

**Parshas Vayetze:**  
**Rabbeinu Bachaya**  
**On Yaakov's Ladder-Visions of His Future**  
**by Rabbi Eliyahu Kirsh**

Parshas Vayetze opens with Yaakov's flight from Eretz Yisroel to Charan. On the way he stops for the night because he sees it is dark. The Torah tells us about the dream he has that night. He dreams that he sees a ladder from earth to the skies and malachim are going up and down the ladder. At the top of the ladder is Hashem himself, reassuring Yaakov that he will be with him on his flight and always and that he will indeed one day come back home to Eretz Yisroel.

Rabbeinu Bachaya explains that the ladder is grounded in Beer Sheva where Yaakov was. The head of the ladder was in the heavenly worlds by the heavenly Bais Hamikdash and served as the gateway for the Malachim to come and go between our world and theirs. He also quotes the known Midrash of Rabbi Yose Ben Zimra that the ladder was actually ground in Beer Sheva and the slant ended by the Bais Hamikdash in Shamayim which is directly above the site of the earthly Bais Hamikdash.

Midrashically, the spreading of the ladder refers to Har Sinai which metaphorically connects heaven and earth. The Torah tells us in Devarim 4-that was burning in fire until the 'heart of the heavens'. The malachim are Aharon and Moshe. Similarly, Hashem was on top of the mountain.

In Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer we are told that in this dream Hashem Showed Yaakov four kingdoms. Bavel went up seventy rungs and fell. Madai went fifty-two rungs and fell. Greece went up one hundred and eighty rungs and fell. Edom went up and did not come down. Symbolically this refers to Edom's arrogance and belief that they could ascend to the skies and no one would ever take them down [Ovadiah1-4] But Afterwards, Hashem tells Edom even in the heavens, he will be taken down.

We are also given hints to all three Batei Mikdashim here. Chazal tell us when Yaakov said 'How awesome is this place' Yaakov saw the first destruction. When Yaakov Said Ein Ze, this is not, he was referring to the second Bais Hamikdash that did not have the Shechinah in the full sense. Shaar Hashamyim is referring to the third Bais Hamikdash which will be a built from Shamayim and never be destroyed. Each of the Avos was reassured that though their children will face exiles and tribulations, they will be redeemed. They will merit seeing the Shechinah restored to its proper place and Yaakov will take his rightful place in leading the world to avodas Hashem.