

THE
Zera Emes
זרע אמת
PROJECT

והגדת
לבנוך
Keeping
Their
Torah Alive.



VAYEITZEI • NOVEMBER 28, 2025 • 8 KISLEV 5786

לעילוי נשמת ר' יעקב בן הרב שמחה בונים ז"ל וחייה בת ר' ראובן ע"ה • ר' יוסף בן ר' עזריאל ז"ל ורעכיל בת ר' יצחק אייזיק ע"ה

The Zera Emes Project by Rabbi Moshe Hubner was created to honor and share the Torah of over 250 Gedolim who weren't zocheh to descendants of their own. Their legacy lives on through their words of Torah and emunah that continue to inspire and touch countless lives. By bringing their timeless divrei Torah and wisdom to life, we create a powerful connection to the past to help inspire today's generation.

For sponsorship opportunities or to sign up to the weekly newsletter, email weekly@zeraemes.com or visit www.zeraemes.com

One Small Step for Mankind

In the beginning of the *parasha*, we learn about the dream that Yaakov had when he spent the night on Har Hamoria. The ladder that “reached up to heaven” (28:12), and the content of the *nevuah* revealed to him, is not only beyond the scope of this weekly *gilyon*, but is so deep that volumes could be written on the symbolism of what occurred. Yaakov was given a glimpse into the future. He was shown the destruction of the two Batei Mikdash and the promise that the third will be the final one, *bimheira b'yameinu*. Hashem assured him that He would protect him (and Klal Yisrael) throughout the long exile.

It was such a profound experience that when Yaakov awoke he said, “Surely Hashem is present in this place,” and he became frightened at the awesomeness of the site. His reaction was to build an altar and name the place (28:16–19). Significantly, the name he chose included the word “house,” hinting to the future redemption. Chazal tell us that this was so great a night

that in order to have Yaakov reach this destination, the ground beneath him contracted miraculously, transporting him instantly to Har Hamoria (*Chullin* 91b).

There are *halachic* ramifications today that stem from this event. The Shulchan Aruch (*Orach Chaim* 555:2) cites the custom practiced by some on Tisha B'Av night to lie on the ground and place a stone under their heads. The Rama adds that this is in remembrance of what is written about Yaakov and this event, “and he took from the stones of the place,” which alludes to his vision of the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash.

How did this all begin? When Yaakov had been heading towards his mother's family residence, he already traveled as far as Charan, when he said to himself,

“How could I have passed the place where my fathers prayed and not have prayed there myself? I must return and correct this oversight.” As soon as he resolved to go



back, is when the land contracted beneath him to begin this holy night.

Rav Reuvein Melamed (*Meilitz Yosher; LiEnosh Binah* pg. 302) cites his rebbe, Rav Chatzkel Levenstein, who pointed out that had Yaakov not experienced that thought, Hashem would have allowed him to continue on his journey—and none of what followed would have happened. An entirely different sequence of events would have unfolded, producing an entirely different course of history.

Rav Reuvein notes that it all began with a single thought: “How could I have passed the place where my fathers prayed and not have prayed there myself?”

He explains that this is the way of the world: there are no small, insignificant actions. Each fleeting thought can become a real thought, which becomes a minor action, which alters the direction of one’s life—and can ultimately influence the course of world history.

He elaborates that when a person takes even a small positive step, he enters a new “camp” of goodness. Since people are shaped by their surroundings—and even think in accordance with their surroundings—this small step into a new “camp” creates a new person: a holier person. The thought redirects his life and opens an entirely new path of thinking.

Can one fully grasp the depth and outcome

of his thoughts and actions?

Yaakov’s initial thought—“How could I have passed the place where my fathers prayed and not have prayed there myself?”—was not even a formal mitzvah. It was neither a fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of *kibbud av* nor a requirement in *hilchos tefillah*. It was a feeling, born of a deep connection to his fathers. Yet it changed the course of history.

Rav Reuvein states that this power is not limited to a Yaakov Avinu, it is applicable to each of us.

The Gemara (*Kiddushin* 40b) teaches that “one who is fortunate to perform a single *mitzvah* can tilt the scale for himself and for the entire world.” And, tragically, the reverse is true as well. The simple understanding is that this statement is referring to when the world is poised in perfect balance; his single act tips the scale.

According to Rav Reuvein, however, the act itself—or the fleeting thought—is not necessarily what tips the scale. Rather, the scale is tipped because of the new potential it creates. Entering a new “camp” of goodness transforms the person into someone new—a holier person—with a new direction in life. This new person, with his renewed world, has the power to change the course of history.

This new person can be you, just seize the positive thought and become the holier you.

ר' ראובן
ב"ר משה
ליב מלמד

R. Reuvein

Melamed (Elul 1914-23 Tishrei 1985). R. Reuvein was born in Liuboml, Ukraine. He studied in Kosova, Belarus, under R. Yitzchak 'Itzele' Karelitz (1880-1942), the Chazon Ish' younger brother. In 1933, R. Reuvein traveled to Vilna, and studied in the Rameiles Yeshiva under R. Shlomo Heiman (1892-17 Kislev 1944). He subsequently enrolled in the Novardok of Bialystok, led by R. Avraham Yoffen (1886-1970). Shortly before WWII, R. Reuvein joined the Mirrer Yeshiva, a move that ultimately saved his life, escaping with them to Japan. During this period, R. Reuvein drew close to R. 'Chatzkel,' Levinstein following him first to the United States, and then to Israel, where, in 1950, he married Miriam Prag. Within a decade, he joined the faculty of the newly established *Yeshivas Ponevezh L'Tzeirim*, alongside R. Steinman (1914-2017) and R. Lefkowitz (1913-2011), where he served for 3 decades until his passing.

Mazel Tov

We are thrilled to wish a huge *mazel tov* to one of the sponsors of the Zera Emes Haggadah, who was recently *zocheh* to have a child after many years! We wish them only *nachas* and continued *simchah ad me'ah v'esrim, iyH!!*