



MORDEKAI'S DRASH — VAYETZE

Torah: *Vayetze* (And he went out), *B'resheet* (Genesis) 28.10-32.3
Haftorah: *Hoshea* (Hosea) 11.7-14.10(9)
Suggested *Messianic Writings* reading: *Yokhanan* (John) 1.19-51

Shalom,

I remember as a youth at summer camp, high in the Colorado Rocky Mountains, all of us standing around the late night bonfire while a leader led us in singing, “We are climbing Jacob’s ladder, we are climbing Jacob’s ladder, we are climbing Jacob’s ladder, children of the Lord.” Everyone was in a somber reflective spiritual mood (staring at a late night bonfire will do that), freezing on the side away from the fire, burning up on the side facing the fire, not having a clue as to what this song meant. Oh, we understood the “children of the Lord” line, but climbing Jacob’s ladder, what does that mean, how do you do that?

Our Parashah this week begins with *Ya’akov* (Jacob) heading back to the land his father and mother came from, under the direction of his father *Yitz’khak* (Isaac), in order to find a wife. We can gain an understanding of the culture when we realize that when *Yitz’khak* made this demand of *Ya’akov*, *Ya’akov* was well over 70 years old, according to some commentators.

On the way, *Ya’akov* received a revelation from ADONAI. *B’resheet* 28.11 is translated as, “he came to a certain place..., he lighted upon a certain place...,” etc. The Hebrew for “came to, lighted upon” is פגע *pah-gah*, and can also mean, “prayed, interceded.” I would conclude that, since ADONAI was guiding the steps of this patriarch of Israel, this was more than a “by-chance” stopping point. I can imagine that when *Ya’akov* entered this area, he felt the urgency to stop for the night and pray, since there was such a heavy spiritual presence. He had, after all, at some point prior to this departure, been given a very significant blessing and word of prophecy from his father. And yet he was definitely in need of a touch from his Creator, for at this point he was leaving the scene of a disaster he had pretty much made by himself, for he had deceived both his brother and his father, and in spite of being blessed, he apparently was traveling pretty light, that is, not carrying loads of wealth and servants with him in this pursuit of a wife, contrary to how *Yitz’khak*’s wife was pursued (see *B’resheet* 24).

There is a distinction in the wording between the blessing that had previously been given to *Avraham*, and the blessing given to *Ya’akov*. In *B’resheet* 17.5, *Avraham* is promised by ADONAI that he will be the father of a multitude of nations (גוים, *goyim*). *Goyim* normally refers to non-Jewish people, but is also used in the Tanakh to refer to nations as a whole, Jewish or Gentile. *Avraham* was the father of *Yitz’khak*, from whom came the Hebrew line, but he was also the father of *Yishma’el* (*Ishmael*); we tend to forget that *Avraham* later had six more sons with *K’turah* (*Keturah*), after the death of *Sarah*. So *Avraham* is indeed the father of a multitude of nations – Jewish and non-Jewish. His son *Yitz’khak* fathered a “Hebrew” son, *Ya’akov*, and a “non-Hebrew” son, *Esav* (*Esau*). *Esav* married some *Kena’ani* (*Canaanite*) women, and later married a daughter of *Yishma’el*. By this marriage he may have been futilely trying to please *Yitz’khak*, but he did not. In fact, what *Esav* produced by this marriage was an alliance between two displaced first-borns, an alliance that has been at odds with the line of *Ya’akov* ever since.

In *B’resheet* 28.3, *Ya’akov* is promised that his descendants would be “קהל עמים *k’hal ahm-meem*, a company of peoples”. The terminology here is more direct – “all of your descendants will be of one people group, one nation.” *Ya’akov* is the first of the patriarchs who did not father any “non-Hebrew” descendants. All of his sons were considered to be the founders of one nation, Israel.

So we return to *Ya’akov*’s first stop on his journey to the land of his parents. This “ladder,” or “stairway,” as it would more correctly be defined, was indeed a mystery. *Ya’akov* saw, in a dream or vision, angels “ascending and descending” this stairway, and realized that he had indeed come upon a holy place. The next thing he knew, “הִנֵּה *hee-ney*, Lo!, Behold!, Suddenly! ADONAI was standing over it, or beside him,” depending upon the translation. At any rate, *Ya’akov* was given a mighty promise of blessing and protection that the land he was in would be given to his descendants. When *Ya’akov* awoke, he set up the rock he had been sleeping upon, anointed it with oil, and named that place “בֵּית אֵל, *Beyt El*, Bethel, House of G-d.”

Now regarding the “ladder,” or the “stairway,” upon it Ya’akov saw angels of ADONAI going up and down. In *Yokhanan* 1.51, from our reading this week, Yeshua tells *Natan’el* (Nathaniel) that he, Natan’el, would see heaven opened and the angels of God going up and coming down *on* the Son of Man!” By saying that, Yeshua stated that *He* is the connection between the holiness of heaven and the desperate search of fallen man; to climb that staircase, to rejoin with the heavenly is now possible only through Him. Humanity has an internal need to try to re-gain what was lost at the fall. True, much of mankind has jaded their spirit and does not even realize this inner desire, but when eyes are opened to the truth of Yeshua, that connection can be made.

When we desire for someone to see the truth of who Yeshua is, intercession is the key to the removal of the blinders over the spiritual eyes, the veil over the spiritual heart. Sha’ul says in 2 Corinthians 4.4, concerning people who can not see the truth of Yeshua, that they cannot come to faith “because the god of the *olam hazeh* [this world, this age] has blinded their minds, in order to prevent them from seeing the light shining from the Good News about the glory of the Messiah, who is the image of God.” Sha’ul teaches a little later on that through intercession we are actually engaged in spiritual warfare. As he told us, the mind of man has been blinded by the god of this world. In 2 Corinthians 10.3-5, Sha’ul teaches us what to do in order to help open these blinded minds: “For although we do live in the world, we do not wage war in a worldly way; because the weapons we use to wage war *are not worldly*. On the contrary, they have God’s power for demolishing strongholds. We demolish arguments [the *logic* of the mind] and every arrogance [the *pride* of the mind] that raises itself up against the knowledge of God; we take every thought [the *deductions, conclusions, and judgments* of the mind] captive and make it obey the Messiah.”

This type of praying for someone is NOT what is sometimes known as “spiritual, or charismatic witchcraft,” or mind control, i.e., “praying” for a person do something against their will, or for something to happen to them in the same way; praying for *our* will to happen in their lives. No, true intercession is the crushing of the spiritual power that blinds the eyes of a person to the truth. Only then will that person realize what truth is, and hopefully they will direct their mind, or “will,” to that truth. Sometimes this type of intercession may take weeks, months, years, even decades. The teaching about intercession in Scripture is that it must be *consistent with and insistent upon ONLY* the will of ADONAI.

No doubt that Avraham and Yitz'khak both interceded for Ya’akov. Ya’akov was undergoing a spiritual transformation here, and it was not against his will; Ya’akov was in a place of complete freedom in ADONAI when he had this dream. That is the place we should all desire to be in: “And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is *liberty*; and we all, with *unveiled face*, beholding the glory of the Lord, to the same image are being *transformed, from glory to glory*, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3.17-18, emphasis added). As Ya’akov passed through this location, he was moving up to another level of glory, by the Spirit of ADONAI. As you work your way up the “stairway” to ADONAI Yeshua, take heart in this fact – you also are being transformed, from glory to glory. Sometimes the next level of “glory” may not appear to be so “glorious,” but in reality it is. “Furthermore, we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called in accordance with his purpose” (Romans 8.28).

Ah, so that is how we “climb Jacob’s ladder;” we live our every day lives – the exciting *and* the mundane – in accordance with His will; as we do this, Yeshua walks with us, every *step* bringing us closer to our real home.

שְׁאַלוּ שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם – *Sha’alu shalom Yerushalayim* – Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! Pray for spiritual eyes and hearts to be uncovered, to see the truth of who Yeshua is – the Messiah, God, and King of Israel – and the true home of the heart of every descendant of Ya’akov. And pray that all of the “cousins” of Israel will come to the same realization.

B'rakhot v'todah rabbah
(Blessings & thank you very much)

Mordekhi

This Yeshua, who has been taken away from you into heaven, will come back to you in just the same way as you saw him go into heaven.
(Acts 1.11 CJB)