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Parshah and Haftara Vayetzi
by Julie Zhuk on 2022-11-26

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Parshah

Jacob leaves Beersheva, where his mother and family were. Charan is the next traveling destination. Mother Rivka's family is living there. Leaving Beersheva, the city lost its beauty and glory. The tzaddikim were the ones who brought beauty and glory there. The little village of Radin was famous because of a well-known Jew, Chofetz Chaim. Chofetz Chaim lived there. When Jacob got the blessings from Yitzchak, he went to learn in the yeshiva of Eiver; he was Noach's great-grandson. He spent fourteen years learning there. Jacob didn't want to interrupt this learning, so for fourteen years, he didn't take the time to go to sleep in bed. He would only take short naps as he sat up. He is supposed to find himself a wife there and he would have to cross the Jordan River as well. On his way to the Jordan River, Jacob meets up with his nephew, Eliphaz. It's Eisav's son. Eliphaz wasn't there to say goodbye to his uncle.

No, his father Eisav, sent him to kill Jacob. Eliphaz wasn't sure what to do, he loved his grandfather Yitzchak. Yitzchak taught him not to kill, but his father gave him the order to kill Jacob. He thought it was a mitzva to go through with the orders of his father. Eliphaz asked Jacob what to do. Jacob had an idea for him, he had brought a huge amount of money and jewelry. The plan was to give this to his future bride and her family as gifts. Now with this threat against Eliphaz, he was going to use the money to save his life. He told Eliphaz that there was a saying about a poor man being like a dead man. He told Eliphaz that he could kill him, by taking away his wealth. It would leave Jacob as a poor man. Eliphaz took the advice and took all of Jacob's jewelry and money. Jacob was able to walk away and live! Jacob continued on his journey, when he got to the rushing waters of the Jordan river he ran into another problem.

Jacob didn't have any money to pay someone to take him across in a boat. Jacob took the only thing that he still owned, it was his walking stick. This was the same stick that Moses had used. Moses used this stick to split the Sea of Reeds when the Jewish people left Egypt. He stretched it over the Jordan River. A miracle happened, the river waters split and made a dry path for Jacob to walk across. The Parsha tells us that his journey to go from Beersheva to Charan, was supposed to take Jacob over two weeks. He somehow managed to get there within the same day. His faith in G-d never shattered. Jacob realized he had passed Mount Moriah. It was where his father and grandfather had prayed. This mountain was really important because G-d had taken the earth to make the first man, Adam HaRishon, from Mount Moriah. Abraham had almost sacrificed his son Yitzchak on Mount Moriah. He didn't pray there, he decided to go back to Israel to pray on the holy mountain. Mount Moriah had another name, Har HaBayis. It meant the Mountain of the House. It was where the Beis Hamikdash was built.

Jacob started going back to Mount Moriah and G-d shrank the distance. He moved the mountain to meet Jacob, Jacob soon found himself standing on that mountain. G-d wanted

Jacob to sleep on Mount Moriah. In order for him to do this, G-d sent him a dream about the future. It was still daylight, Jacob would have prayed and then left to go back to Charan. G-d wanted to make sure Jacob would stay on the holy mountain. G-d made the sun go down early, so it would be too dark to travel and Jacob would just stay there. The commentary tells us that Eliphaz wasn't thinking logically. It was not a mitzva to obey a parent if it means going against G-d's command not to kill. Jacob saw it was getting dark, and right away he started praying the Maariv service. He didn't know how to get ready for bed out in the wild when you don't have a tent or even a sleeping bag. Jacob started collecting rocks.

He used one rock for his pillow and he placed the other piles of rocks around his head. It was a protective wall against wild animals. He lay down on the ground and fell asleep. As he was sleeping these rocks started to argue with each other. Each rock wanted Jacob's pillow, they liked him so much. Each rock said that "this tzaddik should rest his head on me." They all wanted Jacob's pillow, and G-d joined all the stones together. He made all the stones become one. Jacob's head rested on all of them and the rocks became silent. Jacob had taken twelve stones, when he woke up he saw they had moved on their own and become one. It was a miracle and he knew that it was coming from G-d. Jacob would have twelve children who would become the twelve shevatim. Then they would become a united Jewish nation. When Jacob was sleeping he had a dream, there was this very tall ladder.

It reached from the earth to heaven. There were angels going up this ladder and other angels that were going down. The angels that went up the ladder were protecting Jacob in Israel. They weren't allowed to leave Israel, so G-d sent down other angels who would guard Jacob when he would be living outside of the Holy Land. The first person to have established that we should pray at night was Jacob. Jacob slept on the spot that would become the Kadosh Kedoshim in the Beis HaMikdash. He slept in the exact place where the Aron would rest in the future. When the Beis HaMikdash stood, no one was allowed into the Kadosh Kedoshim (holiest room). Only once a year, on Yom Kippur, the Kohen Gadol would go inside. It was the holiest spot on earth. That vision of the ladders and angels had a purpose to it. It was hinting to Jacob about many future events that would take place.

There is a numerical value of the Hebrew word for, "Sinai," it's where the Torah was given. It is the same numerical value as "sulam" the Hebrew word for ladder. Just like an angel, Moses would go up from Sinai to heaven and then come down with the Torah. The Mizbei'ach, being the Altar of the Beis HaMikdash, had a ramp on which the Kohanim, were almost like angels. They would walk up and down as they brought sacrifices. The honor of their service rose to G-d in Heaven. Since the First Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, the Jewish people have suffered through four exiles. They were named for four nations, Bavel, Persia, Greece, and Rome. The exile we are in now is Edom (Rome). The angels are going up and down the ladder where the guardian angels of these four nations were. Each angel went up the same number of steps as the number of years that their nation would be in power.

Then these angels came down. The last exile we are in now will eventually lose its power. That is also when the Mashiach will come. There is a message in this dream. Jacob saw the Presence of G-d was over him. The presence of G-d was guarding over Jacob. G-d was speaking to Jacob. He said the words that He is the G-d of Avraham and Yitzchak. G-d then folded up all of Israel into one small piece of land under Jacob. He said that he would give the

land over to Jacob where he was laying down with all those rocks. The land would go to Jacob's descendants. Jacob's descendants would be as many as the dirt on the earth. G-d told Jacob that his descendants would spread out to the west, east, north, and to south as well. All of the nations on the earth would know that G-d was blessing them and their descendants as well. G-d was going to bring Jacob's descendants back to Israel. G-d was telling Jacob about what would happen in the future. First Israel would be given to Jacob's descendants, then they would take over the land very easily. It would be as if it were just a small piece of land that could fit under one person. Jacob would have a lot of descendants, but they would go into a period of exile.

There they would be treated like the dust under people's feet. They would be stepped on and beaten down by the world's nations. Then Mashiach will come and the Jewish people will go back to Israel. The borders of Israel will spread out in all directions so there will be room for everyone. It will become a rather large country. The commentary for this Parsha says that many nations tried to destroy the Jews. Yet we are still here! There are no ancient Romans, Syrian Greeks, or Babylonians. The Jewish people have outlived them all. The Jewish people have survived over three thousand and three hundred years! How is that possible? It's because of G-d is always there, with us, watching us, keeping the eternal promise He once made to Jacob. We learn in this Parsha about what it's like for people to pray in Jerusalem. When they are in Jerusalem, it is as if they are praying right in front of G-d. It is as if they are on His heavenly throne.

The Gemara tells us that Jacob actually promised to give a fifth, that is twenty percent. From this Gemara we learn that in general, a person should not give more than twenty percent tzedaka. The next part of the Parsha is about angels, in the present day now, Jews don't physically see any angels. Jewish text such as this one, tells us that Jews have angels around us. They are there to protect us, just like Jacob had angels to protect him. When someone goes to Israel there is a changing of the guard. Israel has very holy angels there. They take over from the angels who are watching us Jews outside of Israel. Back to the story of Jacob, he was afraid of what Lavan and Eisav would do to him.

G-d had promised Jacob that He would protect him from them. Also that He would bring Jacob back to Israel. Jacob was asleep for so long, and finally, he woke up from his dream. He told himself that where he had been sleeping was a holy place. He said out loud that he felt G-d's presence there. He thought that if he had known, he wouldn't have slept there. He felt it was the gate of heaven. He didn't know that he slept there because G-d wanted him to be there. All prayers from everywhere in the world passed through this place on their way up to the gate of heaven. This was where the Beis HaMikdash would be built.

Jacob then took the stone that was under his head and poured some oil on it. He used the oil that G-d had given him. Jacob promised to take ten percent of whatever he earned. He was going to use it on sacrifices to be brought to G-d. Jacob would give that ten percent if G-d would do a few things. These were, protecting him on his journey, giving him food and clothing, and letting him return to his father Yitzchak in peace since he didn't learn any bad behaviors from Lavan. The Parsha asks us why Jacob stated if G-d would do all of these things. G-d had already promised to take care of him. Jacob knew that G-d would keep His promises. Jacob was afraid that he might lose all these things if he transgressed against G-d. Or if he didn't deserve G-d's blessings anymore. Not only was Jacob going to give ten percent, but he

promised that the stone on which he'd poured oil would be a place where he would pray and bring sacrifices. Jacob named the place he had his dream Beis El. It means House of G-d. It was time to continue his journey. The next place he was going to was Charan, G-d made promises that left Jacob feeling very happy. He set out on his journey. Jacob reaches Charan and sees three flocks of sheep that are resting on the ground. Their shepherds were standing around a well. They were doing nothing, the top of the well was covered with a large and heavy rock.

In present time, now our water comes from a faucet. Back then in Jacob's time, water came from wells. In places like Charan, the water was pretty precious. People had to share whatever water was available. The well was covered with this heavy stone and it could be lifted only after all the shepherds had arrived. No one could lift it by themselves. The person wouldn't take more than their own share of water. Jacob approached the shepherds where they were from. They told him that they were from Charan and he asked if they knew of Lavan. They pointed to the daughter of Lavan. She was coming down with her flock of sheep. Jacob said that it was still daylight, and he wanted to know why the shepherds were not watering the sheep and taking them to graze in the fields.

They started explaining that they were waiting for the other shepherds to come so there would be enough men to lift the rock. Then they could water the sheep. While this was happening, Rachel had made it to the well. The Parsha tells us that Jacob and Rachel were related, back then being related didn't matter so much. They were cousins. Jacob wanted to help her, he showed her his awesome amount of strength. He lifted the heavy rock. He rolled it off the well with only one hand, Jacob did it easily using minimum effort. The commentary from the Parsha tells us that the well was very ancient. G-d had created it on Erev Shabbat at twilight. It was one of the last things that He created during the six days period. That was when He created the world. Rachel and Jacob's meeting didn't last long before he started to cry in front of her. He realized right away after meeting her that she was going to be his wife. He remembered how Eliezer had brought gifts when he came to find a wife for Yitzchak. Now Jacob stood there in front of Rachel but didn't have any rings or bracelets to give her. It was because Eliphaz had taken away all of his wealth at the time.

Jacob turned to Rachel and asked if she would marry him, and right away she said yes. Rachel warned Jacob, that her father Lavan, cheats on people. Jacob didn't know how Lavan could trick him. Rachel told him that she had an older sister who wasn't married yet. She told him that her father wouldn't let her get married until the older sister would be married. Jacob wanted to solve this dilemma, he gave Rachel a secret code word. It was used as a secret signal, when they got married, Jacob would ask her for the code words. If she knew the code words, it would mean that the girl behind the wedding veil was Rachel and not someone else.

We learn from the commentary in this Parsha another reason Jacob was crying. He had just met Rachel and he saw that shouldn't be buried next to him in the Me'aras HaMachpeilah. There is a commentary on the secret code words between Rachel and Jacob. Jacob told Rivka about the mitzvos that are usually done by women. Such as lighting candles or taking challah. When Jacob and Rachel were at the chuppah, he would ask her to tell him what these words were. When Rachel met Jacob, she ran home to tell her father the news. When Lavan heard that Avraham's grandson had come, right away he remembered the time when Avraham's

servant had come with ten camel loads of riches. Lavan's imagination went wild, he thought that Jacob had a lot of money.

Lavan thought soon he too would take the money from Jacob. Lavan didn't waste any time and ran over to the well. When he met Jacob and found out he didn't have any money he was very disappointed. He saw Jacob standing there alone, there were no camels loaded up with jewelry or riches. Lavan started to think to himself that Jacob came from a rich family and that he must be hiding his stash of gold coins somewhere. Lavan tried to come off as if he was excited to see his nephew. It would be the first time and he gave Jacob a big hug. As he was hugging him, he moved his hands over Jacob's clothing wanting to feel for any hidden money. Lavan didn't find anything, he was still a very greedy man. He didn't want to give up, he thought maybe Jacob was hiding expensive pearls in his mouth. Lavan decided to give Jacob a big kiss, but there were no pearls hidden there. Finally, Lavan gave up trying to find the money for Jacob.

Lavan invited Jacob to come back home with him. Jacob told him about what happened on his way to Charan. He told him about Eliphaz. Lavan was not a happy camper. He had imagined all these riches coming from Jacob and would soon become his. What he was imagining were empty dreams. The Parsha asks us to imagine that we have relatives coming to visit from Israel. Would our parents ask them to wash the dishes, do the laundry, or wash the floors? The Parsha says that most likely this wouldn't happen, since they are guests. Lavan didn't act like this, he told Jacob that because they were related he could stick around for a month. He was also going to put Jacob to work taking care of the sheep. Lavan had two daughters, Leah and Rachel. Leah was the oldest, but she had very weak eyes. Rachel was the beautiful one. In the Jewish world, people love talking about setting matchmaking and setting others up.

They used to say that since Yitzchak had two sons, and his brother-in-law Lavan had two daughters, Leah the older one, would marry Eisav. Eisav was the older son of Yitzchak. Jacob the younger son, would end up marrying Rachel. She was the younger daughter. Leah had asked what kind of man Eisav was, she became horrified after learning of him. Leah discovered that Eisav had been an evil murderer. She really didn't want to marry him after hearing that. She sat in prayer, and she cried to G-d to please let it be His will that she didn't end up with Eisav. All of that crying made her eyes weak. This is where we learn in the Parsha that prayers are a powerful tool. G-d listened to her prayers, and He answered her. She didn't end up marrying Eisav. Instead, she married Jacob, and she married him before Rachel had a chance to do so. When Jacob got married to Leah, he was eighty-four. The commentary tells us sometimes it may seem to be fun to make people look foolish.

The Parsha uses the example of random characters. These names are not based on real people. Samuel and Ari they may have given Moses a cup that had a tiny hole in it. They could laugh at him when he is drinking and it is dripping all over his shirt. Leah may ask Adina to help her hide Malky's schoolbag, then they can giggle while Malky is looking for it. The Parsha says to school kids, the next time anyone's friends want to meet to play a trick on someone, they need to think of our mother, Rachel. Rachel did something incredible, she didn't want her sister to be embarrassed. She gave Leah the secret signal. It was a very great thing for Rachel to have done.

When the first Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, G-d promised He would end the exile and bring the Jews back to Israel. The reason for this was, it was a reward for what Rachel did. Rachel ran home from the well to talk to her father. She didn't talk to her mother about Jacob. Rachel and Leah were orphans. Their mother had died. Jacob asked Lavan to marry Rachel, his youngest daughter. Didn't Lavan know who Rachel was? Jacob was very careful with the words he used when talking to Lavan. He didn't want Lavan to cheat him. If Jacob had asked for only Rachel, Lavan could give some other girl. If Jacob didn't say to Lavan your younger daughter, then Lavan could change Leah's name to Rachel. Then he could give Jacob Leah, who would now be called Rachel! Jacob was extremely careful to say about who he was working for. Regardless of Jacob's efforts, it didn't work out for him.

Lavan was still dishonest and gave Jacob Leah anyways. Jacob finds out how Lavan cheated him. He felt angry, he asked Lavan what did you do to me? He reminded Lavan that he worked hard for Rachel. He asked Lavan why he cheated on him. Lavan already had an answer ready, he was trying to sound like a great big tzaddik. Lavan explains his custom of not marrying the younger daughter unless the older one has been married off already. Lavan tells Jacob to work another seven years and then he can marry Rachel. After one week of celebrating Sheva Brachas of his marriage to Leah, he marries Rachel. Lavan gave Rachel a wedding present. It was a person, a maid named Bilha.

Jacob loved both of his wives a lot, but he truly loved Rachel even more. Leah knew about this and it made her feel bad. Leah wasn't able to have children, but G-d saw how much it hurt her that Jacob didn't love her as much as he did Rachel. Then He gave Leah children, it was a miracle. It wasn't just one child. She had four sons These sons were named Reuven, Shimon, Levi, and Yehudah. At the time, Rachel didn't have any children. She decided to ask Jacob to marry her maid, Bilhah. This way Rachel would be like Sarah. She was hoping that since she didn't have children Bilhah would have them for her. Sarah did that with her maid Hagar. G-d was going to see just how much she wanted children and He would listen to her prayers and give a child as well. Bilhah was blessed with a child and Rachel came up with the name Dan. Rachel raised Dan and Bilhah had another child that Rachel called Naphtali.

Leah saw that she had stopped conceiving and she did what Rachel had done. She asked Jacob to marry her maid named Zilpah. Zilpah had two children, both were named by Leah. The first was Gad and the second one was Asher. Leah had two more children after those two were born. The next two were named Yissachar and Zevulun. After having ten boys, Jacob finally had a daughter. Leah names the daughter Dina. Time passed, but Rachel didn't have any children. She poured out her heart to G-d. She was hoping for a miracle to happen and for him to give her a child. G-d heard her prayers and in the merit of giving the secret code to Leah, she was able to conceive a child. She named that child Yosef. Jacob's family had gotten so big, he had four wives. There were eleven children.

His wives Rachel and Leah were exceptionally holy women. They were also prophetesses who knew the future. The birth of Josef was important to Jacob. Up until Yosef was born, Jacob was afraid to go back home and face Eisav. Jacob knew through a prophecy that Joseph had it him the power to destroy Eisav. Jacob felt now it was safe to go back home. Out to the path of Israel, having good manners, Jacob went to meet with Lavan. He told him that he was planning to leave and asked for permission to go back home to Beersheva.

Lavan hears of Jacob's plans but is displeased. Lavan needed Jacob to stay, Lavan didn't have any sons and now he did. When Jacob came, the number of animals in his flock had gone up. There were a thousand more sheep. There were a thousand more goats. There were a thousand more rams, every month this was happening. Lavan was now an extremely wealthy man. He wanted Jacob to stay and continue working for him, he wanted the blessings Jacob had brought to keep going. Lavan told Jacob that he knew G-d blessed him because of him. Lavan asked how much money Jacob wanted and they made a deal. The commentary tells us that G-d decided on the Jewish New Year before Joseph was born that Rachel would have a baby. The same happened to Sarah Imeinu, before Yitzchak was born. It also happened to Chanaha, the mother of Samuel the prophet. Jacob treated Lavan with derech erez because Lavan had cheated him. He made him work for fourteen years instead of just seven by switching Leah for Rachel. Jacob didn't want to show respect to a man such as Lavan, but he still did. When dealing with people who will lie to you, you can behave like them. Or you can be better than they are and behave like Jacob did. Jacob wanted to behave better than Lavan.

Lavan was doing much better when Jacob came. Our Sages explain that wherever a tzaddik goes, G-d sends blessings to that place. Lavan removed all of the animals in his flock. Lavan had removed all the animals that were in his flocks. These animals weren't all black or all white. He put them in the care of his sons, and Jacob was taking care of the animals that were left over. These animals were either all black or white. Jacob's payment would be that all these animals that were born with brownish red, or had colored spots or patches, were striped. Some of these animals had rings around their ankles and they belonged to Jacob. It wasn't the best deal for Jacob, since all-black and white animals don't usually have multicolored children. Things got a bit worse, Lavan was supposed to leave all the white and black animals, but he left Jacob with the sick and weak ones. Jacob had a dream where he saw an angel that showed him G-d was going to make a miracle happen.

Jacob was going to get the best of the deal. Seeing this heavenly message, Jacob came up with a plan. He took branches of trees and peeled off some of the bark. The pieces of wood had spots and patches on them. Jacob would give the animals water to drink, but Jacob would put sticks in front of them. Some miracle happened, the animals were influenced by looking at the spotted and patched sticks. The animals had babies with spots and stripes. Jacob's flock started to grow. This made Lavan so upset, he kept changing his agreement with Jacob. He was hoping to stop Jacob from being so successful. Lavan would turn to Jacob and say that he would only get the spotted ones.

This didn't help, only spotted animals were born. Lavan saw this happen and changed his mind. He said this time you only get the ringed ones. That didn't help either, nothing was working in Lavan's favor. He changed the deal, the animals had babies that were colored according to Lavan's new deal. Every deal Lavan tried to work out, didn't go in his favor. While this was going on, Jacob's flock just kept growing. G-d was the one who helped of course. After six years went by Jacob was extremely wealthy. He had a lot of large flocks, and from the sale of some of his flocks he was able to buy camels and donkeys as well. He had lots of servants. Lavan and his sons had grown super jealous of Jacob being so wealthy. Jacob had stayed so long with Lavan. It was twenty years when G-d came to him and said you need to go back to where you were born.

Jacob told his wives Rachel and Leah to meet him in the field. He was out in the field taking care of the sheep and he told them his plan was to go back to Beersheva. That was where he was from. He wanted to know how they would feel about leaving their home and joining him. He told the women that their father was jealous of him and he tried to cheat him a lot over the years. Jacob told his wives about the dream he had with the angel, who had told him that G-d would miraculously help him become successful. Jacob told the women that his plan to go back to where he was born was part of G-d's plan. Rachel told Jacob that Lavan didn't treat her or Leah like daughters. He treated Leah and Rachel as if they were strangers. Lavan sold Rachel and Leah to Jacob as payment for the work that he did for him. The women were on board with what Jacob wanted to do. Jacob packed up all his belongings, this included his wealth and his flocks.

Jacob took his children and wives away from Lavan. They headed out back to where Jacob was born, Beersheva. They weren't moving fast, they were traveling with wagonloads of things and large flocks of animals. There were also a lot of children with them. Lavan didn't try to stop Jacob from leaving or taking his family. The reason why he didn't do this, as he had no idea where they were going. Jacob picked a good time to leave, but Lavan was not home. Lavan took a trip, it would have taken him three days from his home. He went to go take care of his sheep. When he came back and was notified that Jacob was gone, the children were no longer around, the large flocks of animals, and Rachel and Leah were gone he had gone livid. He was going to murder Jacob if he could find him.

Rachel didn't just leave with Jacob, she went into her father's home. She found his idols and stole them. This was going to be her last hope to make her father give up his belief in these so-called powerful idols. She hoped that when Lavan would come home and see that his mighty and powerful gods were gone, he would come to realize that worshiping idols was silly. He would realize that there was no point in praying to idols for help when they can't even protect themselves from being stolen!

Lavan and his men did manage to catch up with Jacob. It happened at Mount Gilad where Jacob was camped on top of the mountain. Jacob didn't realize that he and his family were in danger. Lavan and his men reached the foot of the mountain before it got dark. They decided to attack Jacob the next morning. Lavan and his men made camp and went to sleep. Lavan started to have a dream, he saw a frightening vision. There was a fiery angel his name was Micha'el who was standing over him holding a long and sharp sword. It was as if this angel was going to kill Lavan. The dream was a message, it was a warning from G-d. Lavan heard G-d speaking to him. He said don't speak with Jacob either good or evil. G-d continued to tell Lavan to not try and convince Jacob to come back to work for him.

Lavan woke up from his dream and knew he shouldn't even try to kill Jacob. He realized that Jacob wasn't going to return. He still wanted to meet Jacob somewhere, he had no idea who took his idols. He didn't know it was Rachel, he thought for sure it was Jacob. Lavan may have heard G-d speak to him, but he still craved his idols. When the morning came, Lavan and his men climbed the mountain to where Jacob had been camped. Jacob and Lavan came face to face. Wicked people want to think that they are good somehow and that it's the good and decent people who are evil.

People who are wicked twist facts and they tell lies. Lavan started speaking in a way that made it seem he was an innocent victim. He was talking to Jacob and treating Jacob like he was an evil person. Lavan asked Jacob why did you run away in secret. He accused Jacob of tricking him by not saying he was planning to leave or when he was going to leave. Lavan went on to say if he had known, he would have a fancy goodbye party for him. Lavan exclaimed how he didn't have a chance to kiss his family goodbye. Lavan uttered the words to Jacob that he had the power to hurt him, but he won't. Lavan mentioned G-d coming to him in a dream and warning him to not try and hurt Jacob. Finally, Lavan turned to Jacob and said you may have left on your own accord, but why did you steal my gods?

Now it was Jacob's turn to speak, he said to Lavan that there was a good reason to not share they were leaving. That reason was Lavan would find some way of stealing his wives from him and not letting them go with him. Then Jacob said that as far as he was concerned about the stolen idols Lavan had permission to check Jacob's tents. If he was to find the idols whoever took them would be cursed. Then they wouldn't live long. When Jacob said these words, he didn't know that Rachel was the one who stole the idols. Lavan searched the tents of Jacob and his wives, but couldn't find these idols. The idols were in Rachel's tent and not Jacob's. Rachel hid the idols in a good place, she put them in a saddlebag and sat on it. When Lavan came into her tent she told him that she wasn't feeling well.

She couldn't stand up for him. Lavan searched that tent and though the idols were there under Rachel, he never found them. Lavan was standing in front of Jacob empty-handed. He didn't find a thing, Jacob had become angry at this point. He was accused of stealing by this thief and that was too much. Jacob asked Lavan what did he do wrong when Lavan came chasing him. Jacob told Lavan that he searched through everything, and he told Lavan to prove whatever he found. Lavan was pretty humiliated standing there. He didn't have anything and he was the one who accused Jacob for no reason.

Jacob continued to talk to Lavan saying, for the past twenty- years I have worked for you. He reminded Lavan that when an animal was killed by a lion or wolves, then Jacob paid for it. Even though by law Jacob didn't have to, he was not the responsible one. If the animal was stolen by day or by night, then Jacob paid for it as well. Jacob reminded Lavan of the working conditions he was under, by day the heat was unbearable. Then at night was so cold and he hardly ever slept as he was working for Lavan. Lavan always changed how much he paid Jacob. Instead of working for Rachel for seven years, he had to work for both daughters for fourteen years. Then as he was working for Lavan for the next six years, Lavan changed the terms of Jacob's payment a hundred times.

Jacob told Lavan flat out that if G-d wasn't around to protect him, Lavan would have been successful in making Jacob become a poor man. Lavan's response was that Leah and Rachel were his daughters and the children were his sons. He went on to say that the flocks were originally Lavan's. They came from him. Lavan asked how he could possibly hurt the children, his daughters, or the flocks of animals. Lavan asked Jacob to make a treaty with him. G-d would be their witness. The Midrash asks us what were the terms for this treaty. Jacob shouldn't mistreat his wives or marry anyone else. In addition, Jacob and Lavan would set up stones as a

marker. It would be like a border, neither Jacob nor Lavan could pass those stones in order to attack or harm the other. Jacob agreed to this plan.

They set up a large stone that was surrounded by a pile of stones. Lavan named the stone Yegar Shahadusa. Jacob called the stone just Galeid. In the morning Lavan woke up and kissed his daughters and grandchildren. He blessed them and went home. When Lavan got home there was a big surprise waiting for him and it wasn't a nice one. As he was running after Jacob, he was robbed. There were thieves who broke into his house. They stole everything. This included his flocks. Lavan went back to being the same poor person he once was before Jacob ever came in his life. All of Lavan's blessings had come to him because Jacob was living there. Now that Jacob was not there, G-d took everything away. When Jacob left Lavan's home, G-d gave all those blessings to him. Now Jacob was finally free of Lavan!

Jacob continued on his way toward Israel. When he got closer to Israel he saw a wonderful vision. He saw more than a million angels that were dancing and singing! They were divided into two camps of six hundred thousand angels in each. These angels were important in one camp the angels were protecting Jacob outside of Israel. Their job was done since he wasn't outside of Israel. Now the time had come for Jacob and his family to return to Shamayim. The other camp was made up of the angels of Israel. Jacob was coming home, they went out to greet him with joy. They went to take over the job of protecting him. Jacob saw a lot of great things, he called this place Machanayim. This term in Hebrew means a pair of camps. The Parsha for this week started with Jacob having nothing. He had the clothes on his back. He had a walking stick.

Eliphaz had taken everything else from him. Twenty years go by and Jacob has a large family. He is a wealthy man. Most important of all, in all those years, Jacob never changed. He managed to stay the same even when living with evil people. He never behaved like the evil people he was around. He remained a holy tzaddik and a holy person. He raised a fine Jewish family. People around him were worshipping idols left and right.

Haftara

The Parsha and the Haftara go hand in hand this week. The Parsha starts out with Jacob leaving Beersheva, where his mother, father, and brother Eisav were living. There will be parts in the Haftara that will mention what happened in this week's Parsha. The Haftara starts out with the prophet Hosea reprimanding the Jewish people for forsaking G-d. Hosea reminds the Jewish people that no matter what happens, G-d will never abandon them, He asks the Jews how He can give them Ephraim and then deliver them into the hands of the nations. G-d was angry with the Jewish people. At the same time, He said he would not act with the fierce anger that He is feeling. G-d promised the Jews to not destroy Ephraim. It doesn't explicitly say why G-d was so upset with the Jews. The main reason was the amount of idolatry they were practicing. When the Jewish people did that, it brought out the worst anger G-d had.

In this week's Haftara the prophet goes into the things that were done wrong by the Northern Kingdom in Israel. The prophet also goes into detail about the future degeneration of the kingdom of Judea. The prophet explained to the Jews from the perspective of G-d, their actions were worse than when their forefather such as Jacob was alive. Jacob had always been faithful to G-d and prevailed against his enemies. He prevailed against his enemies that were both in human form and in angelic form. There would be an ingathering of the exiles. This would take place during the final redemption. The Jews would

hasten like a bird from Egypt and like a dove from the land of Assyria. G-d would place them in their houses.

G-d kept asking the prophet Hosea, to plead with the Jews to stop worshiping idols of any kind. If the Jewish people would just come back to G-d, then they would come to understand that, "Straight are the ways of the Eternal, the righteous will walk in. Those who transgress will stumble upon them. The biggest point of this Haftara is that G-d promised to punish harshly those who wouldn't follow Him in the end. Those who would choose Him over any practice of idolatry would find salvation. Salvation would only come from G-d Himself.