

SEE WHAT WILL BE

by Rabbi Label Lam

Lavan said to Yaakov, "What have you done that you have deceived me and led my daughters away like captives of the sword? Why have you fled so stealthily, and cheated me? Nor did you tell me- for I would have sent you off with gladness, with songs, with timbrel, and with lyre! And you did not allow me to kiss my sons and daughters; now you have acted foolishly. It is in my power to do you all harm; but the G-d of your father addressed me last night, saying, 'Beware of speaking with Yaakov either good or bad.' Now you have left because you long greatly for your father's house; but why did you steal my gods?" (Bereishis 31:26-30)

Lavan's longwinded diatribe is filled with lies and contradictions. He makes himself into the victim. He talks of hugs and kisses for his children and claims he would have made a good-bye party and a parade for them and in the same breath he betrays a belligerent and threatening posture. What a lost opportunity! Lavan could have been a father of the Jewish Nation as much, if not more than any other patriarch. What was it that caused him to trip and stumble from the stage of history so clumsily?

Once Reb Shmuel Elye of Bilogray came to an inn where there was a group of "progressive"-minded individuals. They began to openly mock the notion of "Moshiach". They had given up hoping for the return of Jews to their former glory in the Land of Israel. For these intellectuals the age of "enlightenment" had already arrived and they felt sufficiently liberated by the promise of a certain political and social opportunity. Therefore, just the sight of someone as "backward" as Reb Shmuel Elye inspired their words of open derision.

Reb Shmuel Elye told them a story. "Once there was a fox that saw a bird perched on top of a tree. He was very hungry, so he said to the bird, "Why don't you come down and keep me company?!" The bird refused, "I know why you invited me. You're hungry and you want to eat me!" "Heaven forbid" answered the fox virtuously, "Moshiach has come and we have already the fulfillment of the verse, "The wolf will dwell with the lamb" (Yeshiah 11:6). No animal will dare harm another."

As they were talking, they suddenly heard the baying of hounds and the sound of trumpets. The fox asked the bird, "What do you see from up there?" The bird replied casually, "It is nothing much. There are just a bunch of hunters and their dogs." The fox became terrified and began to run away. "Why are you running away?"-asked the bird, "After all, Moshiach has come, and no creature will dare hurt another." "You are right," said the fox as he ran for his life, "but these dogs don't believe in Moshiach!"

After all the bluster and bravado, at the very end of his speech Lavan revealed what was really bothering him, "why did you steal my gods?" There in front of him was the promise of a glorious future that might have accrued to his credit. If only he could have seen it well enough to just agree to it. Instead he was blinded by false ideals and idols, as a child is busily attached to his toys. So he cashed out quickly for a cheap substitute. Tragically, in recent history alarming numbers of Jews have opted out of a Jewish future for what has amounted to a mirage. Imagining that Berlin is Jerusalem or Communism "cures all", they fell-victim to those dogs. Only the bird in the tree could **see what will be**. DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](https://torah.org).