



Parasha Toldot ~ Generations

B'reshith / Genesis 25:19-28:9

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Our Torah portion this week is titled, “**Toldot**” or “**Generations**”. And, **Toldot** speaks to us, the *children*, over the **generations** since this story first unfolded. The Hebrew word “**Toldot**” is usually translated as *genealogy, generations, chronicles, history*, etc. But, as usual with Hebrew words, “**Toldot**” means much, much more. You see, “**Toldot**” also includes **results, outcomes** and **consequences**. More than “**generations**” or “**history**”, it means “**fruit**”. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say, “**birthings**”. The root of “**Toldot**” (or “**toldah**” in the singular) is “**leidah**” or “**birthing**”. “**Toldah**” is the result, the outcome of a “**birthing**”. If “**leidah**” is the act of birthing, “**toldah**” is the “**fruit**” of that birthing, or that which is birthed.

There’s a beautiful phrase in Judaism; “**Toldot’ei’hen shel Tzadukim massim tovim**”. This translates as; “**The fruit (the children) of righteous people are their good deeds**”. Children are not just an extension of ourselves; nor, just our future, or our heirs. They are fruit that will bear fruit, that will bear fruit, that will bear fruit, forever. In life, a person may be blessed with sustenance, health and long life, but those only last one lifetime. “**Toldot**”, whether in the form of actual children, students or good deeds toward others, will live on forever; one fruit bearing another bearing yet another, and so on. Then, if you think about your own parents, you come to the realization that you too are the fruit of your father and mother. As you step back in time, you come to the revelation that your parents, their parents and grandparents, going back generation before generation, all the way back to Yitzaq and Rivka, Avraham and Sarah, even Adam and Chavah; we’re all part of one unbroken chain of “**Toldot**”, of “**birthings**” and “**fruits**”. So, as the rabbis bless their people, let me say to you; “**May you all bear fruit and merit to see your fruit bear another generation, and another**”.

In the first verse of our parasha this week and in six other verses, “**Toldot**” is spelled “**Tav-vav-lamed-dalet-tav**”. The word “**toldot**” appears 39 times in the TaNaK, and with 7 variations in spelling. It’s interesting to note that in **B’reshith / Genesis 2:4**, when Torah speaks of the “**toldot**” (**births** or **generations**) of the heavens and the earth, “**toldot**” is spelled “**tav-vav-lamed-dalet-vav-tav**”. The other variations have diminished spelling, or omitted letters; that is, until we get to **Ruth 4:18**, where the spelling of “**toldot**” is restored to its full spelling. In Hebrew thought it is taught that in Torah the spelling of **toldot / generations** was diminished after the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, because the generations of man were diminished by Adam’s disobedience. Further, it was restored to its fullness in **Ruth 4:18**, as it is here, that the Scriptures detail the **toldot / birthings** leading up to King David, who is a picture of Mashiach, who restores the fullness of the generations of man, at His coming. Thus, we have “**Tav-vav-lamed-dalet-vav-tav**” as the full expression of “**Generations**”.

If we consider the numeric value of the letters in "**Toldot**", we see it from another angle. The total numeric value of "**Toldot**", as spelled in our parsha text, is 846. This equals the phrase found in **Debarim / Deuteronomy 6:7**, "**v'shee nan'tam**", "**and you shall teach**". And, the context here is that of teaching your children, your fruit, the words of HaShem. As the full quote is from **verses 4-9**: "**Hear, O Yisra'el: HaShem our God, HaShem is one! And you shall love HaShem your God with all your heart, and with all your being, and with all your might. And these Words which I am commanding you today shall be in your heart, and you shall teach them to your children, and shall speak of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up, and shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.**"

Now, let's begin our reading this with **B'reshith / Genesis 25:19-26**; **And these are the generations of Yitzaq, Avraham's son. Avraham brought forth Yitzaq. And Yitzaq was forty years old when he took Rivka as wife, the daughter of Bethu'el the Aramean of Paddan Aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean. And Yitzaq prayed to HaShem for his wife, because she was barren. And HaShem answered his prayer, and Rivka his wife conceived. And within her the children struggled together, and she said, "If all is right, why am I this way?" So she went to ask HaShem. And HaShem said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples shall be separated from your body. And one people shall be stronger than the other, and the older serve the younger." And when the days were filled for her to give birth, and see, twins were in her womb! And the first came out red all over, like a hairy garment, so they called his name Esau. And afterward his brother came out, with his hand holding on to Esau's heel, so his name was called Ya'aqob. And Yitzaq was sixty years old when she bore them.**

We have already learned, two Torah portions ago, that Yitzaq, even though he was not the first-born, was the "**child of the promise**" that HaShem gave to Avraham and Sarah. In this parasha we are introduced to another child that was not the "**first-born**"; but, the one chosen by God and given the "**promise**". First, we see that Yitzaq was 40 years old when he took Rivka as his wife. In Hebrew thought, 40 is the number of learning, trials and testing, as in the 40 years the children of Yisra'el spent in the wilderness. 40 is the numeric value of the letter Mem, which means "**water**" or "**fountain**" as in "**fountain of knowledge**" and the "**living water**". Then, we read that Yitzaq and Rivka were married 20 years before she bore children. Now in Hebrew thought, 20 refers to being in HaShem's Hand. It is the numerical value of the letter "**Kaf**", which means "**palm**" of the hand. It is also the numerical value of the word "**Yadoh**" which means his hand. So, we see a time of learning and testing, then Yitzaq prays to God for a child and Rivka becomes pregnant with twins.

Now, Rivka feels a struggle going on within her. She seeks HaShem, as she is naturally worried about what might be happening within her body. And God tells her that "**two nations**" are in her womb and that "**two peoples**" will be "**separated**" from her body. Now, the word used for "**nations**" here is "**goyim**". We've learned before that "**goyim**" means; "**nations**" or "**peoples**". But, let's really look at this word "**goyim**" for a minute, because there's more here. "**Goyim**" is spelled "**Gimmel-Yud-Yud-Mem**". The "**Gimmel**" is to "**lift up**" or "**bridge**". Then we have a double "**Yud**". This is significant, as "**Yud**" is "**hand**"; making the double "**Yud**" "**two hands**". Since there were twins born, the two boys (the *two goyim*) are the "**double yud**". The last letter is "**Mem**" which, as we've learned before, means "**water**" or "**fountain**", as in "**water of the Word**" or "**fountain of knowledge and Truth**"; both being euphemisms for Torah. Remember the 40 years in the wilderness were to learn Torah. And, HaShem brought forth "**water**" (*mayim* or *mem*) from the Rock throughout their journey. So, what we have in "**goyim**" is "**the bridge between the two hands is Torah**". These hands are Ya'aqob, who will become "**Yisra'el**" and Esau, who becomes Edom (we'll see is spelled the same as Adam) and

represents *mankind* or “*the world*”. So the “*Bridge between Yisra’el and the world*”, or “*the way the world becomes Yisra’el*” is the “**Torah**”, the *Fountain of Knowledge and Truth*.

To complete this thought, we need to consider that Torah tells us that these two peoples within Rivka were going to be “**separated**” from her “**me’ah**” or the “**inward parts**” of her body. The word for separated used here is “**parad**” and means “**to divide**”. In addition to being *separated* from her body at birth, the connotation here is that these two peoples, *goyim*, would be “**divided**”; there was to be a *division* between them. Remember the “**two yuds**” or “**two hands**” we just looked at. One would be stronger than the other and the older would serve the younger. So, which would be stronger? Well, that would change back and forth at various times in history, as we’ll begin to see that in a bit. And, we’ll also see how the older would serve the younger.

Now, when it was time for her to give birth, she gave birth first to Esau and then Ya’aqob. Scripture tells us that Esau was red all over, like a *hairy garment*. In fact his name, “**Esau**”, means “**hairy**”. Esau is spelled “*Ayin-shin-vav*”. The numeric value of his name is 376 and is equal to the word “**ha’shmali**” or “**the left hand**”, which represents his father’s attribute of *Gevurah* (*strength & severity*) which Esau demonstrates in his own life; but, to excess. 376 is also the numeric value of “**v’ee’ satam’ hoo**” or “**and he hated him**”. This is true on several levels. Esau hated Ya’aqob and his own birthright; and, HaShem said that He hates Esau. 376 also equals “**l’ashamah**” or “**he is guilty**”, which is why HaShem said He hated Esau. Esau was guilty of hating his birthright and his own brother.

Next, Ya’aqob is born. But, as he comes into the world, his hand is holding the heel of Esau. That’s quite a picture right there. We’re told by most lexicons that Ya’aqob’s name means “**Supplanter**”. We’re led to believe that this may not be so good, that Ya’aqob might have been a little shady during the “**early years**”. Well, we’ll see. His name also means to “**circumvent**” according to Strong’s and Gesenius’ Lexicon. What’s interesting is the fact that Ya’aqob’s hand (his **Yud**) grasped the heel of Esau. Remember the double “**Yud**” in *goyim*, the two nations within Rivka.

Rabbi Avraham Greenbaum puts it this way in this commentary this week, [Universal Torah – Toldos](#), “*In the holy structure built by the patriarchs to reveal HaShem to the world, Abraham is the initial thesis: expansive energy, revelation, kindness -- CHESSED. Isaac is the antithesis: restriction, control -- GEVURAH, while Jacob, who enters the stage in our parsha, is the synthesis: balance, order, beauty -- TIFERET. Jacob, the most ‘perfect’ (SHALEM) of the patriarchs, came to complete the holy House -- the House of Israel, to whom all the nations will turn at the end of history in order to find HaShem: ‘And many nations will go and say, “Go, let us ascend to the mountain of HaShem, to the HOUSE of the G-d of Jacob”’ (Isaiah 2:3).*

He goes on to say, “*As thesis and antithesis, Abraham and Isaac represent two opposite tendencies, each of which has an extreme aspect, an aspect of excess, that must be transmuted and directed to the holy in order for perfect balance and harmony to reign. Thus Abraham and Isaac each had a ‘first-born’ (the aspect of excess) who was rejected from the holy structure. The last section of the previous parsha, CHAYEY SARAH, completed the story of Abraham’s ‘first-born’, Ishmael, the son of Hagar, and his descendants, who embody the ‘excess’ aspect of Abraham: religious fanaticism.... In introducing Jacob, the perfect patriarch, our parsha of TOLDOS also introduces Jacob’s challenger, his twin brother Esau, who embodies the excess aspect of Isaac: power and domination used arrogantly for the benefit of self instead of for G-d’.*

And further, “*The holy structure to be built by Jacob was to be constructed only through struggle and effort: Jacob’s struggle is the struggle to elevate Isaac’s power (GEVURAH) through its use not for the benefit of self, but in order to bring the spirituality of Abraham (CHESSED) to rule over the fallen*

GEVUROS, the refractory material world of practical action as represented in the figure of Esau (from the Hebrew root ASO, 'doing'). Only through the struggle to sift and clarify truth and goodness from falsehood and evil IN THE REAL WORLD is the light of truth revealed in all its beauty and perfection. The history of mankind has indeed been the history of the clash of cultures and civilizations. It may appear cyclical and pointless, but as revealed in our parsha, it has a purpose and an end goal. It is to reveal G-d's unity out of the intergenerational war between good and evil in all shapes and forms."

Next, we read in **verses 27-34**; *And the boys grew up. And Esau became a man knowing how to hunt, a man of the field, while Ya'aqob was a complete man, dwelling in tents. And Yitzaq loved Esau because he ate of his wild game, but Rivka loved Ya'aqob. And Ya'aqob cooked a stew, and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary. And Esau said to Ya'aqob, "Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary." That is why his name was called Edom. But Ya'aqob said, "Sell me your birthright today." And Esau said, "Look, I am going to die, so why should I have birthright?" Then Ya'aqob said, "Swear to me today." And he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Ya'aqob. Ya'aqob then gave Esau bread and stew of lentils. And he ate and drank, and rose up and left. Thus Esau despised his birthright.*

Here we see that Esau becomes a "**hunter**" or "**tsa'yid**". In fact, most English translations call him a "**cunning**" hunter. The only other person in scripture that was called a "**hunter**" was Nimrod in **B'reshith 10:9**. Esau was also called a man of the "**field**", or "**sadeh**" which means a "**tiller**" or "**cultivator**" of the land, like Qayin, who killed his brother Hebel.

Further, this verse says of Ya'aqob that he was a "**complete**" man, or "**tamiym**" which also means "**perfect**" or "**innocent**", "**dwelling in tents**". The word used here for "**tents**" is "**ohel'im**" which means "**wilderness tents**" or "**Tabernacles**". The Book of Yashar (*Jasher*) states that Ya'aqob studied the Word of Elohim in the tent of Shem (the *Melek Tzaddik*). However, as we see, this word in Torah is "**ohel'im**", plural. The rabbis teach that he also studied in his grandfather Avraham's tent. Ya'aqob was 13 when Avraham died. Here, he would have studied the "**chesed**" or "**loving kindness**" of Avraham, which exemplified Avraham's life and service. Then too, he studied in his father Yitzaq's tent, where he would have learned "**severity**", "**strength**" and "**judgment**". Ya'aqob's attribute is that of "**tiferet**", which is "**balance**", "**harmony**" and "**beauty**"; which is the combination of "**chesed**" and "**gevurah**" operating in perfect harmony.

Remember too, in the meaning of his name, we saw that Esau is associated with the "**left hand**", in Ya'aqob we see the "**right hand**". In Hebrew thought, the "**left hand**" is the side of "**strength**", "**restriction**", "**severity**" and "**judgment**", the attributes of Father Yitzaq. Now, on the "**right hand**", we have the side of "**chesed**", "**mercy**" and "**loving-kindness**", the attributes of his Grandfather Avraham. The numeric value of the letters in Ya'aqob's name is 182. In this number, we see two very different prophecies about his descendants. 182 equals "**with my staff**" or "**maq'qel**" from **B'reshith / Genesis 32:10**, where Ya'aqob is praying to God just before he is to meet Esau after his 21 years with Laban; *"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 (maq'qel) staff, and now I have become two groups."* "**Maq'qel**" means "**staff**" and also means "**to germinate**". So, what he's saying here that when he left, he had only the seed in his loins; but, has come back with wives and children enough to have become two groups.

Later, in **B'midbar / Numbers 24:17**, in Bil'am's final words while prophesying about Yisra'el, he tells Balak; *"I see Him, but not now; I observe Him, but not near. A star shall come out of Ya'aqob, and a scepter shall rise out of Yisra'el, and shall smite the corners of Mo'ab, and shall destroy all the sons of Sheth (confusion). And Edom shall be a possession; and Seir shall be a possession – enemies – and Yisra'el is doing mightily. And out of Ya'aqob one shall rule and*

destroy the remnant from Ar.” This scepter (which is correctly translated “**staff**”) here is King David, who would possess Edom. But also, according to **Yeshayahu / Isaiah 11:12-14**, Yehudah (in who’s hand is the scepter) and Ephraim shall also conquer Edom, Moab and the sons of Ammon, all of them the sons of confusion of this world. 182 also equates to “**aqeb**”. Now, “**aqeb**” means “**heel**”, also to “**supplant**” or to “**circumvent**”, “**Aqeb**” is one of the root words, along with “**Yah**”, in the name “**Ya’aqob**”. As “**Yah’s Supplanter**”, Ya’aqob would build on the foundation of his father and grandfather to start a “**Nation**” and establish a “**House**”, as we’ll see in the next few Torah portions.

Verse 28 of chapter 25 tells us that Yitzaq loved Esau because he ate of the game Esau hunted. We are also told that Rivka loved Ya’aqob. Rabbi Eli Touger posted this week in his teaching in the [Garden of Torah](#), “*In the most complete sense, our desire to be remembered is focused on our children. We want them to continue and further our principles and values. And here a difficulty arises: Yitzchak’s children were Esau and Yaakov. Yaakov indeed perpetuated and enhanced Yitzchak’s Divine service. Esau, however, rejected Yitzchak’s path entirely... Yitzchak desired to give his blessing to Esau rather than to Yaakov. As a father, Yitzchak was constantly struggling to motivate Esau to live up to his spiritual potential, and he thought that granting these blessings to him would further this purpose... The pattern which G-d invested in the world, however, is that Esau will not uncover his spiritual potential independently. Instead, it is Yaakov and his descendants whose Divine service reveal this resource*”.

Then, in **verses 29 – 34**, we have the selling of Esau’s birthright. We see that Esau was a man of appetites. He was hungry and was willing to say anything to satisfy his desire. In the Hebrew, he tells Ya’aqob that he has “**walked to the point of death**”. It’s interesting that from the Hebrew, this phrase could also be read to say that “*his walk was killing him*”. So, for the red lentil stew, Esau sold his birthright. Because of this price, HaShem called him Edom. “**Edom**” (*Aleph-dalet-mem*) means “**red**” or “**mankind**” or “**the world**” and “**Edom**” is from the root word “**Adam**”. Both Edom and Adam are spelled the same. This is why the rabbis point out that Edom is, and/or, represents the world; and, that the world is separate (remember *divided*) from Yisra’el. HaShem hated Esau because he despised his birthright; it counted for less than a bowl of pottage. The world has indeed sold its birthright for much less.

As Rabbi Avraham Greenbaum wrote last year, “*One of the deep mysteries of the Torah is that the natural, apparent first-born are repeatedly rejected in favor of the true, ‘spiritual’ first-born. Cain was rejected while Abel’s sacrifice was accepted. Japheth was made subordinate to his younger brother, Shem; as Shem and his descendants were the ‘high priests’ who brought knowledge of [Elohim] to the world. Ishmael and Esau were rejected in favor of Isaac and Jacob respectively. Later on, Jacob’s first-born Reuven was rejected in favor of Levi, Judah and Joseph. Ephraim was given precedence over Menashe. Kehas, the son of Levi, was given precedence over Levi’s first-born, Gershon... and Moses attained leadership over the firstborn Aaron, who was three years his senior. Yet through Aaron’s humble, joyous submission to his younger brother Moses, whose spokesman he became, Aaron earned the priesthood. Through the balance between the lawgiver and the priest, the transgenerational struggle between brothers that started with Cain and Abel was brought to a satisfactory conclusion: as religious service (represented in Aaron) must be subject to religious law (Moses). Otherwise service turns into excess.*”

Next, we read in **B’reshith / Genesis 26:1-11**; **And there was a scarcity of food in the land, besides the first scarcity of food which was in the days of Avraham. And Yitzaq went to Abimelek, sovereign of the Philistines, in Gerar. And HaShem appeared to him and said, “Do not go down to Mitsrayim, live in the land which I command you. Sojourn in this land. And I shall be with you and bless you, for I give all these lands to you and your seed. And I shall establish the oath which I swore to Avraham your father. And I shall increase your seed like**

the stars of the heavens, and I shall give all these lands to your seed. And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because Avraham obeyed My voice and guarded My Charge: My commands, My laws, and My Torot.” And Yitzaq dwelt in Gerar. And when the men of the place asked about his wife, he said, “She is my sister.” For he was afraid to say, “She is my wife,” thinking, “lest the men of the place should kill me for Rivkah, because she is good-looking.” And it came to be, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelek sovereign of the Philistines looked through a window, and he watched and saw Yitzaq playing with Rivkah his wife. So Abimelek called Yitzaq and said, “See, truly she is your wife! So how could you say, ‘She is my sister’?” And Yitzaq said to him, “Because I said, ‘Lest I die on account of her.’” And Abimelek said, “What is this you have done to us? One of the people had almost lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt on us.” And Abimelek commanded all his people, saying, “He who touches this man or his wife shall certainly be put to death.”

Here, we have a case of history repeating itself. In last week’s *parsha*, we had a very similar incident with Avraham, Sarah and Abimelek. Only in that case Abimelek actually took Sarah. And, of course, Pharaoh also took Sarah into his house. So, what really was the lesson here? It would seem that within one generation, the lesson was lost and needed to be taught again. But, what lesson? Well, the rabbis teach that the kidnapping of a married woman is a crime against the universal law of the children of Noah. Avraham had taught the lesson in his generation, but it had been forgotten, and it had to be taught again in the generation of Yitzaq. This is because the forces of evil constantly conceal lessons learned by earlier generations.

Let’s look at more of this picture, as we read on in **B’reshith / Genesis 26:12-33**; *And Yitzaq sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold, and Adonai blessed him. And the man grew great and went forward until he became very great. And he came to have possessions of flocks and possessions of herds and a great body of servants, and the Philistines envied him. And the Philistines had stopped up all the wells which his father’s servants had dug in the days of Avraham his father, and filled them with dirt. And Abimelek said to Yitzaq, “Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we.” So Yitzaq went from there and pitched his tent in the wadi Gerar, and dwelt there. And Yitzaq dug again the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Avraham his father, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Avraham. And he called them by the names which his father had called them. But when Yitzaq’s servants dug in the wadi and found a well of running water there, the herdsmen of Gerar strove with Yitzaq’s herdsmen, saying, “The water is ours.” And he called the name of the well Eseq, because they strove with him. And they dug another well, and they strove over that one too, and he called its name Sitnah. And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not strive over it. And he called its name Rehoboth, and said, “For now Adonai has made room for us, and we shall bear fruit in the land.” And from there he went up to Be’ersheva. And HaShem appeared to him the same night and said, “I am the God of your father Avraham. Do not fear, for I am with you, and shall bless you and increase your seed for My servant Avraham’s sake.” And he built an altar there, and called on the Name of HaShem, and he pitched his tent there, and the servants of Yitzaq dug a well there. And Abimelek came to him from Gerar, with Ahuzzath, one of his friends, and Pikol the commander of his army. And Yitzaq said to them, “Why have you come to me, seeing you have hated me and have sent me away from you?” But they said, “We have clearly seen that HaShem is with you. And we said, ‘Please, let there be an oath between us, between you and us. And let us make a covenant with you, that you do no evil to us, as we have not touched you, and as we have done only good toward you, and have sent you away in peace. You are now blessed by HaShem.’” And he made them a feast, and they ate and drank. And they rose early in the morning and swore an oath with one another. And Yitzaq let them go, and they departed from him in peace. And on the same day it came to be that the servants of Yitzaq came and*

informed him about the well which they had dug, and said to him, "We have found water." So he called it Shivah. Therefore the name of the city is Be'ersheva to this day.

You've no doubt heard someone use the term "*Philistine*" when calling someone a "*Barbarian*". The association between "*Philistine*" and "*Barbarian*" is fitting, for the Philistines represent the very opposite of Chesed, which was the attribute of God that drove Abraham's life. The numerical value of the Hebrew letters of Philistim (*Fey - 80, lamed - 30, shin - 300, tav - 400, yud - 10, mem -40*) is 860. 86 is the numerical value of the letters of the divine name **Elohim**, alluding to Gevurah, *might, power, limitation and concealment*, which Yitzaq is a picture of. The Philistines (Philist'im) equal 10 x 86, which represent the forces of limitation and concealment multiplied and in full array. In each generation their king, **Abimelek** (*My father is King, or basically, "I want to rule"*), wants to steal the **Divine Presence** or **Shekinah** (*represented by Sarah and Rivka*) for his own selfish pleasure. In each generation the patriarchs had to teach the lesson that the law of God must prevail. As I said, the kidnapping of a married woman is a crime against the universal law of the children of Noah. Along this line of reasoning, the rabbis point out **verse 15; And the Philistines had stopped up all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Avraham his father, and filled them with dirt.** The mission of the patriarchs was to uncover the waters of spirituality and bring them to the world, but the Philistines closed up the very sources of the living waters of spirituality with earthliness and gross materialism. Rashi points out that the Targum of the word "**closed up**" has the connotation of "**closing up the heart**" with insensitivity and foolishness. Accordingly, Yitzaq had to start all over again, re-digging the very wells that Avraham had dug.

And, Yitzaq's very success, which so aroused the anger and envy of the Philistines, came about because he followed in the ways of charity, generosity and kindness taught by his father Avraham. Yitzaq was blessed because his intent was always to share his blessings. And, faced with the threat of war from the Philistines, HaShem spoke to him and assured him of the very blessings given to Avraham. Instead of fighting his enemies, Yitzaq practiced the ways of peace: ***And he made them a feast, and they ate and drank. And they rose early in the morning and swore an oath with one another. And Yitzaq let them go, and they departed from him in peace.*** And, HaShem blessed his newest well in Be'ersheva.

Now, let's move on to **B'reshith / Genesis 26:34-35; And when Esau was forty years old, he took as wives Yehudith the daughter of Be'eri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. And they were a bitterness of spirit to Yitzaq and Rivka.** So, who were these women who so upset Yitzaq and Rivka? Scripture here in **verse 35** uses the phrase "**morah ruach**" for "**bitterness of spirit**"; in other words, *it grieved their spirit*. Well, "**Yehudith**" means "**praise**" and it is from the same root as *Yehudah*. She was the daughter of "**Be'eri**" which means "**well**" or "**fountain**" of the "**Hittites**" ("**terror**"). So, she was literally "**the praise of the fountain of terror**". Then there was "**Basemath**" ("**spice**" or "**fragrance**"), daughter of "**Elon**" ("**mighty man**") of the "**Hittites**" ("**terror**"). That would make her the "**fragrance of the mighty terrorist**". I guess she smelled like Hamas. Needless to say, these were some scary women, OK? Of course HaShem had forbidden Avraham from finding a wife for Yitzaq from out of the peoples of Kena'an (*the land of the hairy legged women, the pagans*). He had Avraham send his servant to find Rivka, who was from their own people. And, this is the precedence that God set in motion, early on, and carried it throughout the Torah; as time-and-again He warned His people not to take foreign wives, as they would turn the hearts of Yisra'el away from Him. The Scriptures are full of the consequences each time our forefathers neglected this command. We also see in our *parsha* that Esau's heart was far away from HaShem to begin with.

OK, let's move on to **Chapter 27:1-25; And it came to be, when Yitzaq was old and his eyes were too dim to see, that he called Esau his elder son and said to him, "My son." And he answered**

him, "Here I am." And he said, "See now, I am old, I do not know the day of my death. Now then, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt wild game for me. And make me a tasty dish, such as I love, and bring it to me to eat, in order that my being does bless you before I die." And Rivka heard when Yitzaq spoke to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt wild game and to bring it. And Rivka spoke to Ya'aqob her son, saying, "See, I heard your father speak to Esau your brother, saying, 'Bring me wild game and make me a tasty dish to eat, and bless you in the presence of HaShem before my death.' And now my son, listen to my voice according to what I command you. Please go to the flock and bring me two choice young goats, and I make a tasty dish from them for your father, such as he loves. And you shall take it to your father, and he shall eat it, so that he might bless you before his death." And Ya'aqob said to Rivka his mother, "See, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth-skinned man. What if my father touches me? Then I shall be like a deceiver in his eyes, and shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing." But his mother said to him, "Let your curse be on me, my son. Only obey my voice, and go, get them for me." And he went and fetched them and brought them to his mother, and his mother made a tasty dish, such as his father loved. And Rivka took the best garments of her elder son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them on Ya'aqob her younger son. And she put the skins of the young goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. Then she gave the tasty dish and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Ya'aqob. And he went to his father and said, "My father." And he said, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?" And Ya'aqob said to his father, "I am Esau your first-born, I have done as you said to me. Please rise, sit and eat of my wild game, so that your being might bless me." But Yitzaq said to his son, "How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?" And he said, "Because HaShem your God brought it to me." Then Yitzaq said to Ya'aqob, "Please come near, so that I feel you, my son, whether you truly are my son Esau or not." And Ya'aqob went near to Yitzaq his father, and he felt him and said, "The voice is the voice of Ya'aqob, but the hands are the hands of Esau." And he did not recognize him, for his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands, and he blessed him. And he said, "Are you truly my son Esau?" And he said, "I am." And he said, "Bring it near to me, and let me eat of my son's wild game, so that my being might bless you." So he brought it near to him, and he ate. And he brought him wine, and he drank.

First, there is a teaching among the rabbis that the mention of Yitzaq being blind tells us too that Yitzaq's eyes were dim to HaShem's plan. In his teaching last year on [Parsha Toldot](#), Rabbi Jonathon Sacks tells us that, "Rebecca's reaction was extraordinary. Although the situation had only just arisen – she could not have known in advance that Isaac was about to bless Esau, or that he would request some venison first – yet her plan was immediate, detailed and complete. She had no doubts or hesitations. She was determined to seize the moment. When Jacob raised concerns – What if Isaac is not deceived? What if he touches my skin and knows immediately that I am not Esau? – her reply is brief and blunt. 'My son, let the curse fall on me. Just do what I say; go and get them for me'".

Rabbi Sacks goes on to suggest some reasons for her to have done this, including "that she believed strongly that Esau was the wrong person to inherit the blessing. She had already seen how readily he had sold his birthright and 'despised' it. She did not believe a 'hunter' and 'a man of the field' fitted the template of the Avrahamic covenant. She knew that this was one of the reasons why God chose Isaac not Ishmael, because Ishmael was destined to be 'a wild ass of a man (Genesis 16:12). She knew that Isaac loved Esau but felt – for various reasons, depending on which commentary one follows – that he was blind to his faults. It was vital to the future of the covenant that it be entrusted to the child who had the right qualities to live by its high demands". Also, "that she was guided by the oracle she had received prior to the twins' birth: 'Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the

younger'. Jacob was the younger. Therefore, Rebecca must have assumed, he was destined to receive the blessing".

Now, in **verses 26-40** we see what happens next; *And he came near and kissed him. And he smelled the smell of his garments, and blessed him and said, "See, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field which Adonai has blessed. And God give you of the dew of the heavens, of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be master over your brothers, and let your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be those cursing you, and blessed be those blessing you!"* And it came to be, as soon as Yitzaq had finished blessing Ya'aqob, and Ya'aqob had hardly left the presence of Yitzaq his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. And he too had made a tasty dish and brought it to his father, and said to his father, "Let my father rise and eat of his son's wild game, so that your being might bless me." And his father Yitzaq said to him, "Who are you?" And he said, "I am your son, your first-born, Esau." Then Yitzaq trembled exceedingly, and said, "Who was it then who hunted wild game and brought it to me? And I ate all of it before you came, and I have blessed him. Yea, he is blessed." When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me, me too, O my father!" And he said, "Your brother came with deceit and took your blessing." And Esau said, "Was his name, then, called Ya'aqob? For he has caught me by the heel these two times. He took my birthright, and see, now he has taken my blessing!" And he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?" Then Yitzaq answered and said to Esau, "See, I have made him your master, and all his brothers I have given to him as servants. And I have sustained him with grain and wine. And what, then, shall I do for you, my son?" And Esau said to his father, "Have you only one blessing, my father? Bless me, me too, O my father!" And Esau lifted up his voice and wept. And Yitzaq his father answered and said to him, "See, your dwelling is of the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of the heavens from above. And by your sword you are to live, and serve your brother. And it shall be, when you grow restless, that you shall break his yoke from your neck."

Yitzaq's blessing of Ya'aqob mirrors so well the blessings HaShem promised to Avraham and his seed, as well as the blessing He spoke over Ya'aqob, to Rivka, while Ya'aqob was still in her womb. But then, the world came knocking. Esau, Edom, came in to receive what God had promised, and fulfilled, to the son of promise in this case, Ya'aqob. Scripture says that Yitzaq "**trembled exceedingly**". I've often wondered if it was from anger, fear of how Esau might react, or whether he sensed that this might have been done by the hand of Rivka, to fulfill what had been spoken to her by HaShem. Anyway, Esau cries out and weeps for the blessing and the birthright he felt were stolen from him. He was so caught up in himself that he never knew that if he had been obedient to HaShem and his parents, he might have been the son of promise. However, HaShem, in His foreknowledge, knew the end from the beginning and used Esau to help bring about His plan for Ya'aqob (**Yisra'el**). It's interesting to note that in **verse 36** Esau makes a statement by asking a question, "**Was his name, then, called Ya'aqob?**", referring to "**supplanter**" or "**circumventer**".

Esau also recognizes that Ya'aqob had grabbed his heel two times since their birth; first with the "**birthright**" and then the "**blessing**". Now, Yitzaq manages a blessing for Esau. But, it's one that names him as the servant to his younger brother until the time that his descendants would rebel and break the yoke of Yisra'el from off their necks. More on this in a few minutes.

So, as we close this *parsha* with **B'reshith / Genesis 27:41-28:9** we see; *And Esau hated Ya'aqob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, "The days of mourning for my father draw near, then I am going to kill my brother Ya'aqob." And the words of Esau her older son were reported to Rivka, and she sent and called Ya'aqob her*

younger son, and said to him, “See, your brother Esau comforts himself concerning you, to kill you. And now, my son, listen to my voice, and rise, flee to my brother Laban in Haran. And stay with him a few days, until your brother’s wrath turns away, until your brother’s displeasure turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him. And I shall send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereaved of you both in one day?” And Rivka said to Yitzaq, “I am disgusted with my life because of the daughters of Heth. If Ya’aqob takes a wife from the daughters of Heth, like these who are the daughters of the land, what is my life to me?” And Yitzaq called Ya’aqob and blessed him, and commanded him, and said to him, “Do not take a wife from the daughters of Kena’an. Arise, go to Paddan Aram, to the house of Bethu’el your mother’s father. And take a wife for yourself from there, from the daughters of Lavan your mother’s brother. And El Shaddai bless you, and make you bear fruit and increase you, and you shall become an assembly of peoples, and give you the blessing of Avraham, to you and your seed with you, so that you inherit the land of your sojournings, which God gave to Avraham.” So Yitzaq sent Ya’aqob away, and he went to Paddan Aram, to Laban son of Bethu’el the Aramean, the brother of Rivka, the mother of Ya’aqob and Esau. And Esau saw that Yitzaq had blessed Ya’aqob and sent him away to Paddan Aram to take himself a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he gave him a command, saying, “Do not take a wife from the daughters of Kena’an,” and that Ya’aqob had obeyed his father and his mother and had gone to Paddan Aram. So Esau saw that the daughters of Kena’an did not please his father Yitzaq, and Esau went to Yishma’el and took Mahalath the daughter of Yishma’el, Avraham’s son, the sister of Nebayoth, to be his wife, besides the wives he had.

Here we read that Esau hated Ya’aqob and said “*in his heart*” that he would kill Ya’aqob after the death of their father. This is interesting. We are also told that his words were reported to Rivka. I believe that HaShem told her this, as Esau spoke this in his heart, not to others. And even if he were to have said something to his wives, they were not exactly on speaking terms with their Mother-in-law. Further, Scripture says that she did not want to be bereaved of both her sons in one day; indicating that HaShem might have said that if Esau were to kill Ya’aqob, Esau would die the same day. In any event she plants the seed in Yitzaq to send Ya’aqob to Laban, her brother, to find a wife from their own people. Yitzaq then tells him to go. But, not before he confers on him all the blessings given to Avraham and then himself by the Word of God.

In obedience, and maybe a little fear, Ya’aqob goes to Haran (remember, “**the crossroads**”) to find a wife. But, still Esau just doesn’t get it. He sees that the daughters of Kena’an do not please his parents and he sees the obedience of Ya’aqob. So, what does Esau do? He takes as a wife Mahalath, Yishma’el’s daughter and sister of Nebayoth. “**Mahalath**” means, to “**make sick**” or “**grieve**”. What a name for a bride. Again, Esau’s choice of wives flies in the face of obedience.

In marrying Mahalath, Esau forms a familial pact with Ishmael. And, this pact is force to this day. But, why would Scripture also mention her brother Nebayoth? “**Nebayoth**” means “**heights**”. His descendants were the “**Nabateans**” who took Petra from the Horites. Petra would later be ruled by Esau and be part of Edom. Nebayoth and Esau would help build the place that some consider the prophet Zekaryah was referring to as a place of refuge for returning Yisra’el during “**Ya’aqob’s Trouble**”. In any event, Yehudah’s and Ephraim’s refuge has been hidden in Edom (**hidden in the world**) for the past 2,000 plus years.

Before we end for today, let me clarify one more point, if I may. Yitzaq told Esau that he would serve Ya’aqob until Esau became restless and broke Ya’aqob’s yoke from his neck. Has that happened yet? Well actually, Esau’s hatred for Ya’aqob’s descendants is shown throughout Scripture. It was Edom who refused to let the children of Yisra’el pass through their land while in the wilderness in **Shemot / Exodus 20**. However, King David subdued Edom and made all Edom serve him in **2**

Samuel 8. But, Shlomoh, David's son, saw them rebel again and "**break the yoke of Ya'aqob from his neck**" until this day. Since then, Edom, or a remnant thereof, has dwelt in Eretz Yisra'el and warred with the sons of Ya'aqob, even until now.

So, who is "**Esau**" today? Who is Edom? The Palestinians are Edom, the Catholic Church is Edom and some parts of the Israeli government are Edom, also. The US and the rest of this carnal world are indeed Edom. HaShem does indeed hate Esau, Edom. But, we must remember that the world, Edom, Mitzrayim, Babylon are all the "**way of men**". Edom is following our desires, our hungers and our sensual pleasures. All who have sold their birthright have forfeited their blessing and are deserving of Yah's hatred and judgment. But, we must also remember that the attributes of our fathers are indeed Elohim's attributes. So, while "**severity**" and "**judgment**" are present; so is "**loving kindness**". And, in Him they are in perfect balance, just like in Ya'aqob, only to a much greater degree. And remember too, HaShem commands us in **Debarim / Deuteronomy 23:7-8**; "**Do not loathe an Edomite, for he is your brother. Do not loathe a Mitsrite, because you were a stranger in his land. The children of the third generation born to them do enter the assembly of HaShem.**" Did you notice it said, "**the third generation**"? We all know how important the number 3 is in HaShem's timing. He said of Ephraim (*exiled northern kingdom*) and Yehudah in **Hoshea 5:15 – 6:2**; "**I shall go, I shall return to My place, until they confess their guilt and seek My face, in their distress diligently search for Me, and say, 'Come, and let us turn back to HaShem. For He has torn but He does heal us, He has stricken but He binds us up. After two days He shall revive us, on the third day He shall raise us up, so that we live before Him.'**"

Most of us have been inhabitants of Edom; hidden by the Hand of HaShem in the world. We were blind to Ya'aqob, to Yisra'el, just as Yitzaq was. Even though we were exiled in Edom, we're the seed of Avraham. And, if you are not, you can choose to sojourn with the Children of Ya'aqob (Yisra'el), **Yah's Circumventor**. Only, the Spirit of God has no need to use deception. But, He has used the "**blindness**" of this world to hide the seed of His Word within us until He speaks to our hearts and brings the fruit of many **generations (toldot)** forth.

It's right to hate unrighteousness, hate what's going on in the world. But, don't hate Edom; he's your brother. HaShem will rightly judge the "**goyim**" (*nations of this world*). Remember what we learned here today, at the beginning of this parasha; "**the bridge between the two Hands, Ya'aqob and Esau, Yisra'el and the world, is the fountain of Torah**".

Baruch HaShem & Shabbat Shalom!