



November 28-29, 2025

ט כסלו תשפ"ו

Candle Lighting 4:23 PM

**Parashat Vayetze** ויצא

Genesis 28:10-32:3

Stone - p 144

Hertz - p 106

Etz Hayim - p 166

**Haftarah** Hosea 12:13-14:10 הושע

Stone - p 1140

Hertz - p 118

Etz Hayim - p 189

**Kiddush** following services  
is sponsored by the congregation

**Shabbat** ends 5:22 PM

**TRADITIONAL CONGREGATION**

Rabbi Seth D Gordon - Rabbi.Gordon@yahoo.com

Marian S. Gordon, Executive Director -

traditionalcong@gmail.com

**WEEKDAY AND SHABBAT SERVICES**

Tuesday - 6:30 PM

Shabbat - 9:30 AM

Board of Directors:

Governance Committee:

Florence Schachter, Chair

Marty Levy, Vice-Chair

Ken Bohm, Ellis Frohman, Ron Green,

Dina Rinder, Mindy Strauss

Ellis Frohman, Financial Vice President

Mark Weinstein, Ritual Vice President

Marty Levy/Mindy Strauss,

Education Co-Vice Presidents

Dina Rinder, Membership Vice President

Steven Puro, Administration Vice President

Chris Brown/Justin Zeid, Building & Grounds Co-Vice  
Presidents

Ron Green, Fundraising Vice President

Barbara Levin, Treasurer

Mimi Levy, Secretary

Past Presidents:

Kenneth H. Bohm, Phil Brick

Members at Large:

Maureen Brodsky

Stanley Estrin

Bill Gold

Gary Golden

Jack Heller

Sid Levin

Ari Levy

Carol Max

Florence Schachter

We welcome new members!

If you or someone you know would like to receive  
membership information,

please contact our office at 314-576-5230

or traditionalcong@gmail.com

## On This Week's Parashah - Vayetze

It is one of the great visions of the Torah. Yaakov, alone at night, lies down to rest. Instead of experiencing a nightmare, his dream gives him an epiphany:

"He came to a certain place [vayifga bamakom] and stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. He had a dream: he saw a ladder resting on the earth, with its top reaching heaven, and angels of God ascending and descending on it. There above it stood God."

Yaakov awoke from his sleep and said, "God is truly in this place, but I did not know it... How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven."

On the basis of this passage, the Sages said that Yaakov instituted Ma'ariv. The word vayifga can mean "he encountered" but also "he prayed" or "entreated." The Sages also understood bamakom ("the place") as referring to God, the "place" of the universe. Thus the three daily prayers were linked to the avot: Avraham to Shacharit, recited each morning, Yitzchak to Mincha in the afternoon, and Yaakov to Arvit/Ma'ariv, said at night.

Each prayer reflects the character of its founder. Avraham represents morning - the beginning, the courage to begin a spiritual journey. Yitzchak represents afternoon - the quiet strength of continuity, the steady faith of one who carries forward the covenant. Yaakov represents night - fear, flight, uncertainty, and struggle. He is the man who wrestles with God, with others, and with himself.

Yet there is a puzzle. Ma'ariv is not considered obligatory in the Talmud, unlike the Shacharit and Mincha prayers. Why is Yaakov's tefillah voluntary if he, like his father and grandfather, established a moment of worship?

The deeper explanation lies in the kind of encounter each patriarch had with God. Avraham "stood before God." Yitzchak "went out to meditate." But Yaakov "encountered" God - vayifga bamakom. This was not a prayer he planned, nor an experience he sought. His thoughts were on Eisav, from whom he was escaping, and on Lavan, to whom he was going. Yet into his troubled heart came a vision of God and angels, a stairway between earth and heaven. It was a meeting brought about by God, not man.

That is why Yaakov's prayer could not be made a fixed obligation. None of us knows when the presence of God will suddenly break into our lives. There is an element of the religious life that is beyond conscious control. If Avraham represents our journey toward God, and Yitzchak our dialogue with God, Yaakov signifies God's encounter with us - unplanned, unscheduled, unexpected. It is the moment when the Divine Presence enters our lives without warning and leaves us transformed.

Such experiences often come at night - when we are alone, afraid, and vulnerable. It is then, when we least expect it, that our lives may be flooded with the radiance of Hashem. Suddenly we know with absolute certainty that we are not alone, that God is here and has been all along, though we failed to notice Him. That is how Yaakov found God - not by seeking, like Avraham, or through dialogue, like Yitzchak, but in the midst of fear and isolation.

Yaakov - in flight - trips and falls, and finds he has fallen into the waiting arms of God. No one who has had this experience ever forgets it. "Now I know that You were with me all the time, but I was looking elsewhere."

That was Yaakov's prayer. There are times when we speak and times when we are spoken to. Prayer is not always predictable, a matter of fixed times and obligation. It is also an openness, a vulnerability. God can take us by surprise, waking us from our sleep, catching us as we fall.

***Shabbat shalom,***  
**Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l**

## **PRAYER**

We are not poor if we love something, someone, humanity maybe –  
and have faith that we will somewhere, sometime be satisfied,  
though we know not how.

We may even feel that our sorrow is but a school to teach us  
the virtues of sympathy and gentleness  
that will avail us hereafter, though we know not where.

We may not always be on the highway that leads us to this hilltop,  
but we have seen the lighted road stretching on and on.  
Sometimes, we even fancied that we saw the windows of the castle aglow.

We have hastened our steps to be in time for the feast,  
and taken counsel of our courage  
lest we falter and fall on the way.

May we keep this vision of the castle ever before our eyes,  
and a belief in our hearts that the journey is worthwhile.  
May the castle and the glow in the windows  
always be reality, and never illusion.

**Max Ehrmann**  
(adapted)

## **THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE**

Who of us is mature enough for offspring before the offspring themselves arrive?  
The value of marriage is not that the adults produce children, but that the children  
produce adults.

**Peter De Vries**