

# THE TZADIK DOES NOT "FLEE" HE "LEAVES" (WITH DIGNITY AND CONFIDENCE)

by Rabbi Yissocher Frand

## Parshas Vayeitzei

### The Tzadik Does Not "Flee" He "Leaves" (With Dignity and Confidence)

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These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape #570, Tuition And Maaser Money. Good Shabbos!

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Last week's parsha ends with Yitzchak sending Yaakov to his Uncle Lavan to find a wife. The narrative concludes with Yitzchak blessing Yaakov and the latter leaving for Padan Aram. The pasuk [verse] then interjects that Eisav noticed that his Canaanite wives were evil in his father's eyes and therefore went and married Machalas the daughter of Yishmael, son of Avraham. [Bereishis 28:5-9]

Parshas Vayetzei returns to the narrative of Yaakov's departure and restates the fact that *"Yaakov left Be'er Sheva."* [Bereishis 28:10] From a literary perspective, it would have made far more sense to not repeat Yaakov's departure from Be'er Sheva for Padan Aram, but rather to immediately begin the narration of Yaakov's dream: *"He encountered the place..."* beginning in pasuk 11. It would seem almost as if the Torah was "side-tracked" by the interjection of Eisav's marriage, such that it had to retrace its steps and refresh our memory of what was taking place with Yaakov.

The Be'er Yosef by Rav Yosef Salant says this "diversion" implicitly compliments Yaakov Avinu. We notice a vast difference in the lot of Yitzchak's two sons, in their ability to land the type of shidduchim [marriages] they are seeking. Yaakov needs to travel to Padan Aram. He needs to negotiate with the notorious Lavan. He gets tricked by Lavan and winds up having to work for 14 years to get two wives, only one of which he really wanted to marry. Eisav goes off and marries Machalas, one-two- three!

For those with the experience of having sons in "shidduchim," this is the equivalent of having one son

who marries the first girl he ever goes out with, while the other son travels from New York to Baltimore, week in, week out, for years, without ever finding a shidduch.

What are we to say about such a dichotomy? We might say "Nu, some people have it easy and some people have it hard." But who has it easy and who has it hard? The righteous Yaakov has it hard. The wicked Eisav has it easy!

The Be'er Yosef says that this is why the Torah uses the words "*Vayeitzei Yaakov*" at the beginning of the parsha. The verb Vayeitzei [and he went out] teaches us that despite the fact that Yaakov could have had complaints to the Almighty and questioned the fairness of the relative difficulty he was having finding a marriage partner in fulfillment of his parents' wishes, he nevertheless did not question Him. Yaakov had no complaints.

Rav Matisyahu Solomon asks on this insight of the Be'er Yosef: where do we see that Yaakov did not have complaints to G-d regarding the difficulty he was experiencing with shidduchim? Rav Matisyahu Solomon explains that we see that Yaakov did not have complaints from the pasuk "*And Yaakov left from Be'er Sheva and he went to Charan.*" This teaches us that he went serenely and calmly, always with a smile on his face, and without complaints.

How do we see that? A pasuk in the Haftorah mirrors the pasuk at the beginning of the Parsha: "*Yaakov fled (vayivrach Yaakov) to the fields of Aram...*" [Hoshea 12:13] The wording in our Parsha (vayeitzei / vayelech) implies that he went quietly, confidently, not rushed and not hurried, with the greatest serenity. "*Vayivrach Yaakov Sedei Aram*" means he ran for his life! Which one is correct?

In truth, he did flee for his life. Rivka saw what was happening. She knew that her son Yaakov would be in mortal danger if he remained in Canaan much longer. "*So now my son, heed my voice and arise; FLEE to my brother Lavan to Haran.*" [Bereishis 27:43]

Really, both pasukim are true. He was running for his life, but he did not perceive it as such. He perceived that this was part of G-d's plan. G-d was taking him by the hand, so to speak, and saying "Yankele, now we need to go to the field of Aram and this is where you are going to find your marriage partner. I am leading you." Even though objectively he was fleeing, he perceived it to be a departure of dignity and purpose, which did not present cause for worry or anxiety.

There is no difference in any of our life's journeys, whether we have a Pillar of Fire at night that leads our way, as was the case in the Exodus from Egypt, or whether the journey resembles any of the other numerous sojourns that Klal Yisrael has taken in Galus all these thousands of years. It is always the same. Whether obvious or not, G-d is always leading us by the hand.

He prepares the steps of man (ha'mechin mitz'adei gaver). We are supposed to be in a certain place at a certain time and G-d sees to it that this will happen. It is Yaakov Avinu's unbelievable confidence and faith in the Almighty that allows him to take in stride, all the trials and tribulation that confronted him in finding his marriage partner.

It is with such an attitude that Yaakov was able to maintain a sense of calm and dignity represented by the word "*vayetzei*" (he departed in an orderly manner) during a situation that objectively amounted to a "*vayivrach*" (fleeing for his life).

I recently attended a dinner in Chicago for the Telshe Yeshiva. The Roshei Yeshiva there spoke about the history of Telshe. Rav Avraham Chaim Levine was yet a young boy when they started the Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland, Ohio. He remembered what Rav Elya Meir Bloch said in the early days of the Yeshiva in America.

Rav Elya Meir Bloch saw the Telshe Yeshiva in Europe burn to the ground with his own eyes, with virtually all of its students at the hands of the Nazis, yemach shemam [may their name be blotted out]. The Telshe Yeshiva in Europe and all its students were destroyed. Two of the Roshei Yeshiva, Rav Elya Meir Bloch and Rav Mottel Katz were miraculously spared.

When Rav Elya Meir came to the United States as a refugee who had lost his family, he immediately decided that he was going to start a Yeshiva. He went to Rabbi Teitz in New Jersey for consultation. They fasted so that they should merit picking the right city. They picked Cleveland, Ohio.

Some people argued with him: "How can you start a new Yeshiva? You are fresh off the boat! You are a refugee. You cannot start a new Yeshiva in a strange country in a strange land!" Rav Elya Meir responded that when the future King Dovid did not know whether King Shaul was about to kill him or not, he made up a sign with the King's son, Yonasan (recorded in the famous Haftarah of 'Machar chodesh'). *"If I say this to the boy: 'Behold, the arrows are beyond you!', then go (lech), for this is a signal that Hashem has sent you away."* [Shmuel I 20:22].

The pasuk does not use the term "berach" [flee], just "lech" [go]. "For this is a signal that Hashem has sent you away." This is part of your mission from the Almighty. This is part of G-d leading you by the hand and telling you 'This is where you are supposed to go.' This is all part of the Pillar of Light that leads you at night. It may not be readily perceived as such and things might look bleak, but in truth, it is all the same. The Tzadik proceeds confidently in the bleakest of situations, secure in his faith that the Almighty is leading him in the appropriate direction.

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This write-up was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tape series on the weekly Torah portion. The complete list of halachic topics covered in this series for Parshas Vayeitzei are provided below:

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