



## פרשת ויצא

As we learn of Yaakov's sojourn in the house of Lavan, many of us will come across occurrences that are hard to understand; I certainly have. One of the questions that troubled me most was Rochel stealing her father's idols. Rashi (31:19) explains that her intention was to separate her father from Avoda Zarah. See the Daas Zkainim M'Baalei Hatsofas, quoting a Pirke D'Rabi Eliezer that seems to attribute them to כישוף - they killed a human Bechor and separated the head, preserved it and put a gold plate with a שם הסומאה inscribed on it in the mouth, lit a candle and it would talk. In order to prevent "the head" from conveying where they had run, she stole it to keep their whereabouts a secret. Whatever Rochel's plan was, be it כישוף or עבודה זרה, she wanted Lavan to part company with it. How, we wonder, how will this work more than all her years living on good terms with her father, trying unsuccessfully to convince him of the שקר of all his idols? How will a clandestine kidnapping of his g-d, as they escape from him under the cover of night, convince him of the folly of his worship? It was obviously not the ONLY one in town as Lavan did eventually catch them. Furthermore, why did Rochel keep it with her under the camels' backpack? She should have thrown it into a river, a well or simply gotten rid of it - questions we all ask that are echoed by many, many Mefarshim.

Rabeinu Bachye (31:19) quotes a Rabeinu Chananel who says that Rochel had hoped to prove that a g-d that can be stolen cannot be much of a protector. However, there is a phenomenal answer that leads us to a window of understanding that we would never have seen. Rav Yehoshua Bachrach (d. 2002) was known by many as a unique scholar and writer,

who spent much time caring for and becoming a father to orphans in Eretz Yisroel after the war. He learned – and it's obvious in his Sefarim – in Grodno by Rav Shimon Shkop and used the thought process of a "Lamdan" when teaching Neviim for seminaries in Israel. He is known for his Sefarim: אמה של מלכות on Rus, מה בין שאול לדוד, ומה בין אמיתי ואליהו, and others. His enlightening חידוש is from the Sefer שאול מה בין שאול לדוד (p. 219) and even has a message for us today. He suggests, based on a Medrash (74:8), that Rochel staged the whole scene for the sake of the children, ששטי קה. Rochel realized a problem. The Shevatim were born and raised in the house of Lavan, he was their "Zeideh", like it or not. Living with a Zeideh like Lavan presents many problems. Some of you might remember the great song: Zeidy made us laugh...Zeidy made us Kiddush Friday night etc.. The Shevatim had the words "Zeidy played with his idols/shrunken heads not only on Friday night". His השפעה could have been considerable, especially on young children, to whom we can imagine he also gave lollypops. So Rochel staged one final ליצנות, a parting and hopefully lasting mockery, where Lavan comes charging in with the cry למה גנבתם את אלהי, why did you steal my g-d? He comes and searches every tent, even under the camels and everywhere else. The Medrash comments: למה גנבתם את אלהי? אמר רבי אייבו, כיון ששמעו השבטים כך, אמרו "בשנו בכך אבי אמנו שלעת זקנותך אתה אומר למה גנבת את אלהי". Once the Shevatim heard that (and saw him searching for his g-d in the trash), they said: "You are embarrassing us, father of our mother, as an old man you still believe in that". Rochel hoped this display of foolishness would forever remain with the Shevatim so that whatever influence the Galus had on them would dissipate. This article could continue for a long, long time about the influences our own





Galus, today, has on us and certainly our children but you are lucky - not today – but you are welcome to think about how you would end this article.

This breathtaking פשט opens another window that deserves our attention. We have learned, many times before, the idea that Yaakov's niche in מעשה אבות סימן לבנים is as the Av of Galus - by Lavan and in Mitzrayim. The Vilna Gaon directs us to the window to see that the Galus of Mitzrayim is the blueprint for all our wanderings, and for our long awaited Geulah, as the Navi Michah teaches (7:15) כימי צאתך מארץ מצרים אראנו נפלאות. Teaches the Gaon that the מעשה אבות for Mitzrayim was Yaakov in the house of Lavan. We know that Yaakov left Lavan's house with great wealth, so too we left Mitzrayim ברכוש גדול. Both Lavan and Pharaoh chased us at the end of the third day. This is why, explains the Gaon, our Mitzvah of יציאת מצרים begins with the story of Lavan, because Yaakov's Galus is where it all began. The Gaon advises us to learn the story well and see how perfectly it fits תיקון"ז ומפירושי הגר"א עה"ת).

Let's try just a little to listen to the Gaon – it's always good advice. When Hashem decimated Mitzrayim, He promised that (Shemos 12:12) ובכל אלהי מצרים אעשה שפטים אני ה' and as Rashi quotes a Medrash that the wooden and metal idols would disintegrate. The שה was to be reduced to becoming supper, thus ensuring that living in the Galus for hundreds of years would not continue to influence the יוצאי מצרים. The g-d's of Mitzrayim had to be reduced to עפרא דארעא. We now know where the מעשה אבות for that came from - from Rochel's staging Lavan's senseless search for his g-d, leaving the impression of how frivolous pursuing them really was. Just as Lavan's g-d was eliminated, and would no longer not be able to sabotage the Shevatim's Aliyah, so too the g-d's of Mitzrayim had

to be torn down.

Bear with me just a little longer. I have a story that I must share with you about someone everyone adored, The Ponevezher Rav. His legendary love for Jews, rivaled only by his love for Torah, allowed him to extend his love and his השפעה to everyone he met. He traveled the world for the last part of his life, trying to rebuild Torah after the Churban of Europe and his own personal Churban. He had the opportunity to speak in a Shul where the adults were still somewhat religious but the children, for the lack of Yeshivos, were getting lost in large numbers (I think it may have been South Africa – I had such cousins ר"ל), where many Yidden from Lithuania went. He railed at them, with such love, that Lavan, the Zeideh, shouted to his grandchildren – why did you steal my g-d? But your grandchildren will come to you, the Zeidehs, and cry out – why did you steal our G-d from us, and not teach us about the beauty and splendor of Yiddishkeit. Hafleh V'Peleh.

The Ribono Shel Olam is reminding us, all over the world, that we are still in Galus. Despite all the outside noise, we still need to protect ourselves from the inside and know what to cherish and embrace, and what we need to discard as Galus baggage and nothing more.

Among those who are מצפים לישועה.

אמני דאפקרה  
חיים טובים איתן

