**Brooklyn torah gazette**

**For parshas vayishlach 5782**

Volume 6, Issue 9 (Whole Number 264) 16 Kilev 5782/ November 20, 2021

**Printed L’illuy nishmas Nechama bas R’ Noach, a”h**

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**Dr. Henry Heimlich and Being Someone's Angel**

**By Rabbi Efrem Goldberg**

*Proactive step up and step in to make*

*a difference in the lives of others.*



***Dr. Henry Heimlich***

Prior to 1974, the standard practice for dealing with someone who was choking was to whack the afflicted person on the back. Dr. Henry Heimlich argued hitting them that way can force the obstruction further into the gullet, rather than dislodge it. He worked on various theories attempting a better way before ultimately coming up with the technique of putting one’s arms around the person choking and exerting upward abdominal thrusts, just above the navel and below the ribs, with the linked hands in a fist, until the obstruction is dislodged.

Heimlich published preliminary findings from his experiments with anti-choking techniques in a US medical journal. Newspapers around the US quickly began picking up on examples where readers, including restaurant owners, had caught word of Heimlich’s article and had tried the maneuver on choking casualties, [with successful results](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/dr-heimlich-got-maneuver/).

Word spread, and that summer the Journal of the American Medical Association published an editorial in which, with the surgeon’s permission, the technique was officially referred to for the first time as the “Heimlich Maneuver.” The technique became widely adopted nationally and internationally and today it appears on posters in most restaurants and is taught in many schools.

Despite introducing the technique, Heimlich had never actually used it the 42 years of its existence. In 2016, Dr. Heimlich was in the dining room of his retirement home in Cincinnati. A fellow resident at the next table began to choke. Without hesitation, Heimlich spun her around in her chair so he could get behind her and administered several upward thrusts with a fist below the chest until the piece of meat she was choking on popped out of her throat and she could breathe again.

**Angels are not only in heaven. Sometimes they're made right here on earth.**

At 96 years old, [Dr. Henry Heimlich](https://www.aish.com/ci/s/Dr-Henry-Heimlich-Saving-Lives-Saving-Worlds.html) had finally executed the Heimlich maneuver to save a life. A short time later, the 87-year-old woman for whom Dr. Heimlich was an angel here on earth, wrote him a note saying she was so thankful that “G-d put me in this seat next to you.”

Angels are not only in heaven. Sometimes they're made right here on earth.

There are countless stories of humans ascending and descending the stairway to heaven to be someone else’s angel. Forty-two years after inventing his technique, at 96 years old, Dr. Henry Heimlich became that choking woman’s angel.

There are people all around us who are choking on life, facing steep uphill climbs, or stuck on the proverbial side of the road. They are struggling emotionally, financially, with loneliness or in despair. Say hello, give the benefit of the doubt, offer a kind word or a kind gesture. You might be somebody’s only angel of the day, their gift straight from heaven.

[Editor’s Note: Heimlich was born in [Wilmington, Delaware](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilmington,_Delaware), the son of Mary (Epstein) and Philip Heimlich. His paternal grandparents were [Hungarian-Jewish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hungarian-Jewish) immigrants, and his maternal grandparents were [Russian Jews](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Jews). He graduated from [New Rochelle High School](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Rochelle_High_School) (NY) in 1937 and from [Cornell University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornell_University) (where he also served as drum major of the [Cornell Big Red Marching Band](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornell_Big_Red_Marching_Band)) with a [BA](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bachelor_of_Arts) in 1941. At the age of 23, he received his [MD](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doctor_of_Medicine) from the [Weill Cornell Medical College](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weill_Cornell_Medical_College) in 1943.}

*Excerpted from the November 11, 2021 posting on the Aish.com website.*

**Parshas Vayishlach:**

**HASHEM is Here**

**By Rabbi Bentzion Shafier**

**Founder of TheSmuz.com**



“And Yaakov feared greatly, and it caused him pain, and he split the nation that was with him, the sheep, cattle, and camels into two camps.” — Bereishis 32:7

**Aysav Comes to Kill Yaakov**

The word came to Yaakov that his brother Aysav was coming to greet him, accompanied by 400 men armed to the teeth. It was obvious to all that Aysav intended to kill Yaakov. The *posuk* tells us that Yaakov feared greatly.

In Brachos 4a, Rebbe Yaakov Bar Idi states there is a contradiction between this *posuk* and an earlier one. When Yaakov was leaving his father’s house, HASHEM promised him that he would be protected. If so, how is it possible that Yaakov was now afraid?

Rebbe Yaakov bar Idi answers that Yaakov was afraid that HASHEM’s promise to guard him might have been based on the assumption that Yaakov would remain on the level he was on. Yaakov feared that he might have sinned and was no longer the same man he once was, so the promise no longer applied. Therefore, there is no contradiction. HASHEM’s promise to guard him was based on his remaining on the *madreigah* that was then, and he was afraid that he had lost that level of purity. Therefore, he was now afraid of Aysav.

This Gemara becomes difficult to understand when we take into account that after all is said and done, Yaakov Avinu was still a human. No matter how great the Avos were, they were made out of the same flesh and blood that we are, had the same physical makeup that we do, and faced all the challenges of being a human being.

This means that Yaakov had that most difficult challenge of life: integrating his intellectual understandings into practice, of **believing and not believing**. Of course, he knew that HASHEM promised to protect him, but here he was faced with a brother whose nature he knew quite well: a powerful, driven man who had a burning desire to settle an old grudge.

This man didn’t come alone; he brought with him an army to aid in what was his clear intention — murder. So why does Rebbe Yaakov bar Idi assume that it was impossible for Yaakov to be afraid? Maybe Yaakov was just scared — not because of any sin that changed his level, but because of the danger that he faced. Perhaps he was afraid of Aysav, afraid of being out there alone, and afraid of dying.

**HASHEM Made that Promise 34 Years Ago**

What makes this explanation even more plausible is that HASHEM’s promise to Yaakov was made over 34 years before Aysav came to greet him. An awful lot of time passed since Yaakov left his parents’ home. Maybe the trust in HASHEM’s promise had faded over the time. Maybe Yaakov was ever so slightly affected by the ways of the world. Why does Rebbe Yaakov bar Idi assume that there must be some answer as to why Yaakov was afraid? The explanation might be quite straightforward: Yaakov hadn’t heard this promise in many, many years, and he was simply afraid. Maybe Yaakov was much like us.

**Yaakov Walked with HASHEM**

The answer to this question seems to be that there is a key distinction between Yaakov Avinu and the average person. Yaakov Avinu walked with HASHEM.

When he got up in the morning, he said, “Good morning, HASHEM.” When he went to sleep at night, he said, “Good night, HASHEM” because his Creator was directly in front of him. When he went about his daily activities, HASHEM was with him all day long. HASHEM was there as he walked, as he ate, and as he greeted people. Throughout his day, HASHEM was present and accounted for.

One of the reasons that we have such difficulties in trusting in HASHEM is that HASHEM isn’t “here.” Perhaps HASHEM is some thirteen billion light years away, up in the heavens. But when I am walking on a cold dark street late at night, and a car stops, and three tough looking guys step out and approach me, I am alone. It is the three of them and me. So, naturally, I am afraid. Who wouldn’t be?

**Yaakov Avinu was Never Alone**

But Yaakov Avinu was never alone. His entire existence was focused on being close to HASHEM. HASHEM was present with him every moment of his day. When he went to the well to find a wife, HASHEM was right there arranging for Rochel to come with the sheep. When he went to the house of Lavan, HASHEM was right there protecting him from the scheming of a trickster. And now that he was preparing to meet his brother in what was likely to be mortal combat, he was not going out alone. He walked with HASHEM.

If Yaakov didn’t have a reason to think that HASHEM’s promise no longer applied, it would have been impossible for him to have feared being injured. It would be the equivalent of you or me being afraid of some high school punks while being escorted by the entire US Marine Corps. That is why Rebbe Yaakov Bar Idi asked, “How is it possible that Yaakov was afraid?” His answer is that Yaakov was afraid that the promise no longer applied. Maybe HASHEM no longer guaranteed to protect him. Otherwise, it would have been **impossible** for Yaakov to have feared danger.

**Growing in Bitachon Means Seeing HASHEM — Right Here**

This concept that HASHEM is present and right here is the basis of all *bitachon*. If a person doesn’t **know** that HASHEM is present in his life, any discussion of relying on HASHEM is foolish. How can I rely on HASHEM when He isn’t even here? What good is trusting in HASHEM if HASHEM isn’t on the scene, right here to watch over me? *Bitachon*, by definition, means knowing that HASHEM is here, supervising me and involved in my life.

While this may seem self-evident, in practice it is highly elusive. To truly **know** it requires much work, and to a large extent, this is the measure of a person’s *ruchniyus*. However, it is also one of the easiest things to do – to simply remember that HASHEM is here. Right here. As I speak, as I think, as I read. Not some millions of miles away up there in the sky, but right here. This single cognition has a dramatic effect on my entire relationship to HASHEM, on all of my *Avodas* HASHEM, and ultimately on my entire life.

*Reprinted from the current website of TheShmuz.com*

# Rav Avigdor Miller On

# Yaakov Avinu’s Shidduch Prep



**QUESTION: Why did Yaakov stop for 14 years in the yeshiva of Shem v’Ever if his father told him to go and get married?**

**ANSWER:** When Yaakov Avinu was told by his parents, when he was given the order that he should go and get a wife, he didn’t do it.  Fourteen years he took a vacation and he went to the yeshiva.  That’s a queer thing.  They didn’t tell him to go to the yeshiva.  They told him to get a wife. But he dropped out of sight for fourteen years in Yeshivas Shem v’Ever.  How could he do such a thing?  Is that obeying his parents?

The answer is that’s part of the job.  Before you can take a wife you have to be ready for the job.  And that’s why if possible, yilmod Torah, you have to learn, ve’achar kach yisa ishah, and afterwards you should get married. Learning Torah doesn’t mean you learn a piece of Bava Kama and that’s all; no. Unfortunately the way it’s taught in the yeshivos is not a preparation for marriage.  Torah means a lot more.  It’s a pity it’s not being taught in all places properly.  Some places, maybe.

You have to teach a lot of things.  You have to teach toras chesed.  People have to learn that they’re getting married and therefore they have to live with somebody else and they have to be willing to yield.  You have to be willing to accept other people’s idiosyncrasies.  You just can’t have things your way.  There’s a great deal to teach there! The Torah of cooperating with other people.

Here’s a yeshiva man.  He’s frum and he’s idealistic; he’s everything.  But it’s always what he wants to do.  He’s doing what he wants.  Suddenly he gets married and he discovers that there’s somebody else who wants something too; and it’s a great disappointment to him.  And that’s only one of the things you have to learn.

But we’ll leave this to those who are conducting the institutions.  What’s the benefit of my telling it here?  Those people are the ones who should be asking this question.  Let them study the subject.

*Reprinted from the November 9, 2021 email of Toras Avigdor (Tape 178)*

**Rabbi Berel Wein on**

**Parshat Vayishlach 5782**



We seem to find our father Jacob always in some sort of flight. He flees from the wrath of his brother Eisav and spends decades in exile in the house of Lavan. Eventually, he is forced to flee from Lavan when it becomes obvious to him that dishonesty, corruption, and idolatry that characterize the house of Lavan endanger Jacob's physical and spiritual survival, as well as that of his family.

Because of all of this, he flees the house of Lavan to try to return to his home in the land of Israel. Pursued by Lavan, Jacob eventually mollifies Lavan, and continues his journey. But now he regards himself as a fugitive, constantly in danger and subject to constant threats from outside enemies from whom he cannot seemingly escape.

The encounter with his brother Eisav, as described in this week's Torah reading, is the culmination of Jacob's realization of all his fears, and of the futility of his repeated attempts to flee and escape. Rashi points out that Jacob devised a plan of three options regarding the forthcoming encounter with Eisav: to purchase goodwill with money, with a prayer to heaven to help them escape trouble, and, if necessary, physical self-defense to preserve his life and his family.

It is noteworthy that the option of fleeing, of running away, does not appear in the literature as being an option that Jacob considered in this instance. He apparently is done running, and now turns to face his problems and his adversary, head-on, face-to-face.

Jacob is pre-empted by a mysterious confrontation with the angel of Eisav before the actual encounter with his brother. That encounter comes upon him suddenly and unexpectedly, and it is a threat that he cannot escape from. Jacob wrestles with his adversaries but in the ensuing struggle, Jacob is injured. He prevails though and emerges triumphant, so much so, that his adversary is forced to bless him and acknowledge his greatness.

It is this encounter with the angel that, somehow, brought home to Jacob the futility of attempting to escape the meeting with his brother. Jacob. He decides to confront his problems and not avoid them, and devises three options as to how he will encounter Eisav, but also confront him.

There are many problems in life – and, in fact, life is a series of problems – that we often attempt to deal with by ignoring them or fleeing from them. This tactic rarely proves successful. Eventually we all must meet up with our own Eisav, or at least with the angel - and ideas that the angel represents. Judaism has never attempted to escape from the world. Instead, it has always attempted to face it, argue, and debate, teach, and instruct, and retain its faith and values. History has shown us how impossible it is to avoid confrontation – certainly in the realm of ideas, beliefs, and normative behavior. Being able to face up to a problem and its ramifications is the first step towards being able somehow to solve or overcome the problem, with an adequate resolution.

*Reprinted from the current website of rabbiwein.com*

**The Eternal Message**

**Of Yaakov’s True “Home”**

**From the Talks of the Lubavitcher Rebbe**

**Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, Zt”l**



This week's Torah portion, Vayishlach, begins: "Yaakov sent angels before him to greet Esav, his brother." The message Yaakov entrusted these angels to convey was "Im Lavan garti --- With Lavan I have sojourned." In these words, Yaakov summed up the approach he had taken toward Lavan throughout his years in Charan: "garti --- I have sojourned," i.e., I was only a temporary visitor and never fully at ease.

To Yaakov, the mundane affairs of this world were extraneous, removed from his true self and concerns. In Lavan's household Yaakov was like a ger --- a stranger who was only passing through. His interest did not lie in the pursuit of wealth or material riches. Rather, Yaakov's true "home" was in the realm of the soul, in Torah and mitzvot. Yaakov only felt himself at home, truly at ease and comfortable, when he was involved in the service of G-d.

The Torah states, "He built himself a house, and for his cattle he made sukkot (booths)." For "himself," his true self, Yaakov built a "house" --- a permanent dwelling. For his "cattle," his material possessions, Yaakov built "booths" --- assigning them only marginal importance, like a sukka that is designed only for temporary residence.

In this light, we may better understand the explanation of Rashi, the foremost Torah commentator, on the verse "With Lavan I have sojourned": "And the 613 (taryag) commandments I observed."

The word for sojourned, garti, consists of the same letters as the sum of the Torah's commandments, 613. Yaakov was informing Esav that despite his extended stay in Lavan's household he managed to keep all of the Torah's mitzvot. How? By relating to the physical world and to Lavan as being only temporal and transient.

The Maggid of Mezeritch used to say: "At home, it is different." A person's home is his castle; a home must contain all the amenities of life. When a person travels, however, it is not so important if his temporary dwelling is furnished beautifully, for the time spent there is only minimal.

The Jewish people in exile is only "on the road." We are not yet in our true home; rather, we are more like strangers on a temporary visit to a foreign land. Our entire experience in exile is expressed in Yaakov's message to Esav: "garti --- I am only a sojourner."

The road we are on is the road to the Final Redemption, which, for the Jew, represents true life. In the Days of Moshiach, we will finally be at "home," in our permanent dwelling, engaged in our real task of serving G-d. Indeed, by relating to the physical world and its affairs with this in mind we hasten the Redemption, may it happen immediately.

*Reprinted from Reprinted from the 5757/1996 Vayishlach edition of L’Chaim Weekly, adapted from Likutei Sichot, volume 1.*

**Mashing on Shabbos**

**Can I Mash an Avocado on Shabbos?**

**By Rabbi Chaim Hillel Raskin**

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Under the melacha of tochein, it is prohibited min haTorah on Shabbos to grind non-food products or food that grows from the ground. Fully edible food that isn’t a product of the earth (e.g. eggs, cheese, cooked meat) is not subject to this prohibition.1

Some Rishonim hold that the prohibition only applies to grinding for later use (e.g. flour), but it is allowed for immediate consumption since it this is part of the eating process (“derech achila”), just as selecting good from bad (borer) is allowed right before eating.

Although halacha follows this view, poskim—including the Alter Rebbe—write that one should take the dissenting view into account and cut vegetables in slightly larger pieces to avoid the prohibition of tochein altogether.2

How about mashing a fruit (e.g. avocado, banana)? While some poskim consider the breakdown to be tochein, others argue that mashing isn’t tochein since the food isn't “ground” into pieces and it remains one entity.3

Many contemporary poskim hold that lechatchila one should be stringent, and if needed, to only mash it close to the meal and/or with a shinui (e.g. with the handle of a fork).4

R. Chaim Noeh rules that one may be lenient if done close to the meal without a designated masher.5 A well-cooked fruit or vegetable may certainly be mashed further since it is considered to be already mashed through the cooking.6 Likewise, contemporary poskim write that an extremely soft fruit—that comes apart when pulling part of it—is considered already mashed and may be mashed further. Another melacha that can come into play is memare’ach (smoothing soft substances), a tolda of memachek (smoothing firm surfaces). This prohibition doesn’t apply to smearing fully edible food for food purposes, yet the Rama writes that one should be stringent to avoid smoothing a food for aesthetic purposes.7 Spreading avocado or other dips on bread is permitted since one doesn’t intend to beatify the food, rather to spread the dip over the entire slice.8

1 .ראה רמב"ם שבת פ"ז ה"ה. שו"ע או"ח סי' שכ"א ס"ט וי"ב. שוע"ר שם ס"ח-י. 2 .ראה ב"י או"ח סי' שכ"א בשם הרשב"א. וראה שוע"ר שם ס"י ומ"ב שם סקמ"ה. 3 .ראה תהל"ד השמטות לסי' רנ"ב. 4 .ראה אג"מ או"ח ח"ד סי' ע"ד ושש"כ פ"ו ס"ח. וראה אגלי טל מלאכת טוחן סי"ב, וסק"ל. וראה חזו"א סי' נ"ז ד"ה ואמנם. 5 .קצוה"ש סי' ק"ל בדה"ש סקי"ט עמ' כ"ט. וראה שם סי' קכ"ט בדה"ש סקכ"א. 6 .ראה רמב"ם שבת פכ"א הי"ג, שו"ע או"ח סי' שכ"א סי"ט. 7 .ראה או"ח סי' שכ"א סי"ט ומשנ"ב שם סקפ"א. וראה ביה"ל שם ד"ה תע"ב. 8 .ספר להלכה ח"א סו"ס ל"ט.

*Reprinted from the Parshat Vayeitzei 5782 of the Merkaz Anash’s The Weekly Farbrengen edited by Rabbi Shimon Hellinger.*

**Thoughts that Count for**

**This Week’s Parsha**

*We came to your brother Esav, and moreover he is heading toward you with an army of 400 men* (Gen. 32:7)

Esav kept one mitzva, that of honoring one's father. He knew that his father, Yitzchak, would be angry at him for killing his brother Yaakov. Therefore, Esav brought a large crowd with him to meet Yaakov so that he would be able to tell his father, "My friends were so angry at Yaakov for what he did to me, that when they saw him, they overpowered me and I couldn't prevent them from killing Yaakov." *(R. Yonasan Eibeschitz)*

*Rescue me I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esav* (Gen. 32:12)

Yaakov specified "the hand of Esav," even though he only had one brother. Yaakov was afraid of two things, the first being that Esav would harm him physically, the second being that Esav would become friendly with Yaakov's family, which would harm them spiritually. "The hand of my brother" refers to a physical attack, and "the hand of Esav" refers to a spiritual attack. *(Rabbi S.P. Bogomilsky)*

*And Esav said, "I have a lot," and Yaakov said, "Please accept my gift...because I have everything*." (Gen. 33:9-11)

Esav said, "I have a lot," while Yaakov said, "I have everything." Yaakov was a righteous person and it is the nature of a righteous person to be satisfied with his lot. Esav was wicked, and it is the nature of the wicked never to be content and always to want more. *(Klei Yakar)*

*I crossed the Jordan with only my staff* (Gen. 32:11)

The stick that Yaakov referred to is spoken of again and again in Jewish history. It later belonged to Yehuda, and then to Moshe and Aharon in Egypt. It was later used by King David, and handed down from king to king until the Holy Temple was destroyed. When the Redemption comes, the stick will be given to Moshiach.

*(Yalkut Shimoni)*

*Reprinted from Reprinted from the 5757/1996 Vayishlach edition of L’Chaim Weekly Compiled by Rabbi Moshe Bogomilsky and printed in Vedibarta Bam*