

Beit Chachamin

PARSHAT VAYISHLACH

6TH DECEMBER, 2025

COME & LEARN

THE BIG RECAP [PARSHA SUMMARY]

1 – Jacob sends messengers ahead to Esav in Seir, hoping to find favor after years apart. The messengers return saying Esav is coming with four hundred men, frightening Jacob. Jacob splits his camp in two, praying that God will protect him and his family. He reminds God that he is unworthy of His kindness but asks to be saved from Esav’s anger.

2 – Jacob prepares gifts for Esav and sends them ahead in stages to calm him. That night, he moves his family and possessions across the stream, staying alone on the other side. A man wrestles with him until dawn, injures his hip, but cannot overpower him. The man blesses Jacob with a new name, Israel, meaning he has fought with God and men and prevailed; Jacob names the place Peniel, saying he saw God face to face.

3 – As dawn breaks, Jacob limps away. Jacob sees Esav approaching with his men and arranges his family, bowing as he nears. Esav runs to meet him, embraces him, and they weep together. Seeing Jacob’s family, Esav asks about them, and Jacob introduces them.

4 – Jacob’s family and servants come forward to greet Esav. Esav tries to decline the gifts, but Jacob insists he accept them as a sign of reconciliation. Esav offers to travel together, but Jacob gently declines, saying he must go at a slower pace.

4 (cont.) – Esav returns to Seir, while Jacob travels to Succoth, then to Shechem, where he buys land and builds an altar called El-Elohe-Israel.

5 – Dinah, Leah’s daughter, goes out and is assaulted by Shechem, the son of Hamor. Shechem wishes to marry her, and Jacob’s sons demand that all the men of the city be circumcised first. While the men recover, Simeon and Levi kill them and rescue Dinah. Jacob rebukes them for endangering the family. Later, God commands Jacob to go to Bethel, where he purifies his household, builds an altar, and God reaffirms His name as Israel and renews His covenant.

6 – God repeats His promise of the land to Jacob’s descendants. Rachel dies while giving birth to Benjamin and is buried on the way to Ephrath (Bethlehem). Reuben lies with Bilhah, and Jacob hears of it. Then tJacob’s twelve sons and Esav’s wives, sons, and the chiefs descended from him in Edom are listed.

7 – The genealogies of Seir the Horite and Esav’s descendants are listed. The long list establishes Esav’s lineage and the regions of their rule. Closing by noting the leaders of Esav and the lands they possessed.

PARSHAT VAYISHLACH

Parshat Vayishlach presents reconciliation and generosity as pathways to healing deep familial rifts, exemplified by Jacob's strategic gifts and Esav's emotional embrace after years apart.

GENESIS 32:14

וַיִּלֶן שָׁם בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא וַיִּקַּח מִן־הַבָּא בְיָדוֹ מִנְחָה לַעֲשׂוֹ אָחִיו:

After spending the night there, he selected from what was at hand these presents for his brother Esav

GENESIS 33:4

וַיֵּרַץ עֲשׂוֹ לִקְרַאתוֹ וַיַּחְבְּקֵהוּ וַיִּפֹּל עַל־צוּאָרוֹ וַיִּשָּׁקֵהוּ וַיִּבְכּוּ:

Esav ran to greet him. He embraced him and, falling on his neck, he kissed him; and they wept.

GENESIS 33:8

וַיֹּאמֶר מִי לָךְ כָּל־הַמַּחֲנֶה הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר פָּגַשְׁתִּי וַיֹּאמֶר לְמַצְאֵתִי בְעֵינַי אֲדָנָי:

And he (Esav) asked, "What do you mean by all this company that I have met?" He (Jacob) answered, "To gain my lord's favor."

GENESIS 33:9-11

וַיֹּאמֶר עֲשׂוֹ יְשֻׁלִי רַב אָחִי יְהִי לָךְ אֲשֶׁר־לָךְ:

וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל־נָא אִם־נָא מַצְאֵתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ וְלִקְחַת מִנְחָתִי מִיָּדִי כִּי עַל־כֵּן רָאִיתִי פָנֶיךָ כְּרֹאֵת פְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים וַתִּרְצָנִי:

קַח־נָא אֶת־בְּרַכְתִּי אֲשֶׁר הִבָּאת לָךְ כִּי־חַנְּנִי אֱלֹהִים וְכִי יְשֻׁלִי־כֹל וַיִּפְצַרְבוּ וַיִּקַּח:

Esav said, "I have enough, my brother; let what you have remain yours."

But Jacob said, "No, I pray you; if you would do me this favor, accept from me this gift; for to see your face is like seeing the face of God, and you have received me favorably.

Please accept my present that has been brought to you, for God has favored me and I have plenty." And when he urged him, he accepted.

As Jacob and Esav reunite for the first time, Jacob prepares for the worst, sending gifts in an attempt to soothe his brother's temper. However, once reunited, both weep as they feel the deep emotions of being apart for so long. It is through this reunion that we learn the gifts were not necessarily needed but still appreciated once given to Esav.