

פרשת וישלח / Parashat Vayishlach

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32:1-32:52 MATSATI.COM / Rightly Dividing The Word of G-d
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Yisrael, Seed, Stone, Oil, what's the connection?

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Genesis 32:4-36:43
הפטרה: Hosea 11:7-12:12; Obadiah 1:1-21
הברית: Hebrews 11:11-20; Matthew 26:36-46
החדשה

10 In this week's parsha, Parashat Vayishlach, There is a fascinating symbolism in the Torah that is revealed in *Bereshit / Genesis 35:9-15*. There's something deeply symbolic in these passages. Before we begin, can you find any significant symbolism in the following passages? (I circled a few words as a hint.)

בראשית 35:9-15

9 וַיֵּלֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶל-יַעֲקֹב עוֹד בְּבֹאוֹ מִפְּנֵי אֲדָם וַיִּבְרָךְ אֹתוֹ:
10 וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ אֱלֹהִים שִׁמְךָ יַעֲקֹב לֹא יִקְרָא שִׁמְךָ עוֹד יַעֲקֹב כִּי אִם יִשְׂרָאֵל יִהְיֶה שִׁמְךָ וַיִּקְרָא אֶת-שְׁמוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל:
11 וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אֱלֹהִים אֲנִי אֵל שְׂדֵי פְרָה וְרֹבֵה גֹי וְקָהֵל גֹּיִם יִהְיֶה מִמֶּךָ וּמְלָכִים מִחֲלָצֶיךָ יֵצְאוּ וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לְאַבְרָהָם וְלִיִּצְחָק לְךָ אֶתְנַנֶּה וְלִרְעֵךָ אֶחְרִיךָ אֶתֵּן אֶת-הָאָרֶץ: וַיַּעַל מֵעֵלְיוֹ אֱלֹהִים בְּמָקוֹם אֲשֶׁר-דִּבֶּר אֵתוֹ: וַיַּעַב יַעֲקֹב מִצִּבְחָה בְּמָקוֹם אֲשֶׁר-דִּבֶּר אֵתוֹ מִצִּבְחַת אֲבֹן וַיִּסֹּךְ עָלֶיהָ זָסָךְ וַיִּצַק עָלֶיהָ שָׁמֶן: וַיִּקְרָא יַעֲקֹב אֶת-שֵׁם הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֵתוֹ שֵׁם אֱלֹהִים בֵּית-אֵל: וַיִּסְעוּ מִבֵּית אֵל וַיְהִי-עוֹד

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I feel the sequence of events or order of events shows us an interesting symbolism. In biblical hermeneutics, symbolism is the applied use of symbols or representations that carry particular meanings. In the Hebrew Scriptures we find symbolism may refer to a way of representing something allowing for a broader interpretation of a carried meaning that may have great spiritual significance. The few scriptures above I believe are invested with symbolic meaning that has great significance for the believer today. Consider the following list:

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25 **Interesting symbolism**

1. The name change of Yaakov
2. The promise to his seed
3. The stone at the head of the pillar

30 Let's begin by first looking at each part of the list.

The name change of Yaakov

35 The changing of a name for a convert signals the embracing of a new philosophy, a new identification, a new purposeful and mindful statement of intent for the long term future. Many rabbis hold that converts should not only add a Hebrew name but also modify the given name used in pre-conversion years. Others differ sometimes pointing to Ruth saying she did not change her Moabite name at all. The choice is ultimately the convert's and should be made with full

40 knowledge of available names and their meanings. The Hebrew name that is not up for personal preference or choice is the identity of the parents. In Jewish life a person is called by his or her given name as the son or daughter of the parent. The name change of Yaakov (Jacob) to Yisrael there is some significant differences. Yaakov did not have a choice on what name to be called by, and he

45 also was not named in the typical "son of" pattern as we find today. G-d specifically chose the name Yisrael ...

Yaakov has his name changed by G-d to Yisrael establishing him as the father of a nation and identifying the name of the children of Yisrael. The changed name reflects a change in G-d's perception of Yaakov. The change of a name reflects that of being reborn. Similarly in Jewish tradition a child receives his or her Hebrew name at the time they entered into the covenant "Brit Milah" ceremony for boys and "Brit Banot" or naming ceremony for girls in like-manner the patriarchs all had the covenant confirmed at the time of their name change. The difference here G-d gives Yaakov his new name much later in life not at birth as tradition holds today. The name change highlights Yaakov's character over the

55 years. He went from supplanting (the root meaning of "Yaakov") his brother's birthright, to "noble conduct" (the root meaning of Yisrael). It is this growing process that Rashi comments upon as warranting the renewed blessing, a blessing that was now earned and not stolen.

60 **The promise to his seed**

The next thing mentioned is the seed. HaShem is saying the land which He gave to Avraham and Yitzchak He will give to Yaakov.

65 בראשית 35:12
 12 וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לְאַבְרָהָם וְלְיִצְחָק לְךָ אֶתְנַנֶּה
 13 וְלְיִרְעָה אֶתְּחִיב אֶתְּךָ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ: וַיַּעַל מֵעֵלְיוֹ אֱלֹהִים

Rashi
 Rabbi Shlomo ben Yitzchak (1040-1105), author of influential Biblical and Talmudic commentaries

Bereshit / Genesis 35:12
 35:12 'The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, And I will give the land to your descendants after you.' (NASB)

70 The mentioning of the Seed symbolizes the promise and the story of G-d's calling Abraham to leave his homeland, promising his descendants a new home in the land of Canaan, and ultimately promising all the nations of the earth will be blessed in his seed. The mention of seed here makes a connection with Avraham and Yaakov and the continuation of the blessing and promise.

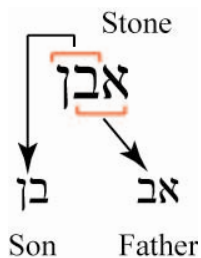
75 **The stone at the head of the pillar**

Did you ever wonder what the purpose of the stone was that Yaakov anoints with oil? Why would Yaakov take the stone and place it at the head of the pillar he makes for the Lord? What about the significance of anointing the stone with oil?

80 ***Bereshit / Genesis 28:18***

"...took the stone (אבן) which he had placed on his head and placed it as a pillar (מצבה) and poured oil (שמן) on the head."

85 I feel there is a messianic connection here in Yaakov's action of anointing the stone with oil. The Messiah means anointed one in Hebrew. In Judaism, Messiah at first meant any person who was anointed with oil on rising to a certain position among the ancient Yisraelites. At the beginning, this was made in reference to the Cohen Hagadol (the high priest) and later to that of the King of Yisrael and also that of a prophet of Yisrael. So essentially Yaakov was anointing the stone with oil, meaning he applied or rubbed the oil upon the stone as a part of a religious ceremony during the covenant he was renewing with the Lord. But is there an even greater significance in the underlying reason Yaakov anointed the stone with oil? Maybe so, let's have a closer look at the Hebrew word for stone. Examining
90 the Hebrew word for stone אבן it appears the three root letters (i) aleph, (ii) bet, and (iii) final nun form two words "Father" and "Son" as shown in the picture below.



100 It appears the Hebrew word for stone אבן is a juxtaposition of the father אב and son בן as shown above. This brings new meaning to the symbolism of the rock, the foundation stone which is figuratively used of believers (see *1 Peter 2:4-5*), and of the Messiah (See *Psalms 118:22; Isaiah 28:16; Matthew 21:42; Acts 4:11*, etc.) in the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic Writings). Stones were used in the ancient times to commemorate remarkable events as we have seen here in the last few parshiot by Yaakov at Bethel (*Bereshit / Genesis 28:18*) and at Padan-

110 aram (*Bereshit / Genesis 35:4*). How much more significant is the use of the
foundation stone to symbolize the work of Yeshua the Messiah. Studying the root
letters for stone is absolutely fascinating not to mention exciting. Looking at the
Hebrew and understanding the word play provides new depth to our
understanding of HaShem's revelation to us of the Messiah. The implied word
play in these passages I believe G-d has revealed His rock, His foundation stone,
Yeshua the Messiah.

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Conclusion

120 The goal of biblical hermeneutic is not to find what no-one else has ever found
before but to discover the plain meaning of the text. However, an interpretation
may seem or appear unique to those who have not seen it before. The plain
meaning of a text is not always plain to everyone and interpretation is not a trivial
exercise. This is why it is absolutely necessary for us to diligently study the word
of G-d. Everyone who reads the Scriptures is essentially an interpreter whether
they like it or not. One mistake people tend to do is assume their understanding
125 of the Scriptures is the same as the Holy Spirit's and the human author's intent.
Sometimes we fail to recognize that each of us brings to the Scriptures our own
cultural, personal experiences, and misunderstandings of words and ideas based
upon our own theological and philosophical presuppositions. If we are unaware
of this it may lead us to read thoughts and ideas into the text that are not actually
130 there. In communicating His message to us G-d uses many forms of
communication including historical narratives, genealogies, chronicles, proverbs,
riddles, dreams, visions, etc. In this week's parsha the Lord speaks to us through
the symbolic meaning and sequence events in the Hebrew text.

135 The sequence of events, the name change of Yaakov, the promise of the seed,
and the stone at the head of the pillar all have significant symbolism. The name
change represents a new calling for Yaakov. The change highlights a change in
character over the years of Yaakov's life. Likewise we are called to be the sons
of G-d through faith, we are called to have a changed life, and newness of life (a
state of being new where the old has passed away) in Yeshua the Messiah. The
140 promise of the seed is a continuation of the blessing G-d promised to Avraham
that all the nations would be blessed. In the Messiah Yeshua we are blessed
indeed. Finally, the symbolism of the stone, the anointing of oil and the concept
of Father and Son in the stone suggests the foundational teachings of the Messiah
are sewn throughout the Hebrew Scriptures.

145 The bible is G-d's authoritative word to all of mankind set in history. It is
understandable, eternally relevant, always applicable, and completely sufficient
for all of our spiritual, philosophical, and psychological needs. It is when the
Bible is read, understood, and obeyed that it truly becomes the inspired and
authoritative Word of G-d.

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Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
"Yeshua" King Messiah forever and ever