

טעמו וראו

A taste of the
Rebbe's teachings

Vayetze



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Humans and Angels; Who Needs Whom?

The Zohar notes an interesting distinction in Torah's description of the angels who met Yaakov on his way out of and into the Land of Israel. Who searched for whom, and why?

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Humans and Angels; Who Needs Whom?

"And he arrived at the place"

(B'reishit 28:11)

Single vs. Married

When Yaakov returned to Israel after his years in Charan, the verse says, "And the Angels of Hashem came to him."¹ Years earlier, when he left Israel, it says, "And he came to the place" [where he dreamed of angels].²

The Zohar explains:³

"When Yaakov went out to Charan, he was unmarried. And the verse states, 'And he came to the place.' After he was married and returned with all the tribes, it was as if the camps of angels met him and entreated him, as it is written, 'And the angels of Hashem came to him.' They came to meet *him*. At first, *he* 'came to the place.' But now, *they*, i.e. the angels - 'came to him.' ... Also, at first, he saw them at night in a dream. Now he saw them with his eyes during the daytime."

In other words, before Yaakov had embarked on fulfilling his life's mission, still as a single man, he was forced to go and search for the place [of G-d, where he had the vision of angels]. And more so: His vision of the angels on a ladder was only in a dream. But when he returned from Charan after carrying out his mission, together with his sons (whom the verse calls "his brothers"),⁴ with a wholesome family, along with the product of his years of work, the sheep,⁵ (along with their spiritual equivalents), he no longer needed to seek them out. To the contrary: they searched for him, as the verse says, "and the angels of Hashem met him." And moreover: it wasn't in a dream, it was in broad daylight.

Chassidism explains⁶ that when Hashem sends a revelation from above (called *it'aruta dili'eilah*) in order to inspire the individual (called *it'aruta dilitata*), the revelation doesn't 'permeate' the subject. In other words, its impact isn't

1) B'reishit 32:2

2) Ibid. 28:11

3) Vol. 1 165a.

4) B'reishit 31:46. See Rashi.

5) See Torah Or Vayetze pg. 23c. Vayishlach pg. 39c.

6) Likutei Torah Vayikra pg. 2b and on. Shir Hashirim pg. 22b and on.

guaranteed; the individual must act for the revelation to have lasting results. However, when the individual begins with his own deeds, and reaches higher spiritual levels on his own,⁷ it is guaranteed to produce a revelation (and continued revelations) from above.

When the Angels Look for You

This is a lesson for every person's personal life mission:

If a Jew occupies himself with only his own spiritual goals, he will remain a loner no matter how high he reaches, and he will always need to 'search' for his 'place.' And even after finding it, it will be only in the form of a 'dream.'

But when a Jew embraces his mission to educate one Jew, than another, and then another, and fulfills his mission as it should be fulfilled, notwithstanding the fact that his mission brings him to Charan, far from the Land of Israel - then, God's blessing comes in the form of 'angels seeking *him* out.' He doesn't need to search for it; heaven offers its help and assistance in whatever he may need - and not in a dream, but in reality.

This task is expected of every single Jew, even those who pursue full time Torah study. They too, each have a unique mission to accomplish in the world. Our Sages taught⁸ that Adam, the first man, designated the purpose of every location in the world, meaning, that every place - and every person - has a designated mission and purpose.

Indeed, the Chabad Rebbes emphasized the importance of spreading Judaism to other Jews and noted that this is the obligation of every individual **without exception**. For, no matter how much one invests in his own spiritual growth, he will always be "searching out G-d" instead of "G-d searching *him* out" as a result of engaging with others.

4 Cheshvan 5721
(Toras Menachem vol. 1 pg. 187)

7) See Zohar vol. 3 pg. 90b.

8) Tractate Berachot 31a.

Further Reading

In the above Sicha, the Rebbe references the concept of 'it'aruta dili'eila' and 'it'aruta dilitata,' in order to explain the change in the angels' conduct following Yaakov's twenty-two-year sojourn in Charan.

This is a good opportunity to discuss the meaning of these terms. The following is based on Rabbi Menachem Brod's essay in Sichat Hashavuah.

The Race car, the Weak Car and the Boost

There are times when a person wakes up in the morning with newfound inspiration for all things spiritual. Suddenly, he feels passion in his prayer, joy in his Torah study and enthusiasm in his Mitzvot. Deeds that felt so arduous just a day earlier are now infused with new life. The individual may begin to suspect that the change within him is permanent. Then, just as sudden as it arrived, the inspiration flutters and disappears.

This brings us to two foundational concepts in Chassidic teachings: "It'aruta dili'eila" and "it'aruta dilitata." Translated literally, "Inspiration from above" and "Inspiration from below."

"Inspiration from below" refers to personal motivation: when a person makes the personal effort to rise to a more spiritual plane. "Inspiration from above" refers to moments of sudden inspiration. Those moments are G-dly interventions, in which he feels inspired for no apparent reason.

Each has an advantage. A G-dly intervention feels far more powerful. It envelopes you regardless of your spiritual condition and instantaneously catapults you to great spiritual heights. But to its disadvantage, you cannot take personal credit for it, nor can you call it your own. As soon as the inspiration dissipates, you will revert to your initial condition. You are like a car with a weak engine being pulled by a race car. While it can quickly reach high speeds, it will slow down as soon as it is left to its own devices.

This is the advantage of the personal motivation. When you slowly and painstakingly polish your character, climbing rung after rung of spirituality, your achievements are genuine and enduring. Something you created will therefore remain with you forever. However, a mortal human being can only accomplish so much. Your own efforts will not bring you the same levels of spirituality as the instantaneous G-dly revelation. To employ the car analogy: when the weaker car drives with its own engine, its speed is consistent and dependable, but it will never overtake the racecar.

However, these disadvantages exist only when each form of inspiration is independent of the other. When G-dly inspiration is coupled with personal motivation, each complements the other. In the best scenario, G-dly inspiration prompts personal motivation, and the resulting efforts are rewarded with further G-dly inspiration, which engenders further personal motivation, and so on and so forth.

It is like a car that is too weak to start on its own. Sometimes, a minor boost can send it on its way. It does not replace the car's own engine; that small boost will allow the engine to find the personal energy to continue. And when the car reaches a more difficult incline, a second boost will help it carry on once again.

When you feel a sudden urge to strengthen your spirituality, remember that it is only a boost. Don't coast with its energy. Instead, couple it with your own personal motivation. Ensure that when the G-dly inspiration dissipates, you have enough personal strength to take you to the next bend.

Sichat Hashavua

Chassidic teaching normally explain that personal motivation is often sandwiched by two G-dly interventions. The first G-dly revelation inspires your personal motivation, and that, in turn, is rewarded with further revelation.

This Sicha expresses a similar idea. The first revelation of the angels represents G-dly intervention. Yaakov's work in Charan constitutes his own personal motivation and effort, and the angels' revelation upon his return represents the second G-dly revelation. However, the Sicha focuses on the second revelation which followed his years in Charan. It does not specify that the work in Charan was achieved through the initial revelation before his departure.

Sources:

Source 1

Bireishit 28:10-12, Rashi

Yaakov left Be'er Sheva and set out for Charan. And he came to the place and lodged there because the sun had set, and he took some of the stones of the place and placed [them] at his head, and he lay down in that place. And he dreamed and behold! a ladder set up on the ground and its top reached to heaven; and behold, angels of G-d were ascending and descending upon it.

And Hashem was standing beside him and He said, "I am Hashem, the G-d of your father Avraham and the G-d of Yitzchak: the ground on which you are lying I will give 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. 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."

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

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

Early in the morning, Yaakov 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 Bet El; but previously the name of the city had been Luz.

מקור 1

חומש בראשית, פרק כ"ח פסוק י' ואילך

י וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב, מִבְּעַר שֶׁבַע; וַיֵּלֶךְ,
חֶרְנֶה.

י א וַיִּפְגַּע בַּמָּקוֹם וַיָּלֶן שָׁם, כִּי-
בָא הַשָּׁמֶשׁ, וַיִּקַּח מֵאֲבָנֵי הַמָּקוֹם,
וַיִּשָּׁם מִרְאֲשֵׁתוֹ; וַיִּשְׁכַּב, בַּמָּקוֹם
הַהוּא.

יב וַיַּחְלֹם, וְהִנֵּה סֹלֶם מְצַב אֶרֶץ,
וְרָאשׁוֹ, מִגִּיעַ הַשָּׁמַיְמָה; וְהִנֵּה
מַלְאָכֵי אֱלֹהִים, עֹלִים וְיֹרְדִים בּוֹ.

יג וְהִנֵּה יְהוָה נֹצֵב עָלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֶיךָ וְאֱלֹהֵי
יִצְחָק הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה שֹׁכֵב עָלֶיהָ
לְךָ אֶתְנַנְנָה וְלְזָרְעֶךָ:

יד וְהִנֵּה זָרְעֶךָ כָּעֵפֶר הָאָרֶץ וּפְרֻצֹת
יָמָה וְקֹדְמָה וְצַפְנָה וְנִגְבָּה וְנִבְרָכוּ
בְּכָל-מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאֲדָמָה וּבְזָרְעֶךָ:

יז וְהִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי עִמָּךְ וְשָׁמַרְתִּיךָ בְּכָל-
אֲשֶׁר-תֵּלֵךְ וְהִשְׁבַּתִּיךָ אֶל-הָאֲדָמָה
הַזֹּאת כִּי לֹא אֶעְזָבְךָ עַד אֲשֶׁר אִם-
עֲשִׂיתִי אֶת אֲשֶׁר-דִּבַּרְתִּי לְךָ:

יח וַיִּיקַץ יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁנָתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי
יֵשׁ יְהוָה בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא
יָדַעְתִּי:

יט וַיִּירָא וַיֹּאמֶר מִה-נִּוְרָא הַמָּקוֹם
הַזֶּה אֵין זֶה כִּי אִם-בֵּית אֱלֹהִים וְזֶה
שַׁעַר הַשָּׁמַיִם:

כז וַיִּשְׁכֶם יַעֲקֹב בְּבֹקֶר וַיִּקַּח אֶת-
הָאֶבֶן אֲשֶׁר-שָׁם מִרְאֲשֵׁתוֹ וַיִּשָּׁם
אֹתָהּ מִצְבֵּה וַיִּצַק שָׁמֶן עַל-רֹאשָׁהּ:

Yaakov then made a vow, saying, "If G-d remains with me, if He protects me on this journey that I am making, and gives me bread to eat and clothing to wear, and if I return safe to my father's house—Hashem shall be my G-d. And this stone, which I have set up as a pillar, shall be G-d's abode; and of all that You give me, I will set aside a tithe for You."

יז וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־שֵׁם־הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא בַּיַּת־
אֵל וְאוֹלָם לֹוֹז שֵׁם־הָעִיר לְרֵאשִׁנָּה:

יח וַיַּדַּר יַעֲקֹב נֶדֶר לֵאמֹר אִם־יְהִי־
אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי וְשָׁמְרֵנִי בַדֶּרֶךְ הַזֶּה
אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ וְנִתְּנֵנִי לֶחֶם לְאָכֹל
וּבְגָד לְלַבֵּשׁ:

יט וְשָׁבְתִי בְשָׁלוֹם אֶל־בַּיִת אָבִי וְהָיָה
יְהוָה לִי לְאֱלֹהִים:

כ וְהָאֶבֶן הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַתִּי מִצְבָּה
יְהִי־הִיא בַּיִת אֱלֹהִים וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר תִּתֶּן־לִי
עֲשֵׂר אֲעֲשֶׂרְנֹו לָךְ:

Rashi on verse 12:

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.

רש"י על פסוק יב'

עולים וירדים. עולים תהלה ואחר
כך יורדים? מלאכים שזוהו בארץ
אין יוצאים חוצה לארץ, ועלו
לרקיע וירדו מלאכי חוצה לארץ
ללוותו:

Source 2

Bireishit 32:2-3

And Yaakov went on his way, and angels of G-d met him. And Yaakov said when he saw them, "This is the camp of G-d," and he named the place Machanaim.

מקור 2

חומש בראשית פרק ל"ב פסוק ב'

ב וַיַּעֲקֹב, הֵלֵךְ לְדַרְכוֹ; וַיִּפְגְּעוּ־בוֹ,
מִלְאֲכֵי אֱלֹהִים.

ג וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב כִּאֲשֶׁר רָאָם, מַחֲנֵיה
אֱלֹהִים זֶה; וַיִּקְרָא שֵׁם־הַמָּקוֹם
הַהוּא, מַחֲנֵיִם.

Rashi:

And the angels of G-d met him: The angels who minister in the Land of Israel came to meet him in order to escort him into the Holy Land.

Two Camps [Machanayim]: [The Hebrew machanayim] means two camps – the one consisting of the angels ministering outside the Holy Land who had come with him thus far, the other, of those ministering in the Land of Israel who had come to meet him.

רש"י:

ויפגעו בו מלאכי אלהים. מלאכים של ארץ ישראל באו לקראתו ללוותו לארץ:

מחנים. שתי מחנות, של חוצה לארץ שבאו עמו עד כאן ושל ארץ ישראל שבאו לקראתו

Source 3

Toras Menachem vol. 4 pg. 77

When we encourage people to engage in spreading Judaism, some respond that their time could – and should – be used more productively through Torah study.

The response to them: By engaging with other Jews, you will see unnatural success in your Torah study. The Alter Rebbe writes that your “mind and heart will become refined one-thousand-fold.” You won’t lose time from your studies. To the contrary, your Torah study will become one thousand times more successful. Through a short half-hour of Tora study, you will be able to achieve what is normally gained through five hundred such hours.

מקור 3

תורת מנחם חלק ד' עמוד 77

כשתובעים שצריכים לעסוק עם הזולת - ישנם הטוענים שחבל על איבוד הזמן שיכולים וצריכים לנצלו ללימוד התורה.

והמענה לזה - שעל-ידי ההתעסקות עם הזולת זוכים ל"שערי הצלחה" בלימוד התורה באופן שלמעלה מדרך הטבע, כמו שכותב אדמו"ר הזקן ש"נעשים מוחו ולבו זכים אלף פעמים ככה", ובמילא, לא זו בלבד שאינו מפסיד מזמן הלימוד, אלא אדרבה, בזמן שלומד תורה הרי הוא מצליח אלף פעמים ככה, ולדוגמא: בזמן מועט של מחצית השעה, מצליח להספיק במדה מרובה שעל דרך הרגיל זקוקים בשביל זה משך זמן של חמש מאות שעות!

מיזם של "משרד השלוחים"

נוסד בימי השבעה לזכרון ולע"נ הרב גבריאל נח וזוגתו רבקה הי"ד
שלוחי הרבי במומבאי, הודו

