

Vayeitzei



Part 1: Parsha Summary

Yaakov leaves his parents' home in Eretz Yisrael to run away from Eisav, who is angry at him for taking the special *berachah* from Yitzchak. He travels to Charan, where his uncle Lavan lives. At the well in Charan he meets Rachel, Lavan's daughter. After helping to take off the stone on the well to draw water, Rachel invites him to her home. Yaakov decides to marry Rachel and agrees to work for Lavan for seven years in return. But, on the night of the wedding, Lavan tricks Yaakov and gives him Rachel's sister Leah to marry instead of Rachel! Yaakov agrees to work for Lavan for another seven years in exchange for marrying Rachel. During his years in Charan, Yaakov's wives give birth to eleven children. At the end of the *parsha*, Yaakov leaves Charan with his family and prepares to return to Eretz Yisrael.



Part 2: The Inside Scoop

Let us look at the story of Yaakov meeting Rachel at the well in more detail.



Bereishit 29:2, 7-10

And he [Yaakov] looked, and there was a well in the field, and there were three flocks of sheep lying beside it, because from that well they would water the flocks, and a huge rock was upon the mouth of the well... And he said [to the other shepherds], "The day is yet long; it is not the time to take in the livestock. Water the sheep and go, let them pasture." And they said, "We cannot [water them since the stone is too heavy], until all the flocks are gathered together, and they [all the shepherds

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וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה בְאֵר בַּשָּׂדֶה וְהִנֵּה שָׁם שְׁלֹשָׁה עֲדָרֵי צֹאן רֹבְצִים עָלֶיהָ כִּי מִן הַבְּאֵר הַהוּא יִשְׁקוּ הָעֲדָרִים וְהָאֶבֶן גְּדֹלָה עַל פִּי הַבְּאֵר... וַיֹּאמֶר הֵן עוֹד הַיּוֹם גְּדוֹל לֹא עֵת הָאֶסֶף הַמְקִנָּה הִשְׁקוּ הַצֹּאן וּלְכוּ רְעוּ: וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא נוּכַל עַד אֲשֶׁר יֵאָסְפוּ כָּל הָעֲדָרִים וְגִלְלוּ אֶת הָאֶבֶן מֵעַל פִּי הַבְּאֵר וְהִשְׁקִינוּ הַצֹּאן:

together] will roll the rock off the mouth of the well, and we shall [then] water the sheep."

While he was still talking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. And it came to pass, when Yaakov saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother and the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother, that Yaakov drew near and rolled the rock off the mouth of the well, and he watered the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother.

עוֹדְנוּ מְדַבֵּר עִמָּם וְרַחֵל בָּאָה עִם הַצֹּאֵן אֲשֶׁר לְאִבִּיהָ כִּי רָעָה הוּא: וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר רָאָה יַעֲקֹב אֶת רַחֵל בַּת לָבָן אַחֵי אִמּוֹ וְאֶת צֹאֵן לָבָן אַחֵי אִמּוֹ וַיִּגֶשׁ יַעֲקֹב וַיִּגְלֹל אֶת הָאֶבֶן מֵעַל פִּי הַבְּאֵר וַיִּשְׁק אֶת צֹאֵן לָבָן אַחֵי אִמּוֹ:



Part 3: Let's Discuss

Kids:

- How do the shepherds explain why they cannot give the sheep water yet? What does Yaakov do in response after he sees Rachel?
- How do you think Yaakov got the strength to do this by himself? Now look at the explanation of Rav Chaim Shmulevitz below. How does he explain it?

Sichot Musar, Essay 5	שיחות מוסר, מאמר ה
<p>"And he rolled the stone off"... Rashi explains "that this teaches that he was very strong"... this does not refer to physical strength... rather his strength was through focusing his heart and in that way acting in a way that is greater than regular human strength... we sometimes see this even today with normal people, such as when there is a fire, G-d forbid, one person is capable of doing what can usually be done only by ten people...</p>	<p>ויגל את האבן... פירוש רש"י "מלמד שכחו גדול" ... אין הכוונה כפשוטו על כח גופני... אלא כחו היה על ידי... יחד את לבו ובכח זה פעל מה שלמעלה מכח אנוש לפעול... ויש שאנו רואים מעין זה אפילו בימינו ובסתם בני אדם, למשל בשעת שריפה רחמנא לצלן, מסוגל אדם אחד לעשות מה שצריך בדרך כלל עשרה בני אדם לעשותו...</p>

- Why do you think Yaakov was able to do this specifically when he saw Rachel?
- Have you ever seen anyone do something that you would think they were not strong enough to do? If so, when?
- Rav Shmulevitz also writes that this idea is true about both physical and mental strength. Think of an example of something that you think is too hard, but if you put your mind to it, perhaps you could do it.

Grownups:

- Give an example of something you felt at one time that you were not physically or mentally capable of doing, but in the end you were able to do it. How did you do it?
- How do you think a person can muster up the extra physical or mental strength that Rav Chaim Shmulevitz discusses?
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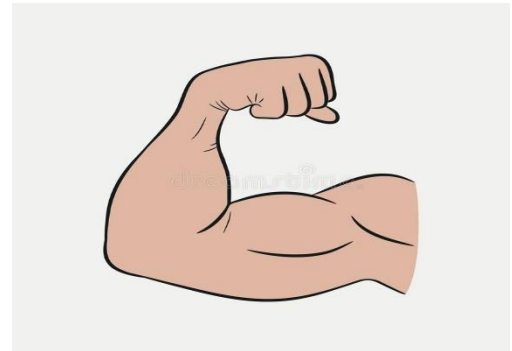


Part 4: Activity

Younger Grades:

Watch [this](#) story about doing things that are hard for you.

- What are some of the things that are hard for the children in the book to do but they are able to do them anyway?
- What things are hard for you but you would like to try to do anyway?



Older Grades:

Watch [this](#) video about ordinary people that did amazing things to save the lives of others (the first 5 minutes will give you the idea).

- Based on what we have learned, how do you think it is possible for them to have such strength?
- In what other ways can a person help when someone is in trouble?

Part 5: Bonus



Look at the following quote from the special prayer we say every year on Shemini Atzeret called *Tefillat Geshem* (the prayer for rain).

Prayer for Rain	אברבנאל, שמות פרק א
He made his heart of one focus and rolled the stone off the mouth of the well of water... For his sake, do not withhold water.	יחד לב וגל אבן מפי באר מים בעבורו אל תמנע מים.

- Based on what we have learned, which person is the prayer talking about?
- Why do you think we mention this when asking Hashem for rain?



Part 6: More on the Parsha – For Grownups

Wells play a major part in the stories in Sefer Bereishit. In [this](#) Tanach Study video shiur on the HaTanakh.com website, Dr. Yael Ziegler examines the different well betrothal scenes to understand their unique features, their characters, and the legacy that emerges.