

דין מעתה עלוהי ואמר אנא יי אלהה
 דאברהם אביך ואלהה דיצחק ארעא די את
 שרי עלה לך אתגנינה ולבניך: יי ויהון בניך
 סגיאין בעפרא דארעא ותתקף למערבא
 ולמדינתא ולצפונא ולדרומא ויתברכון
 בדילך כל זרעית ארעא ובדיל בניך: טו והא
 מימרי בסעדה ואטרנגה בכל אתר די תהך
 ואתיבניך לארעא דרא ארי לא אשקניך עד

יהוה נצב עליו ויאמר אני יהוה אלהי אברהם אביך ואלהי
 יצחק הארץ אשר אתה שכב עליה לך אתגננה ולזרעך:
 יי והיה זרעך בעפר הארץ ופרצת ימה וקדמה וצפנה ונגבה
 ונברכו בך כל משפחת האדמה וזרעך: טו והנה אנכי עמך
 ושמרתיך בכל אשר תלך והשבתיך אל האדמה הזאת כי
 לא אעזבך עד אשר אסעשיתי את אשר דברתי לך:

כ"ט

קיפל הקב"ה כל ארץ ישראל תחתיו, רמז לו שתהא נוחה ליכבש לבניו² (כד'
 חמות, שזכ מקומו של אדם)³: (יד) ופרצת. וחזקת, כמו וכן יפרוך:
 (טו) אנכי עמך. לפי שהיה ירא מעשו ומלצו: עד אשר אם עשיתי. אם
 משמש בלשון כיו: דברתי לך. ללכך ועלך, מה שבצטחתי לאצרכם על
 זרעו, לך בצטחתי ולא לעשו, שלא אמרתי לו כי יחק יקרא לך זרע, אלא כי

מלאכים שליווהו בארץ חין יולאים חוכה לארץ ועלו לרקיע, וירדו מלאכי
 חוכה לארץ ללוותו: (יג) נצב עליו. לשמרו: ואלהי יצחק. אף על פי שלא
 מנינו במקרא שיחד הקב"ה שמו על הכדיקים בחייהם לכתוב אלהי פלוני,
 משום שנאמר הן בקדושי לא יאמין, כאן ייחד שמו על יחאק, לפי שכחו
 עיניו, וכלוא צדיק, וברי הוא כמה, וילך הרע פסק ממנו: שכב עליה.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● What happened to the place where Ya'akov slept? (v. 13)

RASHI: God folded the entire Land of Israel under him, hinting to him that it would be easily conquered by his children.

CHIZKUNI: *Rashi* does not mean that the entire Land of Israel was folded under Ya'akov *literally*. Rather, this was part of Ya'akov's dream.

MASKIL LE DAVID: *Rashi* was troubled by the fact that the verse states, "I will give to you and to your descendants *the land on which you are lying*," suggesting that God was only promising him the four cubits on which he was lying! Therefore, *Rashi* explained that, in

this instance, the entire Land of Israel had been miraculously folded under Ya'akov.

But how was such an astonishing miracle possible? And what was the point of it? Where did all its inhabitants go?

It seems to me, that the whole of the Land of Israel was not folded under Ya'akov in the literal sense. Rather, God uprooted Mount Moriah, on which the "foundation stone" of the world is located, and placed it under Ya'akov (see *Rashi* to v. 11). Since that stone was the foundation of the entire Land of Israel, the result is that when Ya'akov was lying there, it was as if the whole Land was underneath him.

TORAS MENACHEM

It was explained at length above that the Land of Israel was not yet holy in the time of the Patriarchs, which is why we find that they left the Land on a number of occasions (see *Toras Menachem* to 15:8; see also *ibid.* 26:2-3).

This begs the question: If the Land was not yet holy, why were the angels forbidden to leave?

THE EXPLANATION

When we say that the Land of Israel was not holy in the times of the Patriarchs, it means that the *physical Land* itself had not become holy. In heaven, however, the Land has always been desired by God.

Therefore, the Patriarchs who lived down here on earth were permitted to leave the Land, since the physical Land had not yet become holy. But the angels, who dwelled in heaven, were not permitted to leave, because in heaven the Land of Israel has always been associated with holiness.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 25, p. 152ff.)

❖ DID THE LAND OF ISRAEL FOLD LITERALLY? (v.13)

Rashi writes that when Ya'akov was sleeping, the entire Land of Israel was folded by God miraculously underneath him, as a sign that the Land would be easy to conquer by his children.

Chizkuni and **Maskil leDavid** write that this miracle could not have happened literally, for it appears to be an unnecessarily extreme violation of nature, and they offer alternative explanations for *Rashi's* words.

Rashi however gives no indication whatsoever that the miracle did not occur in the literal sense, and bearing in mind that *Rashi* wrote his commentary for a child who is learning the Torah for the first time, we can presume that *Rashi* expected the reader to take his words at face value.

This however leaves us with the question: Why did God make such a grandiose miracle, compacting hundreds of miles into the space of a few feet, merely as a "hint" to Ya'akov that the land would be easy to conquer in the future?

Rashi's comment is even more alarming when one compares his words with the source of this teaching in the *Talmud* (*Chullin* 91b):

The *Talmud* states that, "God folded the entire Land of Israel under Ya'akov our father, so that its conquest by his children would be easy." I.e. according to the *Talmud*, this miracle somehow *helped* Ya'akov's children conquer the land.

Rashi, however, adapted the *Talmud's* words to read, "God folded the entire Land of Israel under him, *hinting to him* that it would be as easily conquered by his children." I.e. the miracle was of no *practical* help. It merely *hinted* to Ya'akov about the future conquest of the Land.

Hence with *Rashi's* turn of phrase, he actually *reduced* the impact of the miracle, from miraculous assistance, to a mere "hint." This magnifies our earlier question: Why did God perform such an earth-shattering miracle merely to provide Ya'akov with a *hint*?

1 תנזומא תולדות ז' חולין צ"א: 3 בדפוס א' דרשי", ובכל כתי" רש"י שבספריית ליובאוויטש (לבד א'). ליתא תיבות אלז 4 שמות א. יב

¹³ Suddenly, God was standing over him, and He said, "I am God, the God of Avraham your father, and the God of Yitzchak. I will give to you and to your descendants the land on which you are lying.
¹⁴ Your descendants will be as (widespread as) the dust of the earth, and you will be strong to the west, to the east, to the north and to the south. All the families of the earth will be blessed through you and your descendants."

¹⁵ "Look, I am with you, and I will guard you wherever you go (from Eisav and Lavan). I will bring you back to this land, for I will not abandon you until I have carried out what I have spoken (to Avraham, a promise that was intended) for you (and not Eisav)."

TORAS MENACHEM

WHAT WAS TROUBLING RASHI?

In order to solve this problem, we first need to clarify why our verse troubled *Rashi*, prompting him to offer an explanation.

At first glance, *Rashi* appears to have explained this matter in his commentary to the *Talmud* (ibid). There he writes that the reader will be troubled as to why the verse states, "I will give to you and to your descendants the land on which you are lying," which seems to suggest that God was only promising Ya'akov the four cubits on which he was lying. (The *Talmud* thus answers that God compacted the Land of Israel into four cubits underneath him to make the whole Land as easy to conquer as if it were merely four cubits).

However, it appears unlikely that this was *Rashi's* problem here in his commentary to the Torah, for the following reasons:

a.) *Rashi's* commentary to the *Talmud* was written for a more advanced student than his commentary to the Torah, since "a five year-old begins scripture and...a fifteen year old begins *Talmud*" (*Avos* 5:22). Therefore, it would be unacceptable to presume that a detail which required clarification in the *Talmud* to the fifteen-year old was obvious to the student of scripture at the age of five. *Rashi* does not indicate here in his commentary to the Torah that he was troubled by the above question (why God was only giving four cubits of land to Ya'akov), and he would not have expected the five-year-old to work it out by himself, if even the fifteen-year-old student of *Talmud* needed prompting on this matter.

b.) Earlier, in *Parshas Lech Lecha*, God told Avraham, "Please raise your eyes and, from the place where you are positioned, look northward, southward, eastward and westward. Because, I will give all the land that you see to you and to your descendants for eternity" (13:14-15).

Now, even if Avraham was on a high mountain, he would not have been able to see the entire Land of Israel. Nevertheless, it is obvious to the reader that when God said, "I will give all the land that you see to you etc.," He was not limiting the promise to the area which Avraham was

able to see physically at that moment in time. Rather, it is self-evident that God promised him the entire Land, and that Avraham was looking at a portion of it. This point is so obvious that *Rashi* deemed it unnecessary to make any comment.

The same applies in our *Parsha*, when God promised Ya'akov, "I will give to you... the Land on which you are lying": It is self-evident, at the literal level, that God intended to give Ya'akov the entire Land, and that Ya'akov was sleeping on part of it. God was merely giving an indication to which land He was referring.

Rather, *Rashi* was troubled by a much simpler question: Why did God need to mention at all that Ya'akov was sleeping on the land? He could have simply said, "I will give this Land to you and your descendants." What was the significance of Ya'akov sleeping on it?

Due to this problem, *Rashi* came to the conclusion that with the words, "the Land on which you are lying," God was not indicating to Ya'akov the geographic location of the land. Rather, He was hinting to Ya'akov's ownership of it.

In other words, just like in the above case of Avraham, God told him to carry out a physical act which reinforced his future ownership of the land ("Get up and walk through the land, across its length and its breadth, for I am going to give it to you"—13:17); so too here in the case of Ya'akov, God miraculously compacted the entire land physically underneath where Ya'akov was sleeping, to underscore the future ownership of the land by his descendants.

There is however one significant difference between Avraham and Ya'akov's acts: Avraham actually performed a positive act, whereas Ya'akov merely slept, while God compacted the land underneath him. So, what did Ya'akov accomplish?

To clarify, *Rashi* continues that this event served the purpose of "hinting

🌀 The Last Word 🌀

"UFARATZTA" (v. 14)

Ufaratzta—spreading forth without limits—means the breaking down of barriers, even when those barriers represent good and valid limitations. For example: extending beyond one's fixed times for Torah study; or giving more charity than Jewish law requires; or meditating on the greatness of God for extended periods before, during and even after prayer.

This ability to break beyond all constraints is the inheritance of Ya'akov, our father.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos*, vol. 1, p. 168-70)

🌀 Sparks of Chasidus 🌀

The highest aspect of the Jewish soul—the *yechidah*—is so sublime that it cannot be contained within the body, and it spreads to a distance of four cubits (approx. 6 ft) around a person. The *yechidah* is also a level of the soul which can never become tarnished, because it is not susceptible to any negative influences.

Thus, when God placed the entire Land of Israel within four cubits of Ya'akov to stress his future ownership of it (see *Toras Menachem*), the Land became connected with Ya'akov's *yechidah*, and so too, with the *yechidah* of every single one of his descendants.

And that is the reason why "it would be as easily conquered by his children," because the land was associated with a level of the soul which is impervious to any opposition.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 20, p. 134ff.)

די אעביד ית די מללית לך: טו ואתער יעקב משנתיה ואמר בקושטא אית יקרא דני שרי באתרא דדין ואנא לא הויתי ידע: י ודחיל ואמר מא דחילו אתרא דדין לית דין אתר דריוט אלהים אתר דרעוא ביה מן קדם יי ודין תרע קבל שמיא: יא ואקדים יעקב בצפרא ונסיב ית אבנא די שוי אסדוהי ושוי יתה קמא ואריק משחא על רישה: יב ויקרא ית שמיא דאתרא ההוא בית אל וברם לוי שמא דקרתא בקדמיתא: יג וקם יעקב קים לטימר אם יהי מיטרא דני בסעדי וישריני בארמא דרא די אנא אזיל ויתן לי לחמא למיכל וכסו למלכש: יד ואיתוב בשלם לבית אבא ויהי מיטרא דני לי לאלה: יו ובאבנא דרא די שויתי קמא תהי דאהי פלח עליה קדם יי וכל די תתן לי חד מן עשרא

טו וייקין יעקב משנתו ויאמר אכן יש יהיה במקום הזה ואנכי לא ידעתי: יי ויירא ויאמר מה נזרא המקום הזה אין זה כי אם בית אלהים וזה שער השמים: יא וישכם יעקב בפקר ויקח את האבן אשר שם מראשתי וישם אתה מצבה ויצק שמן על ראשה: יב ויקרא את שם המקום ההוא בית אל ואולם לוי שם העיר לראשנה: יג וינר יעקב נדר לאמר אם יהיה אלהים עמדי ושמרני בדרך הזה אשר אנכי הולך ונתן לי לחם לאכל ובגד ללבש: יד ושבתי בשלום אל בית אבי והיה יהיה לי לאלהים: יו והאבן הזאת אשר שמתי מצבה יהיה בית אלהים וכל אשר תתן לי עשר אעשרנו לך:

רש"י

הסמוך לעי אלה לירושלים, ועל שם שהיה עיר האלהים קראה בית אל, והוא הר המוריה שהתפלל בו אברהם, והוא השדה שהתפלל בו יצחק, וכן אמרו בסוטה לכו ונעלה וגו' לא כאברהם שקראו הר, ולא כיצחק שקראו שדה, אלא כיעקב שקראו בית אל. ע"כ מפרש"י מדוייק: מה נזרא. תרגום מה דחילו אתרא דדין. דחילו שם דבר הוא, כמו סוכלחנו, וכסו למלכש: זה שער השמים. מקום תפלה, לעלות תפלתם השמימה. ומדרשו שצית המקדש של מעלה מכון כנגד בית המקדש של מטה: (כ) אם יהיה אלהים עמדי. אם ישמור לי הבעות הללו, שבצטייתי להיות עמדי, כמו שאמר לי והנה אנכי עמך: ושמרני. כמו שאמר לי ושמרתך בכל אשר תלך: ונתן לי לחם לאכול. כמו שאמר כי לא אעזבך, והצדק לחם הוא קרוי נעזב, שנאמר ולא רחיתי לדיק נעזב ורעו מצקש לחם: (כא) ושבתי. כמו שאמר לי והשבתי לך את האדמה: בשלום. שלום מן החטא, שלא אלמד מדרכי לכן: והיה ה' לי לאלהים. שיחול שמו עלי מתחלה ועד סוף, שלא ימלא פסול דרעי, כמו שאמר אשר דברתי לך, והצטחה זו הצטיח לאברהם, שנאמר להיות לך לאלהים ולזרעך אחריך. (זרעך מיוחס שלא ימלא בו שום פסול): (כב) והאבן הזאת. כך מפורש וי"ו זו של והאבן, אם תעשה לי את אלה ואף אני אעשה זאת והאבן הזאת אשר שמתי מצבה וגו'. כתרומתו אבי פלח עליה קדם ה',

צינחק, ולא כל יצחק, וכן כל לי, ולך, ולו, ולהם, הסמוכים אלל דבור, משמשים לשון על, וזה יוכיח, שהרי עס יעקב לא דבר קודם לכן: (עז) ואבני לא ידעתי. שאם ידעתי, לא ישנתי במקום קדוש כזה: (יז) כי אם בית אלהים. אמר רבי אלעזר בשם רבי יוסי בן זמרא, הסולם הזה עומד בצאר שבע, ואמלע שיפועו מגיע כנגד בית המקדש, שצאר שבע עומד בצדומה של יהודה, וירושלים בצפונה, בגבול שבין יהודה וצנימין, ובית אל היה בצפון של נחלת צנימין, בגבול שבין צנימין ובין בני יוסף, נמצא סולם שרגליו בצאר שבע וראשו בצית אל, מגיע אמלע שיפועו נגד ירושלים, וכלפי שאמרו רבותינו, שאמר הקב"ה, לדיק זה צא לבית מלוני ויפטר בלא לוינה, ועוד אמרו, יעקב קראו לירושלים בית אל, וזו לוי היא ולא ירושלים, ומיכין למדו לומר כן, אומר אני שנעקר הר המוריה וצא לכאן, וזו היא קפולת הארץ האמורה בשמיטת חולין¹ שצא בית המקדש לקראתו עד בית אל, וזהו ויפגע במקום. ואם תאמר וכשעבר יעקב על בית המקדש מדוע לא עכבו שם, איכו לא היכי לביה להתפלל במקום שהתפללו אבותיו, ומן השמים יעכבוהו, איכו עד חרן אזל, כדאמרין צפרק גיד הנשה² וקרא מוכיח ויגך חרנה, כי משא לחרן אמר, אפשר שעברתי על מקום שהתפללו אבותי ולא התפללתי בו. יבז דעתי למבדר, וחזר עד בית אל, וקפלה לו הארץ. (בית אל לא זה הוא

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why did Ya'akov make his promises (v. 22) conditional on the clauses specified in v. 20-21?

PANE'ACH RAZA: Ya'akov did not intend to fulfill his promise only if God would abide by the specified clauses, since a person should serve God regardless of the reward. Rather, he was saying to God, "Just as I am fulfilling my promise, I hope You will fulfill Yours."

MASKIL LEDAVID: A person is only obligated to separate a tenth of his produce for ma'aser (tithe) but Ya'akov promised to separate a fifth, on the condition that God fulfill His promises. This was not inappropriate since Ya'akov made his *additional* gift to God conditional, but not his basic obligation.

● What did Ya'akov mean with the phrase, "God will be my God"? (v. 21)

RASHI: That His Name will rest on me from beginning to end so that no disqualification should be found among my descendants.

RAMBAN: Rashi is incorrect in his assertion that the words "God will be my God" was the last of Ya'akov's clauses. In fact, it was the first of his promises. Ya'akov was saying, "If I return to my father's house then I will worship God as He is known by His true Name, in the Chosen Land, at the location of this stone which will be for me a house of God, and there I will separate ma'aser."

1 חזקוני צא: 2 שם 3 תהלים לו, כה 4 בראשית יז, י

¹⁶ Ya'akov woke up from his sleep, and he said, "God is truly in this place, and I didn't realize (otherwise I wouldn't have slept here)!"

¹⁷ He felt frightened. He said, "How awesome this place is! This is none other than the house of God. This is the gate of heaven (through which all prayers ascend)."

¹⁸ Ya'akov arose early in the morning. He took the stone that he had placed at his head, set it up as a monument, and poured oil on top of it. ¹⁹ He named the place Beis-Ail, but Luz was originally the name of the city.

²⁰ Ya'akov made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me (keeping His promises), and He will guard me on this route in which I am going (like He said He would), and He will give me bread to eat (as He promised not to abandon me) and garments to wear, ²¹ and if I return in peace to my father's house (as He promised I would), and God will be my God (to prevent any of my children from going off the path—²² then I will do the following for You:) This stone, which I have placed as a monument, will (eventually be built to) be a house of God, and I will definitely separate tithes for You from everything that You give me."

TORAS MENACHEM

to him that it would be easily conquered by his children." I.e. unlike Avraham's symbol of future ownership—which had entailed a significant effort on his part, walking from one end of the land to the other—Ya'akov's act had been effortless. This hinted to him that the future conquest of the Land of Israel by his descendants would likewise be devoid of any effort at all.

Thus, in the final analysis, it turns out that at the literal level of Torah interpretation God gave Ya'akov an even greater promise than that which the *Talmud* conveys. For, according to the *Talmud*, God was making the Land of Israel as easy to conquer for Ya'akov as if it were only four cubits, but nevertheless, those four cubits still needed conquering. According to *Rashi's* commentary on the Torah however, God was promising that the conquest would be totally effortless, just like sleeping on the ground.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 20, p. 129ff.)

☞ YA'AKOV'S PROMISE (v.20-22)

Pane'ach Raza and **Maskil leDavid** question why Ya'akov made a conditional promise to God, when a Jew is supposed to serve God without contemplating the benefits that might result from his observance.

Maskil leDavid answers that Ya'akov was not expecting God to

reward him for his observance of *mitzvos*, but for his *additional* promises that extended beyond the basic obligations of Jewish law. Therefore, Ya'akov attached conditions only to his additional promises to God, which he expected to yield fruit.

However, such an act appears to be out of character with the moral caliber of the Patriarchs. Our Sages taught that the Patriarchs were so devoted to God, at the expense of any personal agenda, that they are compared to a "chariot" which follows the direction in which it is led without deviating to either side (see *Bereishis Rabah* 47:6). Thus, it is somewhat unsatisfying to conclude that Ya'akov would have made any conditions in his Divine service, even in matters in which he was not strictly obligated.

Rather, it would appear that Ya'akov was not demanding rewards from God; he was merely requesting the necessary *working conditions* to fulfill his promise. I.e. in order to build a "house of God" and perform the *mitzvos* (tithes) properly, Ya'akov would need God's protection, provision of food and clothing, assistance to return back to the Land of Israel, assistance to build a family. Thus Ya'akov was merely requesting from God the necessary means to be able to serve Him.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 15. p. 243)

☞ Sparks of Chasidus ☞

According to Chasidic teachings, Ya'akov's promise could be understood as follows (translation follows **Ramban**):

If God will be with me—to help me serve Him.

And He will guard me on this route in which I am going—He guards me from transgressing the prohibitions of the Torah.

And He will give me bread to eat—i.e. he will help me to study Torah which is described as "bread" (spiritual sustenance).

And garments to wear—this refers to *mitzvos*, which are described as "garments" for the soul.

And if I return in peace to my father's house—this refers to utilizing non-holy objects for the sake of heaven, causing the sparks of holiness within them to "return" to their source.

Then God will be my God—Then I will reap personal, spiritual gain, because the soul which descended into my body will enjoy an "ascent," having completed its mission successfully.

And this stone, which I have placed as a monument, will be a house of God—But, more importantly, the physical world itself ("this stone") will become a home for God below (a "house of God") through my Divine service.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 15, pp. 249-250)