



## DIVREI MENACHEM

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# From “Hineh” to “Hinneni”

The first phrase of our Parsha and its title, “Vayetze,” says it all. “*Vayetze Yaakov*” – ‘And Yaakov went out.’ In today’s parlance, we might say that Yaakov went out of his comfort zone. He left Beer Sheva for Horon; he left the spiritual warmth and custody of his parents’ home for the wide world with all its temptations and diversions.

Moreover, R. Hirsch points out that Yaakov was now alone and bereft of wealth and sustenance, unlike Avraham, who set out on a journey with his family and possessions. Thus, what Yaakov takes with him on his journey is but his essential self – his thoughts, values, dreams, and fears.

No wonder that Yaakov was somewhat confused. No wonder that when he awoke from his dream, he surprised himself, exclaiming that where he had rested was holy ground. He declared, “This is none other than the House of God! And this a gate to heaven!” (Bereishit 28:12).

Yaakov witnessed a ladder on which angels were ascending and descending to the very spot where he was sleeping. For R. Hirsch, it appears, Yaakov is the prototype, serving future lost souls searching their way during

their lifetime’s hazardous expedition. Thus, in the broader sense, the angels’ mission was to summon from above both Yaakov and his future descendants “to work themselves up towards a lofty heaven-sent goal.”

The ladder informs us that there is an essential link between ‘Heaven’ and ‘Earth.’ Moreover, the place upon which the ladder stands is no less than the “House of God.”

Extrapolating from this concept, we might say that wherever we rest our weary heads is an abode for Hashem. In a sense, our souls – which represent the breath of God within our material selves – are a repose for Hashem if we but let Him into our innermost sanctum.

It appears that we need Yaakov’s angels to check on us once in a while to remind us of Hashem’s Presence and paternal protection as we travel along our life-long trail. But, oh – How many times do we wake up, having forgotten or betrayed our Father’s house!

Perhaps, like Yaakov, we need that “Hineh” (הנה) experience (v.12), that sudden awareness invoked by the term “And behold!” Or perhaps the term הנה reminds us of the phrase ינה – “Here I am” – stirring us in our dream-like state to recall that Hashem is always there to take care of us. ■

Shabbat Shalom! *Menachem Persoff*