

Hear Israel

Va'yetse ~ And He Went Out

B'reshith 28:10-32:3

Beit Emet Congregation ~ Vancouver, WA

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In this week's *parsha* we see another chapter in the history of Yisra'el, our history. Do you remember that phrase we learned a few weeks ago? In Hebrew it's, "**Ma'aseh avot siman le'vanim**". And, in English it's, "**The deeds of the fathers (our ancestors) are signposts to the children**". Remember too how these events are to be examples to us, as we walk out our present and future. Here, Ya'aqob begins the journey that will bring forth the fathers of the twelve tribes and will result in him being given a new name, Yisra'el. But, let's not get ahead of ourselves.

We begin in **B'reshith / Genesis 28:10-22; And Ya'aqob went out from Be'ersheba and went toward Haran. And he came upon a place and stopped over for the night, for the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed and saw a ladder set up on the earth, and its top reached to the heavens, and saw messengers of Elohim going up and coming down on it. And see, YHVH stood above it and said, "I am YHVH Elohim of Abraham your father and the Elohim of Yitsaq. The land on which you are lying, I give it to you and your seed. And your seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and you shall break forth to the west and to the east, to the north and the south. And all the clans of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your seed. And see, I am with you and shall guard you wherever you go, and shall bring you back to this land. For I am not going to leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you." And Ya'aqob awoke from his sleep and said, "Truly, YHVH is in this place, and I did not know it." And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of Elohim, and this is the gate of the heavens!" And Ya'aqob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a standing column, and poured oil on top of it. And he called the name of that place Beyth El, however, the name of that city had been Luz previously. And Ya'aqob made a vow, saying, "Seeing Elohim is with me, and has kept me in this way that I am going, and has given me bread to eat and a garment to put on – when I have returned to my father's house in peace, and YHVH has been my Elohim, then this stone which I have set as a standing column shall be Elohim's house, and of all that You give me, I shall certainly give a tenth to You."**

Now, last week we saw Ya'aqob taking the birthright of the first-born from Esau, and receiving the first-born blessing from Yitzaq. This week he leaves Be'ersheva to go to Haran. Remember, "**Be'ersheva**" in Hebrew literally means the "**seventh well**", or in Hebrew thought is a picture of the "**Fountain of Divine Knowledge**". We also learned in past *parashot* that "**Haran**" means "**the Crossroads**" and symbolizes "**choosing**" or "**making choices**".

Now, we read in the ISR Scriptures that "**he came upon a place....**" The KJV says that "**he lighted upon a certain place....**" In the Hebrew it states that, "**Va'yifga ba'maqom**" or "**and he**

encountered that place". Now, the Hebrew word here for "**place**" is "**maqowm**", Strong's #4725, meaning; "**place**" or "**station**". "**Maqowm**" is from the root word #6965 "**quwm**", meaning; **to rise up, arise**, also to be "**proven**" or "**to establish**". In fact it is translated as "**rise up**" or "**arise**" 451 times in Scripture and as "**confirm**", "**perform**" and "**establish**" 65 times. So, Ya'acob has come to and encountered this place, this "**maqowm**", where the Words of Yahweh are "**confirmed**", "**proven**" and "**established**".

Next, we read in most English translations that he took one of the stones (some say that he took "*of the stones*") from that place and put at his head, or as his *pillows* [KJV]. There's a whole Hebrew word thing going on here that we need to look at in order to understand what is happening. First it says, "**he took**". The word here is #3947 "**laqach**", which means "**to take**", "**accept**" or "**marry**". Next is "**m'eben'y**", or "**of stones**". O.K., I've told this before, about how the word for "**stone**" in Hebrew (**eben**) is spelled "*aleph-beit-nun*". And, that we have two words within "**eben**". We have "*aleph-beit*" (**ab**), which means "**father**" and "*beit-nun*" (**ben**) which means "**son**". So, both *father* and *son* make up the *eben* or *stone*.

Hold that thought for just a minute. Now, we read that Ya'aqob put them at his head. Some translations say, "*for pillows*". The KJV puts that in italics to note that it was added. However, from the Hebrew it reads, "**v'asam m'rashatah**" or that "**he arranged them around his head.**" O.K., let's sum up for a minute what the Torah is telling us here. He **takes** or "**accepts**" some of the stones and arranges them around his head before he goes to sleep. Now, if we add to this that within these stones are father and son, we get a picture of Avraham and Yitsaq establishing the genealogy of Ya'aqob and the tribes. The rabbis teach that he placed twelve stones around his head. Now, we're not given the exact number of stones that Ya'aqob placed around his head. However, what I find interesting here, is that the numeric value of the phrase "**m'eben'y**" or "**of stones**" is 103, which equals "**ha kokavim**" or "**the stars**".

This reminds us of Yoseph's dream in **B'reshith 40:9-10**; **And he dreamed still another dream and related it to his brothers, and said, "See, I have dreamed another dream, and see, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars bowed down to me." And he related it to his father and his brothers. And his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall we, your mother and I and your brothers, indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?" And his brothers envied him, but his father guarded the word.** You'll remember that it was Ya'aqob who interpreted the dream. He knew, probably from his placing of the stones around his head at Beth El.

Next, Ya'aqob sleeps and he has a dream. He sees a "**ladder**"; in Hebrew "**sullam**", Strong's #5551 which is from #5549, "**salal**" meaning to "**lift-up**" or "**exalt**". And, this ladder was "**mutzav erez**", or was "**rooted in the land**" and "**reached to Heaven**". It didn't just reach from the earth to Heaven; it was "**rooted**" in the land. It was connected to the Land. Now, the "**messengers**" ("**malaki**") of Elohim were ascending and descending upon it. This brings at least two things to mind. First, why does it state that the messengers were "**ascending**" and "**descending**" in that order? Logic would say that the descended from Heaven, then ascended back. The rabbis teach that the ladder being rooted in the land means that first, our prayers are carried up to Yahweh by the messengers that He has placed to guard us. Then, they will return with His provision. This is indeed the picture borne out in the second point. Yahshua said, in this week's Brit Chadashah reading, to Nethane'l in **Yohanah/ John 1:50-51**; **Yahshua answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? Greater than that you shall see." And He said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, from now on you shall see the heaven opened, and the messengers of Elohim ascending and descending upon the Son of Adam."** What was Yahshua telling Nethane'l? He was telling him that He, as Yahweh our Salvation, is the "**ladder**" between Ya'aqob

(Yisra'el) and Elohim. And, that it is on His account (on Him) that the "**malakim**" (messengers) ascend and descend in on our behalf.

Now, according to the Hebrew, Ya'aqob sees Yahweh standing over him. And He tells him ***"I am YHVH Elohim of Avraham your father and the Elohim of Yitsaq.*** Why do you suppose Yahweh tells Ya'aqob that He was the Elohim of his father Avraham? Yitsaq was his father. Because Avraham was to be Ya'aqob's role model. You see, Yitsaq was never in "**galut**" (exile or dispersion). Then, Yahweh tells Ya'aqob in **verses 13b-15**; ***"The land on which you are lying, I give it to you and your seed. And your seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and you shall break forth to the west and to the east, to the north and the south. And all the clans of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your seed. And see, I am with you and shall guard you wherever you go, and shall bring you back to this land. For I am not going to leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you."*** Here Yahweh repeats the promises made to Avraham and Yitsaq, with the addition of prophesying of the future dispersions of both "*Houses of Yisra'el*" in that they will break forth in all directions. Then He tells Ya'aqob that He is with him, guarding him and will bring him back to Eretz Yisra'el. And, that He will not leave Ya'aqob until all is done. The Stone Edition TaNaK ends it this way from the Hebrew, ***".... for I will not forsake you until I will have done what I have spoken about you."***

Now, Ya'aqob does indeed return from exile; not once, but twice. He returns from Haran 21 years later a wealthy man with eleven of his sons and the twelfth on the way. Then, while still in Mitzrayim, as he is dying, he asks Yosef to promise to bring his body home to Eretz Yisra'el to be buried with Avraham and Yitsaq. So, he is taken from his grave in the world and brought back to Eretz Yisra'el. What a picture! Where have we heard that before, regarding us? In the "*Valley of Dry Bones*" in **Yehezqel / Ezekiel 37:12-13**; ***"Therefore prophesy, and you shall say to them, 'Thus said the Master YHVH, 'See, O My people, I am opening your graves, and shall bring you up from your graves, and shall bring you into the land of Yisra'el. And you shall know that I am YHVH, when I open your graves, O My people, and bring you up from your graves.***

Then, in **verses 16-22** we read; ***And Ya'aqob awoke from his sleep and said, "Truly, YHVH is in this place, and I did not know it." And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of Elohim, and this is the gate of the heavens!" And Ya'aqob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a standing column, and poured oil on top of it. And he called the name of that place Beyth El, however, the name of that city had been Luz previously. And Ya'aqob made a vow, saying, "Seeing Elohim is with me, and has kept me in this way that I am going, and has given me bread to eat and a garment to put on – when I have returned to my father's house in peace, and YHVH has been my Elohim, then this stone which I have set as a standing column shall be Elohim's house, and of all that You give me, I shall certainly give a tenth to You."***

There are two or three things we need to see here. We read that Ya'aqob takes "**the stone**" that had been around his head all night and stands it up as a standing column and pours oil on top of it. That's right; in the Hebrew Torah, the "**stone**" here is singular in **verse 18**, but plural back in **verse 11**. And, should it be singular back in **verse 10**; then, how do you arrange one stone around your head. Somehow, these stones (perhaps twelve of them) united into one stone. Of course in that stone (**eben / aleph-beit-nun**) is the Father and the Son. The Father being Yahweh; after all, Ya'aqob named the place (**ha maqom**) **Beit El** (House of Elohim). The Son, Yahshua, the **Stone** the builders rejected that became the Chief Corner**stone** and the **Stone** of Stumbling. So, when these smaller stones, "**living stones**" unite in Moshiach, we see that they become a column, or as

Yahshua said in Revelation 3:12 of he who overcomes, he will be a column or support in the “**Dwelling Place**” or (**Beit El**) the “**House of Elohim**”.

Now, he calls this place the “**House of Elohim**” or “**Beit El**” and the “**Gate of the Heavens**”. This place, Scripture says, was previously called “**Luz**”. Now **Luz** (Strong’s #3870) means “**almond tree**”. The almond tree, if you’ll remember, was where Aharon’s staff came from and is the sign of the authority of the Levites and the priesthood. Also, the golden Lampstand (menorah) was fashioned to represent an almond tree. Another interesting note here is that Beit El is the most mentioned city in Scripture besides Yerushalayim. And, it is very near Yerushalayim. In fact many believe that they are one and the same. Now, throughout the Book of **Shoft’im** (Judges), we see that the people and the Judges inquired of Yahweh in Beit El.

Even though the Mishkan (Tabernacle) was in Shiloh for 369 years, the Ark of the Covenant was in Beit El for a number of those years, as we read in **Shoft’im / Judges 21:26-28**, as B’nei Yisra’el is preparing for the third battle against the tribe of Binyamin; ***And all the children of Yisra’el, even all the people, went up and came to Beyth El and wept, and sat there before YHVH and fasted that day until evening. And they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before YHVH. And the children of Yisra’el asked of YHVH – the ark of the covenant of Elohim was there in those days, and Pinehas son of El’azar, son of Aharon, stood before it in those days – saying, “Should I yet again go out to battle against the children of my brother Binyamin, or should I cease?” And YHVH said, “Go up, for tomorrow I give them into your hand.”*** I don’t know if you noticed; but, Pinehas being at Beit El and the end of the time of the Judges in Yisra’el, means that he lived to be over 300 years old, at a time when 110 was a ripe old age, as that was Yehoshua’s age at his death.

So, Ya’aqob acknowledges Yahweh for His provision and makes a vow that when he returns to his father in peace and Yahweh has been his Elohim, the column he erected will be, for him, the House of Yahweh and he will tithe of all he has. We’ll see next week that he indeed comes back to Beit El, as Yisra’el, and builds an altar there. Perhaps this altar still stood at the time of the Judges, so that they came to inquire of Yahweh where Elohim appeared and spoke to Ya’aqob.

Now, let’s move to **B’reshith 29:1-14**; ***And Ya’aqob moved on and came to the land of the people of the East. And he looked and saw a well in the field, and saw three flocks of sheep lying by it, for out of that well they watered the flocks, and a large stone was on the well’s mouth. And all the flocks would be gathered there, then they would roll the stone from the well’s mouth and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the well’s mouth. So Ya’aqob said to them, “My brothers, where are you from?” And they said, “We are from Haran.” And he said to them, “Do you know Laban son of Nahor?” And they said, “We know him.” So he said to them, “Is he well?” And they said, “Well. And see, his daughter Rahel is coming with the sheep.” And he said, “See, it is still high day, not the time for the livestock to be gathered together. Water the sheep, and go and feed them.” But they said, “We are not allowed until all the flocks are gathered together, and they have rolled the stone from the well’s mouth, then we shall water the sheep.” While he was still speaking with them, Rahel came with her father’s sheep, for she was a shepherdess. And it came to be, when Ya’aqob saw Rahel the daughter of Laban his mother’s brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother’s brother, that Ya’aqob went near and rolled the stone from the well’s mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother’s brother. And Ya’aqob kissed Rahel, and lifted up his voice and wept. And when Ya’aqob told Rahel that he was her father’s relative and that he was Rivqah’s son, she ran and told her father. And it came to be, when Laban heard the report about Ya’aqob his sister’s son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him,***

and brought him to his house. Then he told Laban all these matters. And Laban said to him, "You are indeed my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with him for a month.

Ya'aqob comes to the land of the people of the East. We know that this is the ancestral home of Avraham and of Ya'aqob's mother Rivka. But, why would Torah say East? The Hebrew word used here is "**qedem**". It is Strong's #6924 and is more often used to mean "**that which was before**" or "**from ancient time**", "**antiquity**" or "**from of old**". This would describe the land of Avraham's origin.

Then, he sees a well in the field. First let's look at this field. As we read last week, Yitzaq sent Ya'aqob to Paddan Aram, which is located in Haran. Now Paddan Aram literally means "**field of exaltation**" or "**exalted field**". This was indeed a special place. If you'll remember Avraham sent Eliezer, his trusted servant, to Paddan Aram to find Rivka for Yitsaq. Now, Ya'aqob goes to Paddan Aram to find a wife. This could very well be the same well.

Here, he sees three flocks of sheep lying near the well and we are told that a large stone was on the well's mouth. We also get a narrative about how the flocks are watered. When all the sheep are gathered, then the stone would be rolled away, the flocks watered and well closed. Before I go on, I need to go over a couple of things. First, the rabbis point out that in the Hebrew, it is stressed that the stone used to close the well was indeed very large. Now, this type of well closure was common. It was probably the only source of water for the city and they wanted to keep it secure. Plus, it was likely owned by Laban, in that this city was founded by Avraham's father Terah and Laban was the patriarch at this time. Then rabbis also point out that the Hebrew words used to describe the three flocks "**lying by the well**", or "**beside it**" as some translations read, carries the connotation that they were fully dependent on it. As we've seen before, in Hebrew thought, "**wisdom**" is symbolized by the water underground. It is buried, hidden, and accessible only to those willing to go to the effort to bring it to the surface. This was a very important well represented here.

Remember the reference to the stone (**eben**) being made up of Father and Son and the fact that all the flocks needed to be present for the wellspring of wisdom to be opened. But, when Ya'aqob arrives, there were only three present. One thought on this number we're given is that these three flocks represent the flocks, or children, of Shem, Ham and Yapheth (Noach's sons), since they repopulated the world. Remember, these were people of "**qedem**" or "**antiquity**". Now we're not told here how many flocks there were. But, when Rachel showed up with her father's flock, even though it was still early in the day, Ya'aqob asks the men of the city to open the well. But, even though they are from Haran, they tell him they are not allowed. They say that when all the flocks have gathered, the proverbial "**they**" have opened the well, the flocks will be watered. They don't have the strength or the authority to open the well. But, even as they spoke, Rahel came to the well with her father's sheep. And seeing her with Laban's sheep, Ya'aqob rolls away the huge stone and waters the sheep. You see, Laban's flock contained all of Yisra'el. Because through his house (Leah, Rachel and the two hand-maidens), from his flock, would come all Twelve Tribes of Yisra'el. So, when these sheep are gathered among all the flocks of the earth, the well-spring of Yahweh opens and gives them "**Living Water**".

Then, Ya'aqob kisses and greets Rahel with tears. He no doubt relived the story that his parents must have told him of how Rivka came out to the well and was met by Eliezer. And, he no doubt knew that he was looking at his future wife. She runs to tell her father. I'm sure when Laban hears that Ya'aqob, Yitsaq and Rivqah's son, is here and showed such strength and authority in opening the well, he thought, "**My wealthy family is here! My ship has come in!**" He was no doubt a little disappointed to see only Ya'aqob, empty-handed, with only his walking stick and no change of clothes. Now, remember that "**Laban**" means "**white**". And, you can either take that as "**pure**" or "**white**" as in "**leprous**".

From the verses that follow, that month that Ya'aqob spent with Laban must have been a truly blessed one. For we read in **B'reshith 29:15**; *Then Laban said to Ya'aqob, "Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for naught? Let me know, what should your wages be?"* It's obvious from the text that already Ya'aqob was serving Laban and something was going well for him. Then in **verses 16-31**; *And Laban had two daughters, the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rahel. And Leah's eyes were weak, but Rahel was lovely of form and appearance. And Ya'aqob loved Rahel, so he said, "Let me serve you seven years for Rahel your younger daughter." And Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to another man. Stay with me." So Ya'aqob served seven years for Rahel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her. Then Ya'aqob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my days are completed, and let me go in to her." And Laban gathered all the men of the place and made a feast. And it came to be in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter and brought her to Ya'aqob. And he went in to her. And Laban gave his female servant Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a female servant. And in the morning it came to be, that see, it was Leah. So he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rahel that I served you? Why then have you deceived me?" And Laban said, "It is not done this way in our place, to give the younger before the first-born. Complete the week of this one, then we give you this one too, for the service which you shall serve with me still another seven years." And Ya'aqob did so and completed her week. Then he gave him his daughter Rahel too, as wife. And Laban gave his female servant Bilhah to his daughter Rahel as a female servant. And he also went in to Rahel, and he also loved Rahel more than Leah. And he served with Laban still another seven years. And YHVH saw that Leah was unloved, and He opened her womb, but Rahel was barren.*

Torah tells us here that Laban had two daughters, Leah the eldest and Rahel the youngest. Leah's name means "**weary**" or "**grieving**". Now the popular English translations say that Leah's eyes were weak. However, the Hebrew words here are "**rak**" (**tender**) and "**Ayin**" (**eye**), as in "**tender-hearted**". An interesting side note here is that the rabbis interpret her name as an abbreviation of "**M'Leah**", which means "**ful**". Now Leah is spelled "**Lamed-aleph-hey**". **Lamed** means to "**learn**" or "**teach**", **aleph** is the "**ox**", meaning "**strength**" or "**master**" and **hey** means "**to behold**" or "**revelation**". This adds great depth to her name; Leah's name would mean "**to teach the Master's revelation**". It's interesting that if you add "**Mem**" (as in M'Leah) or **water**, symbolizing the **Word**, to one who is weary, or grieving, they become full. Also, the numeric value of her name is 36 which equals the phrases "**in His hands**" and "**with His power**". Leah is a name worthy of a Matriarch, as she would give birth to six of Ya'aqob's 12 sons (*Reuben, Shimon, Levi, Yehudah, Yissakar and Zebulun*) and to *Dinah*, their daughter.

Now, Rahel means "**ewe**" or "**sheep**". Torah tells us that she was "**yapheh to'ar**" or "**beautiful of form**" or **shape** and that she was "**yapheh mar'eh**" or "**as beautiful as a vision**". We're told that Ya'aqob loved her. The word is "**ahav**" and it means "**to love**", "**desire**" and the Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon says to "**breath after**". Now that's intense. The rabbis teach that Leah was not "**hated**" by Ya'aqob. It's just that his love and passion for Rahel was so intense that she felt hated. However, the Hebrew word used here is a form of the word "**sane**" which implies "**unloved**". Also, Rahel is spelled "**Reish-chet-lamed**". **Reish** means "**head**" or "**beginning**". **Chet** means "**fear of Yahweh**" or "**life**". And **lamed** is the "**shepherd's staff**" and means to "**learn**" or "**teach**". So, Rahel's name would mean "**the beginning of fear (life) is learning (knowledge or wisdom)**". As **Tehillim (Psalms) 111:10a** says; *"The fear of YHVH is the beginning of wisdom,...."* and **Mishle (Proverbs) 1:7** says; *"The fear of YHVH is the beginning of knowledge; a Fools despise wisdom and discipline."* It's no coincidence that Rahel, *the sheep*, was our mother; the mother of *Yoseph*, as well as *Benjamin*. Her name's numeric value is 238 which equals "**and He blessed**", "**and multiply**

you, “**first-fruits**” and “**and will bless**”. These are the words that Ya’aqob would later use to bless Ephraim and Menasheh.

Now, while we’re remembering our matriarchs, let’s not forget two other “*Moms*” that are very important to Kol Yisra’el. First, there’s **Zilpah**, whose name literally means to “**trickle as myrrh**” a way of gently adding a strong spice, a little at a time. **Zilpah** is spelled “*Zayin-lamed-pey-hey*”. The numeric value of her name is 122 which equals “**and they shall flee**”, “**in its appointed season**”, “**and they went up**” and “**He will make wonderful**”. Zilpah bore Ya’aqob two sons, *Gad* and *Asher*.

Finally we have Bilhah. Her name means “**troubled**” or “**to trouble**”. Bilhah is spelled “*Beit-lamed-hey-hey*”. The numeric value of Bilhah’s name is 42 which equals “**Eloah**”, “**My esteem**” and “**in his heart**”. She bore two sons to Ya’acov; *Dan* and *Naphtali*.

Now, **B’reshith 30** deals with the bearing of Ya’aqob’s children; all except Benjamin, as he would come a little latter. Here’s a brief look at their names:

Re’uven - Behold, a son (named this as a reminder of the firstborn son).

Shimon – Hearing (named this because Yahweh heard the prayer for another son).

Levi – Joining of the Heart (named because Leah thought this child would join her and Ya’aqob).

Yehudah – Praise (named this as the family praised Yahweh for another boy).

Dan – Judge (named this as Yahweh judged in Rahel’s favor and gave her a child).

Naphtali - Wrestling (named this as a symbol of the wrestling between Rahel and Leah for Ya’aqob’s favor and love).

Gad – Fortune (named this as a testimony to good fortune found by Zilpah, Leah’s handmade).

Asher – Happy (named this because this child would bring much happiness to Leah).

Yissakar – Hire or Reward (named this as a testimony to Yahweh that he rewarded Leah forgiving her handmade to Ya’aqob to have relations with).

Zebulun – Living Together (named this as hope that this son would cause Leah and Ya’acov to live together).

Dinah – Judgment (the 7th child of **Leah**).

Yoseph - May He Add (named this as a prayer to Yahweh “*Elohim has taken away my reproach*” that another son would be added to Rachel).

Binyamin – Son of the Right-hand (named this by Ya’aqob at the death of Rachel [the curse of Gen. 31:32 fulfilled in Gen. 35:16-17]).

After serving two, seven year periods for his wives, Ya’aqob agrees to work six more years for his wages, or flocks. Rabbi Avraham Greenbaum points out that Ya’aqob’s main work, and that of his wives, is “**breeding**”. They breed children and flocks. And, Yahweh blesses Ya’aqob beyond measure in all his work. But, then Ya’aqob sees the jealousy on the faces of Laban’s sons and sees too that Laban is not toward him as before. So, we read in **B’reshith 31:4-13**; ***And Ya’aqob sent and called Rahel and Leah to the field, to his flock, and said to them, “I see your father’s face, that it is not toward me as before, but the Elohim of my father has been with me. And you know that I have served your father with all my strength. Yet your father has deceived me and changed my wages ten times, but Elohim did not allow him to do evil to me. When he said this, ‘The speckled are your wages,’ then all the flocks bore speckled. And when he said this, ‘The streaked are your wages,’ then all the flocks bore streaked. So Elohim has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me. And it came to be, at the time when***

the flocks conceived, that I lifted my eyes and looked in a dream and saw the rams which leaped upon the flocks were streaked, speckled, and mottled. And the Messenger of Elohim spoke to me in a dream, saying, 'Ya'aqob.' And I said, 'Here I am.' And He said, 'Lift your eyes now and see, all the rams which leap on the flocks are streaked, speckled, and mottled, for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. I am the El of Beyth El, where you anointed the standing column and where you made a vow to Me. Now rise up, get out of this land, and return to the land of your relatives.' ”

Yahweh circumvents Laban to bless Ya'aqob and calls him to go home with his wives and children. Ya'aqob does not tell Laban that he is leaving, causing one more confrontation between them. However, Yahweh visits Laban ahead of their meeting and warns him not to do harm or speak either evil or good to Ya'aqob. So, they make a treaty. However, in the stealing of her father's household idols, Rahel brings judgment on herself. Ya'aqob, not knowing she had taken them, forfeits her life. And, she soon dies, as she gives birth to *Binyamin*, Ya'aqob's 12th son.

While the traditional Haftorah reading for this week is found in **Hoshea 12:13 – 14:10**, I found that the Sephardic reading actually begins with **Hoshea 11:7**. Let me read just what we missed earlier this week, **Hoshea 11:7-12**; *“My people are bent towards backsliding from Me. Though they call to the Most High, He lifts none of them up. How could I give you up, Ephrayim? How could I hand you over, Yisra'el? How could I make you like Admah? How could I set you like Tseboyim? My heart turns within Me, all My compassion is kindled. I shall not let the heat of My wrath burn, I shall not turn to destroy Ephrayim. For I am El, and not man, the Set-apart One in your midst, and I shall not come in enmity. Let them follow YHVH. Like a lion He roars. When He roars, then sons shall tremble from the west. They shall tremble like a bird from Mitsrayim, and like a dove from the land of Ashshur. And I shall let them dwell in their own houses,” declares YHVH. Ephrayim has surrounded Me with lying, and the house of Yisra'el with deceit. But Yehudah is still wandering with El, and is true to the Set-apart One.”*

And, let's continue with **Hoshea 12:1-14**; *“Ephrayim is feeding on wind, and pursuing an east wind. All the day he increases falsehood and ruin. And they make a covenant with Ashshur, and oil is sent to Mitsrayim. And YHVH has a controversy with Yehudah, to punish Ya'aqob according to his ways, to repay him according to his deeds. He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and in his strength he strove with Elohim. He strove with the Messenger and overcame, he wept and sought His favor. He found Him in Beyth El, and there He spoke to us – even YHVH Elohim of hosts, YHVH is His remembrance. Therefore, return to your Elohim. Guard kindness and right-ruling, and wait on your Elohim continually. A merchant! In his hand are scales of deceit, he loved to oppress. And Ephrayim says, “Indeed, I have become rich, I have found wealth for myself. In all my labors they shall find in me no crookedness that is sin.” But I am YHVH your Elohim since the land of Mitsrayim, again I shall make you dwell in tents as in the days of the appointed time. And I have spoken to the prophets, and have increased visions. And through the prophets I gave parables.” Is Gilead wicked? Certainly, they have been false! In Gilgal they have offered bulls. Also their altars are as heaps on a ploughed field. And when Ya'aqob fled to the country of Aram, Yisra'el served for a wife, and for a wife he kept watch. And by a prophet YHVH brought Yisra'el out of Mitsrayim, and by a prophet he was watched over. Ephrayim has provoked most bitterly. So his Master left his blood-guilt on him, and repaid him for his reproach.*

Yahweh compares His watching over His bride to Ya'aqob laboring and watching over his wife. But, as He says, **“He will not hand over Yisra'el and He will not turn to destroy Ephrayim”**. We all will once again dwell in tents with our brothers, as in the days of the **“Mo'ed”** or **“Appointed Time”**

(**Sukkot**). But, He also tells us that we will dwell in our own houses and be restored. If we will but return again to Yahweh, our Elohim, and guard His Torah, and kindness and right-ruling.

Then, we read on with **Chapter 13:1-16**; *When Ephrayim spoke there was trembling, he was lifted up in Yisra'el. But through Ba'al he became guilty, and he died. And now they sin more and more, and make for themselves moulded images from their silver, idols according to their skill, all of them the work of craftsmen. They say of them, "Let the men who slaughter kiss the calves!"(referring to the two golden calves set up by Yarboam) Therefore they shall be like a morning cloud, and like dew that goes away early, like chaff blown off from a threshing-floor, and like smoke from a window. "But I am YHVH your Elohim since the land of Mitsrayim, and an Elohim besides Me you shall not know, for there is no Savior besides Me. I knew you in the wilderness, in the land of drought. When they were fed they were satisfied. They were satisfied and their heart was exalted, therefore they forgot Me. So I am become like a lion to them, like a leopard I watch by the way, like a bear robbed of her young I attack them and rip open the enclosure of their heart. (Another way to read this from the Hebrew would be that "... I rip open their closed up heart") And there I devour them like a lion, a wild beast tear them apart. You have destroyed yourself, O Yisra'el, but your help is in Me. Where is your sovereign now to save you in all your cities, and your rulers of whom you said, 'Give me a sovereign and rulers'? I gave you a sovereign in My displeasure, but I took him away in My wrath. The crookedness of Ephrayim is bound up, his sin is hidden. How long was our sin hidden from our understanding? Pains of a woman in labor shall come upon him. This is travail in our spirits when we realize who we really are and our need to go home, even to Ya'aqob's Trouble. The purpose of the Great Tribulation is to collect B'nei Ya'aqob (Yisra'el) from the four corners of the earth for the complete restoration of the Kingdom under Mashiach. But, the verse goes on to say; He is not a wise son, for it is not the time that he should delay at the breaking forth (most translations say birth) of the children. This is so important to understand. We are not wise (we're lo chaqam). We feel in our hearts the need to go home. But, as Yehudah begins to call us and as the door (or womb) is opening for the "birth of Tzion", we say, "Whoa! Hold on a minute. This can't be happening now. This is a move of man". We find every reason to delay the birth. Well we're not going to delay what Yahweh has ordained. We're only risking our opportunity to be born... or reborn.*

Now, as we move on to **Verse 14**, we need to pay attention, in that the ISR Scriptures has missed some key words that change the translation. Now, I'm not going to launch a Hebrew lesson here. Check it out though. Let's look at **Hoshea 13:14** better translated (see KJV & Artscroll TaNaK); *I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be your plagues; O grave, I will be your destruction: remorse shall be hidden from My eyes.* Yahweh is stating that He will judge death and the grave, as stated in **Revelation 20:14**, when both are thrown into the Lake of Fire.

Now, to finish the Haftarah portion, we read again from the ISR, **Hoshea 13:15 – 14:9**; *"Though he bears fruit among his brothers, an east wind comes, a wind from YHVH comes up from the wilderness, and it dries up his fountain, and his spring becomes dry – it plunders a treasure of all desirable objects. Shomeron is held guilty, for she has rebelled against her Elohim – they fall by the sword, their infants are dashed in pieces, and their pregnant women ripped open." O Yisra'el, return to YHVH your Elohim, for you have stumbled by your crookedness. Take words with you, and return to YHVH. Say to Him, "Take away all crookedness, and accept what is good, and we render the bulls of our lips. Ashshur does not save us. We do not ride on horses, nor ever again do we say to the work of our hands, 'Our mighty ones.'*

For the fatherless finds compassion in You.” “I shall heal their backsliding, I shall love them spontaneously, for My displeasure has turned away from him. I shall be like the dew to Yisra’el. He shall blossom like the lily, and cast out his roots like Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his splendor shall be like an olive tree, and his fragrance like Lebanon. Those who dwell under his shadow shall return. (The Hebrew word here for shadow is “tzel” which is also “shade”) They shall revive like grain, and blossom like the vine, and become as fragrant as the wine of Lebanon. What more has Ephrayim to do with idols? It is I who answer and look after him. I am like a green cypress tree, your fruit comes from Me.” Who is wise and understands these words, discerning and knows them? For the ways of YHVH are straight, and the righteous walk in them, but the transgressors stumble in them.

Indeed, who is wise and understands these words? By our own nature, we are “*lo chaqam*” or “*unwise*” as we just read. If we can manage to step out of ourselves and see things as Yahweh sees them, we can see and understand His wisdom. But, how do we do this? **Tehillim / Psalm 111:7b-10** says that; *All His commands are trustworthy, They are upheld forever and ever, Performed in truth and straightness. He sent redemption to His people, He has commanded His covenant forever. Set-apart and awesome is His Name. The fear of YHVH is the beginning of wisdom, All those doing them (the commands) have a good understanding.* The Hebrew word here for “*fear*” is “*yirah*” which literally means to “*see in reverence*” or to “*behold as awesome*”. When we see or behold Him, as He is, in His awesomeness, as Creator and Mighty One of all the earth, we will reverence His Words and do them and we will see things as He sees them. Then, we’ll understand.

This is indeed challenging for us. But, we have help. I want to close with one of my favorite scriptures, **Tehillim / Psalms 121:1-8; A Song of ascents. (A song of aliyah.)** *I lift up my eyes to the hills; Where does my help come from? My help comes from YHVH, Maker of the heavens and earth. He does not allow your foot to be moved; He who watches over you does not slumber. See, He who is guarding Yisra’el neither slumbers nor sleeps. YHVH is your guard; YHVH is your shade (Again “tzel” meaning His “shadow”) at your right hand. The sun does not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. YHVH guards you from all evil; He guards your being. YHVH guards your going out and your coming in, Now and forever.*

I’ve always just loved those verses. But, Yahweh showed me even more. The Hebrew word we read in the English as “*hills*”, is really “*har’im*” or “*mountains*”. As I saw this, I wondered “*why mountains?*” And Yahweh reminded me that if we look to the mountains of “*Beit El*” and “*Sinai*” and “*Moriyah*” (where He appears and speaks to His people Yisra’el), then we will see and hear Him. So, where does my help come from? The word for help is “*ezer*” (as in El’ezer, “*El is help*”, Avraham’s trusted servant of old) and it means “*Helper*”, as in Ruach HaKodesh.

So, *I lift up my eyes to the Mountains of Yahweh; Where does my helper come from? My helper (His Spirit) comes from YHVH, Maker of the heavens and earth. He does not allow your foot to be moved; He who is your Guardian does not slumber. See, He who is guarding Yisra’el neither slumbers nor sleeps. YHVH is your guard; YHVH’s shadow is your shade at your right hand. The sun does not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. YHVH guards you from all evil; He guards your being. YHVH guards your going out (of exile) and your coming in (to Eretz Yisra’el), Now and forever. Baruch HaShem Yahweh! Ahmein v’ Ahmein.*