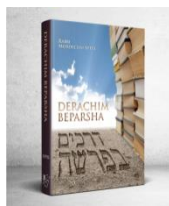


דרכים בפרשה ויצא

R' Mordechai Appel,
an alumnus of Telz
Yeshiva, is the
author of
DERACHIM
BEPARSHA



ויחלם והנה סלם מצב ארצה וראשו מגיע השמימה והנה מלאכי אלקים עלים ויורדים בו

He had a dream; and behold a ladder was set on the ground and its top reached to the sky, and Malachim of Hashem were going up and down on it. (28:12)

Yaakov Avinu left Be'er Sheva and was now enroute to Charan. It was suddenly nighttime and Chazal teach us that Yaakov lied himself down for a night's sleep for the first time in fourteen years. He took some stones, put them under his head and slept. His dream was a vision from Hashem of *Malachim* ascending and descending.

Rashi asks the obvious question over here: עולים תחלה? ואחר כך יורדים? Assuming that the place in which a *Malach* resides is high in *shomayim*, it should have said *yordim v'olim* – descending and ascending. It must be that these *Malachim* were actually starting from down below.

Of course, first we must understand what they were doing down here. There are a number of answers brought in the *meforshim*. Rashi answers that מלאכים שליחו בארץ אין יוצאים חוצה לארץ, ועלו לרקיע וירדו מלאכי – Those *Malachim* who accompanied him in Eretz Yisroel were not permitted to leave the Land; they were the ones that ascended to Heaven. The *Malachim* that were to accompany him in *Chutz La'aretz* descended that night.

The Ha'emek Davar answers something incredible: מזה הבין שהשכינה למטה בארץ ומלאכים סביביו ועולים בשליחות ויורדים לאחר כן. והוא אות על השגחה פרטית על כל סביבות – from this, Yaakov understood that the *Shechinah* was actually down below; the starting point for the *Malachim* was here on earth! This signifies the immense *hashgacha pratis* that surrounded Yaakov.

The Em Lamikra (written in the 19th century) so beautifully answers that the ladder signifies the connection between what we do down below and how Hashem “reacts” above. The ascending *Malachim* refer to the Torah and *mitzvos* we perform and the *tefillos* that we utter. Those are all sent upstairs. The descending *Malachim* refer to that which Hashem sends down to us in response. Therefore, it is upon us to realize that, to an extent, we can set the parameters of our relationship with Hashem because we are the starting point.

But now let us focus on the Midrash's answer as brought in the Da'as Zekeinim M'Baalei Tosafos: והנה

מלאכי אלקים עולים היינו המלאכים שהלכו להפוך את סדום שתלו הכבוד לעצמן שאמרו כי משחיתים אנחנו וגם גלו מסתורין של הקב"ה ולכך נדחו ממחיצתו של הקב"ה קל"ה שנים ועכשיו – These were the *Malachim* that had come to save Lot and destroy Sodom. The *pesukim* tell us that after Lot begged the *Malachim* to stay with him, they came inside of his home. Moments later, there was loud banging and shouting coming from outside. The mob had arrived. They wanted Lot to hand over his guests so that they could get to “know” them better. Lot willingly offered up his two unmarried daughters rather than betraying his guests. Moments later, the *Malachim* told Lot that he had one chance to save his family members, *because we will be destroying this place.*

The Midrash (B”R 50) tells us that when the *Malachim* said this, Hashem put them into *cheirim*; they were not allowed to return to *shomayim* for 135 years. Their sin was that they put their own *kavod* on the table by getting offended when the people of Sedom made their horrendous suggestion. Only after that did they reveal that Hashem actually sent them. Now, in Be'er Sheva – 135 years later, the *cheirem* had finally ended and they had their first opportunity to go back upstairs.

The *Be'er Moshe* and others ask: why was it specifically at this moment that were they allowed back into *shomayim*? Yaakov Avinu was chased down by his nephew, Eliphaz, with instructions to kill him. Yaakov convinced him to keep him alive by claiming that *Ani nechshav k'mais* – A destitute man is considered like a dead man. So he left Yaakov alive and stripped him of all his worldly possessions, save for his walking stick. How humiliating it must have been, as the once wealthy Yaakov now had no possessions to his name. Still, that night, הוא ישכב במקום – he slept a very restful sleep. He dreamt of the סלם מצב ארצה and he saw the *Malachim* עולים ויורדים בו. Chazal tell us that Yaakov Avinu maintained his *emunah* and lofty *madreigah* even in the darkest of times in his life. When he slept at night without any belongings, save for a hard pillow made up of twelve stones, he slept like a baby would in its mother's arms. He had no worries because he was in the Eibishter's hands.

It was only after the *Malachim* witnessed Yaakov Avinu's disregard for his personal *kavod* that they were ready to return. After observing Yaakov being completely at peace with whatever Hashem has planned for him, they realized that when it comes to *Avodas Hashem*, there is no place for personal *kavod*. Hashem comes first. Only now, after this realization, did Hashem grant them the green light to come back up to *shomayim*.

מרדכי אפפּעל, Good Shabbos,