

## Parashah #6

(Updated 11.29.08)

Tol'dot ~ תולדות ~ History/Genealogy

Torah: B'resheet/Genesis 25:19-28:9

Haftarah: Mal'akhi/Malachi 1:1-2:7

B'rit Hadashah: Romans 9:6-16; Ivrin/Hebrews 11:20; 12:14-17

Here is the history or genealogy . . . or as some translations say, generations. However, the Hebrew word for **generation** is **dor** so I believe the correct translation is history or genealogy. Before we get into the meat of today's Torah portion, I'd like to share some interesting tidbits with you from the Chumash.

It is reported that each of the Patriarchs had a (Yeh-shee-vah) **Yeshiva/Hebrew school**, where he taught about the existence of G~d and His will. **Avraham/Abraham's** school had hundreds of students, whereas **Yitz'chak/Isaac** had only one student, **Ya'akov/Jacob**, who was trained to teach others. Of course, this makes sense, who else would teach them except the Patriarchs? Everyone else had been raised in an idolatrous land.

Another interesting matter involves the Matriarchs. Each of them, Sarah, Rebecca and Rachel were barren women. The fact that Israel emerged as a nation is a miracle in itself when you consider that each generation was a gift from G~d to a mother who couldn't conceive naturally.

### CHAPTER 25

As this Parashah begins, we find, in **verse 19**, the Torah stressing that Avraham and Yitz'chak are father and son. Remember that the cynics of that day implied that Sarah must have become pregnant by Abimelech since she had been barren all those decades with Avraham. Consequently, HaShem made Yitz'chak's features so identical to Avraham's, there was no denying his paternity.

Another matter, according to the Stone Edition of the Artscroll Chumash, is the commentary concerning the differences or contrasts in Avraham's and Yitz'chak's characteristics. Avraham's primary characteristic was (kehs-sehd) **chessed**, meaning **kindness**; whereas Yitz'chak's was (geh-voo-rah) **gevurah** which means **strength**. It is said that in the Jewish scheme of life, kindness and strength must go together. One without the other could be dangerous. Kindness without strength could lead to self-indulgence and hedonism; whereas strength without kindness could lead to selfishness and cruelty.

Sometimes I think we overlook things in our reading because of how it is written or how we have been taught. **Verse 20** says that Yitz'chak was 40 when he "took" Rivkah. Two sentences (verses) later, it says she conceived. However, Yitz'chak was 60 when Rivkah gave birth so she was barren for approximately 20 years! That's quite a span of time in just two sentences!!!

**Verse 22** speaks about "the children agitated within her". Some of the Rabbis explain when Rebecca walked by the **Yeshiva**, that **Ya'akov/Jacob** struggled to come forth and when she passed the temple of idol worship, **Esav/Esau** struggled to come forth.

Please remember, I don't put a lot of stock in Rabbinical commentary but I do think it is interesting. Reading their commentaries, I believe, is on a par with the likes of Matthew Henry, Charles Spurgeon, Henry Schofield, Chuck Swindoll, Charles Stanley, Kenneth Copeland and the like.

Did you notice that during the time of Rebecca's pregnancy, she didn't share with her husband, Yitz'chak, or her father-in-law, Avraham, about the struggle taking place in the womb? It is reported that one of the reasons for not telling them was so they wouldn't think there was sin in her life and that was the reason for her suffering. Furthermore, when she inquired of the L~rd why the struggle within her womb, He revealed to her **and to her only** in **verse 23**, that two nations were represented within her; the struggle in the womb symbolized the future between them and in the end, the younger would prevail over the older.

I believe that communication is a vital and important aspect of life. Consequently, I can't help but wonder . . . if **Rivkah/Rebecca** had shared, early on, with **Yitz'chak/Isaac** what HaShem had told her, then the deception that took place later might not have been necessary.

However, there is the commentary that **Rivkah/Rebecca** did try to communicate with **Yitz'chak/Isaac** and it fell on deaf ears. Another commentary indicated that **Ya'akov/Jacob** was supposed to have been born first; thereby receiving the

first born inheritance and that is why he grabbed the heel of Esau. This one doesn't "fly" with me because if it were true, HaShem would not have told **Rivkah/Rebecca** that the older would serve the younger.

AND . . . before I go any further, let's clear up one matter that has been taught throughout "churchianity". **Ya'akov/Jacob** does **NOT** mean deceiver; it does mean **heel grabber**. In fact, the name **Ya'akov** is a play on the word (eh-kehv) **ekev** which means **heel**. **Ya'akov/Jacob** did **NOT** take away Esau's birthright. Esau chose to relinquish it for a bowl of beans!!!

Oh, by the way, **Esau's** name means **completely developed** which is what everyone called him because when he was born, he had as much hair as a child several years older.

In **verse 27**, Torah says that Ya'akov was an **ish tam** (אִישׁ טָמֵם) . . . a **peaceful man**. However, according to First Fruits of Zion, it is better translated into English as **blameless** and is the same Hebrew word used to describe unblemished animals fit for sacrifice.

According to the commentary on **verse 27**, "the boys" were relatively similar to each other until they reached their bar-mitzvah age. Up until that time, Esau's pranks were just considered "childishness". From thirteen on, Esau turned to idols and became a man of the field but Jacob was a quiet man who stayed in the tents. Another cause for me to ponder . . . "Tents" . . . would those have been the Yeshiva tents? Could the "tents" have been **tallitot/prayer shawls**? I don't know when prayer shawls came into being but given the nature of the man, it wouldn't surprise me that when he wasn't in Yeshiva, he was in prayer!

The Sages teach (**verses 29~33**) that Avraham died this particular day and **Ya'akov/Jacob** was preparing the stew as the traditional mourner's meal for his father, Yitz'chak. Although all of the "Who's Who" of that day stood in mourning, Esau was out doing "his thing" and wasn't involved in the family's bereavement; when, in actuality, it was his place, as first born to be preparing the traditional mourner's meal. According to **verse 30** Esau acquired the name **Edom** which means **red**. It is said that Esau was **ruddy** in color and sold his birthright for the sake of **red food**; therefore the name Edom is a term of contempt.

In fact, that was the day that Esau was willing to give up all that was his, as first-born, for a bowl of beans!!! Needless to say, upon close examination, we know that Esau's birthright was not "STOLEN" from him, nor was he "duped" or defrauded, rather, he willingly relinquished it. It had no value to him when he was famished and it remained meaningless after he had gorged himself. Bottom line . . . he spurned his birthright, according to **verse 34**.

## CHAPTER 26

As was true with his father, Avraham, **Yitz'chak/Isaac** was faced with a famine in his land and planned to leave but HaShem commanded him not to go to Egypt but to remain in The Land so Yitz'chak went to the central part of the Land along the Mediterranean coast. According to **verse 1** Yitz'chak stayed in a place called **G'rar**, which means **a lodging place** and is believed to have been a town south of Gaza. This is land which HaShem had promised to Avraham's descendants due to his loyalty in obeying the word of HaShem.

The Hebrew, in **verse 2**, indicates that Yitz'chak was an unblemished offering. It is believed when Yitz'chak was placed on the Altar of the **Akeidah/the binding**, he became the same as an elevation-offering, a burnt-offering that is completely consumed on the Altar. Since such an offering may not be removed from the Temple Courtyard, so it was forbidden for Yitz'chak to leave the sacred soil of The Land.

Notice that **verse 5** speaks of four categories of commandments (depending on the translation) . . .

- "My safeguards" ("charges") which serve as barriers against infringement of Biblical prohibitions
- "My commandments" which are laws that man's moral sense would dictate
- "My decrees" ("statutes") which are laws that reason cannot explain and
- "My Torahs" ("laws") or teachings both Written Torah and Oral Torah

The general opinion is that Avraham arrived at a knowledge of the **entire Torah** through Divine Inspiration and observed it voluntarily.

The area Yitz'chak went to, along the Mediterranean Coast was ruled by Abimelech. I am inclined to believe that Abimelech is more of a title rather than a name. Based on Hebrew, it would be translated as "my father, the king". Anyway, do you remember him from the days of Avraham? Well, guess what?!?!?! When questioned about his wife,

Yitz'chak, like father, like son, said she was his sister. Not long afterward, Abimelech saw Yitz'chak and Rivkah together. Now one of my translations, in **verse 8**, says he was "**jesting**" with Rivkah and another says he was "**caressing**" her. Personally, I think there is a **LOT** of difference in the two. Nonetheless, Abimelech has Yitz'chak brought before him to clear up the matter, as Abimelech was on the verge of taking her for his wife.

**Verse 15** begins the saga of the wells . . . those being stopped up by the Philistines which was in direct violation of the covenant Abimelech had made with Avraham; reopened by Yitz'chak's men and being renamed with the same names out of respect for his father.

It is said that the experiences of the Patriarchs are signposts of Jewish history and the three wells correspond to the three Temples; the two that were destroyed and the eternal one yet to be built. In **verses 19-22**, we learn that . . .

- The first well is named (eh-sehk) **Esek** which means **contention** and alludes to the strife of the nations which caused the destruction of the First Temple.
- The next well was called **Sitnah** which was a much harsher name than the first as it means **hindrance** or **enmity**. This refers to the Second Temple period when Israel's enemies were longer lasting and more violent.
- The third well, called (Reh-hoe-both) **Rehoboth** and meaning **spaciousness**, we are told, alludes to the future Temple era, when strife and enmity will be things of the past.

The Artscroll Chumash states that "wells also symbolize the spiritual wealth that is hidden beneath the layers of human smugness, materialism and laziness. Avraham, who was the spiritual father of all mankind, tried to show the world how much they could accomplish – if they wanted to! – and did so through the symbolism of digging wells, which represent a quest for spiritual riches that lay buried beneath the surface. The Philistines rejected his teachings, but Yitz'chak persisted."

One note on **verse 22**, says ". . . and (he) dug . . ." Apparently Yitz'chak, himself presided over the digging or perhaps he even dug the first clod to initiate the venture. I thought to myself, "How interesting!" How many times have we seen "photo ops" of ground breaking ceremonies, where this very thing occurs? I'm tellin' ya, our culture has been more affected by Jewish tradition than we can begin to imagine!!!

This long story short, Abimelech sees that HaShem is blessing Yitz'chak so he wants to enter into a treaty with him. **Verses 30 & 31** tell us that they discuss the treaty over a tasty meal replete with "drink". They didn't make their oath until the next morning after they had slept off the effects of the dinner wine so neither side could claim that the oath was taken in less than a sober state.

In **verse 33**, we learn that the name of the city, Be'er-Sheva, commemorates the two occurrences: the well and the oath. The well was named (she-vah) **Sheva** which means **seven** and **oath** to commemorate the seven ewes that Avraham had given to Abimelech, in addition to the oath that was made. (**B'resheet/Genesis 21: 28-31**)

Finally, in **verse 34**, Esau marries at the age of 40 (that sounds familiar) and takes two Hittite women as his brides. Rashi, a noted Sage, states that "Esau is compared to a swine that, when it lies down, stretches out its cloven hoof, as if to say, "See, I am a kosher animal!" Similarly, the princes of Esau rob and extort while they pretend to be honorable. So it was with Esau. Until he was forty, he had been living immorally, enticing married women from their husbands, but when he became forty, he said hypocritically that he would follow the example of his father who married at that age."

## CHAPTER 27

This chapter takes us back to "the boys"! But first . . . **Yitz'chak/Isaac** is aging, 123 years old and his eyes are dimmed from seeing. (I have learned that physical blindness is a common biblical metaphor for spiritual blindness.) One of the reasons given for the loss of his eyesight was due to the smoke of the incense that Esau's wives offered to their idols. Along those same lines, his blindness kept him from seeing the excessive idol worship that was taking place in his home. Another reason stated that providence caused his blindness so that Ya'akov could receive the blessing without Yitz'chak realizing whom he was blessing. Nevertheless, I repeat, if communication had been taking place perhaps the deceit would not have been necessary.

Another matter concerning Yitz'chak's blindness, in my opinion, was his spiritual blindness with regard to Esau. It is mystifying to me that as righteous as Yitz'chak was that he could be so adamant in choosing Esau to receive the Patriarchal blessing. On the other hand, I don't understand why Rivkah would resort to such blatant deception.

There are some who believe that carrying out this deception was **Ya'akov/Jacob's** personal **Akeidah/binding** because, as scripture attests, Ya'akov personified (eh-met) **emet/truth**, yet his mother was commanding him to commit a falsehood in order to secure the blessings. This was totally foreign to Ya'akov's very nature, yet he was obedient to his mother.

It's interesting to note that even in today's headlines, the prophecy given to Rivkah hundreds of years ago still holds true. She was told the two could not coexist because when one would rise, the other would fall but the younger would ultimately prevail. The Arabs are the descendants of Esau or Edom and of course, the Israelites are the descendants of **Ya'akov/Jacob/Israel**.

In **verse 27**, Isaac "smelled the fragrance of his garments". Let's get real here. There is NO way washed goatskin is fragrant!!! As a matter of fact, I would dare say, it is MOST offensive but the teaching is that the fragrance of the Garden of Eden entered the room with Ya'akov and this was the fragrance Yitz'chak smelled.

As Yitz'chak is blessing Ya'akov, in **verse 28**, he mentions "**abundant grain and wine**". I want to quote the Chumash here. "*In addition to their literal meaning, grain refers to the necessities of life and wine to its pleasures, which are not imperative, but give enjoyment. In Torah study, too, there are grain and wine: the essential knowledge of the text and law and the interpretations that give spice to learning.*"

Of course, we know that right after Ya'akov receives the blessing from his father, Esau returns from the fields and all "you-know-what" breaks out. Esau threatens murder in his heart. **Verse 42** says "**When Rivkah was told of the words of her older son Esau . . .**" Wait a minute . . . who told Rivkah? Supposedly there was no one around and the words were not audible, since "Esau thought" (**verse 41**) them. So . . . who told Rivkah? I believe it was revealed to Rivkah by the (Rue-ahk Ha Ko-desh) **Ruach HaKodesh/Holy Spirit**. Therefore, she decides to send Ya'akov off on the pretext of finding a suitable wife rather than having him choose from the Hittite women, which we already know did not fare well with Momma and Poppa.

## CHAPTER 28

**Verse 4** specifically mentions that the "blessing of Abraham" was given to Ya'akov. We learn that the Patriarchs did not function as individuals but that their mission in life required the partnership of a wife worthy to be a Jewish Matriarch. So Ya'akov leaves for Padan-aram and his mother's family, where he will be in exile for over 20 years.

In a "last ditch effort" to try to correct some of his poor behavior of marrying Hittite women, according to **verses 6-9**, Esau goes to Yishma'el and takes one of his daughters, Mahalath, as another wife. Is this not "jumping from the fire into the frying pan"? Once again, Esau proves himself unworthy of the Patriarchal blessing.

### **Tol'dot ~ תולדות ~ History/Genealogy** **Haftarah: Mal'akhi/Malachi 1:1-2:7**

#### Chapter 1

Wow! **Verses 2 and 3** leave no doubt in our minds how this haftarah is linked to this week's Parashah (Torah Portion). This part parallels HaShem choosing **Ya'akov/Jacob** from the womb as His anointed one. Very clearly we see that HaShem's choice of Ya'akov was a sign of His love for Ya'akov and His hatred for **Esav/Esau**. The enmity that began here, we can see throughout history. From Esau came . . .

- The **Amaleks**, which were descendents from his marriage to one of Yishma'el's daughters and was the first nation to attack Israel after the Exodus. Haman, of the Esther story, also came from the Amaleks.
- **Edom**, the kingdom established by Esau, we are told, became the Roman Empire which caused the latest Diaspora and the destruction of the second Temple at the hands of Rome.
- And there are reports that there is a connection between Esau and **Germany** as well.

Although Edom says they will come back and rebuild the ruins, the prophet tells us that Esau will not prosper eternally; it is doomed to destruction; it will ultimately be destroyed. Like most prophecies, we do not know when this one will be fulfilled; we know only that it **will** be fulfilled (**verses 4-5**).

In **verses 6-2:4** Israel is sharply chastised, as well as their (Ko-ha-neem) **Kohanim/priests** for the hypocrisy of thinking that they can turn their service of HaShem into an insincere practice by offering old, crippled and ill animals to HaShem while they keep the best for themselves. I believe this portion parallels Esau's lack of respect for his birthright, in that he was willing to relinquish it for a bowl of beans.

## Chapter 2

Finally, in **verse 7**, the prophet encourages the **Kohanim/priests** to live up to their calling as teachers and models. Only by teaching and leading by example, will they be able to pull the people up with them.

### **Tol'dot ~ תולדות ~ History/Genealogy** **B'rit Hadashah: Romans 9:6-16; Ivrim/Hebrews 11:20; 12:14-17**

**Romans 9:6-16** There are a couple of parallels from these verses. One is found in **verse 12** where it says "The older will serve the younger" which is a direct quote from **B'resheet/Genesis 25:23**. The other one in **verse 13** "Ya'akov I loved, but **Esav/Esau** I hated." is from the Haftarah reading in **Malachi 1:2-3**. By the way, the word "hated" in this context simply means "loved less" as taught by The Master in **Luke 14:26**.

**Ivrim/Hebrews 11:20** This verse is a reference to the blessings in **B'resheet/Genesis 27:27-40**, which were yet to come when King Herod, an Edomite, a descendant of **Esav/Esau** would break **Ya'akov's/Jacob's** yoke on Esau and rule Jacob's descendants.

**Ivrim/Hebrews 12:14-17** **Verses 16 & 17** are specific to our Torah portion with regard to Esau's "godless" actions of giving up his rights as the firstborn. Even though he changed his heart or mind between **B'resheet/Genesis 25:27-34** and **27:30-41**, it did no good because a blessing once given could not be withdrawn.

It is abundantly clear to me how each of our B'rit Hadashah scriptures relates to our Torah Portion. It appears to me that if we are . . .

- Torah observant
- Follow after HaShem with our whole heart
- Do not depend upon our own efforts or desires and
- Fully rely on G~d (that's what "frog" means!!!!)

. . . we will be blessed!

**The corresponding Psalm for this week's Torah portion is: Psalm 36**