

THE KTM DAF PARASHA

BRINGING A TASTE OF ISRAEL TO MONTREAL



THE KING IS SUBSERVIENT TO THE FIELD

BY RAV ARI FAUST (ROSH KOLLEL)

One of the greatest novels ever written, *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880) was Fyodor Dostoevsky's final work. In it, he gives voice to words that serve as the pillar of moral philosophy: "Love all God's creation... And know that every one of us is surely responsible for all and for all men before all..." We are responsible not only for ourselves but for the very texture of reality in which we live.

Reality bends, responds, and transforms according to the moral and spiritual posture of the human being who walks through it. Some elevate the world. Others leave scars. And some - perhaps the rarest - learn to transform even the rawest soil into a garden.

It is this idea that pulses beneath the surface of our parasha's narrative. Among the most mysterious moments in our parasha - perhaps in all of Sefer Bereishit - is Reuven's recovery of *duda'im* (a plant or flower, possibly mandrakes) for his mother Leah (Bereishit 30:14):

וַיֵּלֶךְ רְאוּבֵן בַּיּוֹם קָצִיר הַטִּבּוֹם וַיִּמְצָא דֹדָאִים בַּשָּׂדֶה וַיָּבֵא אֹתָם אֶל לֵאָה אִמּוֹ...

Once, at the wheat harvest, Reuven came upon some mandrakes in the field and brought them to his mother Leah...

On the surface, the location where the *duda'im* were found - "בַּשָּׂדֶה" in the field - seems minor, superfluous. Yet the Torah is deliberate. The mention of the שדה is anything but incidental. It sits within a chain of appearances across Sefer Bereishit, forming a tapestry about human influence, spiritual potential, and the moral vulnerability of the world.

Reuven, perhaps without realizing it, steps into an ancient conversation - one that had been shaped by his family for generations.

Reuven's grandfather Yitzchak is explicitly associated with the שדה (Bereishit 24:63):

וַיֵּצֵא יִצְחָק לְשׁוּחַ בַּשָּׂדֶה

And Yitzchak went out to meditate in the field.

Chazal say this is when he instituted Tefilat Mincha. Yitzchak chooses the שדה as the site of dialogue with God. Not a mountain. Not a desert. A field: cultivated and wild, ordered yet open, inviting and unpredictable. The שדה is where human effort meets Divine presence.

Yaakov, too, finds his journey leads him to the שדה

(Bereishit 30:16):

וַיָּבֵא יַעֲקֹב מִן הַשָּׂדֶה בָּעֶרֶב

And Yaakov came from the field in the evening.

Chazal tell us that while in the field, he established Tefilat Arvit. It is upon his return that Leah informs him she traded the *duda'im* found by Reuven in the self-same field, to be with Yaakov. The story circles back: Reuven discovers fertility and hope where his father and grandfather sought spiritual anchoring.

But the story of שדה begins even earlier—at the dawn of existence (Bereishit 2:5):

וְכָל שִׁיט הַשָּׂדֶה טָרָם יְהוָה בְּאֶרֶץ... כִּי לֹא הִמְטִיר ה' אֱלֹקִים עַל הָאֶרֶץ וְאָדָם אֵינוֹ לַעֲבֹד אֶת הָאֲדָמָה

When no shrub or grasses of the field had yet sprouted, because Hashem had not sent rain and no human was there to till the soil.

The Midrash explains: creation awaited "שיח", human speech, namely tefila - that would acknowledge the Source of growth.

The world was not complete at creation. It awaited a partner. The שדה, then, is the first place in the Torah depicted as holding unrealized potential, waiting for human hands - and human hearts - to activate it. The שדה awaits our moral imprint.

Yet this potential allows for distortion. The first murder occurs when Cain and Hevel were in the field (Bereishit 4:8): "וַיְהִי בֵּהֶיּוֹתָם בַּשָּׂדֶה". The שדה that awaited prayer becomes the arena of violence, absorbing the first human blood.

Esav is called "אִישׁ שָׂדֶה" - a man of the field (Bereishit 25:27), not just geographically but as personality. Cunning, opportunistic, a hunter in body and spirit, the שדה in his hands becomes a place of manipulation and conquest.

"Every one of us is surely responsible for all and for all men" - the שדה awaits our moral imprint.

In Chabad Chassidic thought, the שדה is the arena of avodah, the space that beckons us to manifest divinity. Kohelet says (5:8):

מִלֶּךְ לַשָּׂדֶה נִעְבֵּד

The King is subservient to the field

Just as a king is in need of the toil of the lowest of peasants in the fields, the King of Kings becomes revealed through the spiritual work performed



TORAH תורה
MITZION מציון

KTM MONTREAL

PARASHAT VAYETZE
9 KISLEV 5786
29 NOVEMBER 2025

CANDLE LIGHTING: 3:55 P.M.
HAVDALAH: 5:03 P.M.

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THE HOSTAGES! WE CONTINUE
TO LEARN AND PRAY FOR THE
RETURN OF THE REMAINS OF THE
DECEASED, AND FOR A LASTING,
ETERNAL PEACE.

in the field by human beings. The world is not a stage where God acts and we watch. It is a field we cultivate, and God's presence becomes manifest only when we work the soil. The שדה is the arena of avodah, the place primed for Divine revelation - but only if it is worked, plowed, transformed through mitzvot.

God waits for us in the field, not the throne room. The King is revealed when the field is worked.

The Torah's repeated mention of the שדה is no accident. It is a curriculum. Each of us walks into our own שדה - our workplace, challenges, relationships, inner life. These spaces hold enormous potential, but they do not determine what they will become. We determine it. Will they be places of prayer, growth, blessing? Or chaos, like Esav or Cain?

The Torah teaches the field is waiting. Chassidut teaches that God is manifest there. Dostoyevsky reminds us the שדה awaits our moral imprint. Reuven, wandering in the field, invites us to consider: What will our field become?



אין כמו שנה בארץ

BY BENJAMIN HUTMAN

This year, I've been given the opportunity to learn in Yeshivat Torah v'Avodah (YTVA) in Jerusalem. Looking back to one year ago, I was convinced I'd never spend a year in yeshiva, no matter what, because every yeshiva I came across seemed to have one thing in common: Gemara was the center of the entire year, and I didn't want that.

I wanted a yeshiva where I could focus on all aspects of Torah learning while also giving back to the community. That's when I came across TVA. TVA is a Hesder Yeshiva that combines serious learning with real personal development, independence, and responsibility.

One thing I find special about YTVA is the "avodah" aspect. Every Wednesday afternoon is designated for chessed, giving us the opportunity to contribute to Am Yisrael. I've been fortunate this year to work with Friendship Circle in Israel. I found it especially important, coming into yeshiva, that I could do more than just learn from

a book. I wanted to gain experiences that would last forever, and I truly believe TVA does this in an unparalleled way.

In addition to doing chessed once a week, TVA has tiyulim (trips) at least once a month, giving us the chance not only to read about our history but to see it firsthand. This has been one of my highlights in yeshiva. Just this past week, we spent a few days in Eilat and learned about the history of the Negev and the Red Sea while enjoying breathtaking sightseeing and touring.

The chevra (group of students) is another major strength of YTVA. The guys come from many different places, but there is a shared mindset that creates a strong and focused learning environment. What I appreciate most about our chevra this year is that the students come from many states and cities, which gives you the chance to meet everyone and not feel excluded - especially since I came to this yeshiva without knowing a single person.

Even the regular parts of daily life add to the year, whether it's figuring out the transit

system, learning to shop for yourself, doing your own laundry, and especially learning Hebrew so you can communicate with others.

I feel that this year has already pushed me to think more seriously about who I am and who I want to become - both in my learning and as a person.

Looking back on these past few months, I can see how much YTVA has helped me grow. I've learned on levels I never realized I could, built better habits, formed incredible friendships, and gained a stronger sense of who I am and what I want to work on. I'm looking forward to continuing to improve and making the most of the rest of the year.

Benjamin Hutman is an alumnus of Hebrew Academy.



ENCOUNTERING THE GIANTS: MAHARAL

BY CHAGAI SHREM

The Maharal of Prague, Rabbi Yehuda Loew ben Bezalel, from the 16th century, was one of the greatest thinkers

and Kabbalists in Judaism. He became known for a deep, organized, systematic way of thinking that connects philosophy, Kabbalah, Midrash, and Halacha.

Among his central works are Netzach Yisrael and Tiferet Yisrael, which deal with the Jewish people and the Torah respectively.

What is the correct attitude toward the Torah?

There is a mistaken idea that says the world existed and functioned in a complete way, and then, based on that already complete world, God decided to add the Torah into reality - and that the Torah contains all kinds of laws that contradict the human life-force or prevent full use of the world.

The truth is that the entire world is built on the Torah. The Torah is the heart of reality, and God "looked into the Torah and created the world." The Torah is the structure of reality and of the human being.

The world was created according to the Torah, meaning it is the inner blueprint, the spiritual genetic code of the entire world. And the human being was also created in this way. Therefore, the Torah does not force us to be something we are not, nor

does it shrink our life-force. Its purpose is actually to reveal who we really are. And when a person studies the Torah, he is learning the inner code of the world, and when he fulfills the commandments, he expresses who he truly is.

Sometimes the sayings of our Sages (Aggadot Chazal) can seem very strange and unrealistic. How are we to relate to this - are they meant to be taken literally?

Anyone who thinks that the Sages meant their words literally has not understood them at all. The stories express spiritual ideas symbolically. Within the story, the Aggadah contains the depth of the Torah's worldview, and therefore our task is to uncover the depth behind it.

The Aggadah reveals divine wisdom. Its content expresses the essential, spiritual side, and the simple moral or religious

message is not enough to capture its depth. When the Sages expressed it, they weren't speaking in guesses or assumptions, but in a necessary and precise wisdom, which must be explained with great accuracy. The Aggadot in general come to take a person out of the physical, sensory perspective that characterizes our world, and to bring him into contact with the deeper reality.

"And all of them are precious, ordered, radiant things that teach a person wisdom and fear of Heaven... until if a person walks in their ways, he becomes one who walks among the standing ones above."

(Be'er HaGolah p. 50).

The words "among these standing ones" refer to the level of the ministering angels. Learning Aggadot Chazal in general, and shaping oneself according to them, brings a person to awareness and belonging to a higher, spiritual world.



HALACHIC Q&A

BY RABBI YOSEF ZVI RIMON - NASI, WORLD MIZRACHI

The Mitzvah of Bikur Cholim

The Gemara in Nedarim (40a) relates a story of one of Rebbe Akiva's talmidim who became sick:

One of the students of Rabbi Akiva became sick. The Sages did not enter to visit him, and Rabbi Akiva entered to visit him [and instructed his students to care for him]. And since they swept and sprinkled water on the [dirt] floor before [the sick student], he recovered. [The student] said to [Rabbi Akiva]: My teacher, you revived me. Rabbi Akiva went out and taught: [With regard to] anyone who does not visit the ill, it is as though he is spilling blood. When Rav Dimi came from Eretz Yisrael to Babylonia he said: Anyone who visits the ill causes that he will live, and anyone who does not visit the ill... does not plead for mercy for him, neither that he will live nor that he will die.

The Ramban writes based on the Gemara that there are three goals in visiting the sick:

1. The first goal is to care for the sick person: Does he need somebody to cook him meals? Does he need somebody to pick up groceries? Does he need somebody to clean his house? This lesson is learned through the description of how Rabbi Akiva swept and washed the floor of the choleh and how this clearly had a positive effect. Accordingly, we should ensure that our visits fit the needs of the choleh. For example, we should be checking that we are visiting at a convenient time. Additionally, one should stay with the choleh for an appropriate amount of time: enough time to bring him joy and strength,

but not to the point that he is a burden.

2. The second goal is to bring joy to the choleh, keep him company, and uplift his spirits. The Rambam emphasizes this point in Sefer "Hanhagot Habriyot," writing that one should tell the choleh stories that will bring him joy and uplift his spirits.

3. The third goal is that the visitor should daven on behalf of the choleh, as we see from the words of Rav Dimi. We often hear about people in unfortunate circumstances. However, it often takes seeing the sickness or difficulty with our own eyes to understand and internalize the serious degree of the matter. Therefore, through visiting the choleh, the visitor will turn to Hashem from the depths of his heart for the choleh's recovery.

Question: Do I fulfill the mitzvah if I do not accomplish all of the goals?

Answer: Many times we visit a choleh who has family members present that are taking care of all of his needs. Shu"t Tzitz Eliezer writes that even in a case like this, it is still a great mitzvah to visit because the other two elements are still relevant: You are still bringing the choleh comfort and delight by visiting, and additionally, it will inspire tefillah on behalf of the choleh.

Question: Can I fulfill the mitzvah of bikur cholim over the phone?

Answer: Seemingly, one can fulfill all three goals when calling a choleh: We can ask if the choleh needs anything, we can speak with him and bring him joy, and we can also feel for his situation through speaking to

him. If so, can one make phone calls instead of visiting in person? Rav Moshe Feinstein writes in Igrot Moshe that if one cannot visit in person, then the obligation of bikur cholim remains and can be accomplished over the phone. However, when one has the option to visit he must do so. It is clear that a visit can raise the spirits of the choleh to a much greater degree than a phone call. Additionally, one is inspired to pray for the choleh to a much greater degree after a visit than after a phone call. Therefore, if the option to visit exists, one should not settle with a phone call.

Translated from Hebrew by Yaakov Panitch.

PARNASS HAYOM: KISLEV

- 3 KISLEV | Adrienne and Shlomo Drazin, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his grandmother, Bertha Sand z"l
- 17 KISLEV | David Zukor, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his father, Leslie Zukor z"l
- 18 KISLEV | Chaviva Lifson, in honour of the Yahrzeit of her mother, Sandra Katz z"l
- 20 Kislev | Susan Lieberman and family, in honour of the Yahrzeit of her husband, Aron Lieberman z"l
- 22 KISLEV | Alex Spira, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his father, Abraham Spira z"l





THE TRIBE SCRIBE

VAYEITZEI: BIG BUILD-UP!

REMEMBER, CLASS - EACH PAIR GETS ONE PACKET OF SPAGHETTI AND ONE BAG OF MARSHMALLOWS. AND THE TOWER MUST STAND UP ON ITS OWN!

STEM CHALLENGE
Build the tallest tower using only spaghetti and marshmallows

OURS IS GOING TO BE TALLER THAN BIG BEN!

So...

CHOMP!

WE CAN BUILD IT MUCH HIGHER IF WE DO IT SIDWAYS FIRST. THEN WE'LL STAND IT UP FOR THE BIG REVEAL!

SUPER STRATEGY ARI!

IT'S THE LEANING TOWER OF PASTA!

GREAT EFFORT, BUT EVEN PASTA TOWERS NEED A SOLID BASE! A STRONG FOUNDATION HELPS US BUILD MUCH HIGHER!

IN THIS WEEK'S PARASHA, WE READ ABOUT YAAKOV'S (JACOB'S) LADDER - STANDING FIRMLY ON THE GROUND BUT REACHING UP TO THE HEAVENS.

MAYBE NOT OUR MOST STRUCTURALLY SOUND STRATEGY.

KERRRASHH!

LIKE YAAKOV'S LADDER, THE BEST WAY TO REACH GREAT HEIGHTS IS TO HAVE A STRONG, SOLID FOUNDATION. LOFTY DREAMS ARE WONDERFUL - BUT THEY NEED TO REST ON EVERYDAY GOODNESS. TURNS OUT, ARI, THE BEST WAY UP IS STAYING GROUNDED!

Page Editor: Rabbi Nicky Goldmeier Writer: Shira Chalk Cartoonist: Paul Solomons

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