

Parashat Vayishlach 5785, 2024:

*I Will Raise My Eyes*

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**ה' יעזור וירחם על אחינו כל בני ישראל, בארץ ישראל ובכל חלקי הארץ**

Our *parasha* contains one of the most dramatic moments in Tanach: the encounter of Ya'akov and Eisav. It begins with a well-known *pasuk*: “Ya'akov lifted his eyes and saw, and behold (*vayisa Ya'akov ainav va'yare v'hena*), Eisav was coming, and with him were four hundred men...” (*Sefer Bereishit* 33:1, this and all Tanach translations, *The Judaica Press Complete Tanach*). This is not the first time we have encountered the phrase “*vayisa ainav va'yare v'hena*.” Regarding *Avraham Avinu*, the second *pasuk* of Parashat Vayera states: “*Vayisa ainav va'yare v'hena* three men were standing beside him, and he saw, and he ran toward them from the entrance of the tent, and he prostrated himself to the ground.” (18:2) In addition, one of the concluding verses of the *Akeidah* reads: “*Vayisa Avraham et ainav va'yare v'hena* there was a ram, [and] after [that] it was caught in a tree by its horns...” (22:13) Perhaps no better example of the midrashically-inspired phrase, “*ma'aseh avot siman l'banim*—the actions of the fathers foreshadow those of their children,” can be found in Tanach.

*Midrash Tanchuma* (Warsaw, Parashat Vayeshev 6) suggests that in addition to the *Avot* looking up and seeing the scenes before them, this action raised them to a higher level: “*atah motzai sh'hatzaddikim mitrommanin b'ayneihem*—you find that the righteous ones were raised up through their eyes.” (Translation my own) In my estimation, this higher level refers to the pursuit of the holy; by looking upward, the *Avot* were able to connect to Hashem in a new and powerful manner. As such, *vayisa ainav va'yare* foreshadows *Dovid HaMelech's* stirring words in *Tehillim*

121, 1-2: “*Easa ainei el heharim ma’ayin yavo ezri*—I shall raise my eyes to the mountains, from where will my help come? My help is from Hashem, the Maker of heaven and earth.” In his *Commentary on Sefer Tehillim*, the Rashbam (1085-1158) explains that the phrase, “to the mountains,” connotes “heavenward,” that is toward, “the Maker of heaven and earth.”

May we ever join the *Avot*, *Dovid HaMelech*, and countless other *tzaddikim* in casting our eyes heavenward, for there, and there alone, will we find true salvation. *V’chane yihi ratzon*.

Shabbat Shalom

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