

בס"ד

# THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

# Parshas Vayishlach

Kislev 14, 5778 – December 2, 2017

Compiled from the works of  
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**The Lubavitcher Rebbe**

by  
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An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi  
**Parshas Vayishlach**

Likkutei Sichos Volume 1, Pages 68 – 75

**Rashi in His Own Words**

**בראשית ל"ב, ה':** ויצו אתם לאמר כה תאמרו ל'אדני לעשו כה אמר עבדך יעקב עם לבן גרתי ואחר עדי-עתה:  
**רש"י ד"ה גרתי:** לא נעשיתי שר וחשוב אלא גר, אינך כדאי לשנוא אותי על ברכות אביך שברכני (לעיל כ"ז, כ"ט)  
הוה גביר לאחריך, שהרי לא נתקיימה בי. דבר אחר גרתי בגימטריא תרי"ג, כלומר עם לבן הרשע גרתי ותרי"ג מצות  
שמרתי ולא למדתי ממעשיו הרעים:

**Bereishis 32:5:** And he commanded them<sup>1</sup> saying, "So shall you say to my master to Aisov, "Thus said your servant Yaakov, "I have sojourned with Lovon and I have tarried until now.

**Rashi Heading - I have sojourned:** Heb. גָּרָתִי. I did not become an officer or a dignitary, but a stranger (גָּר). It is not worthwhile for you to hate me on account of your father's blessing, (with) which he blessed me<sup>2</sup>, "You shall be a master over your brothers," for it was not fulfilled in me. Another explanation: גָּרָתִי – Garti has the numerical value of 613<sup>3</sup>. That is to say, I lived with the wicked Lovon, but I kept the 613 commandments. I did not learn from his evil deeds.

**Synopsis**

Near the beginning of this week's Parshah, Vayishlach, we find that our Patriarch Yaakov sent messengers<sup>4</sup> to speak to his brother Aisov. They told him that he had sojourned with Lovon. The second explanation which Rashi offers for the word "sojourned" is related its Hebrew equivalent. The Hebrew word for sojourned is גרתי. Every Hebrew letter has a numeric value - the numeric equivalent of גרתי is 613; which is the amount of Mitzvos that the Torah commands each Jew. Furthermore, commentaries say that<sup>5</sup> גרתי and תריג both contain the same exact letters; the only difference is that they are in a different order. Yaakov is letting Aisov know that despite having spent twenty years in the home of the evil Lovon he nevertheless kept the 613

1. The pronoun "them" refers to the "Angels - מלאכים - Malochim" which Yaakov sent to speak to his brother Aisov on his behalf. The Hebrew word "Malochim" can be translated either as Angels (spiritual beings) or messengers (physical beings) which Yaakov sent to placate his brother.

2. Bereishis 27:29.

3. Which is the number of Mitzvos in the Torah.

4. See footnote 1.

5. See Midrash Lekach Tov and Midrash Hagadol.

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commandments. He did not learn from the time he spent in Lovon's house.

Why did Yaakov find it important to make his brother aware of the amount of Mitzvos that he kept while with Lovon? Additionally, Rashi is always interested in teaching us Peshat. The Peshat here is that Yaakov lived there with Lovon. Why does Rashi find it necessary to explain that "sojourned" in Hebrew is equal to the number of Mitzvos that we must perform? We certainly need to understand what this teaches us. If Rashi is telling us this, it must be in order to teach us a lesson.

What Yaakov's messengers were telling Aisov was that Lovon's house was not his home. He was merely "sojourning" there. At times a Jew must be involved in Aisov's mission. Even then it is only temporary. Yaakov told his messengers to relay to Aisov that<sup>6</sup> "I have acquired oxen and donkeys, flocks, manservants, and maidservants, and I have sent to tell (this) to my master, to find favor in your eyes." These were all "Garti - גרתי," temporary. Yaakov's true *place* was Torah and Mitzvos.

### Rashi's Explanation

In this week's Torah portion, Vayishlach, we find that Yaakov sent messengers to speak to his brother Aisov<sup>7</sup>. Aisov was angry at Yaakov because years before he stole their father Yitzchok's blessings from Aisov. Among other things, in planning for his encounter with Aisov Yaakov sent messengers to speak to him. Among other things, they told him that<sup>8</sup>, "And he commanded them (the messengers), saying, 'So shall you say to my master to Aisov, 'Thus said your servant Yaakov, "I have sojourned with Lovon and I have tarried until now.'" In other words, Yaakov commanded them to tell Aisov that despite the fact the he lived with Lovon for 20 years, he only *sojourned* there. In other words his stay was only temporary.

Rashi explains this in his second explanation<sup>9</sup>. "Another explanation: גַּרְתִּי has the numerical value of 613. That is to say: I lived with the wicked Lovon, but I kept the 613 commandments, and I did not learn from his evil deeds." What Rashi is saying is that the word sojourned in Hebrew is גַּרְתִּי. Every Hebrew letter has a numeric equivalent. The Hebrew word גַּרְתִּי

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6. Bereishis 32:6.

7. See footnote 1.

8. Bereishis 32:5.

9. *Ibid.*

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equals 613. That is the amount of Mitzvos that each Jew is obligated to observe. Despite the fact that Yaakov was with the evil Lovon for such a long time, he kept all of the commandments which are incumbent upon a Jew to observe.

### Difficulties in Understanding Rashi

Rashi always explains Peshat; the simple, literal meaning of the verse<sup>10</sup>. Our verse tells us that Yaakov told his messengers to relay to Aisov that he lived, he sojourned with Lovon. That would seem to be the literal Peshat of the verse. Why does Rashi find a need to explain this in the manner which is called Remez, meaning an allusion? Explaining the Torah based on the numeric value of the Hebrew letters of a word is certainly Remez.

Let us suppose that Rashi had a reason for explaining this according to Remez. We still need to understand something else. Why was it important for Aisov to know how many Mitzvos Yaakov observed?

Everything in Torah comes to teach us a lesson. In fact the very word Torah means lesson. What lesson does this teach us for all times and places?

### The Explanation

What did Yaakov mean when he said that he “lived with Lovon?” He was expressing how he dealt with whatever was under Lovon’s jurisdiction; his physical needs. He meant how he treated<sup>11</sup> “oxen and donkeys, flocks, manservants, and maidservants.” He merely sojourned with them. They were not his primary existence.

The Previous Rebbe told over in a talk something which was originally said by the Mezritcher Maggid<sup>12</sup>. He said that *at home* things are different. At home one must have the best of everything. However if one is travelling and he doesn’t have the nicest residence or the nicest furniture, it is not that bad. After all, he is on the road! Based on this we can understand the similarity between the Peshat and the Derush of the verse. Yaakov said that “I sojourned with Lovon.” Because he treated the physical part of life as if he was “on the road,” it did not interfere with his observance of Torah and Mitzvos. He was therefore able to keep all 613 Mitzvos.

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10. There are four ways of explaining everything in the Torah. Peshat is the simple explanation. Remez is an allusion; a hint from the verse. Derush is a Midrashic explanation. Sod is the Kabbalistic explanation. The four are an acrostic for **PaRDaS**. Pardas – or פֶּרְדָּס in Hebrew means orchard.

11. Bereishis 32:6.

12. See Likkutei Dibburim, Likkut 11, Page 214.

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This is why it says further in the Torah portion that Yaakov “built himself a house, and for his cattle he made booths<sup>13</sup>.” For his physical needs, temporary booths were enough. To the contrary. By limiting the physical to temporary things he was enabled to focus on the 613 Mitzvos.

### A Deeper Lesson from Rashi

In the Midrash it says on the verse that Yaakov had “oxen and donkeys, flocks, manservants, and maidservants” the Midrash says the following<sup>14</sup>. “Donkey” refers to King Moshiach, regarding whom it says<sup>15</sup> “He is just and victorious; humble, and riding a donkey.”

The coming of Moshiach depends on the service of each of us<sup>16</sup>. Each of us must bring G-dliness to our body, animal soul and our portion in the world. We must use all of these for the service of Hashem. In this manner we will draw down the revelation of Moshiach.

This is the order of the verses in our Parshah. “I have sojourned with Lovon ... he had “oxen and donkeys, flocks ...” The Jew’s activity with Lovon, with the physical world, is in a manner of sojourning. The Jew looks upon them all as being temporary. Not merely sojourning, but the literal meaning of “Garti,” living. Through “living in,” and using all of his worldly possessions in order to serve G-d, he will be ready for Moshiach.

That is the real reason that Yaakov sent messengers to Aisov. He wanted to let Aisov know that he is ready for Moshiach. He assumed that his brother was ready as well<sup>17</sup>. He wanted them both to get together and bring the Redemption.

Unfortunately the messengers returned to Yaakov and told him<sup>18</sup>, “We came to your brother, to Aisov, and he is also coming toward you, and four hundred men are with him.” From your perspective, he is “your brother.” You are indeed ready for Moshiach. However, he is still “Aisov.” This being the case we are not yet ready for Moshiach.

The lesson from this in all generations is as follows. One can look around, and see that the world is not yet ready for Moshiach. The world has not yet been refined to the state which is necessary. Nevertheless, I still must do my job. Even if Aisov is late I must prepare the world for

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13. For himself Yaakov built a house, i.e. a permanent residence. The Hebrew word which is used for “cattle” is those things which he acquired. The soul does not need anything else. Physical things require acquisitions. For them he built “booths” (Succos).

14. Bereishis Rabbah 75, 6.

15. Zechariah 9:9.

16. Tanya Chapter 37.

17. See Torah Ohr 24, 3.

18. Bereishis 32:7.

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Moshiach. How can I do this? “With Lovon I have sojourned.” All of my (so-called) physical needs must be pushed aside. Then, and only then, can I concentrate fully on that which is truly important. Bringing the complete and true Redemption NOW!

*(Adapted from a talk given on Shabbos Parshas Mikeitz 5728)*

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May he merit to be a Chossid, a Yerei Shomayim and a Lamdon

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