

"And he dreamt, and behold a ladder was set earthward... and behold angels of G-d were ascending and descending on it." (28:12)

The story of Yaakov *Avinu's* dream captivates the mind of every *Chumash* student. Indeed, it has been the source of countless commentaries. As he flees from his brother Eisav, Yaakov stops enroute to lie down. Resting, he falls asleep and has a dream in which he sees Heavenly angels "going up and down" a ladder which stretches from Heaven to earth. At first glance, something seems wrong with this dream. One would expect Heavenly angels to first descend from Heaven and then go up again. Why do they "start" their journey on earth and go upward?

Horav Moshe Swift, zl, declares that it would be a false projection of religion to have the angels "begin" their descent from Heaven. It reflects a misconception of the significance of *Malachim*, angels, to suggest that their origin is found in Heaven. Angels are not made in Heaven; they are made here on earth. Angels are created by virtue of man's *mitzvos* and good deeds. These *mitzvos* catalyze their existence and stimulate their "ascent" to Heaven. Angels are all around us; our *mitzvos* keep them going. In a home in which *Torah* observance reigns supreme, angels are created to go up and descend with blessings. Children grow up with the *tzelem Elokim*, image of Hashem, on their faces, with the nobility of character as an intrinsic aspect of their features. Only when our home becomes a *Bais Elokim*, a house for Hashem, do we create a ladder for the angels to go up and come down, stimulating blessings in our home.