

“והנה מלאכי אלקים עולים ויורדים בו”

Why Did “G-d’s Malachim” Wish to Kill Yaakov after Seeing His Image Engraved on the Throne of Glory?

In our parsha, parshas Vayetztei, we learn of the divine vision HKB”H revealed to Yaakov Avinu in a dream at night on Har HaMoriah—the site where the future Temples would be built. This historic event occurred before he set out for the home of Lavan HaArami, in order to lay the holy foundations of the family of Yisrael. There he would father the twelve heads of the tribes of Yisrael, from whom all future generations of Yisrael would descend. Let us examine the relevant pesukim (Bereishis 28, 12):

“ויחלום והנה סולם מוצב ארצה וראשו מגיע השמימה, והנה מלאכי אלקים עולים ויורדים בו, והנה ה' נצב עליו ויאמר אני ה' אלקי אברהם אביך ואלקי יצחק, הארץ אשר אתה שוכב עליה לך אתננה ולזרעך, והיה זרעך כעפר הארץ ופרצת ימה וקדמה וצפונה ונגבה, ונברכו בך כל משפחת האדמה ובזרעך, והנה אנכי עמך ושמרתך בכל אשר תלך, והשיבותיך אל האדמה הזאת, כי לא אעזבך עד אשר אם עשיתי את אשר דברתי לך. וייקץ יעקב משנתו ויאמר אכן יש ה' במקום הזה ואנכי לא ידעתי, ויירא ויאמר מה נורא המקום הזה, אין זה כי אם בית אלקים וזה שער השמים.”

-- And he dreamt, and behold! A ladder was set earthward and its top reached heavenward; and behold--G-d's malachim ascending and descending on it. And behold! Hashem was standing over him, and He said, “I am Hashem, G-d of Avraham your father and G-d of Yitzchak; the ground upon which you are lying, to you will I give it and to your descendants. Your offspring shall be as the dust of the earth, and you shall burst forth westward, eastward, northward and southward; and all the families of the earth shall bless themselves by you and by your offspring. Behold, I am with you; and I will guard you wherever you go, and I will return you to this soil; for I will not forsake you until I will have done what I have spoken for you.” Yaakov awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely Hashem is in this place and I did not know!” And he became frightened and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the abode of G-d and this is the gate of the heavens!”

Rashi, the great commentary upon whom all of Yisrael rely, remarks: “והנה ה' נצב עליו - לשמרו”—Hashem stood over him to protect him. This requires some explanation. It is certainly plausible that HKB”H stood over him in order to promise him that: **“the ground upon which you are lying, to you will I give it and to your descendants. Your offspring shall be as the dust of the earth, and you shall burst forth westward, eastward, northward and southward; and all the families of the earth shall bless themselves by you and by your offspring. Behold, I am with you; and I will guard you wherever you go . . .”** So, from where does Rashi deduce that HKB”H stood over him in order to protect him?

The “Malachei Elokim” Envied Yaakov Whose Image Was Engraved on the Kisei HaKavod

The answer is provided by the Siftei Chachamim in the name of Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrachi, in his commentary on Rashi. The Gemara (Chullin 91b) expounds on the following passuk: **“והנה מלאכי אלקים עולים ויורדים בו, תנא עולין ומסתכלין בדיוקנו של מעלה, ויורדין ומסתכלין בדיוקנו של מטה, בעו לסכוניה, מיד והנה ה' נצב עליו.”** The malachim ascended to gaze upon his image above—the human visage among the four animals resembled Yaakov—then they descended to gaze upon his image below; out of jealousy, they wished to harm him; immediately Hashem stood over him to protect him.

Let us explain. It is known that the Kisei HaKavod—the Throne of Glory—upon which HKB”H sits, so to speak, is carried by four heavenly creatures, the “chayos hakodesh.” They are called “chayos,” beasts, because they are in the image of: a lion, a cherub, an eagle and a human being. This is based on Yechezkel’s prophetic vision of the heavenly Chariot—**“וארבעה פנים לאחד, פני האחד פני פני וארבעה פנים לאחד, פני אריה, והשלישי פני אדם, והרביעי פני נשר”—and each had four faces; the first face was the face of a Cherub; the second face, the face of a man; the third, the face of a lion; and the fourth, the face of an eagle.**

Here, in the Gemara, Chazal reveal to us that Yaakov’s image was engraved in the Kisei HaKavod, as the human visage in the Merkavah. This filled the malachim with envy, causing them to want to harm him. This is the implication of the passuk: **“And behold! A ladder was set earthward”**—the bottom part of the ladder sat on the ground, adjacent to the place where Yaakov slept; **“and its top reached heavenward”**—the top part of the ladder reached the Kisei HaKavod, where Yaakov’s image was engraved.

“And behold--G-d’s malachim ascending and descending on it—first they ascended the rungs of the ladder until the Kisei HaKavod; upon seeing Yaakov’s image engraved there, they were bewildered; how could the image of a mere mortal, made of flesh and blood, be engraved there? Immediately, they descended the rungs of the ladder to confirm that, indeed, the image was truly that of Yaakov. When it became clear to them that it was in fact his image, they became insanely jealous and wished to harm him. Yet, they were powerless, because: **“And behold! Hashem was standing over him”**—to protect him.

א'ריה נ'שר כ'רוב י'עקב

This fits in beautifully with an idea presented in the sefer Pninin Yikarim (Vayeitzei) in the name of the divine kabbalist Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropoli, ztz"l. He presents an allusion regarding the following passuk: **“וייקץ יעקב משנתו ויאמר אכן יש--Yaakov awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely Hashem is in this place and I did not know!”** Until he had the dream, Yaakov thought that only three “chayos” carried the Kisei HaKavod—the image of a lion, a cherub and an eagle. He did not realize that his own image was etched onto the Kisei HaKavod representing the image of man. This was revealed to him in the dream, where he saw the malachim ascending and descending. This is indicated by the statement: **“אכן יש ה' במקום הזה”**. The word **אכן** is an abbreviation for: **א'ריה נ'שר כ'רוב י'עקב**—**lion, cherub, eagle, Yaakov**—of that I was unaware until now. This concludes his idea.

We can suggest that this idea is also alluded to by a statement from Avraham’s servant, Eliezer. At his meeting with Lavan and Betuel, when they agree to allow Rivkah to marry Yitzchak, he says to them (Bereishis 24, 34): **“עבד אברהם אנכי”**—**I am Avraham’s servant**. He was conveying the message that it was his mission to find the appropriate wife for Yitzchak that

would bear him a holy son whose image would be etched on the Kisei HaKavod—completing the group of four “chayos” on the Merkavah, represented by the abbreviation **אנכי**—alluding to the lion, the eagle, the cherub and Yaakov.

For this reason, he beseeched Hashem (ibid. 24, 42): **“ואבוא היום אל העין ואומר ה' אלקי אדוני אברהם, אם ישך נא מצליח דרכי אשר אנכי הולך עליה—I came today to the spring and said, “Hashem, G-d of my master Avraham, if You would please make successful my way on which I go . . .”** He specifically employs the term **אנכי**—alluding to his mission to complete the set of four “chayos” represented by **אנכי**. When he sees that his prayer has been answered and that HKB”H has facilitated his success (ibid. 27): **“ויאמר ברוך ה' אלקי אדוני אברהם אשר לא עזב חסדו ואמתו מעם אדוני, אנכי בדרך נחני ה' בית אחי אדוני—he said, “Blessed is Hashem, G-d of my master Avraham, Who has not withheld His kindness and truth from my master; as for me, Hashem has guided me on the way to the house of my master’s brothers.”** Here, he also employs the term **אנכי** specifically, paying gratitude to Hashem for guiding him on the proper path to complete the set of four “chayos” of the Merkavah, symbolized by the term **אנכי**.

Nevertheless, all of the great scholars are perplexed by the malachim’s desire to harm Yaakov. It seems unimaginable that that these heavenly creatures, described as “malachei Elokim,” would wish to harm Yaakov Avinu—the elite of the Avos and the progenitor of all Yisrael. Is it even conceivable that jealousy over the fact that Yaakov’s image was engraved on the Kisei HaKavod would drive them to such drastic measures as to require HKB”H’s special protection: **“וזהנה ה' נצב עליו”**?

The Malachim Dealt Strictly with Yaakov for Sleeping at the Site of the Mikdash

We shall begin our journey with the illuminating words of the Ktav Sofer. When the malachim ascended and saw Yaakov’s image engraved upon the Kisei HaKavod, they were overcome by a strong desire to descend and familiarize themselves firsthand with Yaakov. They were curious to discover who this man was and why he merited this incredible honor. Yet, when they descended to earth, they found him sleeping on the sacred site of the future Mikdash. They could not understand how the man whose image was etched on the Throne of Glory dared to sleep in this sacred place, rather than occupying himself in Torah-study—which would seemingly have been much more appropriate. Reacting zealously, they wished to harm him and terminate his existence.

Thus, the passuk informs us: “והנה ה' נצב עליו”—Hashem stood watch over him to protect him and prevent the malachim from harming him. They did not comprehend that Yaakov’s rest constituted a form of holy service, “avodas kodesh”; it provided him with the energy and wherewithal to continue his Torah studies and good deeds. As such, even his sleep was considered a form of Torah activity. The Rambam expresses this concept as follows (Hilchos Deios 3, 3), and this is also the way the halachah appears in the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 231):

“ישים על לבו שיהא גופו שלם וחזק, כדי שתהיה נפשו ישרה לדעת את ה'... ואפילו בשעה שהוא ישן, אם ישן לדעת כדי שתנוח דעתו עליו וינוח גופו, כדי שלא יחלה ולא יוכל לעבוד את ה' והוא חולה, נמצאת שינה שלו עבודה למקום ברוך הוא, ועל ענין זה צוו חכמים ואמרו (אבות פ"ב מ"ב) וכל מעשיך יהיו לשם שמים, והוא שאמר שלמה בחכמתו (משלי ג-1) בכל דרכיך דעהו והוא ישר אורחותיך.”

One must take care to be physically whole and strong, so that one’s soul will be able to know Hashem without any impediment or interference . . . even while sleeping. If a person goes to sleep with the intention of resting his mind and body so that he will not become ill, which would interfere with his service of Hashem, then it turns out that even his sleep is a form of service to the Omnipresent. Accordingly, our sages commanded us (Avos 2, 12): **“All your actions should be for the sake of Heaven.”** Similarly, this notion is reflected in the wisdom of Shlomo (Mishlei 3, 6): **“In all your ways, know Him, and He will smooth your paths.”**

Based on this idea, he interprets the Midrash (B.R. 69, 7): “וייקץ יעקב משנתו, רבי יוחנן אמר ממשנתו”—the passuk states that Yaakov awoke from his sleep; Rabbi Yochanan, using a play on words, interprets the passuk as stating that he awoke from his studies; *משנתו* means his sleep, while *משנתו* means his studies. Since Yaakov’s sleep constituted a preparation for his engagement in Torah study, his sleep itself was considered a part of that study. This concludes his explanation. It is fascinating to add to what we have learned the interpretation of this passuk from the Ohev Yisrael, authored by the great Rabbi from Apta:

“יש לומר כי אותן י"ד שנים שהיה נטמן בבית המדרש של שם ועבר, לא שכב יעקב רק היה לומד ועבד את השי"ת בלימודו, אבל בשינה לא היה יודע שאפשר לעבוד את השי"ת. וכאשר בא אל המקום ההוא וישכב ויחלום וגו', אז ראה יעקב אבינו ע"ה אשר בשינה גם כן יכולת לעבוד את השי"ת. וזהו ויקץ יעקב משנתו ויאמר אכן יש ה' במקום הזה, פירוש, רואה אנכי היום שיש ה' גם כן בשינה, ויכולים לעבוד את עבודת הקודש בשינה, ואנכי לא ידעתי, פירוש מזה לא ידעתי עד הנה.”

We can postulate that during those fourteen years that he was sequestered in the Beis Midrash of Shem and Ever, Yaakov

did not sleep. He only learned and served Hashem. He was not aware that it is possible to serve Hashem while asleep. Yet, when he came to that place, slept and dreamed, he learned that he could serve Hashem even while asleep. Thus, the passuk conveys the fact that he awoke and realized that, indeed, Hashem was present even in this place. In other words, he now realized that Hashem is present even in a person’s sleep; and it is possible to serve Hashem even during one’s sleep. ואנכי לא ידעתי--“And I was unaware”—until now.

To Unite the Name “Yud-hei” with “Vav-hei” Completely

Let us introduce a wonderful gem from the Be’er Mayim Chaim (Eikev) to help us better understand the fact that: **והנה—Hashem stood over him:**

“ואפשר לי לומר בזה דבר חדש, שלא ראיתי מי שדיבר בזה, והוא כי על פי הרוב ואפשר בכלום, בדברי הרשות וחפצי הגוף החיצוניים מפורש בהם אותיות י"ה, כמו אכיל"ה שתי"ה הליכ"ה שינ"ה שיח"ה ביא"ה. ונאמר בהם בכוונות הרב ז"ל בכמה מקומות, [אכיל"ה] אכל י"ה, [שתי"ה] שת י"ה וכדומה. והן בתורה ומצוות אלהינו יתברך מפורש בהם אותיות ו"ה, כמו תור"ה עבוד"ה קדוש"ה מצו"ה וכדומה. הלא דבר הוא. כי לכאורה אפשר היה ראוי להיות בהיפוך.”

We know that the holy name Havaya in its complete form is composed of four letters; however, in galus the name is not complete; the “yud-hei” and “vav-hei” are separated from each other. The Be’er Mayim Chaim points out that in the Hebrew words related to physical, external, mundane functions the letters “yud-hei” appear. For example: **אכיל"ה שתי"ה הליכ"ה—eating, drinking, walking, sleeping, conversing, having sexual intercourse.** Even while engaged in these mundane activities, we should still have Hashem in mind—thus, the incorporation of the “yud-hei”: **אכל י"ה, שת י"ה, etc.** Now, in the Hebrew words related to Torah and mitzvos, we tend to find the letters “vav-hei.” For example: **תור"ה עבוד"ה—Torah, religious service, kedushah, mitzvah.** It is quite phenomenal, because, seemingly, it should have been the opposite. [In other words, logically the “yud-hei” would have been associated with matters associated with Torah and mitzvos and the “vav-hei” with mundane, bodily functions.]

He explains this phenomenon based on a Tikunei Zohar (Introduction 9b) stating that the name Havaya emanates from the first letters of the passuk (Tehillim 96, 11): **י'ש'מחו ה'שמים ו'תגל: “the heavens will be glad and the earth will rejoice.** According to this, the letters “yud-hei” derived from the words

allude to spiritual matters related to Torah and mitzvos; whereas the letters “vav-hei” derived from the words וְתִגַּל הָאָרֶץ allude to earthly matters such as eating and drinking.

For this reason, we find the letters “yud-hei” associated with material, corporeal activities such as: אֲכִילָה שְׂתִיָּה הַלִּיכָה שִׁינָה. This conveys the message that while engaged in matters related to this world, it is essential to dedicate them “l’shem shamayim.” A person should have in mind that these activities are providing him with the energy and wherewithal to learn Torah and perform mitzvos—matters related to יְשֻׁמְחוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם. On the other hand, we find the letters “vav-hei” associated with spiritual matters such as: תוֹרָה עֲבוּדָה קְדוּשָׁה מִצְוָה. This conveys the message that while engaged in spiritual activities, a person should have in mind the sanctification of all earthly matters—represented by וְתִגַּל הָאָרֶץ. For, it is impossible to perform any mitzvah without props and implements produced from earthly materials. For example, tefillin are written on parchment obtained from an animal’s hide; tzitzit are appended to a wool or linen garment; the “four species” held and waved on Succos are obtained from the plant world.

In the study halls, this explanation has been presented in the name of the great Rabbi Yisrael of Ruzhin. He applies this concept to explain the formula recited before the performance of a mitzvah: -- לְיַחַד שֵׁם ייָ בּוֹהֵה בִּיחּוּדָא שְׁלִים בְּשֵׁם כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל -- **for the sake of uniting the two halves of the holy name—the letters “yud-hei” and “vav-hei”—in complete unity on behalf of all Yisrael.** In the process of performing a mitzvah, it is necessary to unite the spiritual realm with the earthly realm. That is the essence of uniting the “yud-hei” with the “vav-hei” -- יַחּוּד ייָ בּוֹהֵה -- “יחוד ייָ בּוֹהֵה” with the “וְתִגַּל הָאָרֶץ” with the “יְשֻׁמְחוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם” -- בִּיחּוּדָא שְׁלִים -- connecting the יְשֻׁמְחוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם with the וְתִגַּל הָאָרֶץ.

We have now shed some light on the difficulty raised above. The “malachei Elokim” ascended to the heavenly heights and saw the image of a man etched on the Kisei HaKavod; they then descended to earth and verified that the image was indeed that of Yaakov, whom they found sleeping in the future location of the Mikdash. It enraged them that he was occupied in a physical, mundane activity rather than engaging in Torah study. Hence, they intended to do him harm. Due to this precarious situation, Hashem immediately **“stood over him.”** The passuk specifically employs the name Havaya which an acronym for יְשֻׁמְחוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְתִגַּל הָאָרֶץ. We learn from this passuk that it is the will of HKB”H that man engage both in matters of heaven and matters of earth, so as to unite everything for the sake of Hashem. As a result, Yaakov merited divine protection, so that

the malachim would not be able to harm him.

That His Name Will Rest upon Me from Beginning to End

This provides us with a very nice understanding of Yaakov’s statement (Bereishis 28, 20): וַיִּדְרֹךְ יַעֲקֹב נֹדֵד לְאֹמֶר, אִם יִהְיֶה אֱלֹקִים עִמָּדִי: וְשָׁמְרֵנִי בְּדֶרֶךְ הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ, וְנָתַן לִי לֶחֶם לֶאֱכֹל וּבְגָד לְלבוֹשׁ, וְשָׁבַתִּי בְּשֻׁלֹם. **Then Yaakov took a vow saying, “If G-d will be with me, and He will guard me on this way that I am going; and He will give me bread to eat and clothes to wear; and I will return in peace to my father’s house, and Hashem will be a G-d to me. . .”** Rashi comments: וְהִיָּה ה' לִי -- **that His name will rest upon me from beginning to end, that no defect should be found in my offspring.** We must endeavor to explain where we find an allusion here to the fact that he prayed that HKB”H’s name would rest upon him from beginning to end.

Nevertheless, based on what we have learned thus far, we can suggest that the entire time Yaakov remained under his father’s roof, he was completely separated from earthly matters, as it is written (ibid. 25, 27): וַיַּעֲקֹב אִישׁ תָּם יוֹשֵׁב אֹהֶלִים -- **but Yaakov was a wholesome man, sitting in tents**—he sat in the Beis Midrash of Shem and Ever learning Hashem’s Torah, day and night. Yet, when Yaakov saw that it was his fate to go to Lavan’s house and engage in mundane, worldly activities, he prayed to Hashem: **“If G-d will be with me, and He will guard me on this way that I am going”**—that I should merit protection along this new path upon which I am embarking, involving occupation in earthly matters.

“And He will give me bread to eat and clothes to wear”—that He should give me the strength and resolve to eat and dress “l’shem shamayim.” **“And I will return in peace to my father’s house”**—as Rashi explains: that I should remain free from sin and not be influenced by Lavan. **“And Hashem will be a G-d to me”**—that I should succeed in unifying the name Havaya by connecting the “yud-hei” with the “vav-hei” in keeping with the passuk: יְשֻׁמְחוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְתִגַּל הָאָרֶץ -- “יְשֻׁמְחוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְתִגַּל הָאָרֶץ” -- by serving Hashem in both heavenly matters and earthly matters.

We can now better appreciate Rashi’s comment: וְהִיָּה ה' לִי -- **that His name will rest upon me from beginning to end, that no defect should be found in my offspring.** In other words, by successfully serving Hashem both in the realm of Torah in my father’s house and

in the earthly, mundane realm in Lavan's house: **"His name will rest upon me from beginning to end."** **"From beginning"** refers to the first part of the holy name, the letters "yud-hei," emanating from the words **י'שמחו ה'שמים**—referring to the service of Hashem in the spiritual realm. **"To end"** refers to the second half of the holy name, the letters "vav-hei," emanating from the words **ו'תגל הארץ**—referring to the service of Hashem in the earthly realm. **"That no defect should be found in my offspring"**—Yaakov prayed that both his offspring that would study Torah all day long, and his offspring that would work for a living engaging in earthly, non-spiritual occupations, would all serve Hashem by uniting the "yud-hei" and the "vav-hei" completely—**"לייחד שם י"ה בו"ה ביחודא שלים"**.

The Kisei HaKavod Is the Heavenly Beis HaMikdash

As we know, the Torah is multifaceted and can be elucidated from seventy distinct aspects. Hence, I would like to propose a solution for the sages' puzzling statement above by identifying the "malachei Elokim" who dared to endanger Yaakov Avinu. Furthermore, why did the sight of Yaakov's image on the Kisei HaKavod spark their zealotry to the point that it was necessary for HKB"H to stand guard over Yaakov? Lastly, it is worth exploring why, of the three holy Avos, HKB"H chose to engrave only Yaakov Avinu's image on His Throne of Glory.

Let us begin our explanation by examining what is written here concerning Yaakov's dream: **וַיִּירָא וַיֹּאמֶר מַה נֹּרָא הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה. -- And he became frightened and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the abode of G-d and this is the gate of the heavens!"** Rashi makes the following comment: **וּמְדַרְשׁוֹ שְׁבִית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ שֶׁל מְעַלָּה מְכוּוֹן כִּנְגַד בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ שֶׁל מַטֵּה**—**according to the Midrashic interpretation, the Beis HaMikdash on high is aligned opposite the Beis HaMikdash below.** Thus, we learn that in his vision of the ladder extending from earth to the heavens, Yaakov actually saw how the heavenly Beis HaMikdash was aligned with the Beis HaMikdash down on earth. We must, therefore, explain how this accords with the Gemara in Chullin cited above which states that the malachim who climbed up the ladder saw Yaakov's image engraved on the Kisei HaKavod.

It appears that we can resolve this difficulty by referring to Rashi's comment on the following passuk in the "shirah" by the sea (Shemos 15, 17): **מְכוּוֹן לְשִׁבְתְּךָ בַּעֲלַת ה', מִקְדָּשׁ שֶׁל מַטֵּה מְכוּוֹן כִּנְגַד כֶּסֶף**—**a foundation for Your dwelling place: The earthly Mikdash is aligned with the heavenly Throne.** This teaches us

that the Kisei HaKavod is located in the Beis HaMikdash above. In fact, the Midrash Tanchuma (Nasso 11) states explicitly that HKB"H sits on His Throne of Glory in the heavenly Beis HaMikdash:

"בוא וראה בשעה שאמר הקב"ה למשה שיאמר לישראל שיעשו לו משכן, אמר הקב"ה למשה, משה הרי מקדשי בנוי למעלה שנאמר (ירמיה יז-יב) כסא כבוד מרום מראשון, ושם היכל כמו שנאמר (חבקוק ב-כ) וה' בהיכל קדשו הס מפניו כל הארץ, ושם כסא כבודו בנוי שנאמר (תהלים קג-יט) ה' בשמים הכין כסאו, וכן ישעיה אומר (ישעיה ו-א) יושב על כסא רם ונשא ושוליו מלאים את ההיכל, ובשביל חיבתכם אני מניח בית המקדש העליון שהוא מתוקן עד שלא נברא העולם, וארד ואשכון ביניכם שנאמר (שמות כט-מה) ושכנתי בתוך בני ישראל, וכתיב (שם כה-ח) ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם."

When HKB"H instructed Moshe regarding the construction of the Mishkan, He told Moshe that His Mikdash is already built in the heavens; the "Heichal" is there and His Kisei HaKavod is there. And for the sake of your (Yisrael's) love and adoration, I will vacate the Beis HaMikdash above, descend and dwell among you.

So, it is quite clear that the image of Yaakov that the "malachei Elokim" saw on the Kisei HaKavod was located in the heavenly Beis HaMikdash.

The Beis HaMikdash on High Will Be the Third Beis HaMikdash

In addition, let us present a precious idea that is in fact news to me. The Beis HaMikdash above itself is destined to descend from the heavens to become the third Beis HaMikdash at the time of the future geulah. This is what the Ramchal writes in the introduction to the sefer Mishkinei Elyon:

"אבל לעתיד לא די שיהיו דומים, אלא שהבית העליון יתפשט ויגיע למטה. והוא מה שאמרו רבותינו ז"ל שמקדש שלישי הוא מעשה ידיו של מקום, כי לא יעקר הבית העליון ממקומו, רק יתפשט ויגיע למטה, ואז יבנה סביבותיו בנין חומרי כאשר [ראוי] לעולם הזה, ויתחבר בנין בבנין להיות אחד, לא יתפרדו זה מזה."

In the future, they will not merely be similar, but the heavenly Temple will expand and reach all the way down to earth. This accords with our blessed Rabbis' statement that the third Mikdash is the handiwork of the Almighty. The heavenly Temple will not be uprooted from its current location, rather it will expand downwards. Then, a physical, material structure will be constructed around it, which will be appropriate for this world; the two structures will join and become one; they will not be separated from one another.

This enlightens us as to the reason Yaakov's image appears on the Kisei HaKavod. For, we have learned in the Gemara

”מאי דכתיב (ישעיה ב-ג) והלכו עמים רבים ואמרו לנו ונעלה: (Pesachim 88a): אל הר ה' אל בית אלקי יעקב וגו', אלקי יעקב ולא אלקי אברהם ויצחק, אלא לא כאברהם שכתוב בו הר... לא כיצחק שכתוב בו שדה... אלא כיעקב שקראו בית.” According to the passuk in Yeshayah (2, 3), many nations will say that they are going to the house of the G-d of Yaakov. The Gemara questions why the passuk specifies the G-d of Yaakov and not that of Avraham and Yitzchak. We learn that Avraham described the Beis HaMikdash as a mountain (“har”); Yitzchak described it as a field (“sadeh”); whereas Yaakov called it a house (“bayis”).

The Alshich hakadosh explains in Torat Moshe (Bechukosai) that the first Beis HaMikdash stood in the merit of Avraham Avinu; it was conquered by our enemies because of Yishmael, who was the offspring of Avraham. Similarly, the second Beis HaMikdash, which stood in the merit of Yitzchak, was conquered by our enemies due to Eisav—the offspring of Yitzchak. The third Beis HaMikdash, however, which will stand in the merit of Yaakov Avinu, whose offspring were pure, will endure forever without interruption. This explains very nicely why Yaakov’s image is engraved on the Kisei HaKavod in the Beis HaMikdash above. It teaches us that the third Beis HaMikdash, which will be built and will stand forever, will be solely in the merit of Yaakov.

The Kedushah of the Beis HaMikdash Below Derives from the Beis HaMikdash Above

Continuing along this exalted path, let us now explain why G-d’s malachim wished to harm Yaakov Avinu. We find a marvelous chiddush in the Midrash (S.R. 32, 7):

”אתה מוצא שהראה הקב”ה ליעקב שרי כל מלכות ומלכות, שנאמר ויחלום והנה סולם מוצב ארצה, הראה לו כמה אומות, וכמה איפרכין, וכמה שילטונין, עומדים מכל מלכות ומלכות, וכשם שהראה לו אותן עומדים, כך הראה לו אותן נופלין, שנאמר והנה מלאכי אלהים עולים ויורדים בו. אמר לו הקב”ה [ליעקב], עלה אף אתה, אמר לו יעקב, מתירא אני שמה ארד כשם שירדו אלו. אמר לו הקב”ה, אל תתירא כשם שאני יורד מגדולתי, כך לא אתה ולא בניך יורדים מגדולתם, שנאמר והנה ה' נצב עלי.”

HKB”H showed Yaakov the leaders of every sovereignty and regime. Just as he showed them standing, he showed them falling. This is reflected by the fact that the Torah describes them as ascending and descending. Then HKB”H tells Yaakov to climb up the ladder, as well. Yaakov says that he is afraid to lest he fall as they did. HKB”H consoles him and tells him not to worry: “Just as I will not fall from My greatness, so, too, neither you nor your

children will fall from their greatness.” This is signified by the Torah’s statement: “Behold! Hashem was standing over him.”

We learn from this Midrash that the “malachei Elokim” mentioned in the passuk are not holy angels the likes of Michael and Gavriel. Rather, they are the ministering angels of the seventy nations of the world. They are described by the adjective “Elokim,” due to the fact that they are angels. Accordingly, the Midrash interprets the passuk: “והנה מלאכי אלהים עולים ויורדים בו”—**and behold! Angels of Elokim ascending and descending on it**—as indicating that HKB”H showed Yaakov the rise to power and the downfall of each of the seventy ministering angels.

Now, with great pleasure and satisfaction, we can interpret the Gemara (Chullin 91b) in a new light: “והנה מלאכי אלקים עולים ויורדים בו, תנא עולין ומסתכלין בדיוקנו של מעלה” The ministering angels of the nations of the world ascended the ladder and saw the image of a man engraved on the Kisei HaKavod. “ויורדין ומסתכלין בדיוקנו של מטה”—when they descended, it became apparent to them that it was Yaakov’s image that was engraved above. Thus, they understood that the third Beis HaMikdash, which will be built from the Beis HaMikdash above, will be in the merit of Yaakov.

“בנעו לסכוניה”—they intended to cause him harm, because they realized that Yaakov would ultimately cause their downfall at the time of the future geulah. When the third Beis HaMikdash will be built, and the reigns of the other nations of the world will end, HKB”H will first bring down all of the ministering angels. As the Midrash Tanchuma explains (Beshalach 13): “וכן את מוצא שאין הקב”ה נפרע מן האומות לעתיד לבוא עד שנפרע משריהם תחילה, שנאמר (ישעיה כד-כא) והיה ביום ההוא יפקוד ה' על צבא המרום במרום ועל מלכי האדמה על האדמה” HKB”H will not exact justice from the nations of the world “le’atid la’vo” until He exacts justice from their ministering angels first.

Therefore, they became enraged with Yaakov and wished to harm him; they figured that in this manner they could prevent the building of the third Beis HaMikdash. “מיד והנה ה' נצב עלי”—immediately, Hashem stood over him to protect him, so that they could not harm him. What happened to the fathers (Avos) is symbolic for the children. HKB”H stands over us during every galus to protect us from our mortal enemies—until we merit the arrival of the complete and final geulah, with the building of the third Beis HaMikdash, swiftly, in our times. Amen.

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