

# A Taste of Text: Source based learning for Shabbat

*This weekly sheet is brought to you by Rabbi Dr. Moshe Freedman of the New West End United Synagogue in conjunction with Shapell's/Darché Noam*

## PARSHAT VAYEITZEI

### DVAR TORAH: WHAT ABOUT YAAKOV'S PARNASAH?

There is a slight inconsistency between Hashem's promise to Yaakov in his dream and Yaakov's vow to Hashem the morning after.

Hashem says: "I will be with you; I will watch over you wherever you go; I will return you to this Land; I will not leave you until I do what I said I would" (Bereishit 28:15).

Yaakov afterwards takes a vow, saying: "If G-d will be with me; if He will watch over me on this path that I am taking; if He gives me bread to eat and clothes to wear; if I return in peace to the house of my father ..." (Bereishit 28:20).

Hashem's and Yaakov's first and second statements correspond; and Hashem's third promise in the dream corresponds to Yaakov's last statement in his vow. However, Yaakov, when he vows, adds a prayer for bread and clothing – for sustenance, for parnasah. Hashem does not seem to have addressed this concern.

The Midrash (Bereishit Rabbah 69:6) apparently addresses the problem, but it is not clear how. The Midrash says: The Rabbis say – "He responds to everything except for parnasah." Rav Issi says – "He also responded to parnasah when He said, 'For I will not leave you.'" Each of the opinions in the Midrash raises a difficulty. According to the Rabbis, why did G-d not address Yaakov's concern? According to Rav Issi, how do the words "For I will not leave you" address parnasah?

**The Dubno Maggid answers with a parable:** A father once sent his son off on a journey to a distant land. Along with the provisions, the father also added a bundle of money to pay for his son's expenses. As they were planning the trip they found out that foreign soldiers were frequenting the roads, making travel extremely dangerous. The father did not want to leave his son alone under such dangerous circumstances and decided to join him on the trip. When they were on the wagon the son asked the father, "Where is the bundle of money you prepared me for expenses on the journey?" The father replied, "Am I not accompanying you? If you need anything just ask me and I will take care of it."

Hashem and Yaakov Avinu are like the father and son in the parable. Once Hashem promised that He will not leave Yaakov, there was no need to directly relate to his material needs. Wherever he is, Yaakov eats of his Father's food. Rav Issi and the Rabbis do not really argue. The Rabbis point out that Hashem in His promise does not directly relate to the issue of parnasah, whereas Rav Issi explains why – that when Hashem says He will accompany Yaakov, He is implicitly telling him that He will take care of all of his material needs. Hashem says to Yaakov, "I am always with you; whenever you call I will answer."

Yaakov's prayer echoes throughout the generations, as we, Yaakov's descendants, spell out our needs for parnasah; but so does Hashem's promise – I'm with you, and am taking care of all of your needs.

## SOURCE GUIDE: 2 CAMPS OF ANGELS

Immediately after the final confrontation between Yaakov and Lavan at Mount Gilad, Yaakov meets two camps of angels. Who are these angels, what is their purpose, and why do they appear at this point in Yaakov's life? Rashi and the Ramban argue about these points, and the Maharal's defense of Rashi includes an idea later discussed by students of the Baal Shem Tov. This dispute is the basis of this source guide.

### A. Two Camps of Angels: Rashi vs. Ramban

Under Rivkah's direction Yaakov wore Esav's clothing to impersonate him and get blessed by Yitzchak, and her plan worked:

<p><b>1. Bereishit 32:1-3</b></p> <p>(1) Lavan woke up early in the morning and kissed his sons and daughters and blessed them; Lavan went and returned to his place. (2) Yaakov went on his way and met up with angels of G-d. (3) Yaakov said when he saw them, "This is a camp of G-d, and he called the place Machanayim.</p>	<p>בראשית לב:א-ג</p> <p>(א) וַיִּשְׁכֶם לָבֵן בַּבֶּקֶר וַיִּנְשָׁק לְבָנָיו וּלְכַנּוֹתָיו וַיִּבְרָךְ אֹתָהֶם וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיָּשָׁב לָבֵן</p> <p>(ב) וַיַּעֲקֹב הָלַךְ לְדַרְכּוֹ וַיִּפְגְּעוּ בוֹ לְמַקְמוֹ:</p> <p>(ג) וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב פָּאֲשֶׁר מְלֹאכֵי אֱלֹקִים: רָאִים מַחֲנֵה אֱלֹהִים זֶה וַיִּקְרָא שֵׁם הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא מַחֲנֵיִם.</p>
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Who were these angels? Rashi answers:

<p><b>2. Rashi on Bereishit 32:2</b></p> <p>(2) "He met up with angels of G-d" – These were angels of the Land of Israel that came towards him to escort him to the Land. (3) "Machanayim (Camps)" – There were two camps [of angels]: those of outside the Land of Israel that came with him until now; and those of the Land of Israel that came to greet him (based on Bereishit Rabbah and Tanchuma).</p>	<p>רש"י על בראשית לב:ב-ג</p> <p>(ב) ויפגעו בו מלאכי אלקים - מלאכים של ארץ ישראל באו לקראתו ללוותו לארץ</p> <p>רש"י על בראשית פרק לב פסוק ג</p> <p>(ג) מחננים - שתי מחנות של חוצה לארץ שבאו עמו עד כאן ושל ארץ ישראל שבאו לקראתו (ב"ר ותנחומא).</p>
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This is consistent with one of Rashi's comments on Yaakov's dream:

<p><b>3. Rashi on Bereishit 65:22</b></p> <p>"[Angels of G-d] were ascending and descending [the ladder in Yaakov's dream]" – First it mentions angels ascending then it mentions those descending. The angels that escorted him in the Land did not leave the Land and went up to Heaven. And angels of outside the Land of Israel descended to escort him.</p>	<p>רש"י על בראשית כח:יב</p> <p>עולים ויורדים - עולים תחלה ואח"כ יורדים. מלאכים שליווהו בארץ אין יוצאים חוצה לארץ ועלו לרקיע וירדו מלאכי חוצה לארץ ללוותו.</p>
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The Ramban finds Rashi's explanation difficult and offers an alternate approach:

<p><b>4. Ramban's Commentary on Bereishit 32:2</b></p> <p>I wonder about this (whether Rashi's explanation is correct). For Yaakov did not yet reach the Land of Israel and was far away, and sent messengers to Esav from afar. And there (later on in Bereishit 32:23) the Torah says, "He crossed the Yabok pass," which is "Wadi Yabok the border of the Amonites" (Devarim 3:16), south-east of the Land of Israel, and he still had to pass through the border of the Amonites and Moabites and then the Land of Edom. The first entrance into the Land of Israel was in Shechem, for it says, "Yaakov came, complete, to the city of Shechem that is in the Land of Canaan" (Bereishit 33:18).</p>	<p>רמב"ן על בראשית לב:ב</p> <p>ואני תמה בזה, שהרי עדיין לא הגיע יעקב לארץ ורחוק היה משם ושלה מלאכים אל עשו מרחוק, ושם (להלן לב:כג) נאמר "ויעבור את מעבר יבק," שהוא "יבק הנחל גבול בני עמון" (דברים ג:טז), שהוא דרומית מזרחית לארץ ישראל, ועדיין יש לו לעבור גבול בני עמון ומואב ואחרי כך ארץ אדום. ותחלת ביאתו בארץ בשכם היה שנאמר (להלן לג:יח) ויבא יעקב שלם עיר שכם אשר בארץ כנען.</p>
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The Ramban offers two explanations of his own:

<p><b>5. Ramban's Commentary on Bereishit 32:2</b></p> <p>Rather, Yaakov had this vision when he reached the border of [the land of] his enemies, to let him know that there are more with him than there are with them. And it was called "Machanayim" ("Camps" in the plural, even though there was only one camp of angels) in the style of names.</p> <p>Or, the name Machanayim refers to [two camps:] his camp and the camp of the upper ones. Both of them are camps of G-d, blessing Him and affirming His unity, may His Name be blessed for all eternity.</p>	<p>רמב"ן על בראשית לב:ב אבל היתה המראה הזאת ליעקב כאשר בא בגבול אויביו להודיעו כי רבים אשר אתו מאשר אתם ונקרא שם המקום מחנים, כי כן הדרך בשמות.  או מחנים, מחנהו ומחנה העליונים, לומר כי מחנהו בארץ כמחנה המלאכים, כלם מחנות אלהים, מברכים לו ומודים בייחודו יתברך שמו לעולמים.</p>
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### Differences Between the 3 Explanations (one in Rashi and the two in the Ramban):

1. How does each of the three explain why Machanayim is in the plural?
2. Which angels appear to Yaakov?
3. Why does Yaakov see angels at this point in the story?

### B. The Maharal's Defense of Rashi

The Maharal in Gur Aryeh (his supercommentary on Rashi's commentary on the Chumash) makes a thorough defense of Rashi's approach against the Ramban's critique. Here is his central point:

<p><b>6. Gur Aryeh on Bereishit 32:1</b></p> <p>In my opinion this is not a real difficulty. For since Yaakov was going to come to the Land of Israel the angels of the Land of Israel greeted him to protect him. Since his travelling was for the sake of the Land of Israel and he was coming to the Land of Israel it was fitting that he should have angels of the Land of Israel guarding him. He should at least have protection that would remove any barriers to him reaching the Land of Israel. This is the responsibility of the angels of the Land of Israel. The angels of outside the Land of Israel would protect him from other types of damage.</p>	<p>גור אריה על בראשית לב:א ולפי דעתי אין זה שום קושיא, דכיון דהיה הולך ובא לארץ ישראל - באו המלאכים של ארץ ישראל לקראתו לשמור אותו, דכיון דצורך ארץ ישראל הוא, והוא הולך לארץ ישראל, הדין נותן שיהיו לו שומרים מלאכי ארץ ישראל, לכל הפחות השמירה דבר שהוא תולה בהליכה, שלא יהיה לו מונע לבא לארץ ישראל, וזה מוטל על מלאכי ארץ ישראל, ומלאכי חוצה לארץ לשמור אותו שלא יגיע לו נזק אחר.</p>
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This comment by the Maharal is in sync with an idea expressed in the name of the Baal Shem Tov, זצ"ל: You are where your thoughts are. Yaakov was, in mind, already in the Land of Israel, and the angels of the Land came to protect him. The Shem Mishmuel brings a halachic proof for this idea from the laws of Shabbat (Lech Lecha 5672 "El Haaretz"). A man's location for Shabbat – relevant for the laws of how far one can travel on Shabbat – is determined by where he is when Shabbat comes in. If a person is travelling and knows of a certain tree that he could theoretically reach before Shabbat, he can say, "My Shabbat location is at the base of that tree," and that effectively determines his location for Shabbat, **even though he is not physically there.**

### C. Resolving Difficulties

The Maharal also dealt with a number of difficulties that might arise from his defense of Rashi:

If Yaakov already merited protection by the Land of Israel's angels merely because he was travelling towards the Land, why did they only meet him here and not when he left Lavan's house? He answers that Yaakov was not really free of Lavan's house until Hashem came to Lavan in a dream and told him to be careful not to harm Yaakov. Up to that point Lavan might still have forced him to stay.

Why didn't Chutz Laaretz angels accompany him immediately when he left Beer Sheva? He answers that coming to Israel is elevation and that began before entering the Land, but leaving Israel was an unfortunate necessity. When it happens, it happens.

But if that is the case, why did the angels of outside the Land of Israel begin to accompany Yaakov already in Beit El? Rashi, answers the Maharal, is consistent: Rashi holds that during the dream Yaakov was on Mount Moriah. Leaving Yerushalayim, the holiest place in the land is the beginning of the descent.

## LIVE YOUR DREAM BY RABBI MENDEL FARBER

The word "והנה", "behold", appears three times in the first two verses of Yaakov's dream, indicating three separate revelations. The first: "והנה סלם מצב ארצה וראשו מגיע השמימה" – "Behold there was a ladder that stood on the earth and reached the heavens" (Bereishit 28:12). Man's mission and goal is to climb from his position in this world to the heights of the heavens. We are not limited to the finite boundaries of this three-dimensional world. There is a ladder available to us upon which we can raise ourselves out of this restrictive environment and ascend into eternity.

The second revelation to Yaakov was, "והנה מלאכי אלקים עלים וירדים בו" – "Behold Hashem's מלאכים, angels, were ascending to the heavens and descending from the heavens" (Bereishit 28:12). We are not independent existences whose source of strength is within ourselves. True, we must initiate the process. But we do only that, initiate the process. Our activities send forces to the heavens, and in turn, the energy needed to climb the ladder descends from the heavens.

The third והנה is, "והנה ה' נצב עליו" – "Behold Hashem stood above the ladder" (Bereishit 28:13). The third revelation to Yaakov was that the system does not function on its own. We send forces to the heavens, and there is a reciprocal spiritual reaction. But this is not simple cause and effect. It is Hashem constantly supervising the process that makes it work.

There is a fourth והנה several verses later, "והנה אנכי עמך" – Hashem says, "Behold I am with you" (Bereishit 28:15). Yaakov is told that even when we are not doing our part as we should, or even if perhaps we stumble, Hashem promises that He is there to prod us along the way. In the expression מלאכי אלקים the Torah uses the name of G-d indicating Divine judgment that ascends and descends the ladder. But Hashem the G-d of רחמים, mercy, stands above and controls it all. The מלאכי אלקים are the forces we activate through our actions; but it is the Hashem of רחמים that is ultimately in control.

And this was all revealed to Yaakov in a dream. Life starts not in the practicalities of the daily routine; it starts with a dream, with the aspiration to achieve the unachievable. Our lives should be motivated by our dreams instead of our dreams being motivated by our lives.

This Daf Keshet dedicated in memory of  
Dorothy Richards ז"ל

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*This publication is compiled by the staff and Rabbonim at **Shapells/Yeshivat Darché Noam** for men and **Midreshet Rachel v'Chaya Seminary** for women in Jerusalem. Find out more about the **married couples' programme** and the **Pathways Israel** and **Pathways Plus** programmes offered at [www.darchenoam.org](http://www.darchenoam.org) +972-2-651-1178, 5 Beit Hakerem Street, Jerusalem.*

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