

Bringing the Farbrengen Home

THAT PLACE

by Rabbi Shaul Wertheimer

In this week's parsha, Vayeitzei, Yaakov has the famous dream of the ladder. The verse tells us:

"He stopped at that particular place and spent the night there, because the sun had set. He took some stones from the place and placed them around his head, and he lay down to sleep in that place."

Commentaries ask: Why does the word "place" (מקום) appear three times in the same verse?

The word "place" refers to the Beis HaMikdash, which would be built on that very place that Yaakov slept.

The first "place" indicates the first Beis HaMikdash. The words "the sun had set" refers to the fact that even though the Temple was built (i.e., represented by the sun, light), it set, that is, it was destroyed.

Corresponding to the second Temple, the verse states, "He took some stones" – not all the stones, but only some of the stones. This indicates that the sanctity of the second Temple was not as great as the first (for example, the gemora in Yoma 20a-b lists miracles that occurred in the first Temple, but not the second).

Regarding the third Temple which will be built when Moshiach comes, the verse states, "and he lay down in that place." Lying down represents a restful state, which the entire world will experience during the Messianic era.



One possible reason that Hashem shows Yaakov this message of the three Temples is to teach him (and us) that we don't belong in golus (exile)!

Even before Yaakov goes to exile in the house of Lavan, Hashem shows him the Beis HaMikdash, as if to say, *being in exile is not where you belong! This is not what life is about! The entire objective is the Beis HaMikdash!*

Before you go into golus, there is already geulah (redemption).

Furthermore, for some reason, to get to that geulah, we must first traverse all the bumps of golus.

One way to understand this might be illustrated by the concept of pregnancy: The labor pains are necessary in order to get to an entirely new life!

Our sages tell us that everything that happened to the Patriarchs also happens to us, in some way. Just as Yaakov left Beer Sheva, his home, and travelled to Charan (literally, anger), so too each of us encounter "Charan" in our lives. There are times of calm and then there are tumultuous times.

So Hashem gives Yaakov – and each of us – chizuk & encouragement to know that the entire point of all of life's challenges is just to bring us back to that place, to the Third Beis HaMikdash with the coming of Moshiach, may it be speedily! 🕊️

Just Me שו"ת A Question

Q: If we wear tzitzit all the time, why is there a specific earliest time in the morning when we are allowed to say the bracha on the tzitzit?

A: The verse says וראיתם אותו. The Gemara (Menachot 43a) explains that "seeing" is something done during the day. Thus, the mitzvah of wearing Tzitzis does not technically apply at night, and therefore we may not recite a bracha on them during that time. The bracha is permitted from the earliest time of daybreak.

That being said, it is the commonly accepted practice to wear tzitzit at night (and some sleep in them as well).

Source: Shulchan Aruch HaRav O.C. 18

Q: When is the latest time a person can say Shema in the morning? And what should I do if I miss that time?

A: There is a Biblical mitzvah to recite the Shema every morning and evening. The mitzvah to recite it in the morning extends until the third halachic hour of the day.

Since the length of a halachic hour varies based on the time of year, as well as based on latitude, the specific time of the third hour on your clock will vary based on these and other factors.

In Queens, the latest time to recite the Shema this Shabbos is 8:37am (Magen Avraham) or 9:18am (Alter Rebbe & Gra), depending which opinion you follow. *continued on reverse-->*

The Rebbe Writes to Zalman Shazar

Like A Rolling Stone

by Rabbi Shaul Wertheimer

It's one of the most well-known stories in the Torah: Yaakov leaves Be'er Sheva, and while traveling towards Charan, lies down to sleep at night. Before falling asleep, he places rocks around his head.

Commentaries abound: Why did he place rocks around his head?

Rashi notes that he was protecting himself from wild animals.

But if that's the case, then why didn't he place rocks around his entire body? Why just protect his head? And if there's nothing to be concerned about, then why place rocks at all?

The Torah addresses multiple layers of reality. Stones are no mere stones.

On a mystical level, stones represent letters of the alphabet.

Letters are the building blocks. The Sefer Yetzirah says that Hebrew letters are stones: "Two stones build two houses; three stones build six houses etc."

In other words, two stones – that is, two letters, such as alef and beis – can be configured to construct two words: alef-beis and beis-alef (in Hebrew, they mean "father" and "come," respectively). Three stones/letters can be combined to create six different houses/words.

Much like a stone, a letter is, in a sense, an inanimate object. We can construct a home to dwell in with many stones.



Likewise, we can assemble multiple letters/stones into words to live in and with.

The main purpose of a house is not the physical structure itself, but the shelter and home that it provides. So too, the primary function of letters is to convey ideas. With letters, we create. With letters, we share.

Born in Belarus in 1889, Zalman Shazar went on to become the third President of Israel.

Shazar enjoyed a warm relationship with the Rebbe, and much of their written correspondence has been published.

In late 1966, the Rebbe wrote to Shazar, and after addressing what seemed to be the main point of the letter, the Rebbe writes:

"I was upset to find out recently that you were in the hospital!"

It's important to note, that a hospital is often referred to in Hebrew as Beit HaCholim (literally, house for the ill). In this letter, the Rebbe uses the phrase Beit HaRofim (literally, house for healing).

"I was upset to find out recently that you were in the Beit HaRofim. (In fact, I do not acknowledge in any way the term Beit HaCholim. This is especially the case because the meaning of that phrase is the

exact opposite of its purpose; rather, it describes the state of the person before they are admitted and receive treatment)."

It just doesn't make sense: If a person needs to be admitted to a hospital, the purpose is for healing! Our sages stress that the words we use are critical.

Stones may be inanimate, but our letters have life.

(Based on Torah Ohr, Vayeitzei 21a; Igros Kodesh vol.24, p.241; vol.21, p.459)

Hayom Yom

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Man should ponder thoughtfully how great are the kindnesses of the Creator: Such a puny insignificant being, Man, can bring great delight to the "Greatest of all great" of Whom it is written, "There is no delving into His greatness." Man ought therefore always be inspired, and perform his avoda with an eager heart and spirit.

Just Me שו"ת A Question cntd.

If one misses the time to recite Shema ch"v, one should nevertheless recite the Shema. Even though one missed the mitzvah, there is still the concept of *kabbalas ol*, that is, accepting the yoke of Heaven by reciting the Shema.

Secondly, one should do teshuva, asking Hashem for forgiveness and resolving to not let it happen again. It is also proper to review the halachos of reciting the Shema and become fluent in them.

Source: Shulchan Aruch O.C. 58:1; Magen Avraham ad loc.; Igros Kodesh vol.24, p.271 & 273

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