

JewishTimes

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ISRAEL

“GOD’S HOME & HEAVEN’S GATE”

WHAT’S THE MESSAGE? (GEN. 28:17)

**LADDER TO
HEAVEN**

**WHEN
TO VOW**

**Q&A
W/ RABBI
CHAIT**



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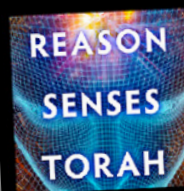
MISSION
God's Revelation at Mt. Sinai: One Plan for Mankind
The greatest event ever witnessed forces one conclusion

MESORA
Summer 2020

EVIDENCE EXISTS for only one event of God revealing His religion to man. All other religions claim divine origin, yet provide no validation. This explains their requirement of "blind faith," which is absent in Judaism: a major offering proof. 3332 years ago upon Mt. Sinai, God gave us His Bible: the only time God communicated a religion to man. Masses witnessed this, which is the only validation of any historical claim, and why the major religions accept the Bible. Mesora's mission is to share God's Biblical religion with all who seek it. As every human descends from that first couple; all humans are equals. Jews boasting "Jewish Superiority" and those who discriminate against any race violate the Bible and reason. Nearing a quarter century, Mesora helps others realize God's will for us all, sharing the beauty of Biblical wisdom. Search our 1000s of original essays, publications and audio, and write us with your questions. God determined the Jew's role is to share Torah's history, wisdom, laws and moral code with all mankind. As God created all mankind, He loves each person equally. As science has defined laws, God's will for man also has defined laws and principles, and they delight the soul. The greatest minds spent their lives studying God through Torah and science, as they found nothing that compared to its enjoyment. Let us humble ourselves before Moses, Kings David and Solomon, Maimonides, Aristotle, Newton and Einstein who taught that a life of wisdom is the most fulfilling life. We too can partake of this pleasurable existence.

THOUGHT
FUNDAMENTALS

"WHAT IS UNDETECTED BY THE SENSES, REASON OR TORAH, MUST NOT BE ACCEPTED AS TRUTH." MAIMONIDES



FEATURED
CONTENT



CHARACTER
PERFECTION

"PERFECTION" REFERS TO ONE WHOSE VALUES AND ACTIONS COMPLY WITH TORAH PERSONALITIES AND LAWS: THE MOST PLEASANT LIFE.



KINDNESS

As equals, all humans must fully treat others as we wish to be treated. Charity, kindness and justice demand we rise above personal or selfish emotions and recognize that God made others as He made ourselves. Doing so creates harmony, and earns His kindness to us.



RACISM: A LIE

Mankind descends from Adam. Black and white twins unveil the lie of racism. Bible denounces it: Moses' wife was black, our kings married Egyptians and Messiah descends from a Moabite. "Better is the day of Ache' (Isaiah 54:17). Birth doesn't define us, but how

JewishTimes

THE JOURNAL ON ORTHODOX JEWISH THOUGHT

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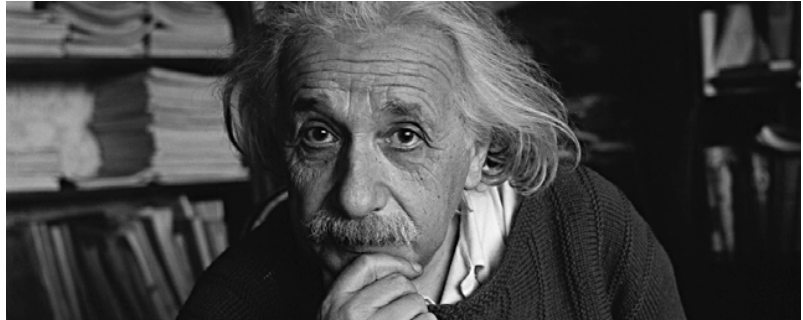
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"Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity; and I'm not sure about the universe."

ALBERT EINSTEIN

QUESTIONS

Sacrifice

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

READER: Rambam states that God commanded the Jews to bring sacrifices in order to ween them off idolatry. How do we explain other biblical figures bringing sacrifices prior to Sinai like Cain and Abel, Noah etc? Did God instruct them to do so behind the scenes? It's interesting because Noah was also told to bring extra clean animals, for the purpose of sacrifices after the flood, according to chazal. How do we approach this and does it contradict the weening off of idolatry opinion?

RABBI: Rambam discusses the formal Torah command of animal sacrifice to God. It intends to ween Jews away from serving animals. But prior, even Adam sacrificed. He was not doing so as a command, nor was he doing so with any relation to idolatry. He did so to demonstrate by proxy that man's existence isn't necessary. We are akin to a dead animal. Nothing demands man must exist, which we demonstrate by rendering a life lifeless, as if it was us. ■

When a Tzaddik is Obligated to Get Angry

RABBI REUVEN MANN

A careful and honest study of the Torah makes it absolutely clear that Judaism categorically rejects the possibility of "miracle workers". In order to have a proper relationship with God, we must scrupulously avoid any attribution of "supernatural" power to mortals.

A fascinating episode in a recently read sedra (Vayetze) clearly illustrates this point. Rachel, who was childless, and envious of her sister Leah, pleaded with her husband to "give" her children or else she would die. Most of the commentators are puzzled with Jacob's angry dismissal of his wife's request. His lack of compassion and sensitivity to Rachel's emotional distress seems incomprehensible. Very surprising, as well, is his display of anger which is an emotion which

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the righteous must always avoid except in matters pertaining to heaven.

We must pay attention to the words of Jacob for they go to the heart of the matter at issue. The pasuk says “Jacob’s anger flared up at Rachel and he said ‘Am I in the place of God who has withheld from you fruit of the womb?’” The commentary of the Sforno is most illuminating. He says, “Jacob’s anger flared up for saying ‘Give me children’, implying that he had the power to do so. In his zeal for the honor of God, he disregarded his love for her.” Rabbi Raphael Pelcovitz in the notes appended to his translation of the Sforno explains, “Jacob was angry with Rachel for saying “Give me” not “Pray for me”. The latter request would have been proper, the former was not since it implied that Jacob had the power to grant that which only God can give....His great zeal for God’s honor, however, caused him to set aside his feelings of love for Rachel, for his love for God was greater.”

Jacob who ranks among the greatest of men displayed anger at any implication that he had the power to change the natural order of events. This type of overestimation of man violates the honor that is due exclusively to the Creator. The true tzaddik is the one, who like Yaakov Avinu, reacts with anger to even the slightest suggestion that he has transcended the bounds of human limitations and shares a power, which is exclusively that of the Creator. ■

Q&A with Rabbi Israel Chait

Written by a student

Parental Influence

QUESTION: “And Isaac pleaded with the Lord on behalf of his wife because she was barren; and the Lord responded to him, and his wife Rebecca conceived” (Gen. 25:21).

Rashi comments:

“The Lord responded to him and not to her, because there is no comparison between the prayer of a righteous person who is the son of a righteous person (Isaac) and the prayer of a righteous person the child of a wicked-person (Rebecca). Therefore God allowed Himself to be entreated of him and not of her (Yevamos 64a).”

Does the righteousness or corruption of our ancestors (something we can’t control) affect our standing with Hashem?

RABBI ISRAEL CHAIT: A righteous person whose father is righteous can fulfill his full potential, whereas one whose father is wicked, cannot. This does not discount the great reward one receives whose origins were wicked and battled negative influences to become righteous. However, the righteous person whose father is righteous benefited from the greatest influence throughout his life. All things being equal, the righteous person whose father is righteous will be a greater person. Similarly, King Solomon says in the beginning of his book Koheles that he was “son of David.” He intended to convey that the reader should pay heed to his words because both he and his father were great intellects, and such lineage secures greater teachers.

Isaac was the second in the chain of the Mesora (transmission); a capacity of the greatest importance. In this vital role of molding Jacob who would be the third in this chain of the patriarchs, to create Jacob’s full potential, it was vital that Isaac play the primary role. Thus, his prayer—and not Rebecca’s—was answered.

The role of the Baalei Mesora—transmitters of the Torah—namely the patriarchs, was an infinite mission [all possibilities to cultivate the greatest good for the nation lie ahead]. To bring about the greatest potential in Jacob, a righteous person (Isaac) whose father was righteous, was vital; infinite [optimal] righteousness was demanded from the forerunners of all future generations. Isaac was to train Jacob to bring about infinite possibilities [optimal good for Israel].

Chazal teach that Jacob was the most prized of the patriarchs, “bachir shel Avos,” as he fulfilled his potential. Abraham was the pioneer, but with time, Isaac and Jacob built upon Abraham’s discoveries. Jacob uncovered new areas his father Isaac and grandfather Abraham could not see. ■

Phantom Pleasures

QUESTION: How do we prove that all pleasures we seek as adults are in fact a search for a pleasure from our youths?

RABBI ISRAEL CHAIT: Maimonides teaches that for every pleasure [real satisfaction] there must exist novelty, and the desired object. A child never loses the novelty of his pleasures, so his pleasures endure. This is because the child desires the very thing he pursues. A child enjoys hearing a story repeatedly without his mother veering in anyway from the first read. The child desires the story, so he enjoys it and novelty does not fade.

But during maturity, human nature becomes frustrated and is dissatisfied with the childhood pleasures. Man’s energies redirect away from stories and toys, and seek other satisfactions. This is by God’s design, that man can look to wisdom as his new and lasting pleasure. Had man not been frustrated, he would never seek pleasures other than those of his youth. He would never engage wisdom, thereby forfeiting his true purpose. But due to his youthful attachment to sensual pleasures, most adults seek sensual replacements for those childhood pleasures, never entering the world of wisdom. Now, an adult does not truly desire the object he pursues, like a new car. He desires the car as a replacement for some phantom pleasure from youth which he fantasizes the car will provide. Thus, as the car is a replacement and not the true desire, the new car cannot offer endless pleasure. The pleasure fades. However, if an adult’s desire were truly for the new car, the adult too would never lose the novelty of its enjoyment, just like the child. The proof that all adult pleasures are in fact replacements, is derived from the question of why the pleasures fade. ■

Free Will

QUESTION: Why did God only provide hints—the tools for Rebecca’s plan to secure Jacob’s receipt of the birthright—as opposed to God clearly outlining a coherent plan for Rebecca’s success? Through Jacob seizing his brother’s heel at birth, God showed Rebecca that Jacob could contend with his twin Esav. God also provided Esav with a hairy body, for Rebecca would need that as well to hatch her plan. Both, Jacob’s personality and Esav’s bodily features were provided, but the plan was left to Rebecca’s thinking. Why?

RABBI ISRAEL CHAIT: God desires man use his free will [his own thinking] when it comes to acts of perfection. Jacob obtaining the birthright was such an act. ■

Submit questions and comments to Comments@Mesora.org and indicate if they are for publication.

Thank you, Shabbat Shalom.



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ISRAEL

"GOD'S HOME & HEAVEN'S GATE"

WHAT'S THE MESSAGE? (GEN. 28:17)

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

PARSHA

Our parsha commences as follows:

Jacob left Beersheva, and set out for Haran. He came upon a certain place and stopped there for the night, for the sun had set. Taking of the stones of that place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. He had a dream; a ladder was set on the ground and its top reached to the heaven, and angels of God were going up and down on it. And the LORD was standing over it 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. 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. And behold, 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." Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is present in this place, and I did not know it! And he was full of fear, he said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and that is the gateway to heaven." 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. He named that site Bethel, "House of God" (Gen. 28:10-19).

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Gods first words to Jacob in this dream were regarding the land. What is so vital about a land?

God originally promised Israel to Abraham. Abraham was the first monotheist and God's will was that Abraham and his seed spread this monotheism to the world and dispel the rampant idolatry. God cares for all of his creatures equally. His creation of every human being displays His concern that every person attains their goal to become an intelligent person who pursues His wisdom. Land enables the Jews to practice Torah without alien societal influence or oppression, with the goal of impressing mankind with monotheism: "All the families of the earth shall bless themselves by you and your descendants."

When associating with alien cultures the Jews became corrupt. After the passing of the 12 sons of Jacob, living in Egypt, the Jews accepted Egyptian idolatry and their superstitions. This sin of idolatry earned the Jews 210 years of Egyptian bondage. It was only through the Jews' repudiation of the Egyptian lamb God by slaughter that they were saved on Passover, after God orchestrated the 10 plagues and the Egyptian exodus. The land of Israel intends to incubate the Jewish nation from such corrupt notions, fostering a unified life of Torah.

From Rebecca's receipt of a prophecy, Jacob learned that God desired him to rule over his older twin Esav. Esav the hunter—a man of hedonism, murder and idolatry—was unfit to continue Abraham's legacy of monotheism. Isaac gave Jacob the Blessings of Abraham. As Jacob was the tent dweller—the man who pursued God's wisdom—God promised Jacob that Israel upon which he slept would function as the haven for monotheism to flourish. A country which was identified exclusively with monotheists, starting with Abraham to whom God first promised Israel.

Israel: God's Home

God determined Israel become the land of the monotheists. This is the meaning of "God's Home." God's house is not for Him, but for His fame, that a land and a people are recognized by the world as those who reject all imaginary deities and follow God, intellect and reason.

Jacob fled from his brother Esav who sought his life for taking the birthright. Jacob arrived at a place where he slept. After Jacob awoke from his dream of the ladder with ascending and descending angels, he said, "How awesome is this

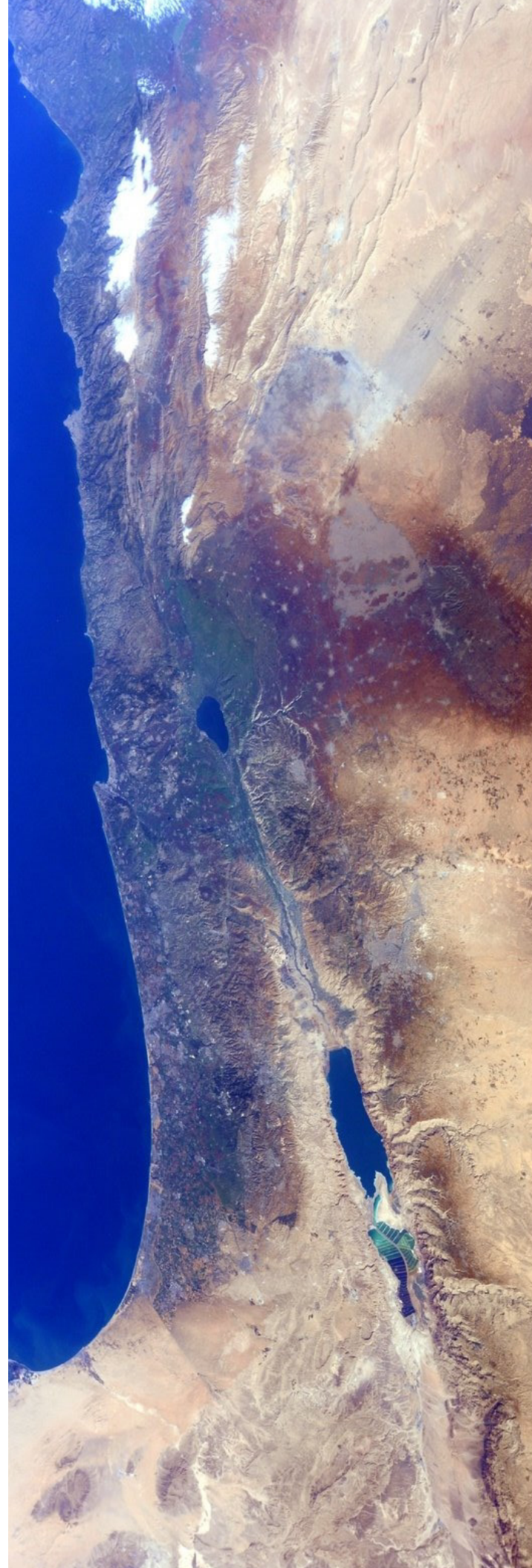
place. This is no other than the House of God, and this is the gate to heaven. And he called the name of that place Beth El (God's House)..." Jacob recognized this place of Israel would now be special. What is the relationship between God's home and heaven's gate?

Heaven's Gate

"Heaven's Gate" refers to a "special access," something closely tied to heaven, to God's providence over man and the universe. Heaven is not a location; God is not in the sky. Heaven is a name given to God's world from which He created the universe and controls it and man's affairs. Heaven is the metaphysical world in which angels fulfill their control over natural law. "Many" angels represent the many spheres of law governing the universe. Jacob saw many angels as God instructed the angels to guard Jacob in many areas of need, such as health, success, protection and knowledge. Perhaps this visual dream intended to calm Jacob's fear, as he had fled from his brother's threat or murder. Jacob knew from Abraham the abstract promise of the land, but this vision made it tangible, relating to him at this time. Rashi says that after this dream, Jacob found his travels very easy, he was relieved. God provided Jacob much needed comfort and security. Learning that God was relating to him at this place, the land of Israel, Jacob was astonished. God's very prophecy here taught Jacob that Israel is a special land of God's providence, the "gate of heaven." Torah too says, "God's eyes are upon the land from the beginning of the year to the year's end" (Deut. 11:12). This is the meaning of "God's Home and Heaven's Gate." Israel will function as a haven for Torah practice and it will reflect a special providence that teaches the world that those who follow God earn His protection.

The Ladder

"A ladder was set on the ground and its top reached to the heaven, and angels of God were going up and down on it. And the LORD was standing over it." Ibn Ezra teaches that a ladder conveys a relationship: "Matters on Earth are governed from heaven as if there is a ladder between them" (Gen. 28:12). That is, God's metaphysical will controls natural law on Earth. Jacob should be less fearful of natural law and people, and more confident that God guides all. "God standing over the top of the ladder" teaches this. ■



When Halacha and Torah Collide

RABBI BERNIE FOX

This week's Parsha commences with a vow

And Yaakov made a vow saying: If the L-rd will be with me and guard me on this path [on] which I travel and give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, and I return in peace to my father's home, and He will be to me a L-rd, [then] this stone that I placed as a monument will be for me as a house of the L-rd and all that You will give me I will tithe to You. (Sefer Beresheit 29:20-22)

I. Introduction

Much of halachah – Jewish law – is derived from the Written Torah. In some instances, a law's Biblical source is obvious. In other instances, the source may not be as easily identified. However, sometimes a law seems to contradict the Written Torah. An example is found in Parshat VaYetze. Let's study this example and how it is addressed by our Sages.

II. Yaakov's vow

Yaakov leaves his parents' home. He is fleeing from his brother Esav. Also, his father has sent him to Charan to seek a wife. He has a dream. He sees a ladder reaching up to heaven. Angels are ascending and descending the ladder. Hashem stands nearby. He assures Yaakov that his descendants will be numerous. They will possess the Land of Canaan. Everyone will recognize that they are blessed. Also, Hashem tells Yaakov that He will guard him and return him to the Land of Canaan. In response to this vision, Yaakov takes a vow. In the place he slept, he will establish a house dedicated to the service of Hashem. Also, he will tithe all he acquires.

III. Vows are discouraged

Was it proper for Yaakov to make a vow? The Talmud discourages vows. Rambam – Maimon-

ides – summarizes the position of the Sages:

“One who takes vows to perfect one's attitudes and behaviors – this is proper and praiseworthy. For example, in the case of one who is a glutton and prohibits upon him/herself meat for a year or two years... Concerning these and similar vows, our Sages said: Vows are a fence for restraint.

Although they are [an expression of service to Hashem] one should not make many vows that prohibit and not become accustomed to them. Rather one should refrain from those things from which one should refrain without [taking] a vow. Our Sages said: Anyone who takes a vow is compared to one who builds an [unauthorized] altar. If one violates [the prohibition against taking vows] and takes a vow, one should ask [the court for a release. This is] so that it is not a stumbling block before him.” (Rambam, Mishne Torah, Hilchot Nedarim 13:23-25)

IV. A clarification

Rambam's comments need clarification. He explains that vows that impose needed restraint are appropriate and praiseworthy. He cites as an example a person who struggles to control one's appetite. The person takes a vow to not eat meat

for a time. Then, Rambam asserts that even these vows should not be frequently taken. Furthermore, the Sages discouraged one from taking vows because of the danger that they may be transgressed. How can this comment be reconciled with his earlier statement that vows that impose needed restraint are proper and praiseworthy?

When Rambam describes vows imposed to provide needed restraint as praiseworthy, he is contrasting these vows to those that do not serve a meaningful purpose. Consider a person who is angry with another and takes a vow to have nothing to do with him or her. This vow is frivolous. Rambam's position is that the basic content of the vow that imposes needed restraint is appropriate. Inherently, the vow is proper. However, because it may be violated, the vow should be avoided. The problem with the vow is not its content, only that it is potentially a stumbling block.

According to Rambam, there are two elements to the Torah's attitude toward vows. It recognizes that vows can be a means of imposing needed restraint upon oneself. However, if one takes a vow, one must be faithful to one's word. Violating a vow is a serious transgression. Therefore, it is best to avoid vows – even those that inherently are proper.

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V. Permissible vows

This discussion suggests that Yaakov should not have taken his vow. Halachah discourages vows but the Torah tells us that Yaakov – one of our righteous patriarchs – took a vow. How can the position of the Sages which is codified into normative halachah be reconciled with the text of the Torah?

Midrash Rabbah addresses this question. It comments that from Yaakov we learn that we should take vows in times of affliction or danger. The Tosefot explain that when one is confronted with danger or an affliction, the prohibition against taking vows is set aside. Yaakov was in flight from his brother and traveling to a foreign strange land. His life and welfare were in jeopardy. In his circumstance, a vow was appropriate. The midrash is explaining that halachah is not inconsistent with Yaakov's behavior. His situation is an exception to the general rule that vows should be avoided. Why was Yaakov's vow an appropriate response to danger? Why, in general, are vows a fitting response to danger and affliction?

VI. Responding to tragedy & danger

Rambam explains that when the Jewish people are confronted by danger and affliction, we must call out to Hashem. Turning to Hashem acknowledges that our suffering is not simply a happenstance occurrence. It is a response to deficiencies in our behaviors. This recognition is the first step toward repentance. He adds that an individual who is suffering should also fast and petition Hashem in one's prayers. In this comment and others, Rambam explains that personal tragedy and suffering should be a catalyst for reaching out to Hashem and for repentance.

VII. Paying forward

How does one engage in repentance at a time of suffering? One can identify righteous or praiseworthy behaviors and one can pledge oneself to adopt them. One can single-out unworthy behaviors that one should curtail or abandon. But at the moment the person is in danger or is suffering one may be unable to perform these actions. Neither may the opportunity presently exist to abandon negative behaviors.

Consider a person hospitalized with a serious

illness. This person studies his behaviors and comes to some conclusions. He has sometimes spoken to his spouse disrespectfully. He has been stingy with charities or treated their representatives with condescension or even disdain. He decides that this illness should be a catalyst to repent from these behaviors. He will be more respectful of others and be more attentive to the dignity of those who are less fortunate. He will support charities more generously and more enthusiastically. These are meaningful commitments. But they concern actions that the person plans to adopt in the future. His repentance will become more complete when his commitments are transformed into actions and behaviors. But how can this person alter his behaviors while confined to the hospital?

A vow is a legally binding commitment to make these changes. It is more than a private internal pledge. By making a vow, one has determined one's future behavior. One who takes a vow to share a specific percentage of one's income, or a specific sum with charities, cannot disregard the pledge. One is bound to it. Making the vow is as close as one can come to carrying-out the behavior it describes without actually performing it. A vow is a form of "paying forward".

Yaakov was leaving the Land of Canaan. At that moment, he could not establish there a house dedicated to the service of Hashem. Also, he did not have the income to tithe. Instead, he made a vow. His vow bound him to these actions and behaviors. They would be performed in the future, but he predetermined through his vow that he must perform them.

VIII. Learning from contradictions

This discussion demonstrates that our Sages were very aware of apparent contradictions between normative halachic requirements and the Written Torah. They recognized that these contradictions require study. But their approach to addressing these contradictions is very important. They viewed these contradictions as learning opportunities. They recognized that an apparent contradiction reveals or communicates a message. In this instance, the contradiction reveals that sometimes vows are appropriate. Using Yaakov as an example, the Torah communicates that in his circumstance – when in danger – a vow is appropriate. ■



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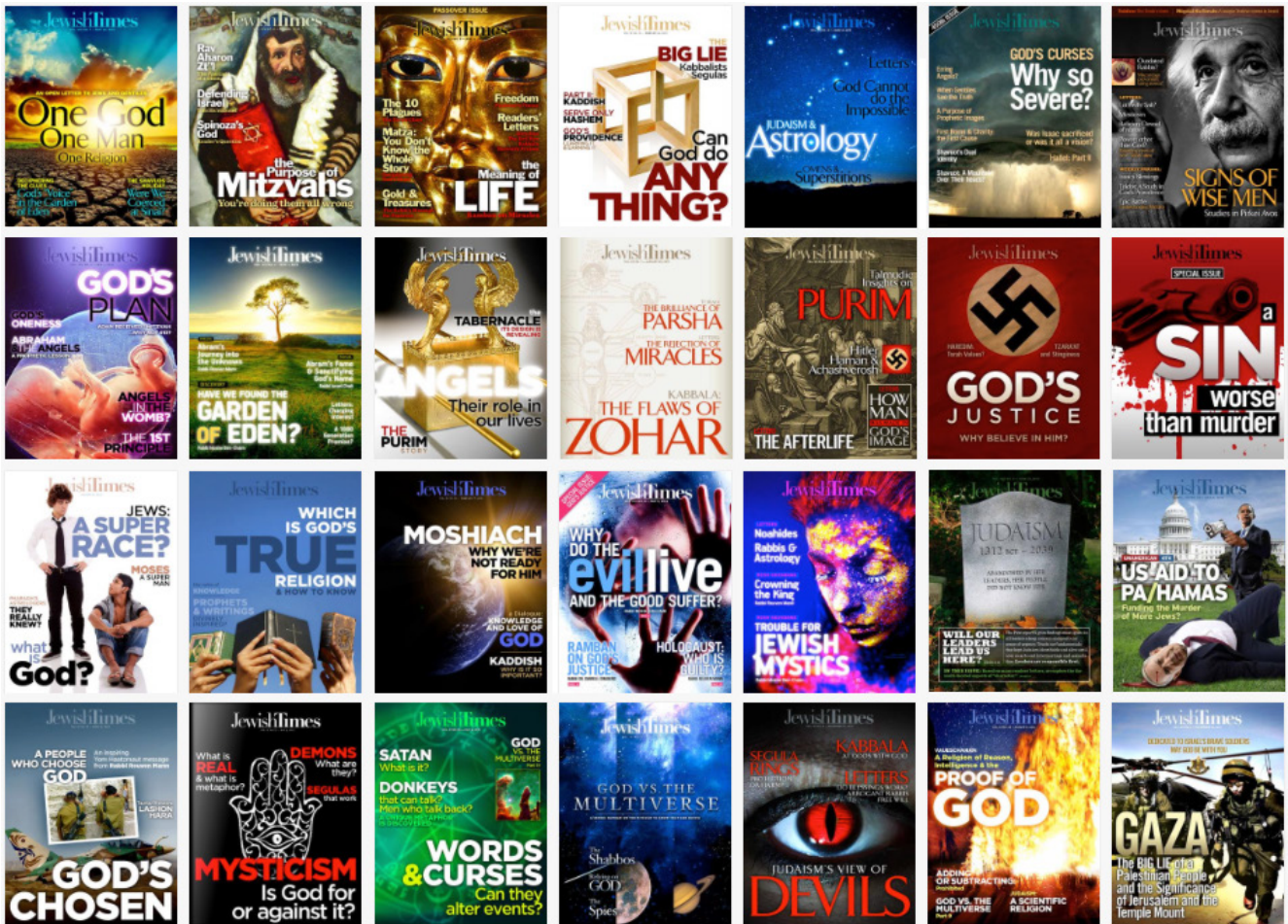
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Ladder to Heaven

RABBI REUVEN MANN

This week's Parsha, Vayetze, brings us to a new phase in the life story of our third Patriarch, Yaakov. Hitherto he had been entrenched in the study halls of Shem and Ever and was engrossed in learning by day and by night.

These heady days of perennial immersion in sublime religious and philosophical ideas had come to an end. Yaakov was reluctant to terminate this elevated form of existence in which he was constantly in the presence of Hashem.

He did not depart from the Beit Midrash voluntarily but was compelled by circumstances. The unlikely cause was the (erroneous) decision of Yitzchak to confer the material blessings upon Eisav. This would have had tragic consequences for the future of the Jewish nation as Yitzchak himself understood when he realized that the recipient of his pronouncements was actually Yaakov.

Tragedy was avoided because Rivka, who disagreed with her husband's evaluation of Eisav, carefully monitored his interactions with his older son. She therefore "heard" when Yitzchak instructed Eisav to go to the hunt and prepare for him a tasty dish. She convinced Yaakov to go along with her risky scheme to wrest the blessings from his unworthy brother.

Rivka's gambit was successful but had dangerous, if unintended, consequences. Eisav could not abide the insult to his pride and silently vowed to seek revenge after the death of his father. Again it was Rivka who discovered this plan and took action to save her younger son. He would have to escape and find refuge in the home of her brother, Lavan. While there he could also seek to secure a fitting match for himself.

But this meant that Yaakov's idyllic sojourn in the "Tents of Torah" would have to come to an end. Still, according to Rashi (Bereishit 28:9), Yaakov did not immediately flee to Padan Aram but hid in the house of Ever for another 14 years and only then tore himself away from the Beit Midrash which was his natural habitat.

Something significant occurred on the first night of his journey. He came upon a "certain place" and lodged there. Sleep, for Yaakov, was a rare luxury. Rashi (Bereishit 28:11) comments "... in that place he slept but for the 14 years in which he "apprenticed" in the house of Ever, he did not sleep at night because he was immersed in Torah." He slumbered and was granted a divine vision.

He dreamed and "A ladder was planted on the



ground whose top reached heaven, and the Angels of G-d were ascending and descending on it. And behold! Hashem was standing over him and He said 'I am Hashem, G-d of Avraham your father and G-d of Yitzchak; the ground upon which you are lying, to you will I give it and to your descendants.'

The Rambam explains the imagery of this prophetic vision in his Guide For The Perplexed. The angels represent the Prophets who obtain the highest level of knowledge of G-d and communicate with Him.

Says Rambam; "...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."

There are 2 phases in the lives of the exalted individuals who merit to attain prophecy. First of all they must spend many years in isolation from society wholly engrossed in intense study and perfection of character. But they have a second mission as well. This can be seen in the trajectory of our 3rd Patriarch.

Yaakov's deceptive "theft" of the blessings was

not undertaken to acquire personal wealth. Instead he put his life at risk in order to protect Klal Yisrael from great potential harm. His life of exclusive study was approaching its end. When he finally left home it wasn't just to escape from Eisav but to attain a wife and build a home as well.

The message of the dream was that he must now utilize the profound knowledge and understanding that Hashem had gifted him with to educate and elevate mankind. His particular role, in this regard, was to effectuate the transformation of the Abrahamic family into a national entity.

The message of "Jacob's Ladder" applies to all of us. We have a great obligation to pursue and internalize the profound wisdom of Torah. This is a purely personal and selfish endeavor. But the story doesn't conclude there. We must acknowledge our profound responsibility for the material and spiritual welfare of the Jewish People. Our love of Hashem and intense appreciation of the knowledge contained in His Torah should be so great that it compels us to share it with all people. It is only by an embrace of this "service of love" that one can be a genuine benefactor of Klal Yisrael. May we merit to achieve it.

Shabbat Shalom ■

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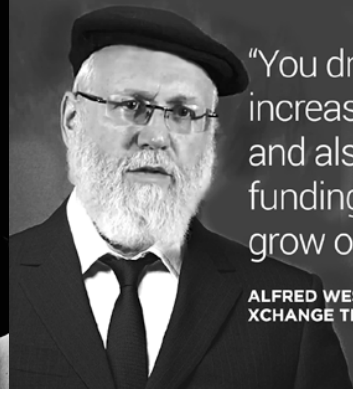
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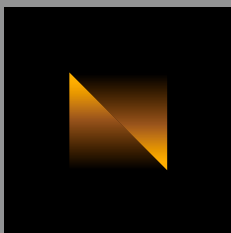
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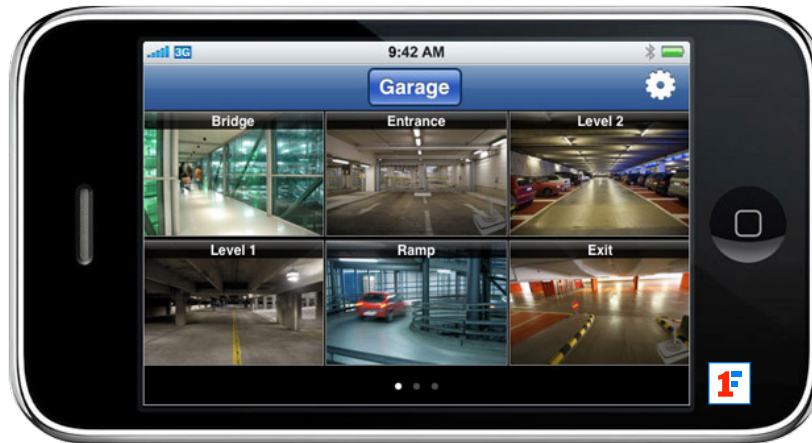
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