

Vayetsei- The Road of Return

Bereshiyth [Genesis] 28:10-32:3



Introduction: Our last reading saw Ya'acov's [Jacob's] fateful decision to deceive his father Yitschaq [Isaac] so now he is faced with the consequences of that tragic decision. We saw that one consequence resulted in Rivkah [Rebecca] hearing that Esav [Esaw] was so angered by his actions that he planned upon the death of Yitschaq his Father to put Yaacov [Jacob] to death. We then see Rivkah once again interceding for Ya'acov with Yitschaq to cause Ya'acov [Jacob] to journey to the land of Laban, Rivkah's brother to take a wife from his daughters.



We do know it was more to preserve Ya'acov from the wrath of Esav his brother since we

find Rivkah instructing Ya'acov to flee to Laban a few days though we know that became a very extended stay, so long that he never saw Rivkah [Rebecca] his beloved mother again.

Our previous portion concludes with Yitschaq blessing Ya'acov [Jacob] & charging him to take a wife from the house of Bethuel from the daughters of Laban.

The Missing Details:



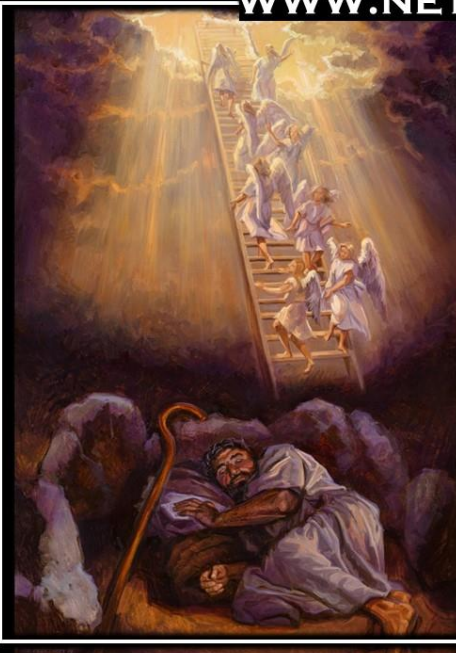
We know from a former reading concerned with choosing of a wife for Yitschaq [Isaac] that **Eliazar** the servant of Abraham had ten Camels & much wealth being the **Dowry for Rivkah** which so excited Laban. In our reading this week however, there is no mention of any wealth brought by Ya'acov, rather Laban initiates a discussion over **wages** with Ya'acov negotiating to serve Laban for **Rachel**. Surely his travel was not without the wealth expected & something **very tragic** must have happened on the way. A suggestion maybe that Esav or his associates attacked him to strip him of all his resources to succeed in his journey just as he stole the **birthright & the blessing** from Esav. **Rashi's** commentary tells us that **Eliphaz** the son of Esav pursued Ya'acov at the command of his father.



Ya'acov
[Jacob]
Arrives
with
nothing

Therefore, upon his arrival to the House of Laban he was destitute with nothing to show for himself, but the fact that he was a relative. Ya'acov on this journey after having everything stripped from him surely wondered how his blessings could ever find fulfilment since now, he was destitute. That surely is no different than our thoughts that we might face in our life when our world is faced with, failure & loss & so we often need to be reassured of the good promises from the Almighty too.

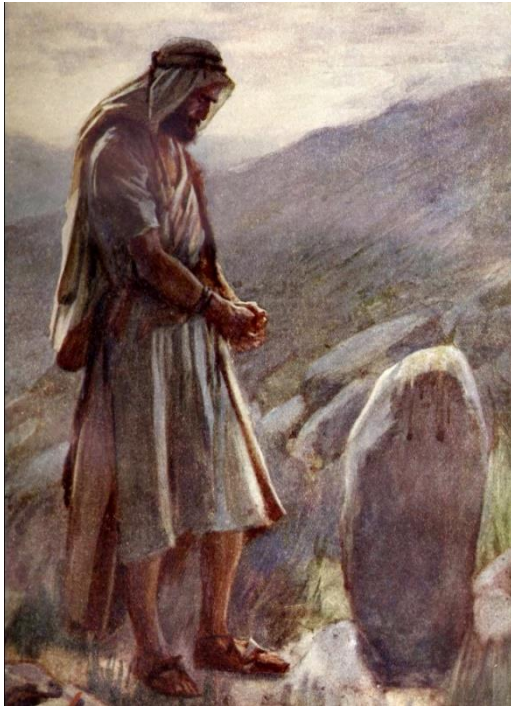
The Supernatural Encounter:



The Covenant
Confirmed

It is therefore precisely when Ya'acov is destitute and has nothing, that he comes to the place & takes of the stones & lays down to sleep. It is at this unique time that Ya'acov [Jacob] has this wonderful dream though everything up to now has led to human failure.

However, in this dream we see Messengers [Angels] ascending & descending on a ladder connecting Earth with the Heavens and Yahweh confirming his Covenant first given to Abraham but now confirmed to him with the promise that Yahweh will be with him. Surely it is this encounter that begins to cause his faith to grow since we read his response being a vow in which he says:



“If Elohim will be with me, & keep me in this way that I am going & give me bread to eat & clothing to put on so that I come back to my Father’s house in peace, then Yahweh shall be my Elohim.”

We do see he is beginning to put his trust in Elohim though his faith reveals a believer in the flesh as his faith is very conditional. Now in his attempt to receive blessings we see him beginning to trust Elohim based on provision. Is this not the journey of faith for most of us? Do not we look to the prospect of blessings & success that then anchors our faith. As with Ya’acov [Jacob] there is still more to raising his faith to a higher dimension. This is **Laban** who becomes essential in the plan of Elohim. He is surely not one we would like in our life as he is so manipulative & conniving but essential to the growth of **Ya’acov’s** [Jacob’s] faith.

Does not failure & loss have the potential to increase faith or defeat it.

The Truth of Measure for Measure:

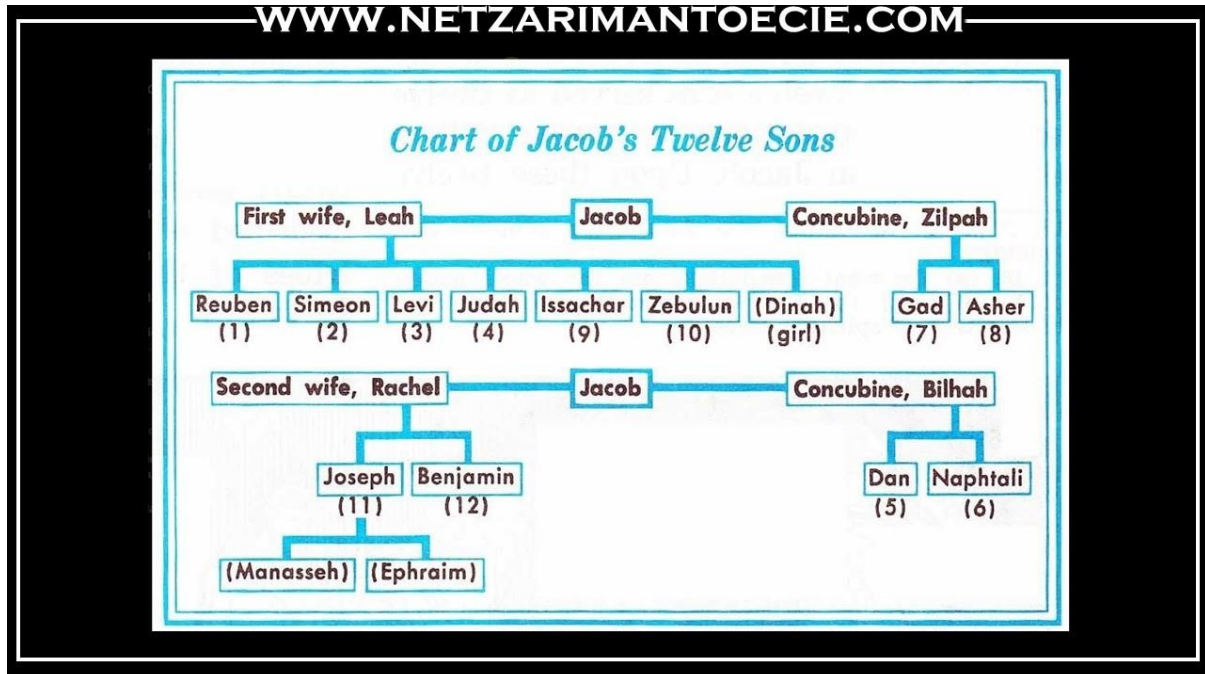
Within the growth of Yaacov’s reliance on Yahweh we come to understanding that with every action there is an opposite and equal reaction.



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**Rachel the
beloved of
Ya’acov
[Jacob]**

We know that Ya'acov truly loved Rachel, but we now come to see how Laban deceives Ya'acov [Jacob] by marrying him to **Leah** first for his promised 7 years of service & then **Rachel** in order to cause an additional 7 years of servanthood which Ya'acov though extremely angry at the deception happily does concede since he loves **Rachel**, so they seem for him as a few days.

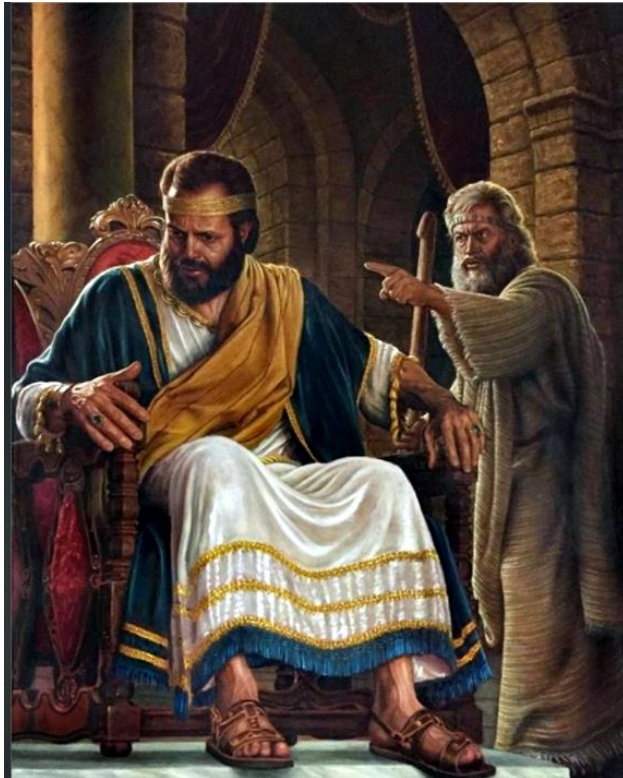


In the years of service 11 sons are born to Yacov so when Yoseph is born to Rachel, Ya'acov tries to leave upon the word of Yahweh, and Laban makes an agreement to pay wages which Ya'acov turns into the agreement for spotted goats & lambs however Laban attempts another deception by removing all of these.



Therefore, Ya'acov still has no material wealth to speak of. Notwithstanding, Ya'acov has

discovered that he should trust the messenger of Yahweh and the result is that many young lambs & kids are born spotted to his joy which makes him rich. After this incident Ya'acov realizes that his relationship with Laban has become tainted since his prosperity is seen by Laban & his sons as robbery. Surely in all this we do see a changed Ya'acov in that he is working so hard to redeem himself in the eyes of Yahweh & surely perceives that the deceit of Laban is the result of his deceit. In Hebrew thought this is measure for measure something we see in the life of King David who is credited as the man after the heart of Elohim, but we read that after David organized to have Uriah the Hittite murdered to take his wife Bethsheba, Nathan the prophet says this in:



Shemuel Beyth [2 Samuel] 12:10 'Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me [YHWH], and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.'

The dreaded Encounter:



We do see in the escape from **Lavan** that even **Rachel** Ya'acov's most beloved had still been influenced by the home she grew up, since she even steals the household Elohim causing Laban to be so angered that he desires to do Ya'acov harm & so **pursues him**. We now come to see how faithful Yahweh is with Ya'acov because in a night-time dream he warns Laban not even to say anything good or evil against his chosen, so we see the final encounter where he does not find his idols and, in his selfishness, he still considers that everything Yaacov has belongs to him including the daughters & all his wealth.

What arouses his anger, his rage, is surely that Ya'acov always maintains his dignity and independence. Faced with an impossible existence as his father-in-law's slave, Ya'acov always finds a way of carrying on. Ya'acov refuses to be defeated. Hemmed in on all sides, he finds a way out. That is Ya'acov's greatness and the sign of his trust in Yahweh. His methods are not those he would have chosen in other circumstances. He must outwit an extremely cunning adversary. But Ya'acov refuses to be defeated, crushed, or demoralized. In a seemingly impossible situation, Ya'acov retains his unmovable faith in Yahweh.



However, because of the divine warning Laban makes a Covenant of separation between Ya'acov and himself so that they would never cross paths again. Could this also teach us something, that there are people in our lives that we should separate from too, if they are toxic to our life with Yahweh. Ya'acov had understood that and so should we.

Conclusion:

This entire portion reveals exactly what Rivkah [Rebecca] was hoping Ya'acov could demonstrate to his father Yitschaq. He now after many years of testing proved beyond a doubt that he could be a doer & that he did not need disguises or trickery to achieve that but an unflinching trust & confidence in Yahweh. This is clearly seen by how everything prospers in his hand & how he knew that he could succeed where formally he was a simple, naïve young man. This is the transformation that all of us need if we are to prosper in our

spiritual life & even in our life in the World. In fact, we are never told in Scripture that our life in this world will always be wonderful, but Yeshua tells us this:



Yahuchanan [John] 16:33 These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

The challenge from this reading that we receive is that our blessing & prosperity is appropriately found in securing ourselves to our beloved Master rather than using human means of success that ultimately cause trouble which is best revealed in these words of Shaul [Paul] where he says in:



Romiym [Romans] 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of Elohim.

Haftarah:



This reading rebukes Yisrael for her human alliances & then it turns to the story of Ya'acov [Jacob] that we have just discussed. This long journey of Ya'acov saw him totally destitute in his own efforts but through perseverance & prayerfulness saw Yahweh's favour rest upon him. He encountered the Holy one of Yisrael at Beyth El who promised the blessings of Abraham which was the promise to his descendants as well. Yisrael had forgotten the hardship Ya'acov had faced but through great struggle he had been greatly blessed because he had remained faithful to Yahweh & his divine calling. Yisrael had forgotten that & turned to their foreign alliances but Yahweh in his faithfulness continued to send prophets to Israel in the hope that they would return to him that they would again be favoured & stay true to its calling which was; that through them all the families of the earth would be blessed as they are today.

Netzarim Ketuvim: Yahuchanan (John) 1:43-51



This is a great reading and I am wondering if in fact Nataniel in his morning devotion under that Figtree was in fact contemplating this parashat or contemplating the Messiah since he is so quick to accept Yeshua as the son of Elohim with Yeshua's revelation though it is here that Yeshua gives us the clearest indication that the Ladder of Ya'acov (Jacob) is in fact himself since he is the fulfilment of what the ladder represents being the connection between earth and heaven and that place that Ya'acov laid his head would finally become the Most Kadosh place (the Holy of Holies) inside the Beyth Ha Mikdash (the Temple) but surely Yeshua was truly saying that only through him would there be access to the Father since Yeshua says that **"no-one comes to the Father except through me"** Yahuchanan [Jn] **14:6.**