



## Va'yishlach ~ And He Sent

B'reshith / Genesis 32:3-36:43

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Our *parsha* this week is titled “**Va’Yishlach**” or “**And He Sent**”. And, it takes place after Laban and his family left Ya’aqob, and made a covenant with him, on Har Gilead (*Mountain of Witness*). Remember that it was Laban who embraced Ya’aqob and brought him into the family only to use him. Laban really represented the “**false chesed**” or a spirit of *false loving-kindness* (the antithesis of Avraham’s attribute of *loving-kindness*) toward Ya’aqob. Laban represented the evil spiritual manifestations of this world toward HaShem’s chosen, Ya’aqob. As Rabbi Avraham Greenbaum reminds us this week; “*At Mount Gil’ad, Jacob made a ‘treaty’ with Laban demarcating the boundaries which they and their descendants were to observe: these are the boundaries that neither good nor evil may overstep in the unfolding drama of human history. In prevailing over Laban, Jacob demonstrated that he had made a complete acquisition of Abraham’s quality of Chesed. It was Abraham who went to the Mountain, and thus Jacob’s ‘treaty’ with Laban was struck at Mount Gil’ad.*”

Remember too, we read last week that Ya’aqob was returning home from “**Paddan Aram**”. You may remember also that this was a very special place. It was the birthplace of his wives and his mother Rivka, and where Avraham lived just prior to his call to leave Babylon and sojourn in the Land that HaShem was giving him. Now, if we look up “**Paddan**” (*pey-dalet-nun*) in Strong’s Concordance, we’ll see that it means “**field**” or “**plain**”. When we go beyond this resource and look at Gesenius’ Lexicon and Klein’s Dictionary, we see that it is from the root word “**paddah**” (*pey-dalet-hey*) which means to “**ransom**”, “**deliver**” or “**redeem**”. In Hebrew thought, a “**field**” or “**plain**” coincides with a “**plane of existence**” or a “**dimension**” that is outside of us. In this case, “**Paddan Aram**” is a “**plane of existence**” or a “**dimension**” where “**redemption**” takes place.

I’d like to add here that HaShem refers to “**men**” as trees in numerous places in Scripture. With this understanding of the word “**field**”, we read Yeshayahu / Isaiah 55:10-12; “**For as the rain comes down, and the snow from the heavens, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, and give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so is My Word that goes forth from My mouth – it does not return to Me empty, but shall do what I please, and shall certainly accomplish what I sent it for. For with joy you go out, and with peace you are brought in – the mountains and the hills (nations and kingdom) break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field clap the hands.** In other words, “*the redeemed of the nations shall greatly rejoice*”.

Now, "**Aram**" (*aleph-reish-mem*) is that area of Mesopotamia where the Arameans came from, "**Aram**" means "**exalted**" or "**lifted up**". Now, the letters in "**Paddan Aram**" (*Pey-dalet-nun* and *Aleph-reish-mem*) equal the number 375, which equals the word "**shalemah**" (from **Debarim / Deut. 25:15**) meaning "**perfect**". This place, this "**exalted field of redemption**" was the place of Ya'aqob's "**perfecting**". As we go through this *parsha*, please remember this; as it will come up again later.

So, after the deception that was perpetrated on Esau to circumvent him, Ya'aqob is sent to "**Paddan Aram**" (*the exalted field of redemption*). There are effects in the physical world for Ya'aqob's involvement in actions against his brother; even though the outcome served HaShem's plan. Here, as Ya'aqob experiences the deceptions and usury of Laban; so, the scales are balanced. But, during this time of redemption, HaShem blesses Ya'aqob with wives, children, flocks and herds. And, because of Laban's greed and usury, HaShem takes from him and in the end, gives to Ya'aqob. Then, HaShem calls Ya'aqob to leave "**Haran**" (*the Crossroads*) and return to his own land.

Yet again, we need to focus our attention on the phrase; "**Ma'aseh avot siman le'vanim**" or "**The deeds of the fathers (our ancestors) are signposts to the children**". In this week's *parsha* we see Ya'aqob struggling with the evil material manifestation of this world against HaShem's chosen. Esau represents the "*fallen gevurah*" or, the "*worldly power and strength*" of the "*man of the field*", Edom, or the world. Thus at the beginning of our *parsha*, Ya'aqob, who is about to enter the Promised Land, sends emissaries ahead to his brother Esau in the land of Se'ir (the *Field of Edom*).

So now, after 22 years, Ya'aqob has to face his brother, Esau. Our *parsha* begins in **B'reshith / Genesis 32:3-8**; **And Ya'aqob sent messengers before him to Esaw his brother in the land of Se'ir, the field of Edom and he commanded them, saying, "Say this to my master Esaw, 'Your servant Ya'aqob said this, "I have sojourned with Laban and stayed there until now. And I have bulls, and donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants. And I have sent to inform my master, to find favor in your eyes." So the messengers returned to Ya'aqob, saying, "We came to your brother Esaw, and he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men with him." And Ya'aqob was greatly afraid and distressed. So he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two groups, and he said, "If Esaw comes to the one group and attacks it, then the other group which is left shall escape."**

So, at this point, the situation is more than a little unnerving for Ya'aqob. He devises a plan to protect at least part of his family. Now, Esau can't wait to see Ya'aqob. So, he goes out to meet him, with 400 men. That's quite a greeting party. This number is very interesting. 400 is the numeric value of the letter "**tav**", which is the "**mark**" or "**sign**" of the covenant and signifies the "**end**". Just as "**aleph**" is the "**beginning**", "**tav**" is the "**end**". Rabbi Greenbaum calls these 400 men "**the legions of death**". He points out that 400 signifies a complete array of numbers, 10 x 10 on all four sides. Esau came against Ya'aqob with the same envy and enmity of the serpent towards Adam. And, Ya'aqob divides his family, his servants and all of his flocks and herds into two groups (*two houses*, if you will); so that if one is wiped out, the other can escape. 400 also equals the phrase "**la'mishle**" or "**for a proverb**" or "**parable**"; which is a story for us to pay attention to. 400 also equals "**mishna'i**" or "**for both**" and "**la'shalom**" or "**for peace**". So, we understand that HaShem orchestrated this event in Ya'aqob's life as a parable, a story for us to understand and heed. Also, "**it's for both**" houses of Israel and it's "**for peace**".

Next, Ya'aqob reminds HaShem, in true humility, of the promises made to him, as we read in **32:9-12**; **And Ya'aqob said, "O Elohim of my father Avraham and Elohim of my father Yitzaq,**

*YHVH who said to me, 'Return to your land and to your relatives, and I do good to you,' I do not deserve the least of all the kind acts and all the truth which You have shown Your servant, for I passed over this Yarden with my staff, and now I have become two groups. Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esaw, for I fear him, lest he come and shall smite me and the mother with the children. For You said, 'I shall certainly do good to you, and shall make your seed as the sand of the sea, which are too numerous to count.' "*

Then, we read in **B'reshith / Genesis 32:13-23**; *And he spent the night there, and took what came to his hand as a present for Esaw his brother – two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milk camels with their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten foals. And he gave into the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, "Pass over before me, and put some distance between drove and drove." And he commanded the first one, saying, "When Esaw my brother meets you and asks you, saying, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going? And whose are these in front of you?' then you shall say, 'They are your servant Ya'aqob's. It is a present sent to my master Esaw. And see, he also is behind us.' " So he commanded the second, and the third, and all who followed the droves, saying, "Speak to Esaw this same word when you find him, and you shall say, 'Also look, your servant Ya'aqob is behind us.' " For he said, "Let me appease him with the present that goes before me, and after that see his face. He might accept me." And the present passed over before him, but he himself spent the night in the camp. And he rose up that night and took his two wives, and his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford of Yabboq. And he took them and sent them over the stream, and sent over what he had.*

Ya'aqob amasses quite a large gift for his brother and tells his herdsmen to say to Esau that they are indeed sent ahead to appease him. Ya'aqob, in dealing with the evil material manifestation of this world, speaks to the materialism in Esau by offering him a very large bribe. And again, I think that the numbers here are important to the picture that HaShem is presenting to us in the history of our father Ya'aqob. This may seem a little tedious; but, I think you'll find it worthwhile. The first gift that Ya'aqob sends out in a drove (*herd* or *group*) is 200 female goats and 20 males. 200 is the numeric value of the letter "**reish**" which is the "**beginning**" and 20 is numeric value of "**kaf**" which is "**palm of the hand**" or "**covering**". So, Ya'aqob wishes to convey to Esau that this is only the first gift for covering his offense. He repeats these numbers again with ewes and rams. 200 is also the numeric value of the word "**va' tzadik**" which means "**and is righteous**" or "**just**". 20 is also the numeric value of the word "**haya**" which means "**has become**". In this second gift we see Ya'aqob also saying that "**he has become righteous**".

Next, we see 30 milk camels with their colts (30, as one each, is typical). 30 is the numeric value of the letter "**lamed**" or the "**shepherd's staff**" which signifies "**learning**". 30 also equals the words "**b'chai**" or "**in life**" and "**va'cheetah**" or "**and is purified**". Here, he has not separated the nursing from their mothers. We see two 30's, perhaps saying that he's "**learned the lessons of life**" and his intentions are pure. He follows this gift with another of 40 cows and 10 bulls. 40 is the number of "**learning**" or "**testing**" and 10 is the number of the "**fullness of something**", as in the "**fullness of time**". Here we see the theme of "**completing the time of learning and testing**". 40 is also the numeric value of the letter "**mem**" which is "**water**" or "**washing**" and 10 is the numeric value of the letter "**yud**" or "**the hand**"; perhaps to say that "**his hands are now clean**". 40 is also the numeric value of "**b'levo**" or "**from the heart**" and 10 equals "**va'avo**" or "**I come**". Together, "**b'levo va'avo**" means, "**from the heart I come**". Finally, Ya'aqob sends 20 female donkeys and 10 foals. Again, 20 represents the "**palms**" and 10 the "**hands**". When you come showing the palms of your hands, what are you saying? I surrender. I submit to you. Ya'aqob was coming not so much in fear, but in true humility and showing respect to his elder brother.

It's interesting that in the groupings of each of these droves, were male and female or mother and child; the continuation of life. These animals would, in and of themselves, reproduce and build wealth. I'm not trying to be a smart-aleck when I say that they were truly the "gift that keeps on giving". And, if you were counting, there were five droves, or divisions, of these animals. Five is the number of "**chen**", which is Hebrew for "**favor**" or "**grace**". It also represents the Torah in Hebrew thought. These are very connected in that the Torah is all about "**favor**" and "**grace**". In fact, the **fifth** Book of Torah, **Debarim/Words/Deuteronomy**, is all about HaShem's "**favor**" and "**grace**" toward Yisra'el, even in their failures, as it speaks of their *turning away* and *exile* and ultimately their *teshuva*, *redemption* and *return* to Elohim and to the Land of their inheritance.

Then, we read in **verses 22 & 23**; ***And he rose up that night and took his two wives, and his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford of Yabboq. And he took them and sent them over the stream, and sent over what he had.*** It's also very interesting that he passed over the River "**Yabboq**" (*Yud-bet-kuf*). You see "**Yabboq**" means to "**empty out**" or to "**be poured out**". Ya'aqob was indeed "*poured out*" and at the "*end of himself*". Having come through all that he had, being what amounted to an indentured servant for over 20 years; Torah says that now he stood alone about to face his past and his future.

Then, we read in **B'reshith / Genesis 32:24-31**; ***And Ya'aqob was left alone. And a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. And when He saw that He did not overcome him, He touched the socket of his hip. And the socket of Ya'aqob's hip was dislocated as He wrestled with him. And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I am not letting You go until You have blessed me!" So He asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Ya'aqob." And He said, "Your name is no longer called Ya'aqob, but Yisra'el, because you have striven with Elohim and with men, and have overcome." And Ya'aqob asked Him, saying, "Please let me know Your Name." And He said, "Why do you ask about My Name?" And He blessed him there. And Ya'aqob called the name of the place Peni'el, "For I have seen Elohim face to face, and my life is preserved." And the sun rose on him as he passed over Penu'el, and he limped on his hip.***

Here we have a most interesting use of Hebrew to describe what went on between Ya'aqob and this "**man**" that he *wrestled* with. The two common Hebrew words used for "**wrestled**" in Scripture are "**pathal**" and "**naftul**". When Rachel says in **B'reshith 30:8** that she *wrestled* Leah with great *wrestlings*, she uses both of these terms. And, you'll find both of these elsewhere in Scripture. However, in our *parsha* text today, a different word is used in both **verses 24 & 25**. And, it only appears here, in our text this week. According to Strong's Concordance, the word is "**abaq**". And, when you look up "**abaq**", you find that it means to "**wrestle**" or "**grapple with**" from the context of "*kicking up dust*" or "*getting dusty*". Gesenius' Lexicon states the meaning as "**to pound**" or "**make small**", as used to describe a fist fight. What's interesting here is that, in the Hebrew Torah, the first time it's used (in **verse 24**) as "**and wrestled**", the word is rendered "**va'yaboaq**". It is a variation of, and has the same pronunciation as the river "**Yabboq**", which means "**poured out**". Now, from our context, it is obviously talking about a great struggle, as in an intense wrestling match that exhausts both parties. So, they are both "**poured out**" or "**emptied**" of strength.

Here, having struggled with both man (*Esau* and *Laban*) and Elohim, working out his redemption as a patriarch of a nation, Ya'aqob is given a new name, **Yisra'el**; because he has "**overcome**" or "**prevailed with El**". And, he names that place "**Peni'el**" which literally means "**facing El**"; because he has seen Elohim and lived. Also, I love how Torah states that "**the sun rose on him as he passed over Penu'el**". The Hebrew word in Scripture for "**dawn**" or "**sunrise**" is "**shachar**". But here, we have the phrase "**Va'eetzerach li ha shemesh**" as he passed over Peni'el. The

implication is that the sun (**shemesh**) rose because of him. It's a word-play, or Hebrewism, denoting that he "**walked in the light**" as in the "**light of the sun**".

Now, we move on to **B'reshith / Genesis 33:1-16**; *And Ya'aqob lifted his eyes and looked and saw Esaw coming, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children among Le'ah, and Rahel, and the two female servants. And he put the female servants and their children in front, and Le'ah and her children behind, and Rahel and Yoseph last. And he himself passed over before them and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. And Esaw ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. And he lifted his eyes and saw the women and children, and said, "Who are these with you?" And he said, "The children with whom Elohim has favored your servant." Then the female servants came near, they and their children, and bowed themselves. And Le'ah also came near with her children, and they bowed themselves. And Yoseph and Rahel came near, and they bowed themselves. Then Esaw said, "What do you mean by all this company which I met?" And he said, "To find favor in the eyes of my master." But Esaw said, "I have enough, my brother, let what you have remain yours." And Ya'aqob said, "No, please, if I have now found favor in your eyes, then receive my present from my hand, because I have seen your face like seeing the face of Elohim, and you were pleased with me. Please, take my blessing that is brought to you, because Elohim has favored me, and because I have all I need." And he urged him, and he took it. And he said, "Let us depart and go, and let me go before you." But he said to him, "My master knows that the children are weak, and the flocks and herds which are nursing are with me. And if the men should drive them hard one day, all the flocks shall die. Please let my master go before his servant, and let me lead on slowly according to the pace of the livestock that go before me, and according to the pace of the children, until I come to my master in Se'ir." And Esaw said, "Please let me leave with you some of the people who are with me." But he said, "Why this? Let me find favor in the eyes of my master." And Esaw returned that day on his way to Se'ir.*

Now, I need to point out that this "**Se'ir**" is not Mt. Se'ir, the area of Edom. We'll read in a few minutes that Esau moves to Edom and Mt. Se'ir after the death of Yitzaq. It's very interesting, that at this time, Esau was still living in Kena'an. There is a Mt. Se'ir in Israel and it is located in Northern Judea (*Yehudah*), northwest of Yerushalayim, not far from Beit El. It lies just south and west of Beit El. Ya'aqob did not misdirect Esau into going to Jordan and then take off in another direction. He was heading toward the area of his brother's home and then on to his father's. It's reasonable to assume that it was Esau who named Mt. Se'ir in Edom. Now, "**Se'ir**" means "**hairy goat**" in Hebrew and is represented by the two goats of Yom Kippur, Day of Atonement. The location of Israel's Se'ir refers specifically to where the "**scapegoat**" is sent into the wilderness, to Azazel. In his teaching of this week's parsha, Rabbi Greenbaum connects a lot of dots for us between this Mt. Se'ir, the field of Edom's Mt. Se'ir and Yom Kippur. I'm including a link to his full teaching; <http://www.azamra.org/Parshah/VAYISHLACH.htm> . No matter what your level of study; you'll find some real nuggets in his teaching.

Now, let's go on with **verses 17-20**; *And Ya'aqob set out to Sukkoth, and built himself a house, and made booths for his livestock. That is why the name of the place is called Sukkoth. And Ya'aqob came whole to the city of Shekem, which is in the land of Kena'an, when he came from Paddan Aram. And he pitched his tent before the city. And he bought the portion of the field where he had pitched his tent, from the children of Hamor, Shekem's father, for one hundred qesitah. And he set up an altar there and called it El Elohei Yisra'el.* Here Ya'aqob stops in what will become known as Sukkoth, which is just east the Yarden River in what would become the inheritance of the tribe of Gad.

Now, here is something that you just don't see in our English translations. It's one of those "statements" that you would more than likely just pass over, if it weren't for the rabbis, who have guarded the Word of HaShem for us and preserved the original Hebrew. I want us to look for a minute at **verse 18**, which reads, from the ISR Scriptures; ***And Ya'aqob came safely to the city of Shekem, which is in the land of Kena'an, when he came from Paddan Aram. And he pitched his tent before the city.*** Now, from the King James Version it reads a little differently; ***And Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which [is] in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padanaram; and pitched his tent before the city.***

Now, in the Hebrew, it's a little different yet, as it reads; ***Va'abo Ya'aqob shalem e'yr Shekem asher b'erezt Kena'an b'vo Paddan Aram va'eechan et paney ha'eyr.*** Well, that's easy for you to say. But, what does that mean? It literally translates as; ***And came Ya'aqob whole or complete to the city of Shekem that is in the land of Kena'an and having come from Paddan Aram and encamped before the city.*** The point here is this; Ya'aqob did not arrive in Shekem "safely"; nor did he come to the city of "**Shalem**". Shalem is not a city of Shekem. Remember, the city of "**Shalem**" was the city/kingdom where the Melek Tzadik, Shem, was the King. Let's take just a minute and look at the word "**shalem**". Contrary to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance and Dictionary, it does not mean "**peace**". It does not mean the same thing as "**shalom**". "**Shalem**", although spelled the same as "**shalom**" ("**shin-lamed-mem**" - except for the vowel markings), is a variation of the root word that means "**whole**", "**complete**", "**unified**", "**finished**" and "**restored**", according to Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon, Klein's Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language and Brown, Driver, Briggs. Now, there are no vowel markings in the Hebrew Scriptures. So, how do we know that HaShem did not intend to use the word "**shalom**" to say that Ya'aqob arrived in "**peace**"? That's a fair question. Had the intent been to say "**And came Ya'aqob in peace to the city of Shekem....**", it would read in the Hebrew "**b'shalom**" (**in peace**). There is no letter "**bet**" as a prefix. So, "**shalem**" would be the proper word to use here. The Melek Tzadik can be referred to as the "**Prince of Shalom**" (**Peace**); but also, He is the "**King of Shalem**" ("**Wholeness**" or "**Completeness**").

Okay, so why is all of this so important, anyway? Because, we've come full circle, back to where we began. Ya'aqob arrives in Shekem "**whole**", "**complete**", "**unified**" and "**restored**". As we read about the life of Yitzaq, we understand that he had been given the estate of Avraham, which was very large. And, we saw that he amassed even more wealth. Ya'aqob would receive the first-born's share, or double portion of that estate. But, he leaves home because of Esau, and during his over 20 years with Laban, he is blessed with wives, children and his own wealth. Now, after he has lived in "**Paddan Aram**" (*the exalted field of redemption*), HaShem calls him to come home and he is restored to his brother Esau and the family. But, more importantly, he is restored to his birth-right and blessing as Yitzaq's first-born, over Esau.

Now, when Ya'aqob crosses the Yarden, after he leaves Sukkoth, he arrives "**restored**" and "**whole**" at Shekem. If you don't remember, "**Shekem**" means "**shoulder**" or the "**upper back**"; where the load carried or the "**burden is shouldered**". In fact, Kohen ha Gadol (the *High Priest*) would later wear onyx stones engraved with the names of the twelve tribes "**upon his shoulders**" to bear the spiritual responsibility of all Yisra'el. He bore the stones of each tribe in the breastplate to show that the tribes were to be "**on his heart**" continually.

Also, Shekem is the city that lies between Mt Gerizim and Mt. Eybal. It was here that Yehoshua (*Joshua*) and the Children of Yisra'el would later come to declare the "**blessings**" and the "**curses**" as instructed by HaShem. It is here that Ya'aqob arrives back in the Land and now completes building the "**House of Yisra'el**" through his sons; and whom HaShem will choose as a people for Himself. In the process, as he came back to Beit El; Ya'aqob builds the "**House of Elohim**".

But, in Shekem, a problem arises; the rape of Dinah. We read in **B'reshith / Genesis 34:1-26**; *And Dinah, the daughter of Le'ah, whom she had borne to Ya'aqob, went out to see the daughters of the land. And Shekem, son of Hamor the Hiwwite, prince of the land, saw her and took her and lay with her, and humbled her. And his being clung to Dinah the daughter of Ya'aqob, and he loved the girl and spoke kindly to the girl. And Shekem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Take this girl for me for a wife." And Ya'aqob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter. Now his sons were with his livestock in the field, so Ya'aqob kept silent until they came. And Hamor, the father of Shekem, went out to Ya'aqob to speak with him. And the sons of Ya'aqob came in from the field when they heard it. And the men were grieved and very wrath, because he had done a senseless deed in Yisra'el by lying with Ya'aqob's daughter, which should not be done. But Hamor spoke with them, saying, "My son Shekem's being longs for your daughter. Please give her to him for a wife. And intermarry with us, give us your daughters and take our daughters for yourselves, and dwell with us, and let the land be before you. Dwell and move about in it, and have possessions in it." And Shekem said to her father and her brothers, "Let me find favor in your eyes, and whatever you say to me I give. Ask of me a bride price and gift ever so high, and I give according to what you say to me, but give me the girl for a wife." But the sons of Ya'aqob answered Shekem and Hamor his father, and spoke with deceit, because he had defiled Dinah their sister. And they said to them, "We are not able to do this matter, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised, for that would be a reproach to us. Only on this condition would we agree to you: If you become as we are, to have every male of you circumcised, then we shall give our daughters to you, and take your daughters to us. And we shall dwell with you, and shall become one people. But if you do not listen to us and be circumcised, we shall take our daughter and go." And their words pleased Hamor and Shekem, Hamor's son. And the young man did not delay to do this because he delighted in Ya'aqob's daughter. Now he was more respected than all the household of his father. And Hamor and Shekem his son came to the gate of their city, and spoke with the men of their city, saying, "These men are at peace with us, so let them dwell in the land and move about in it. And see, the land is large enough for them. Let us take their daughters for us for wives, and let us give them our daughters. Only on this condition would the men agree to dwell with us, to be one people: if every male among us is circumcised as they are circumcised. Their herds and their possessions, and all their beasts, should they not be ours? Only let us agree with them, and let them dwell with us." And all who went out of the gate of his city listened to Hamor and Shekem his son; every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city. And it came to be on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of the sons of Ya'aqob, Shim'on and Lewi, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword and came boldly upon the city and killed all the males. And they killed Hamor and Shekem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shekem's house, and went out.*

We also read that they plundered the city of all its wealth and took, as captives, the women and children of the Hiwwites of Shekem. One has to ask, "Why are we told this here?" Well, first let's look at some terms. "**Shekem**" we know is "**shoulder**". "**Hamor**" has two meanings; the first being "**ass**" or "**male donkey**" and the second is "**heap**". "**Jack-ass**" certainly works here. But, what about "**heap**"? What's a "**heap**"? Well, it is a "**memorial**". People of that day would pile stones or rocks into a "**heap**" as a remembrance or memorial to treaties, covenants, graves or whatever they wanted generations to come to see and remember. As we saw in the beginning, that is exactly what Elohim is doing with this story, this "**parable**", this "**mishle**". He wants us to take note of it and remember it. Now, the men of this city were "**Hiwwites**". If you'll remember back to our "**Counting of the Omer**" study; "**Hivvites**" or "**Chivi**" (Chet-vav-yud), meaning "**dwellers of the high place**", whose capital was on Mt. Ba'al Hermon (meaning "**lord of destruction**").

So, we have a city of pagans, who worship the “**lord of destruction**”, whose leader represents a memorial or historic event and his son Shekem. Now, consider it this way; we read in **Yeshayahu / Isaiah 9** about Mashiach having the “**reign of the Kingdom**” on His **shekem/shoulder**. Now Shekem, as Hamor’s son, is a picture of “**anti-messiah**” who has the reign of his father on his shoulder. He kidnaps and defiles “**Dinah**”, whose name means “**Judgment**” or “**Justice**”. And, this happens in the Land, in the place where Yehoshua would declare the Torah (Yah’s Word as Justice) between the mountains (*blessings and curses*). Standing there, all those years later, Yehoshua and B’nei Yisra’el would have known the significance of this. And again, in our time, we will see the Land invaded by the forces of the “**lord of destruction**” (*anti-messiah*) and we’re already seeing the raping of “**Dinah**”, “**Justice**”.

Only the next time, as **Isaiah 8** tells us, HaShem will fight for Ya’aqob and defeat the “**lord of destruction**” and his armies and cleanse the Land. And, a “**shalem**” Ya’aqob, a “**whole**”, “**unified**” and “**restored**” Yisra’el will bury the dead of that war, as **Yehezqel / Ezekiel 39:11-13**; “**And it shall be on that day that I give Gog a burial site there in Yisra’el, the valley of those passing by east of the sea, and stopping those passing by, because there they shall bury Gog and all his crowd, and shall call it the Valley of Hamon Gog. And the house of Yisra’el shall bury them for seven months, in order to cleanse the land. And all the people of the land shall bury them, and it shall be for a name to them on the day that I am esteemed,**” declares the **Master YHVH.**”

In closing, we see a *foreshadowing* of even more, in this “**memorial heap**”, this *parsha*. At the end of **B’reshith 35**, HaShem calls Ya’aqob back to “**Beit El**” (*the House of Elohim*). Elohim calls Ya’aqob back to where He visited him, back to the “**roots of his faith**”, in order to see if he will honor and give praise to the El of his deliverance. Is this sounding a little familiar, Yisra’el? Then, we read in **35:28-29**; “**And the days of Yitzaq were one hundred and eighty years. So Yitzaq breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, aged and satisfied of days. And his sons Esau and Ya’aqob buried him.**” It’s interesting to think about how long some of these periods of time actually were. Scripture tells us that Yitzaq was 60 years old, when Esau and Ya’aqob were born. Of course, Ya’aqob was separated from his father for 22 years. Scripture doesn’t tell us how old Ya’aqob was, when he went into Paddan Aram, to Laban’s house. However, the sages computed from the Biblical genealogies that he was 77 years old, when he went to Laban’s house for his wife (wives). Also, if you look at the oral history, Ya’aqob and Esau dwelt nearby each other, after their reunion, for about 20 to 30 years, until Yitzaq’s death at 180. So, there appeared to be a reconciliation of sorts. But, Esau is Esau. It’s like today. Some may see a re-uniting between Ya’aqob and Esau in the Land. Many of the nations of this world want to force a reconciliation, against the will and plan of Elohim. But, Esau is Esau and he hates Ya’aqob unto death.

And then, we see at the death of Yitzaq, things change. I believe that all things written in Torah are significant. I may, or may not, see the whole picture. But, as I looked at Yitzaq’s age of 180 at his death, I know the number has meaning. 100 represents the letter “**kuf**” which means to “**surround**” or “**touch**” and 80 is the letter “**pey**”, which is the “**mouth**”, which is part of the “**face**”. So, it reflects “**touching the mouth**” or “**speech**”. “**Face**” in Hebrew is “**paniym**” and also has the numeric value of 180. In fact, as I looked at this number and related words and phrases in Torah, I found several instances referring to “**the face**”, as well as “**nasah**” or “**to go out**” or “**to journey**” which also equals 180. These were all connected to “**going out**” or “**journeying before**” (*in the face of*) Elohim; being sent out to hear His speech, His words and to understand one’s destiny and calling. Yitzaq’s life journey was constantly “**before**” (**paniym**) HaShem, as His purpose and plan were being brought to fruition. The same is certainly true of Ya’aqob, Yah’s circumventer, who was in the palm of His hand always.



As I said, we don't know exactly how long Esau and Ya'aqob dwelt together; whether 30 or 50 years. It's interesting that 30 is the number of "**teaching**" and 50 is the number of "**the kingdom**". Esau had those years with Ya'aqob to learn about the kingdom; to see it demonstrated before his eyes. But, he despised his birthright; not only the "*first-born*" birthright, but also his birthright as part of Yah's kingdom. So, we read in **B'reshith / Genesis 36:6-8**, following the death of Yitzaq; ***And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the beings of his household, and his herds and all his beasts, and all his possessions which he had gained in the land of Kena'an, and went to a land away from the presence of his brother Ya'aqob. For their possessions were too great for them to dwell together, and the land of their sojournings could not support them because of their herds. So Esau dwelt in Mount Se'ir. Esau is Edom.*** Again, HaShem says it, "**Esau is Edom**" (*Esau is the world*).

As we keep seeing in Torah, and throughout all of Scripture, just as we see in our own day; HaShem keeps putting Yisra'el in co-habitation with the "**world**", with Edom. Why? So that the world, through Yisra'el, might come to know Elohim. Rabbi Eli Touger puts it this way in his extraordinary [commentary](#) on **Parsha Va'yishlach**, when he writes, "*This is the message of Parshas Vayishlach: that every one of us is a shliach, an agent of G-d. We are sent 'to Esav' (the world) to refine and reveal the G-dliness within the material existence that is identified with Esav. Significantly, Vayishlach is not just the beginning of the Torah reading; it is the name of the Torah reading. The name of an entity reflects its essence. Thus every element of the reading is connected with this concept, highlighting the many facets of the mission with which we are charged. For being engaged on a mission to make the world G-d's dwelling challenges us to encompass every aspect of existence. The word vayishlach means 'And he sent,' implying that our mission includes the empowerment of other shlichim. A person must inspire others to shoulder a portion of the endeavor.*" The Torah teaches us that even, or should I say especially, in the Land of Yisra'el, the struggle between Ya'aqob and Esau will continue until the "**Redemption**" is complete; until Mashiach comes to rule and reign.

The rabbis echo this; and, point to the conclusion of this week's *parsha* for confirmation. **B'reshith 36** shows us the genealogy of Esau. Now, I know that there is a great study in this whole chapter. But, just looking at three of Esau's descendants we get a picture of history, past and future. In **verse 12**, we see Esau's grandson "**Amaleq**", who is the historical counterfeit of Yisra'el. Then, in **verses 11 & 15** we're introduced to Esau's grandson "**Tsepho**", who according to history, and confirmed in the Dead Sea Scrolls, was made king of Rome, and then made king of "**Chittim**" (which included Cypress) during the reign of King Hizqiyahu (Hezekiah) of Yehudah. Folks, **Rome is Esau**. I found much of this information through the University of Illinois' Jewish history archives. It's only one of several sources. Then, in **verse 43**, we're introduced to "**Magdi'el**". Strong's has one meaning for this name; but, in Hebrew, his name is from the same root as "**Migdol**" which means "**high tower**". The rabbis teach that this too is a reference to Rome, in that when Romulus (*the king of what was about to become the Roman Empire*), united all Italy under his flag, he began to build a "**tower**" like the Tower of Babel to enter heaven and make war with Elohim, in order to establish the Roman Empire as the strongest government in all the earth and in the heavens. But, like those in Nimrod's day, he never finished it.

In the "**Restoration of All Things**", it all comes down to the lessons of this and surrounding *parashot*, the struggle between Esau and Ya'aqob. Esau wants to kill Ya'aqob, just as the serpent in Gan Eden sought to kill Adam. But, HaShem calls Ya'aqob to come back from Paddan Aram, the land of his exile, and then return to the Land of Yisra'el, his inheritance, and face Esau. But, remember from last week, that Ya'aqob set a boundary between him and Laban. Now, this week, a boundary is set between him and Esau. As we read in **B'reishith / Genesis 33:14**; "***Please let my master go before his servant, and let me lead on slowly according to the pace of the livestock that go before me, and according to the pace of the children, until I come to my***

master in Se'ir." Ya'aqob set another boundary, he said, "**until I come to my master in Se'ir**"; not the one in Edom, but in Yisra'el, very near Beit El. Why? Well, this speaks to our future.

Our Haftorah this week gives us the answer. The Haftorah reading is **Obadyah 1:1-21**. We need to read it all. And as we do, remember Edom includes Rome, in government and religion. ***The vision of Obadyah: This is what the Master YHVH said concerning Edom. We have heard a report from YHVH, and a messenger has been sent among the nations, saying, "Arise, and let us rise up against her for battle!" "See, I have made you small among the nations, you are greatly despised. The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who dwell in the clefts of the rock, whose dwelling is high, who say in your heart, 'Who shall bring me down to the ground?' Though you rise high as the eagle, and though you set your nest among the stars, from there I shall bring you down," declares YHVH. If thieves came to you, if robbers by night, how ruined you would have been! Would they not steal till they had enough? If grape-gatherers had come to you, would they not leave gleanings? How Esaw shall be searched out! His hidden treasures shall be sought out! All your allies shall send you forth to the border, your friends shall deceive you and over-power you. They make your bread a snare under you, without you discerning it! In that day," declares YHVH, "I shall destroy the wise men from Edom, and discernment from the mountains of Esaw! And your mighty men shall be discouraged, O Teman, so that everyone from the mountains of Esaw is cut off by slaughter. Because of your violence against your brother Ya'aqob, let shame cover you. And you shall be cut off forever. In the day that you stood on the other side, in the day that strangers took captive his wealth, when foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Yerushalayim, you also were like one of them! And you should not have looked on your brother's day in the day of his estrangement, nor rejoiced over the children of Yehudah in the day of their destruction, nor made your mouth great in the day of distress, nor have entered the gate of My people in the day of their calamity, nor looked down on their evil in the day of their calamity, nor have seized their wealth in the day of their calamity, nor have stood at the parting of the way to cut off his fugitives, nor handed over his survivors in the day of distress. For the day of YHVH is near upon all the nations. As you have done, it shall be done to you, your reward shall come back on your own head. For as you have drunk on my set-apart mountain, so do all the nations drink continually. And they shall drink and shall swallow, and they shall be as though they had never been. But on Mount Tsiyon there shall be an escape, and they shall be set-apart. And the house of Ya'aqob shall possess their possessions. And the house of Ya'aqob shall be a fire, and the house of Yoseph a flame, but the house of Esaw for stubble. And they shall burn among them and they shall consume them, so that no survivor is left of the house of Esaw." For YHVH has spoken. And they shall possess the South with the mountains of Esaw, and low country with the Philistines. And they shall possess the fields of Ephraim and the fields of Shomeron, and Binyamin with Gilead, and the exiles of this host of the children of Yisra'el possess that of the Kena'anites as far as Tsarephath, and the exiles of Yerushalayim who are in Sepharad possess the cities of the South. And saviors shall come to Mount Tsiyon to judge the mountains of Esaw (those in Edom and Israel). And the reign shall belong to YHVH.***

As we study Torah, and examine our roots in Torah's historical record, it helps us to view our collective past, and future, as a "**journey**". Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, in his teaching on our *parsha* titled, "The Jewish Journey", shares with us, "*Why is Jacob the father of our people, the hero of our faith? We are 'the congregation of Jacob,' 'the children of Israel.'* Yet it was Abraham who began the Jewish journey, Isaac who was willing to be sacrificed, Joseph who saved his family in the years of famine, Moses who led the people out of Egypt and gave it its laws. It was Joshua who took the people into the Promised land, David who became its greatest king, Solomon who built the Temple, and the prophets through the ages who became the voice of God.

*The account of Jacob in the Torah seems to fall short of these other lives, at least if we read the text literally. He has tense relationships with his brother Esau, his wives Rachel and Leah, his father-in-law Laban, and with his three eldest children, Reuben, Shimon and Levi. There are times when he seems full of fear, others when he acts - or at least seems to act - with less than total honesty. In reply to Pharaoh he says of himself, 'The days of my life have been few and hard' (Gen. 47:9). This is less than we might expect from a hero of faith....*

*Hence the rules that Israel must always remember its past, never forget its years of slavery in Egypt, never forget on Sukkot that our ancestors once lived in temporary dwellings, never forget that it does not own the land - it belongs to God - and we are merely there as God's gerim ve-toshavim, 'strangers and sojourners' (Lev. 25: 23). Why so? Because to be a Jew means not to be fully at home in the world. To be a Jew means to live within the tension between heaven and earth, creation and revelation, the world that is and the world we are called on to make; between exile and home, and between the universality of the human condition and the particularity of Jewish identity. Jews don't stand still except when standing before God. The universe, from galaxies to subatomic particles, is in constant motion, and so is the Jewish soul....*

*The point is not just that Jacob is the most human of the patriarchs but rather that at the depths of his despair he is lifted to the greatest heights of spirituality. He is the man who encounters angels. He is the person surprised by God. He is the one who, at the very moments he feels most alone, discovers that he is not alone, that God is with him, that he is accompanied by angels.*

*Jacob's message defines Jewish existence. It is our destiny to travel. We are the restless people. Rare and brief have been our interludes of peace. But at the dark of night we have found ourselves lifted by a force of faith we did not know we had, surrounded by angels we did not know were there. If we walk in the way of Jacob, we too may find ourselves surprised by God."*

The Great Redemption and the Kingdom of Heaven are indeed "**at hand**". Let us not despise our birthright, as Esau did. We may be among the gentiles (nations); but, we are not of the nations, if we realize who we and sojourn with Yehudah (the Jews). As we talked about last week, when the Northern Kingdom does this, it will be in fulfillment of **Ezekiel 37:19; Say to them, 'Thus said the Master YHVH, "See, I am taking the stick of Yoseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim and the tribes of Yisra'el, his companions. And I shall give them unto him, with the stick of Yehudah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in My hand."** HaShem is bringing us out of the land of our exile and preparing us for the land of our inheritance, Yisra'el. So, let's pay close attention as; **The deeds of the fathers (like Ya'aqob) are signposts to us, his children.**

**Baruch HaShem & Shabbat Shalom !**