



## MORDEKAI'S DRASH — VAYETZE

**Torah:** *Vayetze* (And he went out), *B'reshet* (Genesis) 28.10-32.3

**Haftarah:** *Hoshea* (Hosea) 11.7-14.10(9)

Suggested **Messianic Writings** reading: *Yokhanan* (John) 1.19-51

Shalom,

This week's parashah focuses on *Ya'akov* (Jacob). In last week's parashah, his father *Yitz'khak* (Isaac) had blessed him and sent him out to find a wife from the land of his mother's relatives. It is of interest to note that some of the commentators believe that *Ya'akov* may have been over 70 years old at this time, but still relatively young for one who lived to the age of 180 (*B'reshet* 35.28). We do know that *Yitz'khak* was 60 years old when *Ya'akov* was born (*B'reshet* 25.26). We can also know that *Ya'akov* was over 40 at this time, for in *B'reshet* 26.34 we are told of his twin brother *Esav* (Esau) marrying a couple of Hittite women at age 40, which brought grief to his parents. In *B'reshet* 27.46, *Yitz'khak's* wife *Rivkah* (Rebekah) made complaint of these women wearing her out, and urged *Yitz'khak* to send *Ya'akov* back to their former homeland to find a wife. So *Ya'akov* headed out, apparently alone – a marked contrast to how the wife of *Yitz'khak* was pursued (see *B'reshet* 24). As he traveled, the sun began to set, and *B'reshet* 28.11 is translated as, “he came to a certain place...,” or, “he lighted upon a certain place...,” etc. The Hebrew for “came to, lighted upon” is *נָחַם* *pah-gah*, which can also mean, “prayed, interceded.” Because of his experience that followed, we see that *Ya'akov* had stopped for the night and was unknowingly about to have an encounter with the Creator, which I believe was a result of the *intercession* of his father and grandfather. Per the events of the life of *Ya'akov* in the previous chapters, this may very well have been his first actual encounter with ADONAI.

Many people who have come to a saving faith in *Yeshua* as Messiah and Lord of their lives can define a certain point when they met Him, particularly if there was no prior level, or perhaps a low level, of familiarity with godliness in their homes or lives. But for those who grew up in a family of believers, there is not always a defined moment per se. There may be a marked point when a public statement was made of one's faith, perhaps there was a public immersion, etc, but sometimes the exact point of personal awareness of G-d is blurred simply because one was always aware of G-d. But when a person is raised in a family of believers and they stay on that path, there comes a point which is more defined, when they realize that this G-d that my fathers have served is also *my* G-d. When the awareness surfaces that G-d is a personal G-d, the light comes on and a quest normally begins, just as it did with those who had never known [about] Him. A.W. Tozer wrote, in his magnificent book “The Pursuit of God,” that for a true pursuer of G-d there comes times when one's hunger and thirst for Him becomes so strong that that one “will not be content with shallow logic... [but will] turn away with tears to hunt some lonely place and pray, ‘O God, show my Thy Glory.’ They want to taste, to touch with their hearts, to see with their inner eyes the wonder that is God.” I feel this is the point *Ya'akov* reached after ADONAI came to him this particular night, a point of pursuit where all believers should be, but more often than not a point to which we need to return.

Daily life can so easily jade our hearts if we're not careful. To counter that, we need to seek out that “lonely place” often, daily if life permits, to meet with our Creator. And if at all possible, as the Word of G-d tells us in Hebrews 10.24-25, “Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” Believers in restricted lands are literally dying for doing what we in this free land too often take for granted, that of gathering with like-minded believers, whether in a home or a more public setting. For western believers in particular, the “things of earth” hold too much sway over our decision making. *Yeshua* told us in *Mattityahu* (Matthew) 26.41 to, “Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Eugene Peterson paraphrases this verse in the Message as: “Stay alert; be in prayer so you don't wander into temptation without even knowing you're in danger. There is a part of you that is eager, ready for anything in God. But there's another part that's as lazy as an old dog sleeping by the fire.”

Our spirit desires something greater, but is so often too easily overruled by our flesh. Stephen Charnock, in his great book, “The Existence and Attributes of God,” first published in 1853, noted this [definitions in brackets are mine]: “Now the soul of man finds an imperfection in everything here, and cannot scrape up a perfect satisfaction and felicity [great happiness; bliss]. In the highest fruitions [accomplishments] of worldly things the soul is still pursuing something else, which speaks a defect in what is already has. The world may afford a felicity for our dust, the body, but not for the inhabitant in it; the world is too mean

[selfish, unkind, cruel] for that... There is, therefore, some infinite being that can only give a contentment to the soul, and this is God.” As Yeshua stated in Mattityahu 5.6, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”

So Ya’akov went to sleep and had a dream, “and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of ADONAI were ascending and descending on it!” This is probably to be more accurately understood as a “stairway,” but whatever it was, it was revealing a great mystery that Ya’akov would not be able to fully understand. As he looked up the stairway, he saw the angels ascending and descending, and “הִנֵּה *Hee-ney*, Lo!, Behold!, Suddenly! ADONAI was standing *over it, or beside him*,” depending upon the translation. ADONAI pronounced a great blessing upon Ya’akov; Ya’akov then awoke and realized that he had “stumbled upon” a holy place, and he worshipped.

And regarding what this “stairway” was, in *Yokhanan* (John) 1.51, from the reading this week, Yeshua tells *Natan’el* (Nathaniel) that he, Natan’el, would see heaven opened and the angels of ADONAI going up and coming down *on the Son of Man!*” By saying that, Yeshua declared that *He* is the stairway, the connection between the holiness of heaven and the desperate search of fallen man; to climb that stairway, to rejoin with the heavenly, is now possible, but only through Him. Humanity has an internal need to try to re-gain what was lost at the fall. Ya’akov was to take the message of the stairway and teach it to his children, who in turn were to teach it to the world. When the descendants of Ya’akov on the whole later rejected the “stairway,” that burden was given to the non-Jewish world to bear; sadly they for the most part rejected the children of Ya’akov at the same time. Now in these last days the children of Ya’akov are beginning to understand and accept the message of the stairway once again, and non-Jewish “stairway bearers” are beginning to stand with them.

One of our duties then, as believers, is to “light upon” that lonely place, that place of intercession. We are to let Him satisfy our own hunger and thirst, *then* seek for the welfare of others. We must be “full” spiritually *before* we can successfully intercede for others. On the other hand, we should not get filled up and then just “leave” the room; we need to “empty ourselves out” on behalf of others. When we desire for someone to understand the truth of who Yeshua is, we have through intercession the key to the removal of the blinders over their spiritual eyes, the veil over the spiritual heart, and this should be our prayer before we begin any discussion with them. 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 unbelievers 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 [spiritual] 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 “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*.

The point then: if you want to “see and understand” *THE stairway to heaven*, you must withdraw to the lonely place and ask the Creator to “show me Thy glory”. The busy-ness of life can be a roadblock to this time, yet all too often we are *not* too busy to sit in front of the tv, go shopping, etc. These things are not bad in and of themselves, but they should not be priority over our pursuit of G-d. Along with that, you must withdraw to the safety of fellow believers if and when you can.

The Haftorah reading ends with these words from the prophet Hoshea: “Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; whoever is discerning, let him know them; for the ways of ADONAI are right, and the upright walk in them, but transgressors stumble in them.”

שְׁאַלוּ שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם – *Sha’alu shalom Yerushalayim* – Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! May eyes Jewish be opened in that city, in all of Israel, and globally, to see and understand their father Ya’akov’s “ladder”.