

# Parashat Vayetze

Genesis 28:10–32:3

DECEMBER 5, 2019



## SUMMARY

At the beginning of *Vayetze*, *Ya'akov* runs away from home after tricking his father, *Yitzhak*, into giving him a blessing that was meant for his brother *Esav*. As he's travelling on his way to *Haran*, to live with his Uncle *Lavan*, he stumbles across a mysterious place where he spends the night. He uses stones for a pillow and, that night, he dreams of angels going up and down a ladder. In the dream G'd speaks to *Ya'akov*, promising to always be with him, and to give him many descendants who will inherit the land on which he is sleeping.

*Ya'akov* wakes up suddenly from his dream--in surprise and feeling G'd's presence. He takes a stone and sets it up as a marker, calling the place *Beit El*, or House of G'd. *Ya'akov* promises to be faithful to G'd if G'd will provide him with shelter, clothing, and food.

*Ya'akov* continues along his way. When he arrives at his mother's birthplace, he meets *Rahel* at a well and falls in love with her. His uncle, who is *Rahel's* father, agrees that *Ya'akov* and *Rahel* should get married. *Ya'akov* then works for *Lavan* for seven years. When it is time for him to marry *Rahel*, *Lavan* tricks him into marrying *Rahel's* sister *Leah* instead. After a week *Ya'akov* marries *Rahel*, too--then works for his uncle *Lavan* for seven more years. *Rahel* and *Leah* and their servants give birth to the sons who will become the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel. At the end of *Parashat Vayetze*, *Ya'akov* leaves *Lavan* and returns with his family to the land of *Canaan*.

### From Our Commentators:

#### Rashi

ויפגע במקום. לא הזכיר  
הפסוק באיזה מקום אלא  
במקום - הנזכר במקום  
אחר, הוא הר המוריה,  
שנאמר בו וירא את המקום  
מרחק:

#### AND HE HAPPENED UPON THE PLACE —

Scripture does not mention which place, but by writing במקום the place it refers to the place mentioned already in another passage, viz., Mount Moriah of which it is stated (Genesis 22:4) "And he saw the place (המקום) afar off".

### FOR DISCUSSION:

- 1) The *Torah* tells us that after leaving *Be'er Sheva*, *Ya'akov* happens to run into a particular place where he sleeps. He gathers stones from that place and puts them under his head, then lays down and dreams about a ladder reaching from the earth up to the heavens. He sees angels going up and down on the ladder. Although the *Torah* doesn't give us a name for this place, the dream that *Ya'akov* had and his comment about this being a place where G'd is would seem to hint that there is something special about this place. What do you think might make this place special?
- 2) What do you think was the message of *Ya'akov's* dream of the ladder connecting the Earth and the heavens and the angels travelling up and down? What did the ladder, and the moving angels symbolize?
- 3) In Hebrew, the word for "angels" is related to the word for "messengers". How are angels and messengers similar or different from each other?

