

PARSHAT VAYETZEI  
GENESIS 28:10-32:3  
HAFTARAH HOSEA 12:13-14:10  
4 KISLEV 5785/5 DECEMBER 2024



*Language of the Birds*  
Oil on linen by Ali Banisadr

## THE WAY OF DISPOSSESSION

1. Jacob went out (וַיֵּצֵא) from Beer-sheba and set out (וַיֵּלֶךְ) for Haran. (Genesis 28:10)

“Now, my son, listen to me. Flee (וְקוּם בְּרַח-לְךָ) at once to Haran...until your brother's fury subsides... (Genesis 27:43-44)

“Up, go to (קוּם לְךָ) Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, and take a wife there... (Genesis 28:2)

2. In order to arrive at what you do not know  
You must go by a way which the way of ignorance.  
In order to possess what you do not possess  
You must go by the way of dispossession.  
(T. S. Eliot, “East Coker”)

3. “The Conference of the Birds” by Farid ud-Din Attar.

And Solomon was David’s heir. He said, “O people, we have been taught the language of birds, and we have been given all things. This is indeed manifest bounty.” (Qur’an 27:16)

Solomon awoke from what he thought was a dream and realized that he had been taught the language of birds. (Midrash Bamidar Rabbah 19:3 and Jewish legend)

4. A journey across seven valleys, those of: quest; love; understanding; detachment; unity; astonishment; deprivation and annihilation.
5. Jacob worked for Rachel for seven years. They were in his eyes as only a few days, because of his love for her. (Genesis 29:20)
6. One of the most important distinctions I have learned in the course of reflection on Jewish history is the difference between optimism and hope. Optimism is the belief that things will get better. Hope is the belief that, together, we can make things better. Optimism is a passive virtue, hope is an active one. It takes no courage to be an optimist, but it takes a great deal of courage to have hope. (Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, *Dignity of Difference*)