

וַיֵּצֵא

ה.

וַיִּנְפַק יַעֲקֹב מִבְּעָר שֶׁבַע וַאֲזַל לְחָרֹן: יֵאָדָּר עַל וַיֵּצֵא בְּאַתְרָא וּבֵת תַּמְן אַרְי עַל שְׁמֵיִשָּׁא וְנָסִיב מֵאַבְנֵי אֶתְרָא וְשׂוּי אֶסְדוּהִי וְשָׂכִיב בְּאַתְרָא הַהוּא: יב וְחָלַם וְהָא סְלֵמָא נְעִיז בְּאַרְעָא וְרִישִׁיָּה מְטִי עַד צִית שְׁמֵיִא וְהָא מְלֵאכִיָּא דִּי סְלֵקוּ וְנִחְתּוּ בָּהּ: יג וְהָא יִקְרָא דִּי מַעַתְד עֲלוּהִי

וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב מִבְּעָר שֶׁבַע וַיֵּלֶךְ חָרָנָה: יא וַיִּפְגַּע בַּמָּקוֹם וַיֵּלֶן שָׁם כִּי-בָא הַשָּׁמֶשׁ וַיִּקַּח מֵאַבְנֵי הַמָּקוֹם וַיִּשָּׂם מִרְאשֹׁתָיו וַיִּשְׁכַּב בַּמָּקוֹם הַהוּא: יב וַיַּחְלֶם וְהִנֵּה סֹלֶם מִצֵּב אֶרְצָה וְרֵאשׁוֹ מִגִּיעַ הַשָּׁמַיְמָה וְהִנֵּה מְלֵאכֵי אֱלֹהִים עֹלִים וְיֹרְדִים בּוֹ: יג וְהִנֵּה יְהוָה נֹצֵב עָלָיו

עריצות. ושנה הכתוב ולא כתב ויחפלה, ללמדך שקפלה לו הארץ, כמו שמפורש בפרק גיד הנשה: כי בא השמש. היה לו לכתוב ויצא השמש וילן שם, כי בא השמש משמע שקפלה לו חמה פתאום שלא צעונתה כדי שילין שם: וישם מראשותיו. עשאו כמין מרוב צביז לראשו, שירא מפני חיות רעות. התחילו מריצות זו עם זו, זאת אומרת עלי יניח לדיק את ראשו וזאת אומרת עלי יניח, מיד עשאו הקדוש ברוך הוא אצן אחת, וזה שנאמר (להלן פסוק יח) ויקח את האצן אשר שם מראשקו: וישכב במקום ההוא. לשון מיעוט, צאומו מקום שכב אבל י"ד שנים ששמש צבית עבר לא שכב צלילה, שהיה עוסק צמורה: (יג) עלים וירדים. עולים תחלה ואחר כך יורדים. מלאכים שליווהו בצרך און יוצאים חוצה לארץ ועלו לרקיע, וירדו מלאכי חוצה לארץ ללוותו: (יג) נצב עליו. לשמרו:

(א) ויצא יעקב. על ידי שצביל שרעות צנות כנען צעמי יאחז אציו הלך עשו אל ישמעאל, הפסיק הענין בפרשתו של יעקב וכתיב (לעיל פסוק ו) ויקרא עשו פי צדף וגו', ומשגמר חזר לענין הראשון: ויצא. לא היה צריך לכתוב אלא וילך יעקב חרנה ולמה הזכיר יציאתו, אלא מגיד שיצאת לדיק מן המקום עושה רושם, שבזמן שהלדיק צעיר הוא הודה הוא זיהו הוא הדרה, יא משם פנה הודה פנה זיהו פנה הדרה. וכן וקרא מן המקום (רות א, ו) האומר בנעמי ורות: וילך חרנה. יא ללכת לחרן: (יא) ויפגע במקום. לא הזכיר הכתוב צאיו מקום אלא צמקום הנזכר צמקום אחר, הוא הר המוריה, שנאמר צו (לעיל כג, ד) ויקרא את המקום מרחק: ויפגע. כמו ופגע ציריחו (יהושע טו, ו), ופגע צד צפת (שם יב, א). ורצותינו פירשו לשון תפלה, כמו ואל תפגע צי (ירמיה א, טו). ולמדנו שתקן תפלת

And Jacob left Beer-Sheba. Rashi cites a famous comment from Bereishis Rabbah to clarify why the Torah mentions Jacob's departure from the city: *The departure of a righteous person from a place makes an impression, for when a righteous person is in a city, he constitutes its magnificence, its splendor and its grandeur. Once he departs, its magnificence, splendor and grandeur depart.* Is there a specific part of the phrase which suggests that Beer-Sheba was a beautiful city before Jacob left it, and that his departure rendered it desolate? On what basis does the Midrash derive this interpretation about the departure?

In Parashas Bo, we read וַיֵּצֵא מֹשֶׁה פָּרַעַה בְּחָרִי אַף [Moses] exited from Pharaoh with burning anger, (Ex. 11:8). Here the term implies permanent dislocation. Similarly, וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב מִבְּעָר שֶׁבַע denotes that Jacob was severed somehow from Beer-Sheba. Jacob was uprooted by forces beyond his control, compelled to leave a place he loved. It is in light of the phrase וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב מִבְּעָר שֶׁבַע that the Midrash and Rashi conclude that Jacob left a place to which he had become bonded. Jacob and Beer-Sheba had merged into a symbiotic entity, and now Jacob had to leave Beer-Sheba and become dislocated.

How are we to understand the symbiotic relationship between Jacob and Beer-Sheba? To gain insight into this connection, we must consider Beer-Sheba's special significance in Jacob's life. *And he [Abraham] planted an eishel in Beer-Sheba, and he called there in the name of the Lord, the God of the world* (21:33). Beer-Sheba was the first home of the covenantal community, the center of spiritual life for the adherents of Abraham's teaching. When Jacob left Beer-Sheba, he was pulled away from this spiritual center. Perhaps he was frightened that if he left the home of his father and grandfather and the center of their teaching, he would also lose his role as leader and teacher of the covenantal community.

VAYEITZEI

10 And Jacob left Beer-Sheba,* and he went to Haran.* 11 And he encountered 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. 12 And he dreamed, and behold! a ladder set up on the ground and its top reached to heaven; and behold, angels of God were ascending and descending upon it.* 13 And behold, the Lord was standing over

Beer-Sheba was rooted in a wellspring of *kedushah*. It was a conduit for the Divine Presence. But when Jacob left, Beer-Sheba lost its glory. Once Jacob had gone, Beer-Sheba resembled Mount Sinai after the shofar was sounded and the sanctity of the mount dissipated. Later in Jewish history, that *kedushah* would find its home in the place that Jacob encountered on his journey from Beer-Sheba: the holy city of Jerusalem. (*Darosh Darash Yosef*, pp. 73-75)

וַיֵּלֶךְ הָרְחֵבָה - *and he went to Haran*. Jacob was perplexed by a conundrum. The blessings of Abraham could only be manifest in *Eretz Yisrael*. When Isaac was faced with famine and wanted to leave *Eretz Yisrael*, he was barred from taking this step. If leaving the Promised Land was forbidden, why did God tell Jacob to do so? Was not his mission as an ancestor of the Jewish people bound up with the Land of Israel? Jacob surely asked himself: Can I really succeed in building a community in Haran? Why should I leave behind the myriads of adherents whom Abraham and Isaac trained?

Apparently it was God's will that Jacob begin anew with a community of twelve souls and, ultimately, seventy: *all the souls of the house of Jacob who came to Egypt were seventy* (46:27). In Haran, Jacob was called upon to start a new community with a handful of children. Here God teaches a fundamental truth about Judaism. The wisdom and moral principles are recognizable and understandable in every location, in every country—even on the moon. Had Jacob not left Beer-Sheba, the community would have been limited only to the Land of Israel. Judaism must also be taught outside Israel. (*Darosh Darash Yosef*, p. 76; *Boston*, 1978)

וַיִּפְגַּע בַּמָּקוֹם - *and he encountered the place*. The paradigmatic figure who found God despite His transcendence is the prophet Ezekiel. Ezekiel's prophetic revelation took place not in the Temple, nor even in the Land of Israel, but rather in a concentration camp in the midst of the bitter Babylonian exile, *among the captives on the River Kebar* (*Ezek.* 1:1). Yet, despite the fact that it was a time of acute *hester panim*, *the heavens opened and [Ezekiel] saw visions of God*. (*Ezek.* 1:1). When Ezekiel declared, *Blessed is the glory of God מִמְּקוֹמוֹ, from His place* (*ibid.* 3:12), he was referring to the huge distance between God and His people. Jacob similarly encountered God in a time of travail. Penniless, fleeing his brother, on the road towards exile, Jacob also perceived God as *מָקוֹם*. (*Birchat Yitzchak*, p. 35)

Chazal interpret the word *מָקוֹם* in the context of prayer, both in regard to Jacob and Abraham. Chazal indicate that Abraham instituted the *Shacharis* prayer based on the verse, *וַיִּשְׁכַּם אַבְרָהָם בְּבֹקֶר אֵל, הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר עָמַד שָׁם*, *And Abraham arose early in the morning to the מָקוֹם, place, where he had stood before the Lord* (19:27). Based on this verse, in which the word *מָקוֹם* also appears, they suggest that Jacob instituted the *Ma'ariv* prayer. The word *מָקוֹם* has the connotation of an appointment, a date, a rendezvous in a certain place at a certain time. Prayer is our rendezvous with God, which ideally takes place at a specific time and specific place every day. (*Lecture to Rabbinic Alumni*, 1968)

וַיַּהַיְתוּ מַלְאֲכֵי אֱלֹהִים עֲלֵים וְיֹרְדִים בּוֹ - *and behold, angels of God were ascending and descending upon it*. According to the Midrash, Jacob's image was engraved on the heavenly throne (*Bereishis*