

## Vayeitzei: Vayifga Bamakom

Rabbi Yaakov Neuberger - Rabbi Yaakov Neuberger tells us that Yaakov instituted Tefla beet Tzara, and it was an example for his descendents. He needed the "Makom" because the place is an inspiration.

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by RABBI YAAKOV NEUBURGER

Fearing the enmity of his brother and the varied dangers of the road, departing from the land of Israel, something his father was not allowed to do, and thus feeling distant from his parents and their mission, Ya'akov formulates the first Ma'ariv prayer and introduces the concept of , galus prayer, tefilah b'es tzoro prayer in troubled times into our mesorah. Medrash suggests that he preceded King David's "Eso einai el heharim mei'ayin yavo ezri I lift my eyes to the mountains, from where will my help come" and recited with a slight but telling change, "Eso eini el hehoirim I lift my eyes to the parents". Chazal see this Ya'akov's prayer in the unusual phrase, "VaYifga Bamakom VaYolen Shom And He encountered the place and he slept there" and point out that it is a double entendre telling two stories at once. It can be translated, and Rashi quotes the proof texts to support this, as "He pleaded in the place" connoting that he prayed there. Additionally this pasuk tells the story of Ya'akov's arrival at the northern border of Israel forcing him to realize that he had long passed Yerushalayim the sight where father and grandfather prayed and brought their supreme sacrifice. Instead of having Ya'akov return all the way to Har Hamoriah Hashem brings it to him and meets him part way. It seems to me that this double entendre characterizes the prayers of times that encompass the uncertainty of being far from one's own land, the agony of missed opportunities and the excitement of seeing Hashem turn encounter into orchestrated rendezvous, namely the prayers of Ya'akov's Diaspora progeny.

Why the emphasis on place? He chanced upon the place... and He slept there... and He slept in that place. Whereas Abraham returns to the very mountain where he had stood to pray on behalf of Sodom to formulate the shacharis and Yitzchak chooses the field from which to contribute to us the mincha, Ya'akov needs "the place" a place which is drenched with meaningful dedication of his parents and his children to Hashem's will. Apparently, to focus on the spiritual and the long lasting in the whirlwind of personal or national nights, one needs to be in a place that inspires, offers a quiet respite allowing one to focus, and also directing our attention to Yerushalayim. Perhaps Ya'akov established for us the importance of davening in a makom tefilah a beis haknesses, especially when distanced from Har Hamoriah, when it becomes a mikdash me'at as well. Indeed, Daniel when he turned to Hashem from Bavel, describes how in the quiet privacy of his home he stresses that he opened the windows facing Yerushalyim. Perhaps it is in a beis haknesses that one can most easily connect with the memories and the hopes of the horim those who have come before and whose dedication and contributions can often be a source of great inspiration.

Finally, the medrash reads "Once Ya'akov made up his mind to return to Yerushalyim" Hashem brought the mikdash to Ya'akov. Remarks Harav Ya'akov Moshe Charlop, that

Ya'akov showed all later generations that heartfelt inspiration, and yearning that is as deep as it is painful will flash in front of us moments of redemption and the closeness reserved for the holiest of places even from the far flung recesses of galus.

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(submitted by Nisson Shulman)