

Bountiful and Bounded Boundaries Parshat Vayishlach

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shira Smiles
Summary by Channie Koplowitz-Stein

After his encounter with Esav, Yaakov arrives safely and *shalem*/whole at the city of Shechem, and *vayichan*/he encamped before the city without entering it. The Midrash explains that it was *Erev Shabbat*, and Yaakov set up an *eiruv* that would establish the *techum Shabbat*. Our Sages extrapolate this idea from *vayichan*, implying that Yaakov established a place to rest, a place of *Shabbat menuchah*. Ramban explains further that Yaakov wanted to establish ownership in the land Hashem had promised him and his fathers, and so he bought the field and would walk into the city of *Shechem* itself, within the extended parameters of *techum Shabbat* beyond the *eiruv* on *Shabbat*, as a landowner. This is one of the "proofs" that our forefathers kept the *Torah*, as we see here that Yaakov kept *Shabbat* and established a *techum Shabbat*.

The Ben Melech notes that the significant events in our history occur on *Shabbat*, such as *Matan Torah*, the fall of the walls of Jericho, and even Yaakov's ladder dream. Just as those were all turning points that provided a sense of serenity and purpose, so too was Yaakov's return to the promised land a moment of peace and reinforced identity as the first thing he does is set up the boundaries for *Shabbat*.

The Avnei Nezer writes that Yaakov arrived at twilight, when light and dark are so intertwined that it's difficult to see clearly. But clear sight is necessary not just for physical mobility, but also for navigating the spiritual world where the lines between the pure and the impure are easily blurred. Yaakov understands that *Eretz Yisroel* requires clear boundaries in this regard. His first action upon his return is to set up clear boundaries, not to adopt the cultures of the societies. Just as Yaakov did, we must also set boundaries to protect ourselves.

Shemen Hatov brings the well-known adage, "The departure of a *tzadik* from a place leaves an impression." Rabbi Weinberger suggests that the reverse is equally true; the arrival of a

tzadik also leaves an impression. Yaakov left this place on an *Erev Shabbat* and was returning on *Erev Shabbat*, closing the circle. *Vayichan*, the *chen*/grace that left with Yaakov's departure was now returning. The *chen* of *Shabbat* and the *chen* of Yaakov now met, and we pray that that *chen* be extended and carried with us from *Shabbat* into the entire week and into our entire lives.

That *chen* comes from controlling our inner energies and passions in the knowledge that everything comes from Hashem Who created the world. This is the testimony of *Shabbat*. When we internalize this message, we testify that Hashem is the King. We stop focusing on trying to control our environment and cede our control to Hashem. By setting boundaries, we leave behind the creative process and move inward.

What is the essence of the *techum Shabbat* that Yaakov established? The Netivot Shalom explains, everything exists on three levels, understood through the acronym עשן/o-sha-n/-smoke. These letters stand for *olam*/world/space, *shanah*/year/time and *neshamah*/person/soul. Here all three of these components were infused with sanctity. The place was *Shechem*, an acronym: שם = שכנו Blessed is the Name of His glorious kingdom; the time was *Shabbat*; Yaakov himself was the person, the soul. *Shabbat* and *Eretz Yisroel* are the only entities that encompass the entire person for extended periods. When we light *Shabbat* candles, we "encircle" the flames and draw the sanctity into ourselves. Yaakov came *shalem*/whole and became fully immersed in *kedushah* through sanctifying the place for *Shabbat*, the time.

The act of setting the boundaries and creating a space for sanctity to expand beyond the initial, borders was the great achievement of Yaakov. As Rabbi Hofstedter then adds, we are not meant to isolate ourselves from the physical world but elevate it. In the *Shema*, we are commanded to love Hashem with all our hearts, souls, and resources. Each of our Patriarchs symbolized and perfected one of

these attributes, notes *Halekach Vehalebuv*. Avraham dedicated his heart to doing *chesed*, Yitzchak was ready to sacrifice his soul, and Yaakov elevated all his material resources to Hashem's service. *Meshech Chachma* notes that Yaakov alludes to this when he sends Esav the message that he has acquired an ox, a donkey, flocks, servants and maidservants. Why did he not include camels? Yaakov was implying that he merits the birthright because he elevates the mundane to the spiritual, he dedicates the firstborn of each of these to Hashem. However, the camel, being a non-kosher animal, is not dedicated to Hashem as a firstborn, and so Yaakov omitted the camel from his message, although he included it as a gift.

Avraham was about expanding *kedushah* outward. Therefore, he made an *erev tavshilin* so he could accommodate guests whenever they came. On the other hand, Yaakov was about expanding the inner awareness, creating and nurturing the Tribes in service to Hashem. It was necessary for him to establish the boundaries that would protect the sanctity of that nation, writes the *Be'er Torah*.

The Torah tells us that on *Shabbat* one should not leave his place. Mesillos Bilvovom discusses how that concept frees us and elevates us. All week long we're occupied with acquiring material things, the desire never ends. On *Shabbat*, we must be content with what we have in our domain. We must turn inward and nurture the greatest joy, connecting with our soul.

When you eliminate the desire for more, you are free and feel complete and whole. Like Yaakov Avinu, you too can become *shalem*, and bring Godliness into the world. Yaakov expanded himself by creating boundaries, living joyously and contentedly within those boundaries. *Shabbat* boundaries teaches us that we can and should strive to live within those boundaries. Let us bring a *Shabbat* mentality into our lives by controlling our desires and not letting them control us.



The Power of Shabbat

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller-Gottlieb

When we make *kiddush* on *Shabbat* we say, "Vayichulu shamayim va'ha'aretz." What does *Vayichulu* imply? There's a famous parable of a king who had a son. When it was time for him to marry, the king arranged for the palace to be decorated. The guests were invited and for days on end the cooks were busy preparing a feast. Then he realized that he had forgotten to arrange a bride. The world was ready, it was perfect, but the *kallah*, *Shabbat*, was missing. Hashem then brought into existence, *Shabbat* a day of rest, a cessation of creative process.

Every physical object has six sides, four on each side and up and down. But there's also the inside which is hidden from view. The non-

physical dimension which is the soul is symbolized by the number seven. The world with all its beauty and incredible intricacy was like a body without a soul. When Hashem created *Shabbat*, he introduced the soul and brought meaning to creation, *vayichulu*- it was now complete as it should be. It says concerning *Shabbat*, "Vayivarach, vayikadosh- He blessed and sanctified." Rashi tells us, he blessed it by sending a double portion of mohn on Friday and ceasing to fall on *Shabbat*. *Kadosh* means separate. The world has a separate dimension which transcends physical parameters.

In *Kiddush*, we affirm how Hashem saw everything He made and it was very good. The

Gemara says Avraham saw the intricacy and beauty of the world. Challenges, destruction and difficulty are meant to bring forth the part of us that's transcendent and holy. There's the part of us that has to say yes and the part of us that has to say no that represents *shamor v'zachar*. I won't give in to the part of me that's drawn to controlling everything around me. At the same time, I'll make room to see Hashem's presence within myself, other people, and the physical world around me.

We'll answer cruelty with kindness, we'll say yes to our enemies' no, and we'll respond to the lack of *kedusha*, of acknowledgement of anything more than self, with embracing the sanctity of *Shabbat*.

Tehillim 30 Reviving- A Song for Chanuka

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Dr. Esther Shkop

Mizmor 30 is recited on Chanuka after lighting the candles and saying *Haneirut Halalu*. "A psalm; a song of dedication of the House, of David" How did David Hamelech sing this song of dedication if he did not build the bet hamikdash? We can translate the word *L'David* as being dedicated to him. When Shlomo Hamelech built the mikdash he affirmed that this was the fulfillment of his father's dreams. One could also say that David Hamelech prepared the framework, outline, plans and ceremony of dedication for the *bet hamikdash* which he couldn't build himself.

Other commentators say this *mizmor* was dedicated to be sung at the rededication of the second *bet hamikdash* by the Chashmonaim and that's why its recited on Chanuka. "I will exalt You, Hashem, for You have raised me up, and You have not allowed my enemies to rejoice over me."

"O Hashem, You have brought my soul from the grave; You have revived me from my descent into the Pit." Rashi explains that *gehinom* is where those who completely destroy their souls go, this is what is referred

to as *yordei bor*. Whereas someone who is a *tzadik* and maintained his eternal soul, his body will decompose in the grave, but his soul will remain eternally alive to join up with the Source from which it came from.

"For His wrath lasts but a moment; life results from His favor; in the evening, weeping may tarry, but in the morning there is joyful singing." It's almost as if Hashem doesn't want to get angry. His will is that we live; and if he gets angry at us, it's not because He wants to punish us, but because He wants to shake us up. "And I said in my tranquility, "I will never falter... You hid Your countenance and I became frightened." There's a certain complacency and with that comes a certain arrogance and sense of entitlement. You hid your face from me for a moment and I became shaken and terrified." The word *nivhal* can be transversed to read *hevel* -I became nothing but hot air. And I didn't know that's it not my strength, but your strength, that is bolstering me up.

"To You I would call and would supplicate... So that my soul will sing praises to You and not be silent. O Lord, my God, I will thank You

forever." Rashi and Malbim explain that *kavod* refers to the soul. The body might be dead, but my songs will remain forever.

This *mizmor* portrays man and the struggles and ups and downs he faces in life, how he pleads with Hashem and finally rejoices. What does this have to do with *Chanukat Habayit* and Chanuka? The Malbim says that's it the body that is referred to as the *mikdash* as it says, "Asu li mikdash v'shachanti b'sochom." When the body is sick, it may sometimes be because the soul is sick. You have to heal the soul in order to heal the body. Eventually the body will die and only the soul will survive. The Greeks defiled the mikdash, they worshipped the body without the soul. On Chanuka, we light candles increasing from day to day. "*Ki ner Hashem nishmat adam*-For the candle of Hashem is the soul of a human being." My candle can light other candles. We light a neshama candle on a *yartzeit* to affirm that although the person is gone, he ignited other lives and as a result his fire is still burning. We're declaring, "Have no fear, we are continuing your legacy and transferring it on to the next generation. And that is why *chasidim* say *l'chaim* on a *yartzeit*."