

Genesis 28:15: Remember, I am with you; I will protect you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land.

Genesis: The Beginning of Desire, by Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg, 1995, pps. 193-194: “I [*anokhi*] am with you”: this suggests an energy that will accompany Jacob through all the vicissitudes of exile. There is a quality of life promised here – a buoyancy Jacob will experience as he walks through the world. By contrast with the angels and their compulsive ascent and descent of the ladder, Jacob will go with an extended *anokhi*, a sense of self that, mysteriously, will *contain* God. ...

The promise to “be with” Jacob, as with Moses, reveals an electric charge in human life, a new sense of God *involved* in the steps of the journey. Jacob is not longer entirely his own man: he goes on divine business.

Solitude and Leadership by William Deresiewicz, 2009: ... *concentrating*. ... It means gathering yourself together into a single point rather than letting yourself be dispersed everywhere into a cloud of electronic and social input. ...

... how will you figure out what you want to do with the rest of your life? Unless you’re able to listen to yourself, to that quiet voice inside that tells you what you really care about, what you really believe in – indeed, how those things might be evolving under the pressure of your experiences. ...

The Genius of Judaism by Bernard-Henri Levy, pps. 188, 190; (This book uses the Book of Jonah as one of its primary sources.) Are the Ninevites sincere when they don their sackcloth, or did they just understand that their choice was repentance, even if over-acted and faith-free, or fire from the sky? ... The answer contained in the Book of Jonah is that it doesn’t matter. The moral to be gleaned from it is that one must never expect to get an answer to such questions before getting involved. ...

Because there is debate, uncertainty, changeability, and so on; because nothing is settled and God himself has not uttered the last word on the matter; because he left the last word to man as early as the sixth day ... we must put all our weight on the scale of good and bad, we must weigh in with every bit of our meager force, we must lend to it our humblest hand and words.

QUESTIONS:

- What does it mean that God is with Jacob? Does that mean that he’ll have a “smooth ride;” that all things will go well for him?
- If Jacob is the father of the Jewish people (his name was changed to ‘Israel’!) then what could it mean that God is with the Jewish people? Surely, not that things will always go well for us!
- What could this religious idea mean for us as individuals and as a people?