

Vayaitzai

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Dedicated in loving memory of **Tzvi ben Berel, z"l**. May his *Neshamah* continue to ascend higher and higher.

The ladder spanned Heaven and Earth, and angels went up and down it. According to the *Midrash*, the dream foretold of four future exiles that the descendants of Ya'akov would have to endure, Babylonian, Median, Greek, and Roman.

But as frightening a dream as that may have been for the fleeing Ya'akov *Avinu* as he was entering his own personal exile, it wasn't that part that left the greatest impression on him. This was:

"Ya'akov woke up from his sleep and said, 'God is in this place, and I did not know [it]!' He was frightened and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of Heaven!'" (Bereishis 28:18-19)

This is surprising because Ya'akov's being there seems to have been predicated on his knowledge that *Har HaBayis* is a special place. He had already gone as far Charan and, turned around to return to the place to *doven*, because he knew that it was the best place in the world to pray. This was especially since his *zaidy* named the place, *"God will see, as it is said to this day: 'On the mountain, God will be seen'" (Bereishis 22:14)*. So what was the big surprise?

The big surprise was, though he knew *Har HaBayis* was a house of God, he hadn't known until his dream that it was the *only* House of God on Earth. In other words, he found out that the only opening to Heaven is over *Eretz Yisroel*, and especially over *Har HaBayis*. This completely changed the nature of his exile out of the land,

as I have discussed many times in the past, and in several books.

But that's not the point I want to focus on here. Instead, I want to use this idea to help explain another one that has to do with the final redemption, since the dream was about that as well. It is what *Chazal* really mean when they said that all other redemptions will pale next to the final one (*Brochos* 12b). Does it really mean what they tell us that, God will perform even greater wonders than the plagues and the splitting of the sea?

Obviously if I am asking that question the answer must be the latter. But what is more profound than God turning nature on its head for the sake of the Jewish people, and showing complete mastery over all mankind?

Shabbos Day

A WHILE AGO I was shown a documentary about cell production in human beings. I love these things because they better my understanding of the miracles of God's world, and I often find important messages about life in them as well. Knowing a little *kabbalah*, it is also fascinating to discover hidden connections between the spiritual and physical worlds.

The only downside of watching these remarkable productions is frustration, and even anger sometimes. I get so overwhelmed by what I am being shown, knowledge that to me should close and lock the door on the debate for any person who still subscribes to the belief of a Godless creation. But instead, it's like trying to convince a person that it is no longer night while the sun is high in the sky.

The amazing thing is that birth has been a human activity for 5,784 years now. It is as big a miracle today as it was at the beginning, one that unfortunately people have gotten used to. The conception and birth of a new human being is the most remarkable thing in life, and yet people dismiss it as a common everyday occurrence.

The documentary I saw certainly changed that for me. It provided a peek into something we already knew a lot about, but not on this level. New technologies have allowed scientists to "see" what's going on inside cells to a mind-boggling degree, and all of sudden the very thing we took for granted provides an entirely new and even more profound level of joy. It's not the creation of something spectacularly new. It's the spectacularization of something assumed to be a lot more mundane.

Now, imagine if that happened to everything around you, if all of a sudden you didn't just see some opaque object, but all the "coding" behind it. Because that is

what it is like, coding in a computer. The reader only sees words, the writer only sees letters, and a graphic designer only sees their imagination come to life on a page. But the programmer sees lines and lines of incredibly brilliant coded algorithms to make the computer user's experience seamless and enjoyable.

Just look at the motherboard of a computer. Countless tiny circuits placed perfectly on a flat surface, connected and interconnected to so many other important pieces that give the computer life and ability. It is awesome to behold and yet, all of that is dark ages compared to a quantum computer. Even a quantum computer does not match the awesomeness of a human brain that is "only" the product of remarkable microscopic cells.

I'm losing my breath just thinking about all of this.

Seudas Shlishis

THE REASON FOR all of this discussion is the following from the *Ramchal*:

"... The Holy One, Blessed is He, will become revealed to all of His creations as a result of knowing and grasping, not as a result of wonders. Rather, they will be able to see His glory, *He should be blessed*, by grasping increased knowledge and wisdom, as it says, '*The Earth will be filled with knowledge of God as the water covers the sea*' (*Chavakuk 2:14*). At that time, signs and wonders will not be necessary to verify faith, but knowledge and understanding, [making people] like all the prophets and angels who recognize God as a result of their understanding. This will be clear and truthful knowledge which is not subject to any doubt, like the level of understanding of the entire Jewish people at *Har Sinai*." (*Da'as Tevunos, Siman 146*)

The truth is, we see this already from learning Torah. As a person delves deeper into a Torah idea, going from *Pshat* to *Remez* to *Drush* to *Sod*, they are just looking at the same thing on different levels. *Pshat*, the simple explanation, is the outside layer of an idea, *Remez*, hint, is the layer beneath it, *Drush*, exegesis, is the layer below that one, and *Sod* is a look at the "soul" of the idea itself.

And yes, the intellectual pursuit is a journey, though only a fraction now of what it will be like when God removes the veil from our eyes. Then we will be able to see Creation and history as they really exist, and it will be shocking. Shockingly *exciting* for those who had faith that it was really like that, and shockingly *painful* for those who fell for the smoke and mirrors of nature.

We also see it as a result of science as well. Science may be breaking down the

universe just to better understand its physical nature, but what it is has discovered and shared has greatly helped those, people like me, better understand the spiritual world. That has been extremely helpful, and exciting.

For all we know, and I strongly suspect it is true, all of it is part of what the *Ramchal* was talking about above. The world is clearly in a period of transition, seemingly to the Messianic Era if you understand the historic context in which it is all happening. So why shouldn't we already be in the phase of transition to that incredible level of understanding of God and Creation, that will make the wonders of past redemptions pale in comparison?

Ain Od Milvado, Part 74

THAT'S WHEN THE *Vav* will finally go back home. The *Zobar* says that Ya'akov wanted to give (i.e., make the verse) *Boruch Shem kevod*, etc., the second verse of the *Shema* (and which presently only has 24 letters), 25 letters (long) like the *Shema*. It only has 24 letters now, but it also has all the letters it can have. Which letter could Ya'akov have added?

The letter *Vav* at the beginning of the verse. Then we would say, "*Hear O Israel, the Lord is God, the Lord is One,*" AND "*Blessed be the Name of His glorious kingdom forever.*" In the meantime, we do not add the *Vav* and, therefore, the AND.

What's the difference? The *Vav* not only connects the two verses grammatically, but conceptually. It says that the spiritual clarity of the angels regarding the existence of God, the level of the *Shema*, also exists on earth, the level of reality to which *Boruch Shem kevod* alludes. That is the Messianic Period spoken about here, "*On that day, God will be One, and His Name, One*" (*Zechariah* 14:9).

And remember that *Aleph* that transforms "*dumm—blood*" into *Adam*, "*kais—throne*" into *kisay* (*Rasbi, Shemos* 17:6), "*vayikar—and it happened,*" into "*vayikra*"—and He called (*Rasbi, Vayikra* 1:1), "*mais—dead,*" into *emes—truth,*" and last, but not least, "*goleb—exile,*" into "*geulah—redemption*"? Well it's comprised of an upper *Yud*, alluding the clarity of the *Shema*, and a lower *Yud* alluding to our level of reality, by none other than the letter *Vav*. And when it does, the total *gematria* of the letter *Aleph* is 26 (10+6+10), which is the *gematria* of the *Shem Hovayab*.

In fact, the *Vav* in the *Aleph* looks a lot like the ladder in Ya'akov's dream that connected Heaven and Earth. And every time a person does something, *anything*, to make the reality of God more real in this world, they play the role of the *Vav* in history. They connect Heaven and Earth, complete the *Aleph*, and bring *tikun* to themselves and the world.