

'I Am' Will Be with You

*“³Then Adonai said to Jacob, “Return to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will be with you’...
¹¹ Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, ‘Jacob,’ and I said, ‘Hineni.’ ¹² He said, ‘Lift up your eyes and see that all the males going up to the flocks are striped, spotted and speckled. For I have seen everything Laban has done to you. ¹³ I am the God of Beth-El where you anointed a memorial stone, where you made a vow to Me”
Get up now and leave this land, and return to the land of your relatives.’”
(Gen 31:3, 11-13).*

In *Parashat Vayetze* Jacob is told to depart immediately and return to his family (his father’s land and to his relatives). The time for being away from *home* is up. Favor has departed from his current dwelling and the grace to be in the house of his wife’s relatives has expired.

Today, we in *Kol Simcha* have been or are about to be in similar situations as the American holiday season approaches. How many of us are about to have encounters with our relatives this season? The Lord wants to speak today on the opportunities that such meetings afford from today’s reading.

When the Lord speaks, our reply should be like our Father Abraham’s and our Father Jacob’s response: *hineni*. In my November 4, 2017 message I expounded on *hineni*: *“Hineni? – Notice how the Lord tested Abraham’s hineni response. If hineni means you have all of me and everything is at your disposal, then Abraham would not withhold anything not even his only son. Now the Lord knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that He could trust Abraham with a covenant that would last for all of eternity. ‘Hineni-People’ in Scripture are a very select company. They include our father Jacob (see Gen 31:11, 46:2), our teacher Moshe (See Exodus 3:4), our prophets Samuel (See 1 Samuel 3:4) and Isaiah (See Isaiah 6:8), Ananias who delivered a key message from Adonai to Rabbi Sha’ul (See Acts 9:10) and our Lord and Savior Messiah Yeshua (See Rev. 1:18). Each one, in a unique way, adds a dimension to the meaning of saying hineni to the Lord. We do not have enough time today to thoroughly expound on these but suffices to say that if we Messianic Jews in Kol Simcha also become hineni people, we are in excellent company!”*

Hineni is THE covenantal response to *Adonai* in Messianic Judaism (see my MJAA SER Message from December 23, 2012). It is further elucidated in Ian’s March 10, 2011 message “The Covenant of Worship.”

Both Rachel and Leah are in complete agreement with each other and with *Adonai* and tell Jacob: *“So now, everything God said to you, do it! (kol asher amar Elohim elecha oseh)” (Gen. 31:16).* Thus, Jacob begins the process of leaving, fully aware of the conflict with his brother Esau and not sure if his father Isaac or his mother Rebekah are alive. Why is *Adonai* interested in sending Jacob and his children back to his relatives? We know that the children of Israel are destined to possess the Promised Land, not the land of Laban. The Lord could have waited for Jacob to die and send them back, but He sends Jacob and his children back now, while there is still a lot of life to live: *“²⁰ while Jacob stole the heart from Laban the Aramean by not telling him that he was fleeing. ²¹ He himself fled with everything that belonged to him, and he got up and crossed the River, and set his face toward the hill country of Gilead” (Gen. 31:20-21).* Jacob and his children become *Hebrews* as they leave the land of the Arameans and cross the river just like Abraham and his household did. I can’t help but to be excited about the Scriptural similarities and the deeper meaning in these passages.

Laban takes his relatives and pursues Israel and his children a seven-day’s journey. He overtakes him in none other than Gilead. But *Adonai* had put Laban on notice: *“²⁴ But God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream at night and said to him, “Watch yourself—lest you say anything to Jacob, good or bad” (Gen. 21:24).* The text expounds on the encounter and the fact Rachel (not Leah) had taken Laban’s idols and this deception is miraculously not discovered. Rachel will be judged for this in the future but for now we see that Laban must then establish a covenant with Jacob and let them depart in peace: *“⁴⁷ Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha and Jacob called it Gal-ed. ⁴⁸ And Laban said, “This pile is a witness between me and you today.” That is why its name is Gal-ed, ⁴⁹ or Mizpah, for he said, “Let Adonai keep watch between you and me when we are out of one another’s sight. ⁵⁰ If you mistreat my daughters, and if you take wives besides my daughters, though no one is with us, look! God is the witness between you and me” (Gen. 31:47-50).* Gal-ed and Gilead have the identical spelling in the *Torah*: *gimmel-lamed-ayin-dalet* (גלעד).

This is the first mention of Gilead in Scripture. It marks the place where the covenant between Jacob and Laban concerning Jacob's wives (Laban's daughters) and his children (Laban's grandchildren). Gilead is the place of the "Balm." In next week's *Parashat* they will become Israel and the Children of Israel, respectively. At the conclusion of the Dessert Experience, at the end of the Book of Numbers (See my July 26, 2014 message entitled "*From Tsuris to Tsori*") we will see that the daughters of the shadow of *trouble* go before *Moshe* and *Adonai* and obtain a righteous inheritance (through obedience), of none other than the land of the Balm of Gilead. With the Lord, troubles are transformed into healing and inheritance from the source of all healing, *Yeshua*. The connection between these daughters, Laban's daughters, and their seed is amazing!

Like Jacob and his family, we must also cross the river (become Hebrews) and leave the currently familiar to return to our relatives. In many cases, we have been in conflict with our families so the prospect of "family gatherings" is not necessarily a pleasant thought. But I hear the Lord saying today (like the Gators) 'come on Gators get up and go!' Many of us need reconciliation with our relatives. Many of us need to ask forgiveness and release these relatives from the walls we have built around them (and around us). Many of us need to go and apply the "Balm of Gilead" to them. This year, the Lord wants us to go and "*proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound*" in our families during this holiday season. We are to become agents of healing, spiritual and otherwise.

How do I know for sure that this is His Message? When the Lord instructed Jacob to go ("*Get up now and leave this land*") the Hebrew text says: "*echeye imcha*." *Echeyeh* is *Adonai's* word spoken at the revelation of the sacred name to Moses in the mount: "*echeyeh asher echeyeh*" (*Ex. 3:14*) when *Adonai* tells Moses to "*tell them that echeyeh sent you*." Thus, 'I Am' is sending us to go and heal these family relationships. I do not know any of your details or even if any of you are in this situation. It is not for me to know, it is for me to proclaim it today: "*The Ruach of Adonai Elohim is on me, because Adonai has anointed me to proclaim Good News to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound,* ²*to proclaim the year of Adonai's favor and the day of our God's vengeance, to comfort all who mourn* ³*to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of Adonai, that He may be glorified*" (*Is. 61:1-3, Luke 4, Luke 7, Matt. 11, and Heb. 1*)

♪ He gave me beauty for ashes
The oil of joy for mourning
The garment of praise
For the spirit of heaviness
That we might be trees of righteousness
The planting of the Lord
That He might be glorified ♪

Shabbat Shalom!