

Parshah Insights 2021

Parshah: Vayeitzei

(Genesis 28:10-32:3)

Genesis 28:15

“...For I will not forsake you until I will have done what I have spoken about you.”

Philippians 1:6

For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Messiah Yeshua.

"White"

"Red"

Laban



JACOB



Esau/Edom

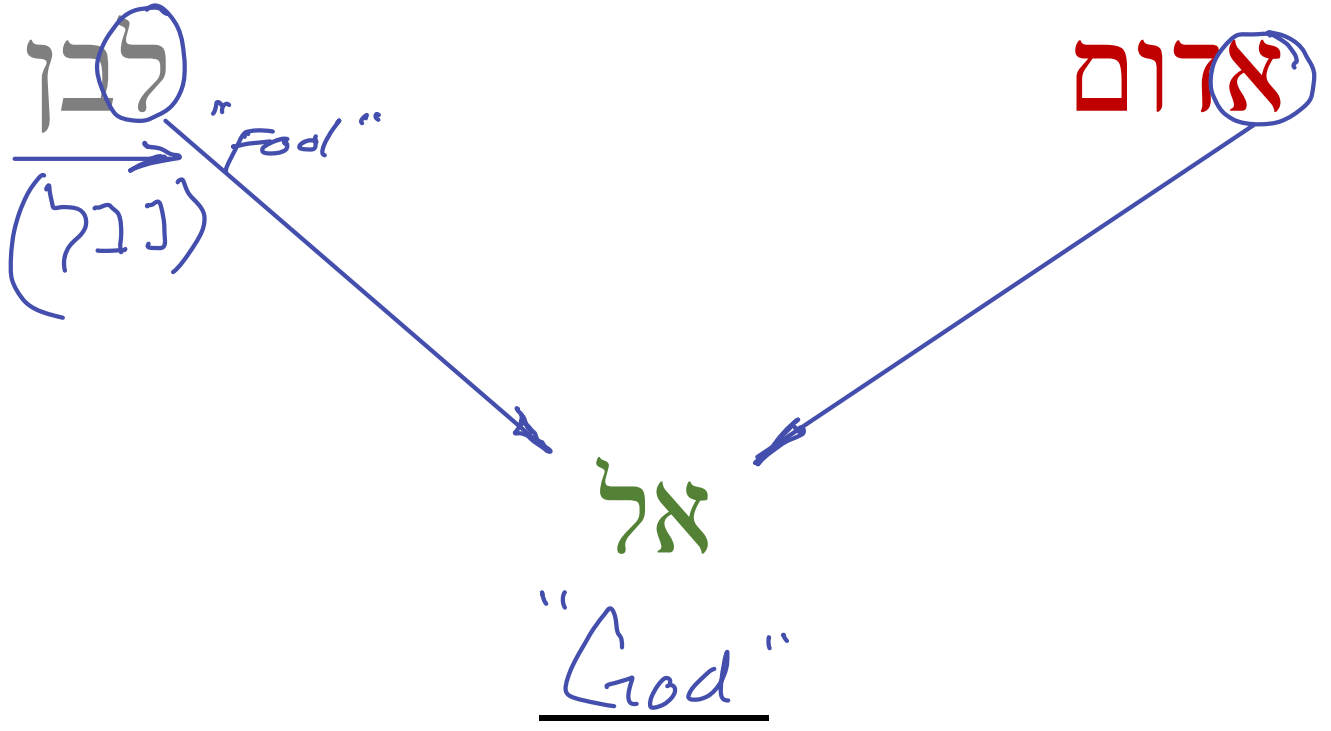
לבן
→
(נבל)

"fool"

אדום

אל

"God"



Jacob “Beholds” Three Things:

#1 – “Behold! A ladder was set earthward and its top reached heavenward.”

- The physical has spiritual purpose
- Principle: All physical things are “ladders”.

#2 – “Behold! Angels of God were ascending and descending on it.”

- God is constantly “messaging” us through the physical.
- One would expect Jacob to notice the angels before the ladder, but that is never the pattern.
- Do angels really need a ladder?

#3 – “Behold! Adonai was standing over him.”

- God is constantly standing over us.
- Looking up is an acquired skill.
- When God spoke, the ladder and the angels were no longer necessary.

Plus...

#4 – “Behold! I am with you. I will guard you wherever you go, and I will return you to this soil, for I will not forsake you...”

- FAITH – We must believe what God has said long after He disappears from our view.
 - FAITH – We must hold on to God’s promises even when they look impossible.
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R’ Dessler’s 4 Levels of Faith:

#1 – Nature Dominates

- These consider themselves believers in God but see natural causes as the dominant forces in the universe.
- Denial is deeply rooted in their hearts.

#2 – Nature Is a Tool

- These still perceive nature as a reality, even though they consider it as a tool in the hands of God, like a pen in the hand of the writer.

#3 – God Acts Alone

- These realize that nature and its forces have no existence as such; they serve merely to obscure the true state of affairs and provide a test for human beings.

#4 – The Happy Few

- These realize that “natural causes” are destructive because they obscure God’s glory.
 - These are surprised there is a “natural world” at all.
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Discussion Questions:

- Read and discuss John 1:43-51 in light of Jacob’s dream.
- Review R’ Dessler’s four levels of faith. At which level do you find yourself? How are you learning to reach the next level?
- What can we learn about historical antisemitism from Genesis 31:1-3?
- Take time to read and discuss the quote by R’ Dessler in the Notes section. Explain his statement in your own words.

NOTES:

Leviticus 13:19-20 And in the place of the boil there is a white swelling or a reddish-white [לבנה אדמדמת, *lavanah adam'damef*], bright spot, then it shall be shown to the priest; and the priest shall look, and behold, if it appears to be lower than the skin, and the hair on it has turned white, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is the infection of leprosy, it has broken out in the boil. (+ 24-25)

Genesis 26:34-35 When Esau was forty years old, he took Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite to be his wife, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and they were a source of spiritual bitterness [מרת רוח, *morat ruach*] for Isaac and Rebekah.

Genesis 27:46-28:2 Then Rebekah said to Isaac, "I loathe my life because of the Hittite women. If Jacob marries one of the Hittite women like these, one of the women of the land, what good will my life be to me?" Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and directed him, "You must not take a wife from the Canaanite women. Arise, go to Paddan-Aram to the house of Bethuel your mother's father, and take as your wife from there one of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother."

Romans 1:18-20 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them, for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

2 Corinthians 4:18 ...while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

John 1:43-51 The next day Yeshua decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Torah and also the prophets wrote, Yeshua of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Yeshua saw Nathanael coming toward Him and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Yeshua answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Yeshua answered him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." And He said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

We have to do some hard thinking. We must search for ways and means to strengthen emuna [faith] in our hearts. First we have to learn, at least, that all causes come from Hashem. He is the writer who holds the pen; what looks to us like a cause is in reality an effect. If someone is successful this is not because he is clever; Hashem wanted him to succeed and therefore gave him cleverness. General X did not win the battle because of his strategic brilliance; it was first decided that he should win, and in consequence of this he was granted brilliance. When it is no longer necessary for that particular person to succeed or for that particular general to win, they will no longer do so. We shall then say that, strangely enough, their business flair or strategic brilliance seems to have deserted them.

(R' Eliyahu E. Dessler, "Strive for Truth!")