

## The Reward(s) of Obedience

*“<sup>46</sup>Rivkah said to Yitz’chak, ‘I’m sick to death of Hitti women! If Ya’akov marries one of the Hitti women, like those who live here, my life won’t be worth living.’ <sup>1</sup>So Yitz’chak called Ya’akov, and, after blessing him, charged him: ‘You are not to choose a wife from the Hitti women. <sup>2</sup>Go now to the home of B’tu’el your mother’s father, and choose a wife there from the daughters of Lavan your mother’s brother. <sup>3</sup>May El Shaddai bless you, make you fruitful and increase your descendants, until they become a whole assembly of peoples. <sup>4</sup>And may he give you the blessing which he gave Avraham, you and your descendants with you, so that you will possess the land you will travel through, the land Elohim gave to Avraham...’ <sup>19</sup>and Ya’akov named the place Beth-El; but the town had originally been called Luz (light, Spanish). <sup>20</sup>Ya’akov took this vow: ‘If Elohim will be with me and will guard (shomer) me on this road that I am traveling, giving me bread (lechem) to eat and clothes to wear, <sup>21</sup>so that I return to my father’s house in peace, then יהוה will be my Elohim; <sup>22</sup>and this stone, which I have set up as a standing-stone, will be Elohim’s house; and of everything you give me, I will faithfully return one-tenth (a tithe) to you.’” (Gen 27:46; 28:4, 19-22 CJB)*

In last week’s *Parasha (Tol’dot)* Esav disregarded his parent’s admonition about marrying “Hitti” women. Esav was concerned only with himself and with those things that brought him personal satisfaction—one more Biblical example of children indulging in what the world has to offer using the resources (at the expense) of the parents! This is a reminder of **what the parents allow in moderation, children excuse in excess!** But here we see how easily Yitz’chak is persuaded to send Ya’akov away—and not because he dislikes his son. Yitz’chak is old, but he is not in his death bed yet. In fact, he will live many more years. What parent would send away one of his sons in his later years? But the mere thought of potentially more of the same behavior from Ya’akov as from Esav would not only kill Rivkah but also ultimately kill Yitz’chak. However, Ya’akov is set to obey immediately. What reward does this obedience bring? It will bring the favor and blessing of G-d!

Consider the blessing in detail: “*May El Shaddai (The Almighty) bless you.*” This immediately reveals an *Elohim* that can do everything—nothing is impossible with Him. Then, “*(May He) make you fruitful and increase your descendants.*” Ya’akov will have many male children. He doesn’t even yet have a wife! “*...until they become a whole congregation (assembly) of peoples.*” His offspring will become diversified people. “*And may he give you the blessing which he gave Avraham, you and your descendants with you, so that you will possess the land you will travel through, the land Elohim gave to Avraham.*” Ya’akov receives the Abrahamic blessing—destined to be the father of many nations and possess the land of Israel. Scripture tells us that when Esav saw that Ya’akov “*obeyed his father and mother*” (vv. 7) he misinterpreted the matter and took himself another wife from the daughters of Ishmael. But the correct interpretation is to obey them first, not after doing it your own way first. “*Honor your father and mother, so that you may live long in the land which יהוה your Elohim is giving you.*” Or “*Children, what you should do in union with Adonai is obey your parents, for this is right.*” “*‘Honor your father and mother’ - this is the first commandment that embodies a promise - so that it may go well with you, and you may live long in the Land.*” (Ex. 20:12 & Eph. 6:1-3) In today’s *portion* we see that *Elohim*’s blessing is Yes and Amen! Ya’akov is probably sad having to leave everything that means anything to him—home, parents, *mishpacha*, comfort. But when he sees *Rachel*, it is all forgotten. Ya’akov’s obedience to his parents brings none other than his beloved *Rachel*, a large family and prosperity. *Elohim* gave him everything as prophesied in his father’s blessing. I believe the same is true today—sons and daughters reap great promises and blessings by the simple act of obedience to their parent’s *righteous* instructions.

The reward of obedience is a fulfilled and prosperous life with a companion from the L-rd by your side and many children to enjoy the blessing with. But it does not end there—it becomes the conduit for *Elohim* to work out His everlasting plan with you as His instrument. Almost everything Ya’akov does from this point forward becomes prophetic. And it all seemed like a *few days* to Ya’akov! Even double or nothing for her was worth it!

## **At the Root of the Problem—Unbelief**

*Avraham Avinu* sowed iniquity with respect to lying and deceiving—could not יהוה (whom *Avraham* knew could raise the dead) not also protect *Sarah* from Pharaoh and *Abimelech*? Is it necessary to lie and to deceive? Was it necessary for *Yitz'chak*, exactly like his father, to lie about *Rivkah* his wife? Was it necessary for *Ya'akov* to lie and deceive *Yitz'chak* in his old age? Do we serve a wimpy *Elohim* who cannot deliver our loved ones or cannot keep His promise to us? This is the basis of the deceiver's (Satan) plan for us. Since “*without faith(trusting) it is impossible to please G-d*” (Hebrews 11:6) Satan prompts us to disguise our trust—to doubt G-d. We are driven to act on our fears that G-d is not able, that G-d does not care, that G-d does not deliver on His promises. We erroneously believe that nothing is going to happen unless we intervene. And so we fall to our unbelief (trust), and displease Him. In the process, we are responsible for altering the roads of life. We will ultimately accomplish His Will for us if we submit to His Sovereignty, but boy do we suffer consequences! Could the 12 tribes of Israel not be born of Rachel, instead of from 4 different women? Did our father *Ya'akov* suffer for his fraud? Will we if we get involved in knavery? Will G-d not bring about what He has promised if we obey the righteous will of our parents?

In the carrying out of his parent's wishes, *Ya'akov* comes to “*The Place*” (*hamakom*). And because the sun is setting he rests there. Where is “*The Place*?” Without knowing it, *Ya'akov* is in none other than Mt. *Moriah*—the very place where his father laid on an altar made of stones and was delivered. He takes from the stones that many years earlier had witnessed the *Akeidah* and lays on them! Do you see that *Ya'akov* is laying on the same place and stones that His father laid? What does he receive? A dream—not just a dream but a revelation of the House of G-d, *Beth-El*. So he builds up a monument (stone memorial) and “*pours oil (וַיִּצֶק שֶׁמֶן)* on it.” This is the first anointing in the Bible—the anointing of the Temple Mount, the House of G-d. In Genesis 31:13 יהוה uses the word, *mashach* (מָשַׁח מִצֵּבָה) to describe *Ya'akov*'s act. This simple rite of pouring out oil over the head of the stone will ultimately culminate in the promise of the *Anointed* one, *Mashiach*, the *Mashiach*.

The text also tells us that *Adonai* is near *Ya'akov*. He assures him that He is with him. He reiterates the promises that He had made to his father and grandfather and assures him that He is in the scene until it is all accomplished. *Adonai* will *shomer* us, do we trust Him to do so? “<sup>15</sup>And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep (shomer) thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.” (Gen 28:15)

The Almighty's Will is not hidden from us—we do not have to guess anymore about what He wants for our lives. He wants us to *sh'ma*, that is, He wants us to prove that we heard His Word by our actions. This is simply called obedience. Our ancestors said “*Na-aseh V'Nishma*” (see Ex. 19:8 and 24:3)—“*all the words יהוה has spoken, we will do and we will obey.*” Unlike our forefathers who were hearing His Words for the first time, we have an advantage—we have His written Word and His *Torah*. So we need not be deceived anymore—we can live our life according to His Will. Young people, these are not my words and these are not your parent's words, these are יהוה's Words! Scripture has given us the benefit of having an absolutely reliable roadmap for our lives—will you sow righteousness and reap a great reward?

Scripture tells us about the cyclic nature of life. *Sh'lomo* the wisest human to ever live tells us: “<sup>14</sup>*I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.*” <sup>15</sup>*That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.*” (Eccl 3:14-16) Can we not break the cycle of iniquity that plagues our generation? *Yeshua* said: “*Because you have such little trust! Yes! I tell you that if you have trust as tiny as a mustard seed, you will be able to say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there!' and it will move; indeed, nothing will be impossible for you!*” (cf. Jer. 32:17) and again He repeated: “*Humanly, this is impossible; but with God everything is possible.*” (see Matt.

19:26). *Miryam* was told in Luke 1:37: “*For with God, nothing is impossible.*” And again in Luke 18:27: “*What is impossible humanly is possible with God.*” Do you get the picture? We can! You can! I can! Say it with me:

**“I have overcome by the blood of the Lamb, by the words of my testimony about that Blood and because I love not my life unto the death.” (Rev. 12:11) I can do all things through Yeshua who strengthens me! (Phil. 4:13)**

It is time to break the cycle of consequences that plague our walk with the L-rd. There is great reward awaiting us if we sow precious seeds. Scripture tell us: “<sup>5</sup>*They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. <sup>6</sup>He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.*” (see Ps 126:5-6) We can, with His Spirit by our side and with His strength change the course of history. I challenge us to rise and become the generation of over-comers. We are that generation by faith. Will you join me and the thousands of our people at Mt. Sinai and reaffirm to Him *Na-aseh V’Nishma*—**We will do and we will obey...**

### ***The Message of the Names of the Tribes of Israel***

In Vayetze we see the children of our father *Ya’akov* named according to what their births mean to their competing mothers, *Rachel* (ewe, beautiful in appearance and form) and *Leah* (exhausted, with tender eyes).

### **The Children of Leah**

#### **Reuben(רְאוּבֵן)**

Scripture tells us that “*when ירהו saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren.*” (see Gen 29:31) She named her first-born son, and since the firstborn belongs to ירהו, from the verb *to see* (ראה) and the noun *son* (בן). Leah believed that ירהו (remember that The Name given to Him by *Avram Avinu* was ירהו יראה, *Adonai Yireh, Adonai will see and provide*) saw that she was unloved by *Ya’akov*, and that having seen (*Yireh*) He had mercy and provided the son that would endear *Ya’akov*’s heart back to her.

#### **Shim’on(שִׁמְעוֹן)**

Leah conceived a second time and names her second son from the verb *to hear* (שמע), that is *sh’ma*. The continued favoring of Rachel over Leah caused Leah to cry out to ירהו for help. She interpreted the birth of her second son to mean that *Adonai heard* her cry.

#### **Levi(לֵוִי)**

Levi-from the words *my heart*. Leah thought that since she gave him three sons, she would have won over *Ya’akov*’s heart.

#### **Yehudah(יְהוּדָה)**

Judah-This name contains the sacred name ירהו. The name from which the word Jew is derived. Judah means *to praise Yah*. Leah offered ירהו praise for giving her a fourth son, having thought that this would surely win her husband’s devotion. In *Yehudah*, the Ineffable Name of God is glimpsed as it shines forth on the Jews. Their destiny is forever linked to the Divine Name and this destiny will be fulfilled when the Messiah, from the tribe of Judah, causes the Name which is engraved in their own to be worshipped by all men and nations.

#### **Yisa-Schar(יִשָּׂשכָר)**

Issachar-from: יש שחר (*yesh sachar*), *there is reward*. Leah apparently thought it was meritorious to give Zilpah to Jacob in order to have more children. When she had a fifth son, she thought it was ירהו rewarding her.

#### **Zebulun(זְבֻלֹן)**

Zebulun-This is the most difficult name from which to decipher an English translation. Two Hebrew roots, z-b-d and z-b-l, are played upon in the two halves of this verse, (vv. 20) and it now appears that they are linked

by meaning as well as sound, in the light of the *Akkadian zubullu, bridegroom gift*. Spiser, who draws attention to this root, translates the second clause, *This time my husband will bring me presents*.

### **Dinah(דינה)**

Dinah-Jacob had only one daughter. Leah was her mother. The circumstances of her birth appear slightly different from her brothers. When each son is born, the text describes something about the meaning of each of their names; however, there is no comment about Dinah's name found in the text. All that we can gather is what the Hebrew word itself means. Dinah, Hebrew דינה means justice or judgment.

## **The Children Born of Zilpah**

### **Gad(גָּד)**

Gad-This name is derived from the Hebrew גָּד, which means *good fortune*. When Leah stopped bearing temporarily, she gave her handmaid to Jacob to have a baby for her. We should note that, to us, this sounds rather immoral; however, it was not only an accepted cultural practice in the days of the patriarchs, but was regulated by legislation as well. When Zilpah bore a son, Leah rejoiced and thought it was good fortune for her. Hence, she named him Gad.

### **Asher(אָשֶׁר)**

Asher-Zilpah bore a second son, causing Leah to be extremely happy. Accordingly, he was named *Asher* from the Hebrew אָשֶׁר, meaning *great happiness*.

## **The Children Born of Bilhah**

### **Dan(דָּן)**

Dan-from the common Hebrew word means *judgment*. Rachel apparently thought יהרה was judging her by withholding children from her. Now, it seems that יהרה gave a favorable judgment and provided a son for her through Bilhah.

### **Naphtali(נַפְתָּלִי)**

Naphtali-from the root נפתל, which means *twisted*. Naphtali is a passive form of the root niph'al; hence, it can be translated *I have been twisted*. *Wrestle* is also a suitable translation. Rachel admitted that by having babies through her handmaid, she was scheming against Leah. It seems that there was fierce competition between them to have children in order to attempt to win *Ya'akov's* undivided attention and love. To Rachel, this scheming was as if she were being *twisted* or *wrestling* within herself, with G-d, with Leah, or possibly all three!

## **The Children Born of Rachel**

### **Yosef(יוֹסֵף)**

Joseph-Rachel finally bore a son and she called him Joseph, from a Hebrew word which means *and He added*, יוֹסֵף. Apparently, she thought she was on a roll! She eagerly anticipated a second son; hence she named her first one a word which indicated, *May the Lord add on for me another son*.

### **BinYamin(בִּנְיָמִין)**

Benjamin-This was the only son born in the Promised Land, a true sabra! We note that his name means *son of my right or the south*. He was named Bin-Yamin by *Ya'akov*, but his mother called him Ben-Noni, the son of my strength (manliness, strength, force, power, potency, wealth, grief, sorrow or alternatively, wickedness, evil, injustice, trouble, distress.)