



ביה

**Parshas Vayeitzei in a Nutshell**  
(Genesis 28:10–32:3)

Jacob leaves his hometown of Beersheba and journeys to Charan. On the way, he encounters “the place” and sleeps there, dreaming of a ladder connecting heaven and earth, with angels climbing and descending on it; G-d appears and promises that the land upon which he lies will be given to his descendants. In the morning, Jacob raises the stone on which he laid his head as an altar and monument, pledging that it will be made the house of G-d.

In Haran, Jacob stays with and works for his uncle Laban, tending Laban’s sheep. Laban agrees to give him his younger daughter, Rachel—whom Jacob loves—in marriage, in return for seven years’ labor. But on the wedding night, Laban gives him his elder daughter, Leah, instead—a deception Jacob discovers only in the morning. Jacob marries Rachel, too, a week later, after agreeing to work another seven years for Laban.

Leah gives birth to six sons—Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun—and a daughter, Dinah, while Rachel remains barren. Rachel gives Jacob her handmaid, Bilhah, as a wife to bear children in her stead, and two more sons, Dan and Naphtali, are born.

*(Continued next column)*

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Leah does the same with her handmaid, Zilpah, who gives birth to Gad and Asher. Finally, Rachel’s prayers are answered and she gives birth to Joseph.

Jacob has now been in Charan for fourteen years, and wishes to return home. But Laban persuades him to remain, now offering him sheep in return for his labor. Jacob prospers, despite Laban’s repeated attempts to swindle him. After six years, Jacob leaves Charan in stealth, fearing that Laban would prevent him from leaving with the family and property for which he labored. Laban pursues Jacob, but is warned by G-d in a dream not to harm him. Laban and Jacob make a pact on Mount Gal-Ed, attested to by a pile of stones, and Jacob proceeds to the Holy Land, where he is met by angels. ❖

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**Halachic Zmanim**  
Shabbos, November 28  
Eastern Standard Time  
Earliest Tallis ..... 5:58 AM  
Latest Morning Shema .... 9:19 AM  
Earliest Mincha (Gedola) 12:09 PM  
Plag Hamincha .....3:34 PM  
Earliest Evening Shema ....5:01 PM

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**Shabbos Schedule**

**Erev Shabbos – Nov 27 / Kislev 11**

Candle Lighting .....4:12 pm

Mincha .....4:15 pm

**Shabbos Day – Nov 28 / Kislev 12**

Shacharis ..... 9:30 am\*

Torah Reading ..... 10:30 am

Rabbi Drasha ..... 11:05 am

Mincha .....4:15 pm

Rabbi’s Drasha.....4:35 pm

Shabbos Ends .....5:15 pm

*\*Latest morning Shema is now 9:19 AM. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).*

**Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):**

**Minyan**

Shacharis (Mon-Fri) ..... 6:15 am

Shacharis (Sunday) ..... 9:00 am

Mincha (Sun-Thurs) .....1:45 pm

Maariv (Sun-Thurs) .....9:15 pm

**Bulletin**

*This week’s Bulletin  
is sponsored by  
The Berman Law Office.*

**Join us each  
weekday morning  
Mon-Fri as we delve into  
the mysteries of  
Chassidic concepts.  
5:55 am  
followed immediately  
by Shacharis.**

## Chassidic Masters

### "The Temple Mount As Sacred Space"

*By Tzvi Freeman  
Based on a discourse by  
the Lubavitcher Rebbe.*

In any field of inquiry, the most interesting aspect is always thresholds. Interfaces between two systems.

To an ecologist, mountains are interesting for their alpine forests and vertically oriented fauna. Plains are interesting for their grasses and swamps. But nothing is as fascinating as the foothills, where two ecosystems meet.

One of the most interesting (and useful) fields today is that of "human interface"—the place where people and their machines meet. And then there is the study of chaoplexity—the fascinating border between rigid order and total randomness, where things such as amoebas, bond traders, Chabad House rabbis and the like occur. In halachah (Torah law), there is much discussion on the status of twilight—the gray area between when day stops and night begins. A gateway is one of the most common metaphors of Torah: a place where you are neither in nor out, but part of both.

Torah generally talks in terms of dual systems: heaven and earth; Gd and man; creator and created; nothingness and something. So if we want to get into fascinating territory, we can ask: Where do they meet, and what happens there?

The first description of such a place was given by Jacob, the third of the three fathers of the Jewish people. On his way leaving the land of Canaan he slept at a place and dreamt of a ladder with messengers of G-d ascending and descending. When he awoke, he exclaimed, "Y-H-V-H (we pronounce that 'Havayeh,' as the Torah instructs us not to pronounce the four-letter name of G-d the way it is written; more about this name later) is in this place, and I didn't realize!" Once this realization had hit him, he trembled and said, "This place is awesome!" (The classic Aramaic translation reads, "This is not a normal place.") And then, "This could only be the house of Elokim, and this is the gateway of heaven!"

It was more than seven hundred years before Jacob's vision could be fulfilled, when King Solomon built the Holy Temple on that mountain, placed the Holy of Holies around that spot, and placed the holy ark on the rock where Jacob had laid his head to rest. The rabbis of the Talmud call that rock "the foundation stone"—because, they say, from it the world was begun. Read that as "the origin of something from nothing, and the place where the two meet."

What happened in that space? It met with anti-space. This is how it worked:

The chamber of the Holy of Holies measured twenty cubits by twenty cubits. The ark was placed in the center, measuring two and a half by one and a half cubits.

From the southern wall of the chamber to the adjacent side of the ark measured ten cubits. The same measurement was taken on the north side of the chamber.

You're reading correctly: The ark took up no space. Or, to be more precise, from the frame of reference of the dimensions of the chamber, the ark occupied no space. The ark itself had to take up two and a half by one and a half cubits, because those are the dimensions specified for it by the Torah in order to be an ark that can go in this chamber and not take up space.

To get to the point: Space and non-space met, but neither canceled out the other. Which is exactly what Jacob said, "Havayeh is in this space!" and yet, "This is the house of Elokim."

Jacob found himself in a place that expresses the essence of Torah. He found himself between two expressions of the one G-d: Havayeh and Elokim.

Pantheism and idolatry arose by separating these two manifestations of the same G-d. All people recognize that there are forces of nature. Some are smart enough to realize the unity of all these forces from observing how they harmonize together and are expressed in similar patterns. The ancients created from this understanding a sophisticated pantheon of divine beings.

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The more enlightened amongst them thought of these idols as mere reflections of the forces of nature. Yet, to this day, most people still accept these forces as being absolute and necessary. A world without gravity or electromagnetic waves is almost as unthinkable as a world without TV. Never mind the absence of time, space and logic themselves.

G-d as the force behind all natural forces is expressed by the name Elokim. When the Torah discusses the creation of the world by ten sayings, it uses this name, as in "Elokim said, 'It should be light'— and there was light." So this is G-d expressed within time and space and all that we can observe. G-d as He is immanent.

But at the essence of everything is something that is beyond all of them. Something that cannot be defined as the perfection of them, nor as the absence of them. Something that cannot be defined at all. Havayah is G-d as He is beyond all that can be known. Transcendent. "I am Havayah, I have not changed." Beyond time and space and any reasoning we could apply. The very source of all being. As Maimonides writes, "If He is, then all else is. But if He is not, then nothing else can be." Miracles, Torah and tzaddikim are manifestations of Havayah in the world.

Interestingly, the ancient pantheons, from Egypt to Norway, generally included an original god from whom all things began. But that godhead remained entirely aloof from the whole hierarchy.

After all, getting involved in the petty world that arose from his essential being would contaminate his perfect oneness. And so Pharaoh said to Moses, "Who is Havayah that I should listen to His voice?" Pharaoh didn't deny the existence of such a being, just the idea that He would care to mix into Egypt's internal politics.

Abraham was the first to smash this dichotomy. He introduced the idea that the same One G-d who originated all things, He also has an intimate concern about what goes on down here. Until Abraham, the Midrash says, G-d was L-rd of the heavens. Abraham made Him G-d of heaven and earth. Abraham said, "See all these forces of nature? All your gods of wind and fire and love and war and fertility and playfulness? They are no more than manifestations of a single, transcendent being who does not change and from whom all things come. As He can be found infinite and unchanging at the essence that precedes all things, so He can be found in the ephemeral, temporal world in which we live. Havayah is Elokim. In truth, there is nothing else but Him."

Jacob, Abraham's grandson, was delighted to find a place where there was no doubt as to his grandfather's wisdom. He had found the place where space began, the one place which was not dominated by G-d as Elokim, but where Havayah is in this place. He envisioned a time when his own descendants would build a house there, a means by which such a revelation could be captured and projected out into the entire world.

FrUntil "No one will teach his fellow, saying, 'Know Havayah!' because all of them will know Me, from their smallest to their greatest, says Havayah."

Although that is a nice place to end, there is a question left that needs to be answered:

Returning to the space of the ark that took up no space, you may ask: How could space remain in the midst of a revelation of non-space? Space is a limitation. When all limitations are blasted away by a revelation of Havayah, space should altogether disappear. Expecting otherwise is like expecting the shadows to remain when all the lights are turned on.

An easy answer is, "It's a miracle. G-d can do anything." However, that's a last-resort answer. First we need to see if there's something we can sink our teeth into, before declaring it out of our bounds.

One way out is to ask, "Perhaps our understanding of space is not what space really is?" By acknowledging that there could be non-space, we have already cast away the impression that space is an absolute given, something that just is and must be. The same G-d who created a world bound by time and space could have come up with something else altogether— although we creatures of time and space would be hard put to imagine such a thing.

***(Continued next page)***

But we could go even further: Is space a static thing? Or is it an event which is continually being renewed out of the void?

If we choose the second option, we can then see space itself as just another expression of that which is beyond space. The One G-d expresses Himself as non-space and as space—but He is neither. And the very fact that the two can coexist is a demonstration of this idea: that He is neither of them, but rather that which is beyond both.

This is the connection between this space and the third of the forefathers: Although the world is generally a binary place, there is a third factor, that which binds and unites all opposites together—even space and non-space. And that, too, is the revelation exemplified by the Third Temple, may it be built very soon, sooner than we can imagine. ❖

## From Our Sages

### ***Jacob went out from Be'er Sheva, and he went to Charan (Genesis 28:10)***

*The story of Jacob's journey to Charan is the story of every soul's descent to the physical world.*

*The soul, too, leaves behind the spiritual idyll of Be'er Sheva (literally, "Well of the Seven"—a reference to the supernal source of the seven divine attributes, or sefirot, from which the soul derives) and journeys to Charan (literally, "Wrath"): a place of lies, deceptions, struggle and hardship; a place in which material concerns consume one's days and nights, sapping one's energy, confusing one's priorities, and all but obscuring the purpose for which one has come there in the first place.*

*Yet it is in Charan, in the employ of Laban the Deceiver, not in the Holy Land and its "tents of learning," that Jacob founds the nation of Israel. It is here that he marries and fathers eleven of the twelve sons who will become the twelve tribes of Israel. Had Jacob remained in the Holy Land, the life of this pious scholar who lived 3,500 years ago would have been of no significance to us today.*

*The soul, too, achieves its enduring significance only upon its descent into "Charan." Only as a physical being, invested within a physical body and inhabiting a physical environment, can it fulfill the purpose of its creation, which is to build "a dwelling for G-d in the physical world."*

*-- (From the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)*

### ***He slept over the night there, because the sun had set (Genesis 28:11)***

*G-d caused the sun to set prematurely, so that Jacob should sleep over. . . . For G-d said: "Should this righteous man enter My home, and depart without staying the night?"*

*-- (Talmud; Rashi)*

### ***A ladder stood on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven (Genesis 28:12)***

*This is prayer.*

*-- (Zohar)*

### ***This . . . shall be the house of G-d (Genesis 28:22)***

*Not like Abraham, with whom it is called a "mountain" (Genesis 22:14); not like Isaac, with whom it is called a "field" (Genesis 24:63); but like Jacob, who called it a "house."*

*-- (Talmud, Pesachim 88a)*

## Haftorah for Vayeitzei in a Nutshell

*Hosea 11:7-12:14*

This week's haftorah mentions Jacob's flight from home to the "field of Aram," an episode that is recounted in this week's Torah reading.

The haftorah begins with the prophet Hosea's rebuke of the Jewish people for forsaking G-d. Nevertheless, Hosea assures the people that G-d will not abandon them: "How can I give you, Ephraim, and deliver you [to the hands of the nations]? . . . I will not act with My fierce anger; I will not return to destroy Ephraim."

The prophet discusses the misdeeds of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and the future degeneration of the Kingdom of Judea. He contrasts their behavior to that of their forefather Jacob who was faithful to G-d and prevailed against enemies, both human and angelic.

The haftorah also makes mention of the ingathering of the exiles which will occur during the Final Redemption: "They shall hasten like a bird from Egypt and like a dove from the land of Assyria; and I will place them in their houses, says the Lord." ❖



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**Good Shabbos to all!**

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