

Dear Chavraya,

Mieke and I are in Rochester visiting Tzvia. I share a brief Shabbos thought. This week's Torah portion is *Parashat Vayetze*. Ya'akov has left home. On the first night of his journey he lays down to sleep, putting his head upon a rock as a pillow. Dreaming of a ladder with angels ascending and descending he awakes filled with awe and says, *achen yesh Hashem bamakom hazeh/surely God is in this place, and I, I did not know* (translating it as Rabbi Lawrence Kushner does.) He then says, *mah norah hamakom hazeh/how awesome is this place*.

As I read Sarah Weintraub's email to the *kahal* / community this morning activating the *Chesed* Committee, even at physical remove from Nehar Shalom, I felt suffused by the awesomeness of this place that is us. We are the angels ascending and descending on the ladder of community. When there is kindness among the people of a place, God is in that place. As we mature as a community, may we be joined to each other in that awareness.

Shabbat Shalom,
Rabbi Victor