

VaYetze 2021

Esther Wein

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May our learning today and always connect us to Ma'amad Har Sinai

- *Leah Thurm for her sister's 31st yartzeit Rivka bas Avraham*
- *Chavi Schmell for a refuah shelaima for her friend Tzirel Tila bas Freida Ratza as well as Freida Ratza bas Sora*
- *Bracha Efron*
- *deep gratitude from bracha Efron to HKBH for successful treatments for her sister Kadima Nechama bat Chava and for a continued refuah shlaima for her and all cholai Yisrael.*

Our Chanuka campaign is in full swing. If you would like to contribute to Chochma v'Chessed, please email me taniahammer@gmail.com

Bereisheet 28:10-16

וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב מִבְּעַר שֶׁבַע וַיֵּלֶךְ חֲרָנָה:

Jacob left Beer-sheba, and set out for Haran.

וַיִּפְגַּע בְּמָקוֹם וַיֵּלֶן שָׁם כִּי-בָא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וַיִּקַּח מֵאֲבָנֵי הַמָּקוֹם וַיִּשֶׂם מִרְאֲשֵׁיתוֹ וַיִּשְׁכַּב בְּמָקוֹם הַהוּא:

He came upon a certain place and stopped there for the night, for the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of that place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place.

וַיַּחְלֹם וְהִנֵּה סֹלֶם מַצְבֵּי אֲרָצָה- וְרֹאשׁוֹ מַגִּיעַ הַשָּׁמַיְמָה וְהִנֵּה מַלְאָכֵי אֱלֹהִים עֹלִים וְיֹרְדִים בּוֹ:

He had a dream; a stairway Or “ramp”; others “ladder.” was set on the ground and its top reached to the sky, and angels of God were going up and down on it.

וְהִנֵּה יְהוָה נֹצֵב עָלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹרָהִם אָבִיר וְאֵלֵי יִצְחָק הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה שֹׁכֵב עָלֶיהָ לָךְ אֶתְנַנֶּה וְלִזְרָעָךְ:

And the LORD was standing beside him and He said, "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac: the ground on which you are lying I will assign to you and to your offspring.

Micha 7:20

תִּתֶּן אֱמוּנָה לְיַעֲקֹב - חֶסֶד לְאַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְאַבְתָּיו מִיְמֵי קֶדֶם:

You will keep faith with Jacob, loyalty to Abraham, as You promised on oath to our fathers in days gone by.

וְהָיָה זֶרְעֶךָ כְּעֹפֶר הָאָרֶץ וּפְרָצְתָּ יָמָה וְקִדְמָה וְצָפֹנָה וְנִגְבָּה וּנְבָרְכוּ בְּךָ כָּל-מִשְׁפְּחוֹת הָאָדָמָה וּבְזָרְעָהּ:

Your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All the families of the earth shall bless themselves by you and your descendants.

וְהִנֵּה אֲנִי עִמָּךְ וְשָׁמַרְתִּיךָ בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר-תֵּלֵךְ וְהִשְׁבַּתִּיךָ אֶל-הָאָדָמָה הַזֹּאת כִּי לֹא אֶעֱזָבְךָ עַד אֲשֶׁר אִם-עָשִׂיתִי אֶת אֲשֶׁר-דִּבַּרְתִּי לָךְ:

Remember, I am with you: I will protect you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

וַיֵּרָא וַיֹּאמֶר מִה-נִּנְרָא הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה אֵין זֶה כִּי אִם-בַּיִת אֱלֹהִים וְזֶה שַׁעַר הַשָּׁמַיִם

Shaken, he said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the abode of God, and that is the gateway to heaven."

1. Studying each part of the mashal and its interpretation

Guide for the Perplexed, Introduction, Prefatory Remarks 12

An example of the first class of prophetic figures is to be found in Genesis:--"And, behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and, behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it"

(Gen. 28:12). The word "ladder" refers to one idea: "set up on the earth" to another: "and the top of it reached to heaven" to a third: "angels of God" to a fourth: "ascending" to a fifth; "descending" to a sixth; "the Lord stood above it" (ver. 13) to a seventh. Every word in this figure introduces a fresh element into the idea represented by the figure.

Mishneh Torah, Foundations of the Torah 7:3

The matters concerning which a prophet is informed by vision of prophecy, are imparted to him allegorically, but the interpretation thereof is engraved upon his heart simultaneously with the vision and he knows what it means, as the vision of the ladder which Jacob our father saw: "The angels of God were ascending and descending upon it" (Gen. 28.12); which was a parable, the interpretation of which is the rise and fall of kingdoms,

2. Yakov learns about The Journey of Am Yisrael

Ramban: 4 "malachim" of the 4 exiles

And He promised him that He, exalted be He, will be with him wherever he will go among the nations, and He will guard him and rescue him from them. Thus the Rabbis have said:⁶*Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer*, 35. "The Holy One, blessed be He, showed him the Four Kingdoms, their dominion and their destruction. He showed him the prince of the kingdom of Babylon ascending seventy rungs¹¹*Symbolic of the seventy years of the Babylonian exile.* and then descending the ladder. Then He showed him the prince of the kingdom of Media ascending one hundred and eighty rungs¹²*See my Hebrew commentary, (p. 158, n.12), which asserts that the correct reading is: "He showed him the prince of the kingdom of Media going up fifty-two rungs and then descending. And He showed him the prince of the kingdom of Greece going up one hundred-eighty rungs and then descending."* The number of rungs represent the amount of years that these kingdoms held sway over Israel. and then descending. And then He showed him the prince of the kingdom of Edom ascending and not coming down. Jacob then said to the prince of Edom, *Yet thou shalt be brought down to the nether-world.*¹³*Isaiah 14:15.* The Holy One, blessed be He, said to [the prince of Edom], *Though thou make thy nest as high as the eagle, etc."*

3. Eretz Yisrael is the ladder, the source of

Derashot HaRan 5:14

For the level of prophecy attainable by a human being is either that of a dream or that of a vision, as it is written (Numbers 12:6): "I make Myself known to him in a vision; in a dream I speak to him." In both of these, the prophecy is imaged in parables and riddles, as in Yaakov's case, where it is written (Genesis 28:12): "And he dreamed, and, behold, a ladder set upon the earth and its top reaching to heaven, and, behold, angels of G-d ascending and descending on it."

The purpose of this parable was to show him the superiority of the land of Israel to other lands, it being the ladder upon which the righteous, who are referred to as "angels of G-d," ascend to heaven....."Angels of G-d" in this instance, then, allude to the righteous, who scale the ascents in the land of Israel. And for this reason it is written "ascending and descending on it," for it is impossible that the ascent of the righteous be an unbroken one, a man, **as we have indicated, having two orientations, one upwards, the other, downwards. And it is impossible, so long as he has a body, that he is exclusively upwards-oriented, but he must also be downwards-oriented towards the management of his body. This is what is alluded to in the parable of "angels of G-d ascending and descending on it." And the Blessed One revealed this to Jacob so that the land of Israel would be precious in his eyes and so that he would make it his destination after his marriage.**

5. Eretz Yisrael and Shefa

Seforno

Ovadia ben Jacob Sforno עובדיה ספורנו was an Italian rabbi, Biblical commentator, philosopher and physician. He was born at Cesena about 1475 and died at Bologna in 1550.

There can be no question that this is a location from where the gift of prophetic insights is dispensed, seeing that I have been granted such an insight without even having expected it or prepared myself for it spiritually. **It is a fact that the characteristics of a person undergo changes in the land of Israel just as the climate and air in this country are different, contributing to one's mental and spiritual progress. Our sages have phrased this as "the very air of the Land of Israel makes one wiser ...if I had realised the special distinction of this site I would have prepared myself mentally for receiving thes**

6. The period of "Lo Yadati".

וַיִּקְוֹץ יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁנָתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲכֵן יֵשׁ הַבְּמִקוֹם הַזֶּה-- וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי:

Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is present in this place, and I did not know it

Shenei Luchot HaBerit, Torah Shebikhtav, Vayetzei, Torah Ohr 101

It is this spiritual association which is alluded to in Song of Songs 1,8 if you do not know, O fairest of women, go follow" the tracks of the sheep

Solomon describes Israel in exile in the verse, as can be seen from Rashi. The "period referred to in our verse in Song of Songs by the words "do you not know?" **is the period to which Jacob referred after his dream as "I did not know," both referring to the period of exile due to the destruction of the Temple. While the Temple was standing, however, there was knowledge, it was the period when prophets abounded with Divine insights**

7. Makom and Lo Yadati

Chatam Sofer on Torah, Vayetzei 7

וי"ל בזה דלכן ישן יעקב במקום ההוא דסבר דנתבטלה הקדושה אבל כשראה שגם בחורבן יש קדושה וכמו שפסק הרמב"ם בפ"ו מבית הבחירה דקדושת המקום קדשה לעתיד לבא, כשראה והשיג שגם **בעת החורבן יש שם השראת השכינה אע"ג שנקרא בעת החורבן רק מקום--** כמו שכתבנו לעיל וזה שאמר אכן יש ה' "במקום" הזה היינו בעת החורבן ואנכי לא ידעתי לא האמנתי והבינותי כן:

8. Accessing Shefa in Galut -

Kli Yakar on Genesis 28:12:1--

ויחלום והנה סולם מוצב ארצה וגו'. כתב הרב המורה שביאר הקב"ה ליעקב סדר השתלשלות המדרגות של ג' עולמות

, כי באמרו מוצב ארצה זהו העולם התחתון וראשו מגיע השמימה זה העולם האמצעי. והנה מלאכי אלהים עולים ויורדים בו זה עולם המלאכים.

והנה ה' נצב עליו להורות כי השי"ת גבוה מעל כל גבוה ומושל על כולם

דבר אחר לכך הראה לו הקב"ה תבנית כל העולמות להורות שמקורם ממקום זה שנקרא אבן שתיה כי משם הושתת העולם ד"א לפי שמשם יוצא השפע לכל העולמות כי התחתונים מוסיפין כח בגבורה

של מעלה כביכול, וע"כ מלאכי אלהים עולים תחלה כי משם ישאבון מי השפע ממעייני הישועה ואח"כ יורדים להשפיע מלמעלה למט

ועוד כי בבהמ"ק, שם ישבו על כסאות הסנהדרין אשר משם תצא תורה, והחכמה הקנויה לאדם ע"י מדריגות חלוקות כי מתחילה צריך החוקר אחר המושכלות להכיר במהות נמצאי מטה וזהו סלם מצב ארצה ומשם יעלה למדריגה גדולה מזו והוא להכיר במהות הנמצאים שבעולם התיכון במהלך הגלגלים ותנועתם ז"ש וראשו מגיע השמימה. ומשם יעלה להבין במהות השכלים הנבדלים שבעולם העליון

9. Spiritual anatomy and physiology

Nefesh HaChayim, Gate I 10:8

And this is also the matter of our father Yaakov's (peace be upon him) vision of the ladder. Refer to the Raa-ya M'hemna Na-so 123: "... and He breathed into his nostrils a soul-*Nishmaht* of life...", about which is said (Bereshit 28:12): "and he dreamed and lo, there was a ladder...". **The ladder is definitely the living soul-*Neshama*...**, refer there, and as will be explained (with God's help) further on in Chapter 19. And via this "and lo, angels of God-*Elohi*"m ascended and descended upon it", as if to say via the living soul-*Neshama* that is positioned on the earth, its lowest edge clothing itself in man's body.

נפש החיים, שער א י"ט:ח'

והוא ענין מראה הסלם מוצב ארצה גו'. ולא אמר מוצב בארץ. אלא ארצה שפי' לארץ ומשמעו שראש עיקר שרשו בשמים ממעל. ומשם הוא משתלשל ויורד עד לארץ יגיע. והוא הנשמת חיים של האדם שמתאצלת כביכול מנשימת פיו ית"ש. ומשם משתלשלת כסלם ושלשלת ומתקשרת עם הרוח והרוח בנפש עד רדתה לזה העולם בגוף האדם.

10. Tefilla and shefa

This is from Rav Johnny Solomon (lives in Even Shmuel) who whatsapps Daf Yomi. This learning should be in the zechut of a refuah shelaima for his wife Yehudit bat Naomi.

Embedded in the legal discussions about how we should pray (in Yevamot 105b) and the shape of the shofar (in our daf - Rosh Hashanah 26b) is a fascinating theological debate regarding our priorities in life. Simply put,

should we focus on the impact we can have on this world, or should we focus on our connection to a higher world?

Yevamot 105b records a debate between Rabbi Chiya and Rabbi Shimon Bar Rebbi concerning the correct approach to prayer. One quotes Melachim I 3:9 which states that “My eyes and heart shall be there all the days” from which it is learned that when a person prays, they should direct their eyes downward. The other quotes Eichah 3:41, “Let us lift our hearts with our hands to G-d in Heaven”, from here it is deduced that the act of prayer demands that we should direct our hearts upward.

Clearly, these two sages had two quite different approaches to prayer. One believed that the act of prayer should involve looking downward, while another was of the opinion that prayer demands that we look upwards. Perhaps expressed differently, one believed that prayer demands that we focus on the physical aspects of our lives and the impact we can have on this world, while the other claimed that we focus on the spiritual aspects of our lives and our connection to a higher world.

As the debate continued, Rabbi Chiya and Rabbi Shimon Bar Rebbi were interrupted by Rabbi Yishmael the son of Rabbi Yossi. He asked them about the topic they were discussing to which they replied that they were talking about prayer. Rabbi Yishmael then explained that he had received a tradition from his father that the correct behaviour during prayer is that ‘a person should direct their eyes downward while directing their heart heavenward’ so that both verses can be observed. Significantly, this is the recommended way for us all to pray (see Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 95:2) – which comes to teach us that prayer is the act of connecting beyond this world while being aware and sensitive to our needs in this world.

11: The end of the miracles is the dawn:

Yoma 29a

א"ר אסי למה נמשלה אסתר לשחר לומר לך מה שחר סוף כל הלילה אף אסתר סוף כל הנסים

Rabbi Asi said: Why was Esther likened to the dawn? It is to tell you: Just as the dawn is the conclusion of the entire night, so too, Esther was the conclusion of all miracles performed for the entire Jewish people.

Takeaway

The ideas that Avraham filled the world with became the "Makom" - our safe space that we always travel within. Yakov, which is a Mashal for our journey through Galus, retraces Avraham's steps, going back to Charan.

This means that we actualize through our journey the very ideas Avraham brought into the world.

There are 2 ways to come to the Emes:

One is through "Chessed" or overflow of Hashem's thoughts - Nevuah - 1st Beit Hamikdash - Leah- Childhood- shockingly called "nighttime"

The other is through "Rachamim" which is the process of Human effort - Chochma- Galut- Rachel - emerging adulthood- Called "daytime"