

## Obedience Rewarded

*"Does Adonai delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of Adonai? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Samuel 15:22a). "In whole burnt offerings and sin offerings You did not delight. Then I said, Behold, I come to do Your will, O God (in the scroll of the book it is written of Me)." (Hebrews 10:6-7)*

We are called to obedience in/to *Adonai* and for us here in *Kol Simcha* we are prepared to obey. In last week's *Parashat Toldot* we saw that Esau disregarded his parent's admonition about marrying *Hitti* women. Esau was concerned only with himself (self-centered) and with those things that brought him personal satisfaction. This is another 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 the saying: *What the parents allow in moderation, their children excuse in excess!* Isaac is old, but he is not in his death bed yet and, in fact, he will live many more years. What parent would send away one of his sons in his later years? But the thought of potentially more of the same behavior from Jacob as from Esau would not only kill Rebekah but also ultimately kill Isaac. We see that Jacob is set to obey immediately. What reward does instantaneous and immediate obedience bring?

Isaac sends Jacob away with blessing: *"1So Isaac called for Jacob, blessed him, commanded him and said to him, "Don't take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. 2Get up, go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, and take for yourself a wife from there, from the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother. 3Now may El Shaddai bless you, and make you fruitful and multiply you so that you will become an assembly of peoples. 4And may He give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your seed with you that you may take possession of the land of your sojourn, which God gave to Abraham" (Genesis 28:1-4). Consider the blessing in detail: "May El Shaddai (The Almighty) bless you." This immediately reveals a God that can do everything (the Almighty) since nothing is impossible with Him. Then, "(May He) make you fruitful and multiply you." Jacob will have many male children, but He doesn't even have a wife! "...you will become an assembly (congregation) of peoples." His children will become diversified people. "So you may take possession of the land of your sojourn, which God gave to Abraham." Jacob receives the Abrahamic blessing; he will be destined to be the father of many nations and possess the land of Israel. Scripture tells us that when Esau saw that Jacob *obeyed his father and mother* (Vv. 7) in a despicable and contemptible response (*"8Then Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan were contemptible in his father Isaac's eyes")* he took for himself an additional wife from the daughters of Ishmael. The correct action should have been to obey first and not after doing it your own way initially. <sup>12</sup> *"Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long upon the land which Adonai your God is giving you." Or "Honor your father and mother" (which is the first commandment with a promise),<sup>3</sup> "so that it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth" (Ex. 20:12 & Eph. 6:2-3).**

In today's *Parashat Vayetze* we see *Adonai's* blessing fulfilled. While Jacob is sad leaving everything that means anything to him – home, parents, family, wealth, and comfort. But when he sees Rachel, it is all forgotten. Jacob's obedience to his parents brings him his beloved Rachel, her sister, a large family, and prosperity. *Adonai* gave him everything that was 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*.

*Adonai'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* – to *prove that we heard His Word by our actions*. This is called obedience. Our ancestors said: *"Na-aseh V'Nishma"* (see Ex. 19:8 and 24:3): *"all the words Adonai 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 because we have His written Word and His *Torah*. We need not be deceived anymore because we can live our life according to His Will. These are not my words or your parent's words – these are *Adonai's Words*. Scripture has given us the benefit of having an absolutely reliable roadmap for our lives therefore, will you obey and reap a great reward?

Scripture tells us about the cyclic nature of life in Eccl. 3:15. We can break the cycle of iniquity and in fact, it is time to break the cycle of consequences that plague us. There is great reward awaiting us if we obey. 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 overcomers. We are that generation by faith. *Shabbat Shalom!*