

VAYIGASH – 5774

Rabbi Aharon Ziegler

[FYI: This parasha has 106 pesukim, 1480 words, and 5680 letters]

Ya'akov Avinu is about to begin his journey down to Mitzrayim when, at night, HaShem appears to him in B'er Sheva (46:1-4). The message Ya'akov receives corresponds directly to the night message Ya'akov received at the beginning of his journey away from his father's house (28:13-16). Here in Vayigash it begins with saying "I am the Lord, the G-d of your father...I will go down with you to Mitzrayim, and there in Vayetzei he is told, "I am the Lord, the G-d of Avraham your father and the G-d of Yitzchak,...I will be with you and protect you". Ya'akov then calls the name of this place: Beit El (28:19)

This Beit El where it all began does not refer to the city known to us today as Beit El, but rather to Yerushalayim, and more specific, to the place of the Beit HaMikdash, or Har Hamoriah (see Torah Temima on 28:19). This is where the dream of the ladder with Malachim ascending and descending occurred.

Gemara Pesachim(88a) tells us that Mt. Moriah was called different things by the different Avot. Avraham called it a mountain; Yitzchak called it a field; Ya'akov called it a house. The common theme between them is that HaShem had to show his presence in all different situations. Not only is HaShem necessary in the beginning, when you need to conquer the Land and all that is there is a desolate mountain. HaShem is not only necessary when there is but a field, with much work needed for cultivation and there are hardly any homes in sight. But even when there are houses, when there is some permanence and success and one is ready to have an independent base for a family, there is still a need for HaShem.

Dahvid HaMelech tells us "*Im HaShem Lo Yivneh Bayit Shav Omlu Bonav*" [If HaShem does not build a house, its builders will have toiled in vain] (Tehilim 127:1). If the family is not built on holiness, which shows that HaShem is part of the home, the negative results will show. The home cannot stand with any permanence if it is not a House of G-d. The Divine Presence must be felt in all its rooms, and the life lived within its walls must be holy.

The Midrash (Bereishit Rabba 95:3) explains that Yehuda's advanced scouting was, according to one opinion, to build a home to live in and according to another opinion, to establish a meeting place to teach Torah. We are required to connect the two ideas. Our homes must be such that words of Torah are heard within. May our homes resemble that of Ya'akov Avinu- a house that is a Beit El- or commonly known as a Bayit Ne'eman B'Yisrael.