



EVEN SHESIYA

THE TORAH OF HARAV YOCHANAN BECHHOFFER
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Vayetze - Enter the Center

Only Yaakov leaves an impression?

In the beginning of this week's Parsha Rashi comments on what the Pasuk says: "Yaakov exited Be'er Sheva and went to Charan": "It would have been enough to just say he went to Charan, why did [the Torah] have to mention his exit? this comes to teach you that the exit of a Tzadik from a place **makes an impression** at the time that the Tzadik is in the town he is its splendor, he is its Aura, he is its Beauty. When he leaves vacated is the splendor, vacated is the aura, vacated is the beauty..." There is much that needs to be understood here: Many Tzadikim walked the earth before Yaakov took this journey to Charan. Avraham Avinu in particular did a lot of traveling! should we not have been taught this lesson earlier by Avraham or one of the earlier Tzadikim that when they leave a place they take all the glory of the place with them? The term "**makes an impression**" is difficult to understand. You would think that we should put this in a positive direction - that when a Tzadik **comes to a town he makes an impression** because he brings splendor, Aura, and beauty! Why do we say it in the negative - that **when he leaves the town out goes the splendor, aura, and Beauty**. The term "**makes an impression**" doesn't really apply in the way it's being used here! To "**make an impression**" is a positive act, here we're talking about "**leaving a vacuum**"! How do we understand the term "**make an impression**" in the way that's being used here?

Beis Hamikdash Maariv & Spatial Distortion

"And he encountered the place..." Rashi brings the Chazal that he instituted Maariv, but the Torah did not want to say "he Davened" but

rather "he encountered" [which can also mean to request/beg] because the Torah wants to allude to that the "**Earth jumped for him**" and he got to the "**place**" in a miraculously short amount of time. That "**place**" was the Temple mount! What do these things have to do with each other - that he reached the Temple Mount in a miraculous form of spatial distortion, and instituted Maariv? The accelerated motion of Yaakov is not that he was temporarily endowed with super speed, but it is as we just wrote in the paragraph above: there was **spatial distortion** - the "**Earth jumped**"- literally! Rashi takes it to a whole another level on the words: "..... this is a House of Hashem" Rashi concludes that the Temple Mount actually went towards Yaakov and met him in Beis E-L which is in the North of Israel. The Temple Mount superimposed itself upon northern Israel!! This phenomenon happened also when Yaakov was asleep: Hashem promised him "the land that you are laying on" explains Rashi: "**Hashem folded all of Israel under him** to allude to the fact that it will be easy for him to conquer for his children just like the four ammos that any person takes up"! There is another example of this: when Yaakov says "... and this is the gateway to Heaven" Rashi says that besides from being a place for the prayers to go up to heaven it also means that "**the Beis Hamikdash on Earth is perfectly parallel to the Beis Hamikdash in heaven**" as if there is an interdimensional portal between here and heaven. The ideas of spatial distortion and interdimensional travel comes up over and over again by Yaakov and it is something that we have not seen by the Tzadikim that lived before him. What is the significance of these

spatial distortions and interdimensional portals and why do these phenomena happen to Yaakov in particular?

What House?

When Yaakov awoke from his dream he explained “how **“Norah”**-awesome is this **“place”** this is none other than a **House of Hashem** and the gate to heaven and he subsequently called the place Beis E-I which means the **“house of Hashem”**. Chazal tell us that it is to Yaakov credit that he called the Temple mount a “house” as opposed to Avraham who called it a “mountain” by the Akeida and Yitzchak that called it a field when he instituted mincha and because of this in the future third Beis Hamikdash which will last forever will be called the **“House of the Lord of Yaakov”** because he was the first to call it a **“house”**! What's so special about referring to the area of the Temple as a **“house”**? What's even more difficult to understand is: It's understandable why Avraham called it a mountain because it was a mountain, and so it looked to him. Yitzchak called it a field because it was a field! **Yaakov calling It a “House” is strange – it was an empty lot at the time! What's great about calling it a “house”?**

“Makom”

The theme of this first aliyah of the Parsha is **“Makom”**-place. The term “Makom” is mentioned 6 times in just a few pesukim asides from the Rashi about the Tzadik exiting a **“makom”** - what is it about Yaakov and **“Makom”**? Why is the Temple Mount called here and over and over again in the Chumash as **“Makom”**? Hashem himself is called “Makom” and this is a midrash in this week's Parsha that when it says “he encountered the “Makom”-place it could also be read, and he encountered He who is the **“Makom”-place of the world**, which is referring to Hashem! Why is Hashem called **“Makom”- the place of the world?** Chazal tell us “there's nothing that doesn't have its **“Makom”**-place”. What that

means is: **everything that Hashem created needs its field that facilitates its existence.** The root of the word **“Makom”** is **“kiyum”**-to sustain. **Nothing is self-sustaining! Everything needs its “Makom”!** This can be seen physically that fish can only survive in the appropriate body of water, animals can only survive on dry land. People can only survive in a non-hostile environment. Even a person who is technically homeless would not survive if he didn't have his **“Makom”** which is the trash disposal that he fishes food from, and the stairwell under which he seeks shelter, without that **“Makom”** he would die! **Hashem set this up even within physical reality as a metaphor to make us realize our existence needs to be perpetually supported!** Ultimately the one who supports our existence is Hashem himself! He holds us in existence every second and second just as he holds the existence of all those things that we would (wrongly) call our “Makom”. **The real supporter of reality is Hashem himself and that's why he's called the “HaMakom”.**

Maariv and finding our real place

When we think about this more analytically, we realize that all that we would call **“our space”** or **“our turf”** is all just an illusion! Our dependence upon having our **“safe space”** is just to make us realize that ultimately we are dependent on Hashem who supports us and all those resources that we **think** support us. In truth there's only one **“real place”** - **Hashem who makes existence possible.** We come to this realization in our personal lives we have a crisis and we feel **our world is falling apart**, when we lose our sense of security as if **we have no firm ground to stand on.** That is what we say in our prayers every Monday and Thursday **“Our brothers the whole house of Israel who are in peril and captivity who stand between the Sea and the land (have no place to call their own where they are safe)...”** and the prayer continues **“HaMakom”** will have mercy on them and will save them.... Etc.” - **we address Hashem as “Makom” because we**

have lost our illusion of security which was our “fake Makom” and that caused us to come to realization that Hashem alone is our “makom”! When we come to that realization we can feel that we are in “safe space” anywhere! Another example where this is expressed is when a person's World falls apart by the loss of a loved one. Our place or home is defined by family and when a close relative passes away we feel that our “home” is hit and that's why we are consoled: “HaMakom” will console you...” that **the real “Makom” is Hashem alone and the support group that you got from your family is not the real space that you stand on - it is Hashem alone!** When you come to that realization you are consoled. With this we could understand why “Vayifgah BaMakom” - to encounter the place also means the institution of Maariv. Maariv is the prayer for the times of Darkness, confusion, and insecurity. It's actually in those ties of severe insecurity that “we encounter the place” - we come to the realization that Hashem alone is our firm foundation to stand on and our “safe space”. It's with this faith that we daven maariv and that Maariv reinforces that faith.

Torah & Beis HaMikdash – “Norah”!

Is there a way to unlock the truth that Hashem is the “true space of the world”? **The revelation of that truth is in that place called “Makom” per se – the Beis Hamikdash!** This happens in different ways. There were miracles such as Yom Kippur when the Jews stood crowded like sardines but when they bowed everything was expansive, because **when they subjugated to Hashem space opened up because Hashem is He who gives space!** Year round that Revelation was there in the “holiest of holies” where there was the “Even Shesiya”- the foundation stone which all reality branched out from - **referring to the idea that Hashem gives space and all spaces branched out from His space.** That was the place of the “Aron”- holy ark. **Chazal tell us the “Aron” did not take**

up space - it is beyond space as we know it **because it is the source of all space!** The “Aron” houses the Torah and the Torah is what Hashem created the world with! This means that Torah ultimately is the “space of the world” and since it's Hashem's Will and Word, **that's why Hashem is called the place in the world.** This revelation is what Yaakov refers to as “Norah”- awesome! **My Rebbe HaGaon HaRav Moshe Shapira zt”l** pointed out that the word “Norah”-awesome spelled backwards spells “Aron”- the holy ark - **because the “awesomeness of the Makom” is the Revelation that Hashem is the real space of the world and that was exhibited by the “Aron”.** Surrounding the Beis HaMikdash is the land of Israel which also exhibited such qualities because of its proximity to the Beis HaMikdash and because it is the place of Torah. The gemara says in Gittin that when the Jewish people reside in land of Israel it expands magically and when the Jewish people are in exile it shrinks. Rav Yitzchak Eizik Chaver explains **because the Jewish people are the people of Torah and they learn Torah they can open up extra space in the land of Israel which reacts to the power of Torah - which is the source of space.**

“Makom” in Galus

With this we could understand two important Chazals. Chazal say: “from the day the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed **all Hashem has in His world is the four amos of a person learning Torah**” The Beis HaMikdash reveals “the space of the world”, which is Hashem's attribute of facilitating reality, and that attribute is the Torah from which Hashem created the world. **The “embassy” of that is every place where a person learns Torah!** That person opens up a portal that taps into the Beis HaMikdash and it's called “Hashem's world” because there it is revealed that Hashem is the “real space of the world”. Chazal say that after the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed Daniel and Yirmiyahu respectively stopped saying about

Hashem in their prayers that he is **"Gibor veNorah"**-mighty and **awesome**. The Anshei knesses HaGedolah came to the realization in the depth of the exile that Hashem is "Gibor veNorah" – "Gibor" because he is restraining his anger from vanquishing the Goyim that oppresses his children, and he is **"Norah"** because if not for the "awesomeness of Hashem" How could a nation survive surrounded by other nations? Meaning to say: **the secret of the survival of the Jewish people in exile is "Norah"-awesome because the reason why we have safe space despite the fact that we're not on our own turf and we are surrounded by enemies is because since we are the people of Torah and we learn Torah a special space directly for Hashem - similar to the space revealed in the Beis HaMikdash opens up for us and that's our safe space - even in exile!**

"Tiferes" – Central power

There's only a certain type of person that could reveal this reality. The sefer Yetzira works on a system of parallel between person, place, and time of year. The Torah itself is the attribute of Hashem giving space to the world. There has to be the type of person that's perfectly parallel to this reality in order to reveal it. That is the special level of Yaakov who was called **"Bechir she'bavos"** - the chosen of all the forefathers. His attribute of **"Tiferes"- Glory is the center of all the other attributes** and that's why he can negotiate between "Chesed"-Kindness that comes from Avraham and "Gevurah"-Might that come from Yitzchak. All these Midos rotate around his midah and he is the anchor to keep all these attributes within the framework of the Torah and the parameters of Halacha. Therefore, his attribute of **"Tiferes" is parallel to the Torah itself**. The Torah is inclusive of everything and the 613 mitzvot demand from us all the different character traits. There are some Mitzvos that demand from us forms of "Chesed"- kindness and there are mitzvot that demand from us "Gevura"- to be mighty and

judge. **Yaakov is parallel to this all-inclusive point Center and that's why he is the man can reveal the real "Makom"- center of reality!** Because of his special attribute **it's as if space as we know it doesn't exist for him!** He taps into the **true Center** and the center is nowhere in particular and yet everywhere. **That's why "all of Israel could be condensed beneath him" and that's why he feels how the Beis HaMikdash is "Norah" as the real "Makom"- Center of reality.** Center touches all the dimensions and that's the secret that "the Beis HaMikdash in the heavenly realms and the Beis Hamikdash of the Earthly realm are all parallel" **-they're all the same point Center of all of reality!** Yaakov can uncover that point of center and **actually enter in it and therefore for him there are no separate spaces, all of physical reality could be super imposed upon itself because of the inner and only real dimension that he is able to tap into and reside in.**

Moving IN

With this we could understand what it means that he called the Temple Mount **"house"**. Avraham saw Divinity as a "mountain". A mountain sticks up and is very visible, you can't miss it! Avraham wanted to share that **vision** with the whole world, and by no coincidence he called it **"the mountain where Hashem will be seen"**. Yitzchak took it a step further and said that Kedusha is not just something that you acknowledge, you work with it! You do "Divine service" (See more on this in last week's "Even Shesiya") and that's why he called it a "field" where you work! The common denominator between a mountain and a field is that they are outside of you - **or from their vantage point you are outside of them.** A "house" is **inner space** where people live together. Yaakov can actually tap into and reside within point Center and that's the highest level of **"Deveykus"!** He didn't just observe point Center, didn't just work with point Center, **he actually entered point Center and lived there and that's why he called it a**

“house” or “home”. This is the difference between shiva asar b’tamuz and Tisha b’Av. Shiva asar b’tamuz we mourn the cessation of the “Avodah”- the Divine service, Tisha b’Av is worse - it’s the destruction of the “house” - that special level of “living in sanctity” that Yaakov uncovered and unleashed and made the legacy of the whole Jewish people that are his children.

Shabbos

As we mentioned, for every type of person and place there’s also a time. This time is called **Shabbos kodesh** and it is the **Center of reality in time**. It is the seventh day parallel to the idea of the 7th which is the center. The six days of creation were parallel to the six edges of the three dimensions as each dimension has two poles, the 7th is the center! That’s why Shabbos is holy, because point Center is “beyond” as it’s not on any side, and yet it’s on all sides! That’s why Shabbos is “holy” on the one hand as it is “beyond”, and it’s also the “source of blessing” because through it we could import into our world from the higher dimensions because point Center is the point of Union between infinite different dimensions. With this we understand why in Mincha on Shabbos we say “Avraham and Yitchak rejoice but Yaakov and his sons rest in it. Yaakov and the Jews that come after him are able to **resides within Holiness**, the true space of reality. That’s the secret that on Shabbos “everyone must stay in their place”(parshas Beshalach) -not carrying to the public domain and not leaving the “Techum”. Everything must be in its “appropriate place” because the real place is revealed – Hashem! With this we understand the secret of what Chazal say based on the navi Yeshaya “anyone who draws pleasure on Shabbos gets the inheritance of Yaakov which is without limit”. **Yaakov per se, because he lives in Shabbos and Yaakov has no limits because he’s not in the limited space that we know - he’s in the real space of Hashem that has no boundaries!**

Leaving a Mark

With this we get back to Rashi at the beginning of this week's Parsha. **Yaakov was the first Tzadik to attain that cutting level of perfection that uncovers the true space, and therefore when he is in a town he is not living in that physical space, he is uncovering the real Divine space under that town!** At that time there’s a Revelation of the splendor and Aura of Hashem’s space shining through that “fake space”. When the Tzadik leaves that Divine energy that he unleashed from **the “real space” supporting that “fake space” ceases, but it does leave a permanent mark**. There’s a “seal” on that space saying: “This space is not real in its own right - it is lacking!” There’s an **impression** as in a “badge” that this space is not complete in its own right. **That place will never be able to have the illusion of being a place in its own right ever again - it’ll be having an identification Mark that it belongs to the kingdom of Heaven and can never be complete until the worldwide revelation Kingdom of Heaven, speedily in our days.**

