

# THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT VAYEITZEI

2-3 DECEMBER | 9 KISLEV

## Leaving a Mark



**ELI  
FOUX**

Youth Director  
@ Hendon United  
Synagogue

This week's parasha opens with the words: "And Yaakov (Jacob) departed from Be'er Sheva and he went towards Charan" (Bereishit 28:10).

Rashi (1040-1105) says on this verse: "The Torah could just have written, 'And Yaakov went to Charan', why does it mention his departure? This tells us that the departure of a *tzaddik* (righteous person) from a place makes an impression. At the time a righteous person is in a city, he is its magnificence, its splendour, its grandeur. Once he has departed, its magnificence is gone, its splendour is gone, its grandeur is gone..."

The Sfat Emet (Rabbi Yehuda Aryeh Leib Alter, 1847–1905) asks the following question: if the message here is to inform us that the "glory" of a *tzaddik* departs a place when he leaves, what is the benefit to us knowing that he left that place?

Surely we need to know where the *tzaddik* is now in order to benefit from his magnificence, not where he once was!

The Sfat Emet answers this question, accompanied by a beautiful message for our daily lives. We need to understand this concept through a different lens. It is only when a *tzaddik* leaves that the impression he had on the locale can be fully felt. The place he has left is a distinctly different place, a better place, because the *tzaddik* lived there.

We can now understand the Rashi we started with as explaining that it

was Yaakov's departure from Be'er Sheva that left such a prominent mark. Once he left Be'er Sheva, it was apparent what a different place it had become thanks to his presence.

The Sfat Emet urges us to utilise this idea in our daily lives and appreciate that every Mitzvah we perform leaves an indelible spiritual impression on us. The arm that has laid Tefillin is a spiritually "different" arm to that same arm before the Tefillin were donned! That is why there are 248 limbs and 365 tendons which comprise our bodies (a total of 613), corresponding to the 613 Mitzvot in the Torah (248 positive and 365 negative). It is up to us to retain the impact of each Mitzvah and improve and "build" our spiritual bodies.

## Parasha Quiz

1. What did Yaakov see in the dream recounted at the beginning of the Parasha?
2. What did Yaakov name the place where he had his dream?
3. What was Rachel doing when she first met Yaakov?
4. Who was older, Rachel or Leah?
5. How long did Yaakov work for Lavan for the right to marry Rachel and Leah?
6. What did Rachel tell Yaakov when she saw that only Leah was having children?
7. Who were Bilhah and Zilpah?

**Answers:** 1. Angels going up and down a ladder, reaching from earth to heaven 2. Beit El 3. Tending her father's flock 4. Leah 5. 7 years each 6. "Give me children, and if not, it is as if I am dead" 7. Bilhah was Rachel's maid, and Zilpah was Leah's maid. They both married Yaakov too.

