

**Parshat Matot Maseh**

**Esther Wein**

**28 July 2022**

**29 Tamuz 5782**

### **Dedications**

- **Tammy Mark for the Yahrzeit of her father in law Yehudah Eliezer ben Yitzchak Mark**
- **Rivkie Jungreis - thank you to Hashem that the surgery went well and a continued refuah shelaimah b'karov for Godel Yehuda b Roizel.**
- **Refuah shelaima for Sara bat Ra'hel**
- **Suzy Libin in honor of her father's continued good health Harav Yisrael Yaakov Yoykel Grosz**
- **Ossnat Shaw for an Aliyas Neshama for my grandmother Chava Reizel bas Avrohom who's Yahrzeit is today, 29 Tamuz**
- **Rochel Sabol for complete refuah for Shlomo Pinchas ben Rochel**
- **Chana Gold for her mother's Yahrzeit Sara bat Chana, zt'l, is 9 Av And her mother in law's yahrtzeit Chaya Golda bat Fayga, zt'l was on 19 Tammuz**
- **Basi Berg for a refuah shelaima for Tinok ben Sora Rivka**
- **Emunah Sohn on the yahrzeit of Shoshana bat Shalom**

**Our Chochma v'Chessed tzedakah campaign is gearing up for Tishrei 5783 - much needed funding for meals. I just counted at least 30 yom tov meals in Chutz Laaretz. That's a lot of food for people who are struggling. All donations go to tzedakah. Please contact me if you would like to dedicate a shiur and/or give to Chochma v'Chessed [taniahammer@gmail.com](mailto:taniahammer@gmail.com)**

## **Aveilut: Aspirations versus Expectations**

### **A. Thought Experiment:**

- 1. Think about an episode of strong frustration, or anger, self pity or hatred.**

Assess what your expectation was and measure the intensity of your reaction compared to the intensity of the expectation

2. What is the root of the word **aveilut** ?

## B. Nedarim: Aspirations Versus Expectations

### 1. Bamidbar 30: 3-5- Parsing the words

If a householder\* (*an individual whose vows are not subject to another's review—unlike the vows made by dependent men within his household, and unlike those made by his wife or daughter*) makes a vow to ה or takes an oath imposing an obligation Or “a prohibition.” on himself, he shall not break his pledge; he must carry out all that has crossed his lips.

וְאִשָּׁה כִּי־תִדְרַךְ נָדָר לָהּ וְאָסְרָה אֶסֶר בְּבֵית אָבִיהָ בְּנַעֲרִיהָ:

If a woman\* **woman** makes a vow to יהוה or assumes an obligation while still in her father's household by reason of her youth,

וְשָׁמַע אָבִיהָ אֶת־נִדְוָהָ וְאָסְרָה אֲשֶׁר אָסְרָה עַל־נַפְשָׁהּ וְהִחְרִישׁ לָהּ אָבִיהָ וְקָמוּ כָל־נִדְוָיָהּ וְכָל־אֶסֶר אֲשֶׁר־אָסְרָה עַל־נַפְשָׁהּ יִקְוּם:

and her father learns of her vow or her self-imposed obligation and offers no objection, all her vows shall stand and every self-imposed obligation shall stand.

### 2. Rabbeinu Bachya:30:4:1

This entire paragraph reveals many important laws concerning vows and oaths in very few words. The legal status of women concerning vows may be divided into four categories: 1) A נערה, girl between the age of 12-12 years and six months; 2) An ארוסה, a girl betrothed but not yet having moved in with her husband. 3) A married woman (after 4 ; חופה) A widow. When a נערה has a father she remains under his legal control and her father can invalidate her vows on the day he hears about them but not later. The logic behind this is that she would have attached a mental rider to her vow that her father would

approve of it. If she finds that she was mistaken and her father objected upon hearing of it, her vow was never valid in the first place.....

When such a נערה has attained the age of 12 years and six months she is considered adult in all legal respects and no longer under her father's legal control (Niddah 47). She is fully responsible for all her vows and oaths, the same as a widowed woman or a divorcee. The words of verse 10: על כל אשר אסרה על, "everything she has prohibited upon herself- shall remain upon her," apply to such a 12 and a half year old single girl. If, while under the age limit, she made a vow and her father annulled it on the day he heard of it, it is as invalid as if it had never been uttered. When the Torah adds the words וה' יסלח לה, that "the Lord will forgive her," the sages reasoned that these words are applicable when the girl who had made the vow is in need of forgiveness, such as when she violated her vow being unaware that her father had already canceled it (Niddah 47). Obviously, if someone commits what he or she perceives to be a violation of G'd's law they are in need of forgiveness even if technically, for reasons unknown to them they did not commit a sin.

### 3. The "Cheftza" and the "Gavra":

The Talmud (Nedarim 2b) contrasts a neder, which assigns prohibited status to an object, with a shvu'ah, which regulates the behavior of an individual.

### C. The first Neder Ever

#### Bereisheet Vayetzei 28:10-22

וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב מִבְּעַר שֹׁבַע וַיֵּלֶךְ חֲרָנָה:

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

וַיִּפְגַּע בְּמָקוֹם וַיֵּלֶן שָׁם כִּי-בָא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וַיִּקַּח מֵאֲבָנֵי הַמָּקוֹם וַיִּשֶׂם מִרְאשֵׁיתוֹ 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.

וַיַּחֲלִם וְהִנֵּה סֹלֶם מֻצָּב אֶרְצָה וְרֹאשׁוֹ מִגִּיעַ הַשָּׁמַיְמָה וְהִנֵּה מְלֹאכֵי אֱלֹהִים עֲלֵים וַיִּרְדּוּ בּוֹ:

He had a dream; a ladder was set on the ground and its top reached to the sky, and messengers of God were going up and down on it.

והִנֵּה הַ נֹּצֵב עָלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי הֵאֱלֹהִים אַבְרָהָם אֲבִיךָ וְאֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה שֹׁכֵב

And standing beside him was ה, who said, "I am ה, the God of your father Abraham's [house] and the God of Isaac's [house]: the ground on which you are lying I will assign to you and to your offspring.

וְהָיָה זֶרְעֶךָ כְּעֹפֶר הָאָרֶץ וּפְרָצְתָּ יָמָה וְקִדְמָה וְצָפֹנָה וְנִגְבָּהּ וּנְבָרְכוּ בְּךָ כָּל־מִשְׁפְּחוֹת הָאָדָמָה וּבְזָרְעֶךָ:

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 אֲנֹכִי עִמָּךְ וְשָׁמַרְתִּיךָ בְּכָל־אֲשֶׁר־תֵּלֵךְ וְהִשְׁבַּתִּיךָ אֶל־הָאָדָמָה הַזֹּאת כִּי לֹא אֶעֱזָבְךָ עַד אֲשֶׁר אִם־עֲשִׂיתִי 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."

וַיִּיקָץ יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁנָתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֵיךְ יֵשׁ הַ בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי:

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

וַיִּירָא וַיֹּאמֶר מַה־נוֹרָא 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."

וַיִּשָּׁלֶם יַעֲקֹב בְּבֹקֶר וַיִּקַּח אֶת־הָאֶבֶן אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם מִרֹאשְׁתּוֹ וַיִּשֶׂם אֹתָהּ מִצְבֵּה וַיִּצַק שָׁמֶן עַל־רֹאשָׁהּ:

Early in the morning, Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on the top of it.

וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־שֵׁם־הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא בֵּית־אֵל וְאוּלָם לְזֵז שֵׁם־הָעִיר לְרֹאשְׁנָהּ:

He named that site Bethel; *Bethel* i.e., "house of God." but previously the name of the city had been Luz.

**וַיִּדַר יַעֲקֹב נֶדֶר לֵאמֹר אִם־יְהִי אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי וְשָׁמְרָנִי בַדֶּרֶךְ הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי הוֹלֵךְ וְנָתַן־לִי לֶחֶם לֶאֱכֹל וּבְגָד לְלַבֵּשׁ:**

Jacob then made a vow, saying, "If God remains with me, protecting me on this journey that I am making, and giving me bread to eat and clothing to wear,

**וְשָׁבְתִי בְשָׁלוֹם אֶל־בֵּית אָבִי וְיְהִי ה' לִי לֵאלֹהִים:**

and I return safe to my father's house— ה shall be my God.

**וְהָאֶבֶן הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַתִּי מִצְבֵּה, יְהִי בַיִת אֱלֹהִים - וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר תִּתֶּן־לִי עֲשֹׂר אֶעֱשֶׂרנָה לָךְ:**

And this stone, which I have set up as a pillar, shall be God's abode; and of all that You give me, I will set aside a tithe for You."

- Cheftza and Gavra??

## **D. The meaning of Yaakov's dream**

### **1. Kedushas Levi Vayetze 5**

**(Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev)**

ויקח מאבני המקום- וישם מראשותיו וישכב במקום ההוא כו' (בראשית כח, יא

ויקח מאבני, --- זה האותיות כמבואר בספר יצירה .

המקום, --- זה הקדוש ברוך הוא כמאמר חכמינו ז"ל הוא מקומו של עולם

וישם מראשותיו, --- כלומר בראשית המחשבה

וזה וישכב, --- ויש כ"ב אותיות. במקום, כנ"ל. ההוא, לשון נסתר, והמבין יבין

### **2. The "angels" on the ladder**

#### **a) Rashi; Malachim,**

ASCENDING AND DESCENDING — It states first ascending and afterwards descending! Those angels who accompanied him in the land of Israel were

not permitted to leave the Land: they ascended to Heaven and angels which were to minister outside the Land descended to accompany him (Genesis Rabbah 68:12)

### **b) Moreh Nevuchim 1:15- Neviim**

כל מה שבא מזה השם בחוק הבורא הוא מזה הענין "והנה יי נצב עליו" - קיים עומד עליו - כלומר על ה'סולם' אשר קצהו הראשון בשמים וקצהו האחרון בארץ ובו יעלה כל מי שיעלה עד ששיג מי שעליו בהכרח אחר שהוא עומד קיים על ראש ה'סולם': ומבואר הוא שמאמרי הנה 'עליו' הוא כפי זה המשל הנשוא. ו'מלאכי אלוקים' הם הנביאים שנאמר בהם בפרוש "וישלח מלאך" "ויעל מלאך יי מן הגלגל אל הבוכים". ומה טוב אמרו "עולים ויורדים" - ה'עליה' קודם ה'ירידה' - כי אחר ה'עליה' וההגעה אל מעלות ידועות מן ה'סולם' תהיה ה'ירידה' במה שפגש מן הענין - להנהגת אנשי הארץ ולימודם אשר בעבור זה כינה ב'ירידה' כמו שבארנו:

understood in the latter sense, as, "And, behold, the Lord stood (nizzab) upon it" (Gen. 28:13), i.e., appeared as eternal and everlasting "upon it," namely, upon the ladder, the upper end of which reached to heaven, while the lower end touched the earth. This ladder all may climb up who wish to do so, and they must ultimately attain to a knowledge of Him who is above the summit of the ladder, because He remains upon it permanently. It must be well understood that the term "upon it" is employed by me in harmony with this metaphor. "Angels of God" who were going up represent the prophets. That the term "angel" was applied to prophets may clearly be seen in the following passages: "He sent an angel" (Num. 20:16); "And an angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim" (Judges 2:1). How suggestive, too, is the expression "ascending and descending on it"! The ascent is mentioned before the descent, inasmuch as the "ascending" and arriving at a certain height of the ladder precedes the "descending," i.e., the application of the knowledge acquired in the ascent for the training and instruction of mankind. This application is termed "descent," in accordance with our explanation of the term yarad (chapter x

### **c) Midrash Tanchuma, Vayetzei 2:1- Exiles**

He dreamed, and behold, a ladder set upon the earth; and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it (Gen. 28:12). R. Samuel the son of Nahman declared: These were the guardian angels of the idolatrous nations. He explained further: This verse teaches us that the Holy One, blessed be He, showed Jacob, our father, the guardian angel of Babylon ascending seventy rungs of the ladder and

descending, the guardian angel of Media ascending fifty-two rungs of the ladder and descending, the guardian angel of Greece ascending one hundred rungs of the ladder and descending, and the guardian angel of Edom ascending the ladder.<sup>2</sup>*The ascent and descent of the guardian angels foretold the rise and fall of the nations they represented. Note that the text does not depict the guardian angel of Edom, i.e., Rome, as descending.* Jacob did not know how many rungs of the ladder the guardian angel of Edom mounted, and he therefore cried out in terror: Perhaps Edom will never be compelled to descend. The Holy One, blessed be He, then said to him: *Fear thou not, O Jacob, My servant; neither be dismayed, O Israel* (Jer. 30:10), for even though you see him ascending unto My throne as though that were possible, I will cast him down, as is said: *Though thou wert to rise as high as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord* (Obad. 4).

#### **d) Where does our inspiration and aspirations come from?**

#### **Rashi and Rambam- Neviim- Childhood**

#### **Midrash Tanchuma- Malchiot- Adulthood**

#### **E. The expectation and the reality**

##### **[Vows - aish.com M'oray Ha'Aish](#)**

Jacob was the first to utter a vow, therefore when one vows he should refer the vow to him. Rabbi Abbahu said: "It is written, *How he swore unto the Lord, and vowed unto the Mighty One of Jacob* ([Psalms 132:2](#)). It does not say, *the Mighty One of Abraham or Isaac*, but *unto the Mighty One of Jacob*, thus referring the vow to him who was the first to give it utterance." (Midrash Rabbah - Genesis 70:1)

Rabbi Nathan said, "If a man makes a vow it is as if he has built a *bama* - a personal altar. And, if he fulfills it, it is as if he has offered up a sacrifice upon it." ([Yevamot 109b](#))

The Midrash draws our attention to the fact that contextually, the command to return to Beit El is sandwiched by these two tragic occurrences. The implication is that both these and other tragedies could have been avoided had Jacob kept his vow:

Said Rabbi Yannai: "If a man delays to fulfil his vow, his ledger is examined ... The proof is this: Because our father Jacob delayed the fulfillment of his vow, his ledger was examined, *And God said to Jacob: 'Arise, go up to Beit-El, etc.'*" (Midrash Rabbah - Genesis 81:1)

When his ledger was examined, it was found lacking:

Rabbi Shmuel ben Nachman said: "If any one makes a vow and delays to fulfil it, he will ultimately be involved in the worship of idols, in sexual immorality, in bloodshed, in slander. From whom can you infer all this? From Jacob, who, because he had made a vow and delayed to fulfil it, came to be involved in all these. Whence do we know this of idol-worship? *Then Jacob said unto his household ... 'Put away the strange gods'* ([Genesis 35:2](#)). Whence of sexual immorality? From Dina, of whom it says, *And Dina ... went out, etc.* ([Genesis 34:1](#)). Whence of bloodshed? From the fact that it says, *And it came to pass on the third day, when they were in pain, that the two sons of Jacob ... slew all the males* ([Genesis 34:25](#)). Whence of slander? From the fact that it says, *And he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying: 'Jacob has taken away all that was our father's'* ([Genesis 31:1](#)). Our Rabbis say that if anyone vows and delays to fulfil it, he will bury his wife. This is proved by the text, *And as for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died unto me.*" ([Genesis 48:7](#)). (Midrash Rabbah - Numbers 37:1)

The Zohar expresses the same idea:

Observe that the accuser attacks a man only in time of danger; and so it was on account of Jacob having delayed to fulfill his vows which he had made to God ... Hence we are taught that a man should "never open his mouth for the Satan", inasmuch as the latter is sure to take hold of his utterance and use it to bring accusations



on high and below. All the more so if it is the utterance of a righteous man or a sage. (Zohar Genesis 174b-175a)

## **F. Aspirations are beloved : Neder- Dira**

Jacob's desire to build a "house" for the *Shechina* resulted in a reciprocal gesture on the part of God.

Rabbi Yehudah said: "The Holy One gave two vows to Jacob, 1) that He Himself would go down and stay with him in exile, and 2) that He would let him come out of his grave to behold the joy of the holy host of celestial beings who would dwell with his children in their captivity. (Zohar Exodus 16b)

- *What does "Imo Anochi B'Tzara, and that the "shechina" is with us in exile" and that Yakov could see that reality mean?*

## **G. Takeaway;**

**The space between high aspirations and undecided expectations leads to happiness, contentment, gratitude, creativity, joy.**