

Stollen Moments – Vayetzei – December 7, 2024

PARASHA SUMMARY FROM WWW. REFORMJUDAISM.ORG

- Jacob dreams of angels going up and down a ladder. God blesses him. Jacob names the place Bethel. (28:10-22)
- Jacob works seven years in order to marry Rachel, but Laban tricks Jacob into marrying Leah, Rachel's older sister. (29:16-25)
- Jacob marries Rachel but only after having to commit himself to seven more years of working for Laban. (29:26-30)
- Leah, Rachel, and their maidservants, Bilhah and Zilpah, give birth to eleven sons and one daughter. (29:31-30:24)
- Jacob and his family leave Laban's household with great wealth. (31:1-32:3)

Genesis 28

וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב מִבְּעֵר שְׁבַע וַיֵּלֶךְ תְּרַנָּה: וַיִּפְגַּע בַּמָּקוֹם וַיֵּלֶן שָׁם כִּי-בָא הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיִּקַּח מֵאֲבָנֵי הַמָּקוֹם וַיִּשָּׁם מִרְאֲשֵׁתוֹ וַיִּשְׁכַּב בַּמָּקוֹם הַהוּא: וַיַּחֲלֶם וַהֲגִה סֹלֶם מַצֵּב אֲרָצָה וְרֹאשׁוֹ מֵגִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִמָה וַהֲגִה מְלֹאכֵי אֱלֹהִים עֲלֵים וַיְרֻדִים בּוֹ: וַהֲגִה יְהוָה נֹצֵב עָלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹרָהֶם אָבִיךָ וְאַלֹהֵי יִצְחָק הָאָרֶץ אֲנֹשֶׁר אִתָּה שְׁכַב עָלֶיךָ לָךְ אֲתַנְנָה וְלִזְרַעֲךָ: וַהֲגִה זֶרַעֲךָ כַּעֲפַר הָאָרֶץ וּפְרֻצֹת יָמָה וְקֹדְמָה וְצִפְנָה וְנִגְבָּה וְנִבְרָכוּ בְךָ כָּל-מְשֻׁפָּחֹת הָאֲדָמָה וּבְזֶרַעֲךָ: וַהֲגִה אֲנֹכִי עִמָּךְ וּשְׁמַרְתִּיךָ בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר-תֵּלֶךְ וְהִשְׁבַּתִּיךָ אֶל-הָאֲדָמָה הַזֹּאת כִּי לֹא אֶעֱזָבְךָ עַד אֲשֶׁר אִם-עָשִׂיתִי אֵת אֲשֶׁר-דִּבַּרְתִּי לָךְ: וַיִּקַּץ יַעֲקֹב מֵעֲלֹב מִשְׁנָתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲכֹל יֵשׁ יְהוָה בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא נִדְעָתִי: וַיִּירָא וַיֹּאמֶר מִה-נִּוְרָא הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה אֵין זֶה כִּי אִם-בֵּית אֱלֹהִים וְזֶה שַׁעַר הַשָּׁמַיִם: וַיִּשְׁכַּם יַעֲקֹב בַּבֹּקֶר וַיִּקַּח אֶת-הָאֲבָן אֲשֶׁר-שָׁם מִרְאֲשֵׁתוֹ וַיִּשָּׁם אֹתָהּ מִצֵּבָה וַיִּצַק שָׁמֶן עַל-רֹאשָׁהּ: וַיִּקְרָא אֶת-שֵׁם-הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא בֵּית-אֵל וְאוּלָם לִזְז שֵׁם-הָעִיר לְרֹאשְׁנָהּ: וַיָּנֹד יַעֲקֹב גָּדָר לֵאמֹר אִם-יְהִי אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי וְשָׁמְרָנִי בַדֶּרֶךְ הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ וְנָתַן-לִי לֶחֶם לֶאֱכֹל וּבְגָד לִלְבָּשׁ: וְשָׁבַתִּי בְשָׁלוֹם אֶל-בֵּית אָבִי וַהֲגִה יְהוָה לִי לֵאלֹהִים: וְהָאָבִן הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר-שָׁמַתִּי מִצֵּבָה יְהִי בֵּית אֱלֹהִים וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר תִּתֶּן-לִי עֲשֹׂר אֶעֱשְׂרֶנּוּ לָךְ:

10 Jacob left Beer-sheba, and set out for Haran. 11 He came upon a certain place and stopped there for the night, for the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of that place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. 12 He had a dream; a stairway was set on the ground and its top reached to the sky, and messengers of God were going up and down on it. 13 And standing beside him was יהוה, who said, "I am יהוה, the God of your father Abraham's [house] and the God of Isaac's [house]: the ground on which you are lying I will assign to you and to your offspring. 14 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. 15 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." 16 Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely יהוה is present in this place, and I did not know it!" 17 Shaken, he said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the abode of God, and that is the gateway to heaven." 18 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. 19 He named that site Bethel; but previously the name of the city had been Luz. 20 Jacob then made a vow, saying, "If God remains with me, protecting me on this journey that I am making, and giving me bread to eat and clothing to wear, 21 and I return safe to my father's house— יהוה shall be my God. 22 And this stone, which I have set up as a pillar, shall be God's abode; and of all that You give me, I will set aside a tithe for You."

Commentaries

Rashi on Genesis 28:12:1

Going up and down - Going up first and afterwards down; angels who accompany him in the land do not leave the land, but go up to the sky, and angels from outside the land go down to accompany him.

Ibn Ezra on Genesis 28:12

It is common for a sulam (ramp, ladder) to be a symbol, or it is the same numerical value as "Sinai." Rabbi Shlomo from Spain said that a ladder is a hint about the higher soul, and the mal'achim of God are thoughts of wisdom. And Rabbi Yeshua said that the reason for a ladder is that prayers go up it, and God's salvation comes down from the heavens... ..And it is also written: and other messengers go down to fulfill their divine tasks, like a king and his servants.

Toldot Yitzchak, Breisheet 28:12

The answer to the intention of the ladder is that they tell us that the mal'achim do not have enough energy from when God created them, but rather at every moment they need to receive hashpa'ah/ 'influence' from God, and that is what it means when it says that the mal'achim are going up; it is to get hashpa'ah from God. And they go down with their hashpa'ah, and it is unlike a building which does not need its builder afterwards.

The Five Books of Miriam: The Symbolism of Ladders - Ellen Frankel

The Rabbi's explain: According to our Sages, the sulam, Jacob's ladder, (also translated as "stairway" or "ramp") was the stairway leading from the Temple altar to God. But others teach that it was Mount Sinai, since the numerical value of sulam equals "Sinai." Still others say that the ladder represents Jewish history, with its many ups and downs, and it is further taught that ladders represent an individual's life history: 'The Holy One of Blessing sits and makes ladders, raising one person and casting down another.'

Esther the Hidden One interjects: We need to remember that ladders lead not only from earth up to heaven but also from heaven down to earth. As we leap up to reach the bottom rung of the heavenly ladder, God lowers the ladder to meet our outstretched hand. And when we cannot grasp even that lowest rung, She-Who-Dwells-Within reaches down and meets us where we are. Our Bubbies Offer: For centuries, Jewish women in Eastern Europe baked ladders into their hallahs for special occasions: for the meal just before Yom Kippur, so that our prayers for forgiveness should go up to Heaven; and for Shavuot, to remember how Moses climbed all the way up Mount Sinai to receive the Torah.

Torah Journeys -Vayetze - Rabbi Shefa Gold

Jacob's journey is blessed at its outset with a dream and with a moment of awakening. In the dream God shows Jacob the stairway that connects the realms of Heaven and Earth and then gives him a promise. Through this blessing we ourselves becomes that stairway, that connection, with our feet planted in the foundation of Earth and our crowns open to the expanse of Heaven. Through us the Divine flow pours down into the earthly realms, Through us the pleasure and miseries of earthly experience are offered up to The Divine Expanse.

**RABBI KOMEROFSKY WILL NOT AT STOLLEN MOMENTS NEXT WEEK.
HE WILL BE AT A FAMILY BAR MITZVAH.**