

TORAH PORTION
"VAYETZE", DECEMBER 4-10, 2005

"BEARING THE CONSEQUENCES THROUGH INTERCESSION"¹

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This week's Torah portion deals with a new beginning for one of our forefathers, Jacob. He needed to flee for his life to a far off country. He needed to run out of his own safety zone, out of his homeland, out of his dear parents' home and away from all that he was so familiar with and accustomed to!

Last week's portion dealt with the reasons that led Jacob to flee to Charan. Jacob took advantage of his brother's weakness (Gen. 25:27-34) and agreed to be a part in his mother's trick against his older brother, a trick that enabled Jacob to gain the blessings of the first born from his old father (Gen. 27). We know very well that God's sovereignty was very active throughout all of this and that He, in His wisdom, used Jacob's selfishness and "fleshly" behavior to accomplish what He had already foretold Rebecca when the two sons were still in her womb (Gen. 25:23).

Those who have known me long, know how I define "God's sovereignty". It is the way God works and uses man's stupidity and weaknesses to accomplish His perfect will here on planet earth. He does it this way so that no man could take the credit for himself, and at the end of the day, men would bow down and give Him and only Him all the Glory!

Things have been rough since we moved back to Israel and Gaby and I often question whether or not we made the right choice in regards to moving back over here. We often wonder whether it was a big mistake because at times we feel so "unused" here, not having any real spiritual purpose or ministry, not to mention the many difficulties and attacks from the enemy we have experienced.

The only thing that keeps our sanity these days is the knowledge that God, who is *Love*, forgives our mistakes and cares for us no matter what. But even more than that, He is a *sovereign God*! He can still use our mistakes, weaknesses, stupidity etc. to eventually fulfill His perfect will in our lives!

But what is the key to our spiritual peace, when at times we feel like we messed up and that we now need to bear the consequences of our possible mistakes? The only answer to that question is so evident in our Torah portion. The key to surviving the difficulties we face, is having a special and very personal encounter with the living God! How do we get to experience this very special encounter with our loving Creator? By *intercession*!

Let's go now to the text and see what I'm talking about. As mentioned above, Jacob needed to bear the consequences of his actions against his older brother. He needed to leave behind him the "Well of the Seven" (or the "Well of the Oath", which is the Hebrew meaning of "Beersheba". See Gen. 21:22-31, 26:26-33). Yes! Jacob needed to leave his beloved comfort zone behind him, the place he called home. Beersheba, the well of living waters from where he could drink freely. The place where both his father and grandfather received promises and swore oaths. In such a circumstance, Jacob was in great need

for a very special and personal encounter with the living God!

So where was the very first place Jacob went to? Where did Jacob experience God in a very special and personal way? It was in "Bethel" (in Hebrew, "The house of God"). But how did he get there in the first place? *By intercession!*

What you read in English as, "He came to..." (Gen. 28:11), is actually a translation of only one Hebrew word: "Vaifgah". This word comes from the root "P.G.A" (or "Paga"; 6293), which is a primitive root, *to impinge, by accident or violence, or (figuratively) by importunity, come (betwixt), cause to entreat, fall (upon), make intercession, intercessor, entreat, lay, light (upon), meet (together), pray, reach, run.*

Moreover, what you read in English as, "A certain place" (Gen. 28:11), is actually a translation of (again) only one Hebrew word: "Makom" (4725) which indeed means "a spot or location". Yet it is probably connected to another Hebrew word, "Kum" (6965. or "Lakum"), which contains the following meanings: *rise up, abide, accomplish, confirm, continue, endure, enjoin, get up, help, hold, (help to) lift up, ordain, perform, raise (up), remain, establish, stand (up), stir up, strengthen and succeed.*

In only one verse (Gen. 28:11), this word "Makom" is mentioned three times! The Jewish sages understood this word as relating to the Almighty. Until this very day, orthodox Jews will use this word as one of God's names! The Jewish sages understood this "place" ("Makom") to be not just another place in the Promised Land, but "THE very Place" —The God of Israel!

Whether the Jewish sages' understanding and use of the term "Makom" is right or wrong, one thing is for sure. The Almighty was indeed in that "place", according to Jacob's own understanding (See Gen. 28:13-15, 16-17).

So we can see that in order to overcome his very difficult and uncertain circumstances, Jacob "interceded" until he got to a place of rest, the very place where the Almighty Himself dwelled! Yes! Jacob got to the place where the Almighty would "reestablish" him; a place where he could "rise again" and "be reconfirmed" as God's chosen/called-out one.

To summarize:

- God is A SOVEREIGN GOD!
- Despite the above truth, this does NOT mean we are exempt from having to take responsibility or exempt from bearing the consequences of our (possible) mistakes/sins!
- The key to overcoming difficult circumstances here on planet earth (mostly caused by us), is to have a very special and personal encounter with HIM! He is only ONE who can lead us through and out of these "valleys of the shadow of death" that we get ourselves into.
- The only way we can get to that "place", is by interceding and begging Him to show us His face, His great LOVE, and His comfort. We can have faith that HE WILL!

I wish all of you a very blessed week, full of His presence, comfort and love!

In Him,

Rami

