

פרשת

ויצא

Parashat Vayetze

*Bereshit / Genesis 28:10-32:2, Hosea 12:12-14:10
Matthew 5:13-4:11*

What does it mean: “Hearing from the Lord requires Torah?”

Have you ever felt that when you pray the Lord God ignores your prayers, or, do you feel as if your prayers bounce off the ceiling? We have been told that the Lord knows what we need even before we ask. (*Matthew 6:8*) If the Lord already knows what we want, why is prayer necessary in the first place? Why do we need to pray? If we are serious about our faith, then prayer is an essential part of our lives and our relationship with the Lord. Do you believe praying in the name of Jesus guarantees your prayers are heard and answered? Is this what we are taught according to the Scriptures? King Solomon said in *Mishley / Proverbs 15:29 The LORD is far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous. (NASB)* Based upon Solomon’s assessment, if we are living in sin, the Lord will not hear our prayers. (See also David’s opinion on this in *Tehillim / Psalms 66:18*) It is important to understand that the Lord is always in the process of teaching us. When life is suddenly full of inconveniences being thrown our way, stop and ask, “*Is the Lord trying to get my attention?*” When the problems are larger than minor inconveniences i.e. an auto accident or financial

stress, then the Lord God may be calling out to us on a different level saying there is something deep within that you need to rectify. Consider the words of the Apostle James and Peter; *James 5:16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. (NASB)* and *1 Peter 3:12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. (KJV)* Based upon these Scriptures, is there more to the Lord hearing our prayers than simply speaking to Him? In this week's Torah Portion, it appears as if Jacob very carefully chose his path based upon his faith for a place to rest and lay down to sleep. (*Bereshit / Genesis 28:1*, א וַיִּקְרָא יַצְחָק אֶל-יַעֲקֹב וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתוֹ, וַיִּצְנֶהוּ וַיֵּאמֶר לוֹ לֹא-תִקַּח אִשָּׁה מִבְּנוֹת כְּנָעַן:) As a result, he met with God and the Lord confirmed the covenant He had sworn to his fathers, Abraham and Isaac. The key to hearing from the Lord was founded upon his faithfulness to the covenant of God that is related to his walking in God's ways. Does this remain an important aspect of our lives today in Yeshua the Messiah?

This week we are looking at *Bereshit / Genesis 28:10-19*.

Bereshit / Genesis 28:10-19

28:10 Then Jacob departed from Beersheba and went toward Haran. 28:11 He came to a certain place and spent the night there, because the sun had set; and he took one of the stones of the place and put it under his head, and lay down in that place. 28:12 He had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. 28:13 And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, 'I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants. 28:14 'Your descendants will also be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 28:15 'Behold, I am with you and

will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.’ 28:16 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, ‘Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.’ 28:17 He was afraid and said, ‘How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.’ 28:18 So Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on its top. 28:19 He called the name of that place Bethel; however, previously the name of the city had been Luz. (NASB)

י וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב מִבְּעָר שְׁבַע וַיֵּלֶךְ חֲרָנָה: יא וַיִּפְגַּע בַּמָּקוֹם וַיֵּלֶן שָׁם כִּי-בָא הַשָּׁמַיִשׁ וַיִּקַּח מֵאֲבָנֵי הַמָּקוֹם וַיִּשֶׁם מִרְאשֵׁיתוֹ וַיִּשְׁכַּב בַּמָּקוֹם הַהוּא: יב וַיַּחְלֹם וְהִנֵּה סֹלֶם מַצֵּב אֲרָצָה וּרְאִישׁוֹ מִגִּיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִמָּה וְהִנֵּה מַלְאָכֵי אֱלֹהִים עֹלִים וְיֹרְדִים בּוֹ: יג וְהִנֵּה יְהוָה נֹצֵב עָלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֶיךָ אָבִיךָ וְאֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה שֹׁכֵב עָלֶיהָ לָךְ אֲתַנְנָה וּלְזַרְעֶךָ: יד וְהִנֵּה זֶרְעֶךָ כְּעֹפֶר הָאָרֶץ וּפְרֻצֹת יָמָה וְקֹדֶמָה וְצַפְנָה וְנִגְרָ בָּהּ וְנִבְרָכוּ בָּהּ כָּל-מִשְׁפְּחוֹת הָאֲדָמָה וּבְזַרְעֶךָ: טו וְהִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי עֹמֵד וְשֹׁמְרֵתִיךָ כָּל אֲשֶׁר-תֵּלֵךְ וְהִשְׁבַּתִּיךָ אֶל-הָאֲדָמָה הַזֹּאת כִּי לֹא אֶעֱזָבְךָ עַד אֲשֶׁר אִם-עָשִׂיתִי אֵת אֲשֶׁר-דִּבַּרְתִּי לָךְ: טז וַיִּיקָץ יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁנָתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אָכֵן יֵשׁ יְהוָה בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי: יז וַיִּירָא וַיֹּאמֶר מַה-נִּוְרָא הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה אֵין זֶה כִּי אִם-בֵּית אֱלֹהִים וְזֶה שַׁעַר הַשָּׁמַיִם: יח וַיִּשְׁכֹּם יַעֲקֹב בַּבֹּקֶר וַיִּקַּח אֶת-הָאָבֶן אֲשֶׁר-שָׁם מִרְאשֵׁיתוֹ וַיִּשֶׁם אֹתָהּ מַצֵּבָה וַיִּצְקֵם שָׁמֶן עַל-רֵאשָׁאָה: יט וַיִּקְרָא אֶת-שֵׁם-הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא בֵּית-אֵל וְאוּלָם לִזְז שֵׁם-הָעִיר לְרֵאשֻׁנָּה:

In these verses we are told how Jacob recognized the awesomeness of this place in which he had laid down. יז וַיִּירָא וַיֹּאמֶר מַה-נִּוְרָא) הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה אֵין זֶה כִּי אִם-בֵּית אֱלֹהִים וְזֶה שַׁעַר הַשָּׁמַיִם: 28:17 *He was afraid and said, ‘How awesome is this place! This is none other than*

the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.’ *NASB*) This seems to be apparent in the way in which the MT speaks about His choice to stop for the night in *Bereshit / Genesis 28:11* which states the following: וַיָּבֹא בְּמָקוֹם וַיְלֵן שָׁם כִּי־בָא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וַיִּקַּח מֵאַבְנֵי הַמָּקוֹם וַיִּשָּׂם מֵרָאשֵׁיתוֹ וַיִּשְׁבֹּ־גַע בְּמָקוֹם הַהוּא׃ כַּב *He came upon a certain place and stopped there for the night, for the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of that place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place.* (*NASB*) Three times the word מָקוֹם is mentioned in this verse according to the Hebrew text. This is meant to draw our attention to the significance of this place in the sense that this is a holy place of God. The reason this place is so significant is because of the Torah connections to הַמָּקוֹם and the place in which the Lord God of Israel would establish His name and be the central location in which the Word of God would be sent into all of the world. Because of these things the rabbis have a significant amount to say concerning this verse.

Rashi on Bereshit / Genesis 28:11 Part 1

וַיִּפְגַע בְּמָקוֹם *AND HE LIGHTED UPON THE PLACE*
— *Scripture does not mention which place, but by writing בְּמָקוֹם the place it refers to the place mentioned already in another passage, viz., Mount Moriah of which it is stated (Genesis 22:4) “And he saw the place (הַמָּקוֹם) afar off”.*

Rashi states that the word בְּמָקוֹם refers to the holy place on Mount Moriah. The Scripture speaks of the place that he saw afar off. This is important since Abraham and Isaac would have explained to Jacob and Esau what the Lord had done in this place, the miracle of Isaac’s deliverance from being a sacrifice and the concepts of the resurrection from the dead. The Lord providing a substitute for Isaac would have been synonymous to raising him who was as if dead laying upon the altar.

Daat Zkenim on Bereshit / Genesis 28:11 Part 1

וַיִּפְגַע בְּמָקוֹם, *“he prepared to pray intensely at a certain location (known to him as a suitable location for prayer);” according to our author, these words mean*

that he prepared to offer a prayer; and that we find this expression for preparing to pray also in Jeremiah 7:16 i.e. ואל תפגע בי, “and do not pray to Me (on behalf of your people)” According to the Talmud tractate B’rachot, folio 26, Yaakov “invented” the daily evening prayer preparing himself shortly before sunset before doing so. The recital of the k’riyat shma is to await the visibility of three stars in the sky before it may be recited.

Daat Zkenim states that it was at this place he had determined to pray intensely. It is believed at this point Jacob established the daily Ma’ariv (evening) prayer time. The commentary states that this was a place (המקום) known to him that was suitable for prayer. The commentator draws in the context of *Jeremiah 7:16* וְאַתָּה אֶל-תִּתְפַלֵּל | בְּעַד- הָעַם הַזֶּה וְאַל-תִּשָּׂא בְעֵדוֹם רִנָּה וּתְפִלָּה וְאַל-תִּפְגַּע-בִּי כִי-אֲיַנְנִי שְׁמֹעַ אֹתָם: *7:16 ‘As for you, do not pray for this people, and do not lift up cry or prayer for them, and do not intercede with Me; for I do not hear you. (NASB)* What is interesting based upon *Jeremiah 7:16*, praying for others should be directed towards their repentance and turning from sin. This should be coupled to the prayer for their needs.

Radak on Bereshit / Genesis 28:11 Part 1

יפגע במקום, while on his way Yaakov encountered one evening a site less than a day’s walk from Beer Sheva. Since it was already evening, the sun having set, he decided to spend the night there as he was too tired to walk any further. The reason why the letter ב in במקום is spelled with the vowel kametz, suggesting that the place was known, is that the location was known as a site where travelers from Beer Sheva would often spend the night.

Part 2

ויקח מאבני המקום, one of the stones of the place, for he had not entered the town to spend the night there but

preferred to spend the night in the open field.. To that end he placed the stone under his head to serve him as a pillow and lay down there.

Radak claims that the reason Jacob chose to stop in this location was because this place was “*known*” as a place for travelers to spend the night. Why do you think Radak claims this is a common place as opposed to focussing upon the holiness of this place? It is very likely that this was the place known as the place where the Lord had called Abraham to Akedat Yitzchak (עֶקֶדַת יִצְחָק). Radak says that Jacob decided not to enter the town that was in near proximity of his location but instead chose one of the stones to be used as his pillow to lay down.

Kli Yakar on Bereshit / Genesis 28:11 Part 2

Another reason why it is called simply ‘the place,’ is because this is the place of the world. This is both because the foundation stone, from which the world was founded, is located there, and that even now the whole world rests on it because from there the Divine abundance pours out to the world. Ya’akov sensed that this would be the place of the Holy Temple when he saw that the sun set upon him before its proper time, because this holy place dims the sphere of the sun and does not require the sun. On the contrary - the sun needs it, as the Sages taught ‘R’ Avin said, we find that one who wants to make windows makes them wide on the inside and narrow on the outside in order to draw in the light from outside. But the windows of the Holy Temple were wide on the outside and narrow within – why? In order that the light would go out from the Temple and illuminate the world, as it says “...and the earth shone from His glory,” (Yechezkiel 43:2) and it is written “As a Throne of Glory, exalted from the beginning, so is the place of our Sanctuary.” (Yirmiyahu 17:12) See the version of this midrash in Yalkut parshat Tetzaveh 378. This is a proof that the sun does not light the Holy Temple, therefore the light of the sun dimmed immediately upon

reaching this holy place, "...and it shall come to pass that at eventide it shall be light," (Zechariah 14:7) because Gd shined the supernal light from this holy place until He appeared to Yaakov in a vision that night.

Kli Yakar states that this location is *"The Place"* of the world which contains the foundation stone upon which the world was founded (created). This draws in the connection to Jacob choosing a stone in that place to lay his head upon. The commentator speaks of the holy place and the future Temple where the windows, their construction, was for the purpose of showing the light (righteousness) of God unto the world, as opposed to a standard home whose windows are designed to bring the light from outside in. The light of this holy place is emphasized by the statement, *"Ya'akov sensed that this would be the place of the Holy Temple when he saw that the sun set upon him before its proper time, because this holy place dims the sphere of the sun and does not require the sun."*

The general consensus based upon this short survey of the rabbis is in the interpretations for making a case for this holy place, that is connected to a special place, of prayer, of righteousness, of holiness, of justice, and of truth, and a place where the Lord speaks to His people. These things are connected to the covenant in which the Lord has made with Jacob; note how Jacob is walking in faith (*Bereshit / Genesis 28:1*, א וַיִּקְרָא יִצְחָק אֶל-יַעֲקֹב וַיְבָרְךָ אֹתוֹ וַיִּצְוֵהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ לֹא-תִקַּח אִשָּׁה מִבְּנוֹת א וַיִּקְרָא יִצְחָק אֶל-יַעֲקֹב וַיְבָרְךָ אֹתוֹ וַיִּצְוֵהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ לֹא-תִקַּח אִשָּׁה מִבְּנוֹת :כַּנְעַן) and with us in the Messiah Yeshua. The requirements of the covenant may be illustrated by the way the Lord speaks to Ezekiel according to *Ezekiel 22:1-31*.

Ezekiel 22:1-31

22:1 Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 22:2 'And you, son of man, will you judge, will you judge the bloody city? Then cause her to know all her abominations. 22:3 'You shall say, 'Thus says the Lord God, 'A city shedding blood in her midst, so that her time will come, and that makes idols, contrary to her interest, for defilement! 22:4 'You have become guilty by the blood which you have shed, and defiled by your idols which

you have made. Thus you have brought your day near and have come to your years; therefore I have made you a reproach to the nations and a mocking to all the lands. 22:5 'Those who are near and those who are far from you will mock you, you of ill repute, full of turmoil. 22:6 'Behold, the rulers of Israel, each according to his power, have been in you for the purpose of shedding blood. 22:7 'They have treated father and mother lightly within you. The alien they have oppressed in your midst; the fatherless and the widow they have wronged in you. 22:8 'You have despised My holy things and profaned My sabbaths. 22:9 'Slandering men have been in you for the purpose of shedding blood, and in you they have eaten at the mountain shrines. In your midst they have committed acts of lewdness. 22:10 'In you they have uncovered their fathers' nakedness; in you they have humbled her who was unclean in her menstrual impurity. 22:11 'One has committed abomination with his neighbor's wife and another has lewdly defiled his daughter-in-law. And another in you has humbled his sister, his father's daughter. 22:12 'In you they have taken bribes to shed blood; you have taken interest and profits, and you have injured your neighbors for gain by oppression, and you have forgotten Me,' declares the Lord God. 22:13 'Behold, then, I smite My hand at your dishonest gain which you have acquired and at the bloodshed which is among you. 22:14 'Can your heart endure, or can your hands be strong in the days that I will deal with you? I, the Lord, have spoken and will act. 22:15 'I will scatter you among the nations and I will disperse you through the lands, and I will consume your uncleanness from you. 22:16 'You will profane yourself in the sight of the nations, and you will know that I am the Lord.''' 22:17 And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 22:18 'Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to Me; all of them are bronze and tin and iron and lead in the furnace; they are the dross of sil-

ver. 22:19 'Therefore, thus says the Lord God, 'Because all of you have become dross, therefore, behold, I am going to gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. 22:20 'As they gather silver and bronze and iron and lead and tin into the furnace to blow fire on it in order to melt it, so I will gather you in My anger and in My wrath and I will lay you there and melt you. 22:21 'I will gather you and blow on you with the fire of My wrath, and you will be melted in the midst of it. 22:22 'As silver is melted in the furnace, so you will be melted in the midst of it; and you will know that I, the Lord, have poured out My wrath on you.' 22:23 And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 22:24 'Son of man, say to her, 'You are a land that is not cleansed or rained on in the day of indignation.' 22:25 'There is a conspiracy of her prophets in her midst like a roaring lion tearing the prey. They have devoured lives; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in the midst of her. 22:26 'Her priests have done violence to My law and have profaned My holy things; they have made no distinction between the holy and the profane, and they have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they hide their eyes from My sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. 22:27 'Her princes within her are like wolves tearing the prey, by shedding blood and destroying lives in order to get dishonest gain. 22:28 'Her prophets have smeared whitewash for them, seeing false visions and divining lies for them, saying, 'Thus says the Lord God,' when the Lord has not spoken. 22:29 'The people of the land have practiced oppression and committed robbery, and they have wronged the poor and needy and have oppressed the sojourner without justice. 22:30 'I searched for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, so that I would not destroy it; but I found no one. 22:31 'Thus I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with

the fire of My wrath; their way I have brought upon their heads,' declares the Lord God. (NASB)

In relation to having our prayers answered, are you involved in any of these things? Murders in thought or in deed, Idolatry, witchcraft, lying, deception, oppressing others, profaning God's name, His holy day, not discerning between clean and unclean, living in unrighteousness and robbery, being unjust towards a neighbor or brother, etc? Do you think it is possible to have our prayers answered if these things are going on in our lives, or even in our hearts? One cannot simply put on a costume and pretend to be one thing one day a week, where in the end, deep down you are who you are. Dressing up the outside does not change the thing that you are on the inside. It is the Lord God of Israel, by the power of His Spirit within that is able to change us on the inside where what is required of us is to seek the Lord for this in repentance. These things are connected to this holy place, in which Jacob laid down. The place of God's rest involves holiness, righteousness, and justice, and this is why we are called to strive for purity and innocence in the Lord. Note what the Apostles believed concerning having prayer answered.

1 Peter 3:7

3:7 You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered. (NASB)

Peter believes the way we treat our spouses will result in answered or unanswered prayer. Note the significance of the context of Peter's words:

1 Peter 3:4-14

3:4 but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. 3:5 For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own

husbands; 3:6 just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear. 3:7 You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered. 3:8 To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; 3:9 not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing. 3:10 For, 'The one who desires life, to love and see good days, Must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit. 3:11 'He must turn away from evil and do good; He must seek peace and pursue it. 3:12 'For the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, And His ears attend to their prayer, But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.' 3:13 Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? 3:14 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, (NASB)

The context of Peter's words on answered prayer includes doing what is good (righteousness), do not lie (speaking deceit), and seeking peace. It is this kind of person the Lord seeks to hear his prayers (3:12).

When it comes to marriage, God commands us to treat our wives with respect. In fact, He commands us to treat all humans with respect, which is a part of the greatest command to love our neighbor as ourselves. Based upon these Scriptures, our wives should receive an extra measure of good treatment which includes respect, consideration, kindness, and patience. A man should be treating his wife as a treasure that he cherishes, and it is within these things that our wives will listen and not ignore what we say. In real life, this is easier said than done, the reason being, the people closest to us are the ones we take for granted. Is this because we feel the most relaxed around our loved ones, which

means we let our carnality (fleshly desires) show a lot more. Note how you would not speak badly to the boss of the company you work for, but you are more likely to say nasty things to your wife when she is getting on your nerves. We all have our set of flaws and insecurities, however, in the midst of these things, Peter tells us that regardless of these things, we are to maintain a certain level of righteous behavior towards our wives and in general, otherwise the Lord God is going to start stonewalling you in your prayer time. The same may be said of how we live our lives for the Lord God in heaven. We are going before the God of all creation, He is Holy and Righteous. To approach Him with a lack of reverence, and to minimize how we are called to walk before Him, while expecting to have our prayers answered, what do you think will happen? Now consider how our lives and our relationship with God is paralleled to a marriage between a bride and a groom. Can you see how the Lord has provided us with very practical applications, and examples on how to live for Him based upon Jacob's choices according to Parashat Vayetze (*Bereshit / Genesis 28:11*)? This week's Torah portion connects **מְקוֹם** (The Place) of our hearts and out lives to that place in which the Lord God of Israel would establish His name to be the central location in which the Word of God would be sent forth into all of the world. This place of holiness, righteousness, and truth is in our hearts and in our lives! The place of God's rest is in our hearts, which is why we are called to strive for purity and innocence in the Lord. Though we fall short of God's commands, the most important thing is to repent, to seek the Lord from a repentant heart, and to strive to turn from our sin. This is a daily calling before God, and only then will our prayers be heard and answered.

