

Parshas Vayeitzei

This week's Parsha-Vayeitzei begins with the famous story of Yakov's travels, where he rested by placing rocks around his head (for protection) and he dreamed angels were ascending and descending. Our general understanding (as we saw in Parshas Vayeira, angels are singularly tasked, as such, the angels protecting Yakov in Canaan were not the angels to accompany him to Lavan's house).

The location was Har Moriah- which is the same spot where Yitzchak was bound, and the same spot eventually, that the Beis Hamikdash would be built. Rashi explains on the words there, that miracle took place to ensure Yakov would stop and not only pray (he instituted Maariv- Berachos 26b) but he also rested for which he had his vision.

According to Bereishis Rabba 68:11, Rabbi Yehuda said that Yakov gathered 12 stones- in reference to the fact that from Yakov 12 tribes will be the nation of Israel. According to Rashi, the 12 stones argued for who would be the head support of Yakov, and Hashem made a miracle that they turned into one stone, which Yakov used as a monument (Chullin 91b).

This could be an allusion to the fact that when the 12 tribes are like one, and united, they are undefeatable, (like a stone), more so, when they are one, they are ready and able to receive Mashiach (or at this point in the Parsha- the Beis Hamikdash). Rashi explains this on the verses, that the miracle of the "crumpling of the land" (Rashi on 28:13) to make Yakov rest there, is an

allusion to how easy it will be for the Jews to conquer the land.

We begin seeing the Berachos of reassurance that Yakov was receiving as a counteraction to the threat of Lavan and Esav whose entire existence is antithetical to the safety of the Jews.

The use of the word Makom (place- end of posuk 11) also refers to Hashem (as explained in Medrish Rabba), and that this "place" (i.e. Hashem is everything, not the place is Hashem). These allusions give rise to the future when the Beis Hamikdash's will stand, and the final place of the Messianic temple.

Interestingly on the word Nitzav Alav (28:13) Rashi explain that Hashem was guarding, in contrast to how Rashi explains Nitvaim in 18:2, where out of respect to the Angels, the Torah uses the word above which is also used for in front, in order to show that the Angels were higher than Avraham (in some respects spiritually as they exist on a spiritual plane higher than Avraham who lives on a physical domain), and therefore give respect to the Angels. Here, Rashi explains that standing over him (which would connote a similar explanation) as "l'shamor" to guard him, perhaps because we know that Yakov was able to battle an angel, thus we see Yakov's ability to transcend multiple spiritual planes. Yakov's reassurance from Hashem is a theme we see recurring in the coming Parshas, as Yakov was always existentially worried about the threat of Esav, and his dominance over Yakov (and the later offspring). The Gemara in Chullin 91b (which Rashi quotes quite a bit with these pesukim) explains that the Angels were jealous of Yakov and wanted to endanger

his life, for which Hashem had to offer protection (again showing that Yakov had an ability to be relate to the angels on a different spiritual plane).

Halachikally, Yakov stated “I did not know” the sanctity of the spot which I rested (28:16), to show that had he known he wouldn’t have slept there, as one, may not sleep in a house of study (shul, etc.).

If we are speaking about Halacha, how can the angels be envious of Yakov? We know that one of Moshe Rabbeinu’s (Shabbos 88b) claims to convince the Angels to allow us to receive the Torah, was “are angels envious”, it would seem based on the Gemara in Chullin 91b, they wanted to endanger Yakov’s life for which Hashem needed to protect Yakov.

The first answer I think, is that the envy, isn’t the human style, where there is a desired negative outcome perhaps in the other. Angels envy, is borne from a passion to protect Hashem’s assets, (such as not wanting the Torah to be released in physical form on earth).

The Baal Shem Tov explains, that Malach Michael is jealous of humans, and would give everything up just to do one Mitzvah, because the Baal Shem Tov explains, in a place of “all light” (such as in heaven) it is easy to remain providing light, whereas on this Earth where there is darkness, one single mitzvah shines divine light that is directly connected to Hashem with no filter. Which is part of our service as humans on earth. To draw down Hashem’s light in a meaningful and impactful way. In this way, we will turn the darkness into light. The Nesivos Shalom, and the Lubavitcher Rebbe explains along these lines that the journey

of Yakov is not only a physical one, it is a spiritual one. Much like the journey of our soul on earth now, all these years later.

This connects with Chodesh Kislev, where there are 2/3 celebratory days relating to the release of some of the Rebbe’s were confined to jail. There’s 19 Kislev where the first Rebbe was released, called the Rosh Hashana of Chassidus, as this is the day the wellsprings of Chassidus were to be released. There’s the 10th of Kislev where the Mittlerer Rebbe was released, and there’s 12-13 Elul when the Friedeker Rebbe was released. The Rebbe in a Mamer in Melukat 5 on “Pada Bishalom”, explains that true peace isn’t the control or diminishing of an adversary (as Dovid Hamelech accomplished in his generation) it is the complete turning of an adversary into an ally (as in the time of Shlomo Hamelech) that is the sign of true peace, and therefore Shlomo was meritorious to build the Beis Hamikdash. Yakov , knew that as long as there was an adversary in Esav, there is no peace, for which hashem promised that his offspring will conquer the land, and more than this be united as one stone and one monument for the world. This whole mission makes the angels jealous, as we saw with Yakov, and yet we have Hashem’s direct Shmira to guard over us and help us through even the darkest times.

Good Shabbos.