

# CHEVRAH TORAH...5777

With HEART in MIND

MUSSAR Teaching to Transform the Text & Our Lives

## VaYetzei—Genesis 28:16-19

MIYUT SHAYNA—Limiting Sleep

...Key KOSHI...

WHAT is Jacob’s response to his ‘ladder dream?’

HOW does Jacob’s response help us *wake up*?

WHERE, in Jacob’s [our] waking dream, is the “Gateway to Heaven?”



### P’SCHAT...Studying Torah—Encountering The Word—The Will—The ONE

The truly wise individual is not one who has achieved wisdom but a *talmid chacham*—a wise student...one who is constantly learning—including by observing and reflecting on what can be learned from other people.

<p>16] Waking from his sleep, Jacob said, “Truly, the Eternal is in this place, and I did not know it!” 17] He was awestruck, and said, “How awe-inspiring is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!”</p> <p>18] Rising early that morning, Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up as a monument. He then poured oil on its top. 19] He named the place Beth El. (But originally the town’s name was Luz.)</p>	<p>16 וַיִּקְצֶץ יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁנָתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אָכֵן יֵשׁ  יְהוָה בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי :  17 וַיִּירָא וַיֹּאמֶר מֵהַנוֹרָא הַמָּקוֹם  הַזֶּה אֵין זֶה כִּי אִם־בַּיִת אֱלֹהִים וְזֶה  שַׁעַר הַשָּׁמַיִם : 18 וַיִּשָּׂם יַעֲקֹב בַּבֹּקֶר  וַיִּקַּח אֶת־הָאֶבֶן אֲשֶׁר־שָׂם מִרְאֲשֵׁתוֹ  וַיִּשָּׂם אֹתָהּ מַצֵּבָה וַיִּצַק שָׁמֶן עַל־  רֹאשָׁהּ : 19 וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־שֵׁם הַמָּקוֹם  הַהוּא בֵּית־אֵל וְאוּלַם לִזוֹ שֵׁם־הָעִיר  לְרֹאשְׁנָה :</p>
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בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְעֲסוֹק בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה.  
Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu laasok b'divrei Torah.

Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, who hallows us with mitzvot, commanding us to engage with words of Torah.

**REMEZ...Acquiring Torah...**When Torah penetrates our entire being, not just our *seichel/intellect*, this is the acquisition of Torah. –R' Avi Fertig

V.16 *Jacob awoke from his sleep and said: "Surely God was in this place and I, i did not know!"*

**Ba'AL HaTURIM...R'** Yochanan explains the word *MiSh'nato*—*from his sleep*, as *Mi-MiSh'nato*—*from his Mishnah*, that is, his study. When Jacob awoke, he was already engaged in the study of his dream, for since he studied the *Mishnah* day and night, he kept right on searching it for what his dream might mean **RAMBAM...** When prophets are inspired in a dream, they by no means call it a dream...but declare it, decidedly, a prophecy. Thus Jacob did not awake and say, 'It was only a dream.' Rather he declared, "Surely God is in this place..." ...When prophets are shown a vision, they know. [The Guide, 2:45]

**RASHBAM...** "Achen" is two words, *ACH*—*But*, and *KEN*—*it is so*. Idiomatically it connotes a new perception, implying, things are not as I thought at first, 'but [rather] it is so!'

**OR HaCHAYIM...** What does Jacob mean by *Achen*"?...It appears to mean that something concealed had been revealed. **WHY** would he then express surprise at having been unaware of such knowledge, "But I did not know?!" Did he have to be aware of everything that is hidden?

**HERTZ...** "in this place" Many people still confine religion to the sacred occasions and sacred locality which is their place of worship, instead of looking upon religion as a continuously active influence and regulative principle in their daily life.

**PANIM YAFOT...** When does man ultimately experience God's nearness? Only when he is suffused by "lo yadati—I do not know." That is, when he himself knows that—for all he knows—he does not know, and no longer pretends to possess all the answers...

**RASHI...** "I did not know." For had I known [that God would be in] a holy place such as this, I would never have gone to sleep.

**S.R.HIRSCH...** Jacob's initial reaction is "God is here!"

Thus, he experiences deep "Yirah—FEAR/AWE" at the very thought of mortal man being the bearer of Divine Majesty, realizing the gravity of the task awaiting anyone who prepares to build a "House where God dwells"...a home which can become a "gateway to heaven."

**D'RASH...Helping the Heart feel what the Mind understands ...**

V.17 *Shaken, he said: How awesome is this place! This is none other than the House of God & that is the gate of Heaven!*

**...Dr. ALAN MORINIS...**

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There are Jewish notions about how much sleep a person should get every night. The **RAMBAM** rules that the average adult needs six to eight hours of sleep and notes, "If a person sleeps in order to allow his mind to rest and to give rest to his body so that he should not become sick and unable to serve God...in this case his very sleep is in the service of God."

...But...we should still not sleep too much, and the reason is simple: Life is precious, and there is much to do....The Alter of Novarodok quipped, "The trouble with people is that they want to change overnight and have a good night's sleep that night, too."...The Alter is here targeting our tendency to be lazy...Its laziness that has us spending extra hours under the blanket, beyond the sleep the body needs

...Each of us needs to get the right amount of sleep to keep our minds and bodies healthy. Less is torture; more is indulgence. The sleep we get at night in bed, however, is not the only form of sleeping we do. We also need to minimize the amount of time we spend asleep even while we are technically awake.

We need to be vigilant not to live our lives as sleepwalkers. On a deep level, the entire teaching of Mussar is about waking up to life. The RAMBAM explains the commandment to blow the shofar like this:

*Even though blowing the shofar on Rosh Hashana is a Divine decree, it contains an allusion. Oh you sleepers! Awaken from your sleep! You slumbering ones, awaken from your slumber! Search your ways and repent; remember your Creator!"* [Hil'chot Teshuvah, 3:4]

Things happen in life that hit us hard and deliver a wake-up call. How much better not to be asleep in the first place! [With Heart in Mind, pgs 90-93]

## **SOD...*Helping the soul-light shine...***

Practice focuses on recalibrating the soul-traits that are obstructing your soul's light from shining into your life.

**...Dr. ALAN MORINIS...**

### **...PRACTICE...**

CONSIDER...REFLECT...JOURNAL.....SHARE

1. What does it mean to you to “minimize sleep”?
2. What change would you make to enact this practice?
3. How do you see climbing your own ladder of spiritual ascent? What is that to you, and what commitment can you make to making that climb?