

# This Way Up!

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Rebbe Nachman used to say, “If God wanted to serve Himself, He wouldn’t have needed us!”

God created this world specifically in order for us human beings to arouse ourselves and serve Him. But try as we may, our evil inclinations constantly get the better of us. Were it not for the Divine assistance that we receive, it would be completely impossible for us to prevail. This is the ultimate paradox and something that we can never truly understand. Nevertheless, God calls out to each and every one of us, “Make Me a tiny opening and I will open up wide to you!” It is our job to take that first baby step, but each step will directly trigger a powerful dose of Heavenly assistance.

Jacob was told by his parents to journey and search for a wife. Since Isaac had viewed the local Canaanite population as being unfit for marriage purposes, Jacob traveled from his father’s house in Beersheba in the south of Israel to Charan in Turkey, where his mother’s relatives lived.

After arriving in Charan, Jacob thought to himself, “Maybe I passed by the place my forefather prayed at and I didn’t stop there?” He turned back and God said, “I will bring Mount Moriah (the place of the Temple) directly to him” (Rashi on Genesis 28:17). Jacob had already passed this place on the way

to Charan, but only now, when he initiated an interest in praying there, did God transplant Mount Moriah to him. Jacob now begun to fathom how powerful our efforts down here truly are. Even if we are on the way to distant places like Turkey, if we turn back towards God, God will turn over Heaven and earth to reach us.

“He encountered the place (Mount Moriah) and spent the night there because *the sun had set*”—Jacob saw the place of the eternal Third Temple, but went to sleep because of the length of the long and bitter exile that we must endure before it is built. Remembering that even when things are bleak, our efforts are extremely powerful, Jacob

used that opportunity to establish the Evening Prayer service (*Chullin* 91b).

“He took from the stones of that place and put them around his head”—these were the downtrodden sparks and souls. Jacob connected them to his thought process. “And he lay down in that place”—Jacob lowered himself to their place and to all the distant places, in order to pick up and elevate them. “He

**God returns our interest,  
with interest**

dreamed, and behold! A ladder was standing on earth and its top reached the heavens”—Jacob saw that we must try to reach all the way to the heavens in order to perfect even the heavenly worlds. “Angels of God ascended and descended on it”—the angels going up represent us doing our part and trying to come close to God. This effort creates new angels in Heaven, and then these new angels descend to help us.

“Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, ‘Surely God is in this place, and I did not know.’” Jacob’s vision had now come full

circle. As great as Jacob was, even he hadn't realized in the beginning how great Mount Moriah was. It wasn't until he turned back that he came to understand this. Truly, there is no place distant from God; even if we think we are far, we are mistaken. God showed Jacob that if we do what we can, He will come to us. So many times we think that we have fallen away when, in actuality, we are being tested in order to elevate us to a new level of closeness. God is always here waiting for us. It's up to us to take the first step.

Based on *Likutey Halakhot, Hilkhos Matanah 5*