

Vayetze

Reid Silverhart

Shabbat Shalom! My torah portion is *Vayetze*. In *Vayetze*, Jacob left Beer-Sheba and set out for Haran. On his way, he found a spot to stop for the night. That night, he had a dream. In the dream, Jacob saw a stairway going from the ground into the sky. On the stairway, there were angels of God going up and down. They were going up first because they were returning to the heavens from being with Jacob. Then, Jacob saw God. God made the promise to Jacob that he made to Abraham and Isaac. God told Jacob that he would protect him wherever he goes and will take him back to this land.

When he woke up, Jacob realized that he had had an important dream. He named the place Bethel, which means “a house of God” or “a holy place”. Then he resumed his journey to Haran. When Jacob finally got to Haran, he found his uncle Laban and his cousins, Leah and Rachel. Jacob immediately fell in love with Rachel. Laban told Jacob that if he works for him for seven years, he could marry Rachel. However, after seven years, Jacob was rewarded with Leah. Jacob angrily said to Laban, “What is this you have done to me? I was in your service for Rachel! Why did you deceive me?” Laban replied, “It is not the practice in our place to marry off the younger before the older. Wait until the bridal week of this one is over and we will give you that one too, provided you serve me another seven years.” Jacob agreed and in turn, married his true love, Rachel.

One thing that I found interesting about *Vayetze* is the dream that Jacob had. The first time I read my portion, I asked myself; who are these angels? What are they doing? And why is Jacob dreaming about them? But after reading it multiple times, I found answers to these questions. In one Midrash, Mordecai Kaplan said, "We need different angels or guides at different times in our lives." For example, when you are little, you need guides to teach you the basics like talking, reading, spelling, and so on. As you get older, you need guides for more complicated things like knowing how to deal with certain situations. In *Vayetze*, Jacob's old angels were going up the stairway. The angels that were coming down the stairway were his new guides. They were coming to help him on his trip. Also, God may have sent these angels to make sure that his promise was fulfilled.

In my life, I have had many different guides. Whether they were my parents, teachers, coaches, or camp counselors, they each have taught me something different that I will remember for my whole life. In my life, my parents are my most important guides. They have been there my whole life, helping me get through every situation. They have also taught me so many of the important things that I know. They have taught me how to walk, how to tie my shoes, how to ride a bike, and how to play sports. Without good guides to teach me these things, I probably would not be a very confident person.

I am also a guide for other people. For my Bar-Mitzvah project, I collected used baseball equipment. Through an organization called Pitch in for Baseball, I donated about 25 pairs of cleats, 37 bats, 34 gloves, 2 sets of catcher's equipment, 3 catchers mitts, 1 umpires mask, 2 bat bags, 1 pair of batting gloves, 3 helmets, and 13 baseballs and softballs to needy people all around the world. By doing this, I was a guide for all of these children because I was showing them the right way.

I would like to thank Mrs. Fox and Rabbi Small, for helping me write this D'var Torah, Moshe Pinchover, for helping me prepare for this day, all of my Hebrew school teachers, for teaching me all that I know so far about the Jewish religion and Jewish history, my sister Perri, for helping me out throughout the years, and most of all, my parents, for being there to support and encourage me all of the way through my life.