



## When Heaven Sends a Test Right After a Blessing

---

### The Dream of a Lifetime

Our parsha introduces us to Yaakov Avinu at one of the most intense, dangerous, and spiritually electrifying moments of his life.

He's running for his life from Esav — who, let's call it what it is, fully intends to *unalive him*. Rivka sends him off under the cover story of, "Go get married, find a girl from my homeland," but we all know what this is really about.

Yaakov stops at the Makom HaMikdash — the place of the Akeidah — and has *the dream of all dreams*. The ladder. Angels ascending and descending. Hashem standing over him with promises that would make any human being float:

- "I am with you."
- "I will guard you."
- "You will return to this land."
- "Your children will be like the dust of the earth."
- "All blessing in the world will flow through you."

Imagine waking up from that. You don't even need coffee. Your neshamah is doing jumping jacks.

Yaakov builds a mizbeach, vows to serve Hashem, and moves forward... with a blessing ringing in his ears.

---

### And Then — Suddenly — Sheep.

You expect the story to jump straight to the major moment: Yaakov sees Rachel, rolls the massive stone off the well like he's starring in a biblical CrossFit commercial, and falls in love.

But the Torah... takes its time.

The pasuk says: "**Vayisa Yaakov raglav vayelech...**"

He continues on his journey.

**"Vayar — and he sees."**

**"Vehineh!" — Behold!** There's a well.

There are sheep. There are shepherds. A whole conversation about workplace

# Rabbi Shlomo Farhi

etiquette, flock-management, and why the shepherds are standing around drinking iced coffee at 11:30 AM instead of finishing their shift.

Why?

Why do we need the chit-chat? The small talk? The schedule review?

Just get to the part where he meets Rachel!

Chachamim explain something big here — and then we'll go even deeper.

Yaakov sees the shepherds doing what looks like... nothing. If these are day laborers, they're cheating their boss. If they're tending their own sheep, they're losing daylight. So Yaakov, fresh off the greatest spiritual revelation of his life, says something simple and direct:

**"Achai — my brothers... it's early. Why are the sheep resting?"**

This is the first recorded act Yaakov does after receiving Hashem's blessing.

---

## Why Does This Matter? Because Blessings Come With Tests.

Chazal teach: **G-d gives you a bracha — and immediately gives you a chance to lose it.**

Not out of punishment.  
Out of clarity.

Hashem wants to see whether you understand *why* you were blessed.

Avraham Avinu learned this when G-d appeared to him on day three after his milah. Right then, three idol-worshipping travelers show up needing hospitality. Avraham turns to Hashem and — respectfully — says: **"Please wait."**

Why could he do that?

Because he understood this:

**The revelation comes BECAUSE of the mitzvah.**

If he abandons the mitzvah for the revelation, the revelation no longer belongs to him.

Hashem, as if to say:

"You get why I'm here—because you're the kind of person who runs to help strangers. So go. Do what made you worthy of My presence."

---

## Yaakov's Test: Will He Still Be Yaakov?

Why is Yaakov getting this divine vision?  
Because he is **Ish Emet** — a man of truth.

So what does Hashem do the *very next moment*?

He places him in front of shepherds who are — intentionally or not — behaving dishonestly, wasting time, mismanaging someone's flock.

And the Torah freezes the camera there.

# Rabbi Shlomo Farhi

Not at the ladder.  
Not at the angels.  
Not at the poetry.  
Not at the miracle.

At the **sheep**.

At the mundane.  
The boring.  
The little human interaction that no one  
else would think twice about.

Because Hashem is saying:

**“Let’s see if you still care about truth,  
about integrity, about other people’s  
property... now that I’ve promised you  
the world.”**

Will Yaakov, floating from prophecy, still lean  
down to speak to simple shepherds?  
Will he still notice wrong?  
Will he still care enough to give gentle  
rebuke?  
Will he still be the Yaakov I just blessed?

Yes.  
And that is WHY he keeps the bracha —  
and WHY he merits Rachel.

The “vehineh” — the surprise — is not the  
well.  
It’s the test.

---

## The Blessing and the Opportunity

And this is how life works.

Whenever G-d blesses us, right behind the  
blessing — sometimes seconds behind —  
comes a test:

- You get blessed with wealth → Are you still humble? Still generous? Still kind?
- You get blessed with success → Do you still have time for the old friends?
- You get blessed with influence → Do you still listen to the little guy?
- You get blessed with comfort → Do you still challenge yourself spiritually?

If the bracha made you forget what earned  
it... Hashem whispers:

**"Maybe you're better off without it."**

Not as punishment — but as course  
correction.

---

## Two Men, One Gate, and \$150,000

A man once flew to London to raise money  
for lifesaving surgery for his daughter.  
Another man sat beside him in the airport  
lounge — anxious, jittery.

They talk.  
One says he needs \$150k to save his child.  
The other says he has exactly \$150k in

# Rabbi Shlomo Farhi

cash, heading to London for an “unbelievable business opportunity.”

What are the odds?

He looks at the father and says:

**“Hashem sat us next to each other for a reason. Take the money.”**

The man protests.

The donor insists.

He hands over the bag — full of cash.

They both walk out of the airport and go home.

Later...

The father calls:

“The surgery succeeded — and because it turned into an experimental case, it cost... nothing. They refunded the money in full.”

The investor travels to London with the very same money.

He sits for the deal.

**The cost of the investment? Fifty thousand dollars.**

A third of what he thought.

Same deal.

Same return.

Same profit.

At one-third the cost.

Why?

We don't know G-d's cheshbonot.

But we know this:

**Hashem gave him a blessing — and immediately brought him the opportunity**

**that proved he deserved it. And then Hashem multiplied that blessing.**

---

## The Lesson

Blessings are not just gifts.

They are **reflections**.

Hashem sends you a bracha — then sends you a chance to prove you understand why you received it.

Pass the test → the blessing grows.

Ignore the test → the blessing evaporates.

May Hashem grant us the clarity to recognize these tests in real time, the courage to rise to them, and the humility to remember where our blessings come from.

**Amen v'Amen.**

---

## SHABBAT TABLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Can you remember a time you received something good — and immediately felt tested?

## *Rabbi Shlomo Farhi*

2. Why does the Torah highlight Yaakov's conversation with the shepherds instead of jumping straight to Rachel?
3. What blessings do you think are linked to your strongest middot?
4. When life places "sheep at your well," how can you recognize these moments as spiritual opportunities?
5. Do you think blessings should be unconditional, or is there value in being tested right after receiving them?