

Parashah #6

(Updated for 11.06.10)

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; Ivrim/Hebrews 11:20; 12:14-17

Writer's note: I have learned most Christian commentators and Rabbis agree the complete plan of HaShem is in Torah and specifically in (say-fer B'reh-sheet) *Sefer B'resheet/Book of Genesis*. Most readers of scripture have not been taught to look for the Heavenly Father's plan and consequently miss what they are not looking for. With what is happening in the world, it is time for us to really pay attention!!!

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 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 Israel emerged as a nation is a miracle in itself when you consider 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 Avraham and Yitz'chak are father and son. Remember, the cynics of the day implied 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.

The Stone Edition of the Artscroll Chumash commentary states 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 in the Hebrew 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
- Strength without kindness could lead to selfishness and cruelty.

Sometimes we overlook things in our reading because of how it is written or how we have been taught. **Verse 20** says 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 says "the children agitated within her". Some of the Rabbis explain when Rebecca walked by the Yeshiva, **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 it is interesting. Reading their commentaries, is on a par with the likes of Matthew Henry, Charles Spurgeon, Henry Schofield, Chuck Swindoll, Charles Stanley, Kenneth Copeland and the like. They make good commentary but it shouldn't over rule the Word of HaShem!

I believe each one of us possess some of Rivkah's travail because there are two natures within us wrestling one with the other. There is a little Ya'akov and Esav in each of us because our flesh and our spirit are at odds with one another. There is the spiritual potential of Ya'akov, taking hold of the inheritance from HaShem. This is our new identity in Messiah. On the other hand our old man lurks like the bitter and angry Esav, who thinks only of satisfying his fleshly appetites and resents anything or anyone which prevents him from doing so.

Did you notice, 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 one of the reasons for not telling them was so they wouldn't think there was sin in her life and it 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**, 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 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 which took place later might not have been necessary.

However, there is commentary indicating **Rivkah/Rebecca** did try to communicate with **Yitz'chak/Isaac** and it fell on deaf ears. Another commentary says **Ya'akov/Jacob** was supposed to have been born first; thereby receiving the first born inheritance and this 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* the older would serve the younger.

AND . . . before I go any further, let's clear up one matter which has been taught throughout all denominations. *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 Ya'akov was an *ish tam* (אִישׁ תָּם) . . . 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 bar-mitzvah age. Up until then, 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 (tah-lee-tote) *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 if he wasn't in Yeshiva, he was in prayer!

The Sages teach (**verses 29~33**) Avraham had died 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 the day stood in mourning, Esau was out doing "his thing" and wasn't involved in the family's bereavement. In actuality, as first born, it was his place to prepare the traditional mourner's meal. According to **verse 30** Esau acquired the name *Edom* which means *red*. It is said 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 **verse 30** Esau says, "Please! Let me gulp down some of that red stuff – that red stuff! I'm exhausted!" The Hebrew here is more comical. Esau uses a verb which describes "slopping the pigs". In his desperation, he cannot quite formulate the word for soup, so he stammers around calling it, "red, red stuff". "Quick, slop me some of that red, red stuff!" he begs.

In fact, on that very day Esau was willing to give up all which was his, as first-born, for a bowl of beans!!! Needless to say, upon close examination, we know 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 still remained meaningless after he had gorged himself. As one commentary states: "Esau was concerned about only three people in his life – my, myself and I." Torah describes Esau's exit with a succinct series of one-word

verbs: “He ate, he drank, he rose, he left and he despised his birthright.” Bottom line . . . he spurned his birthright, according to **verse 34**.

You and I are not immune from this Esau attitude. When was the last time you or I should have said no to something immediate and spent some time in prayer instead? How many decisions could have been made better if those decisions had been submitted to a few days of prayer and seeking the will of our Heavenly Father instead of taking immediate gratification?

CHAPTER 26

As 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. Consequently, 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.

The Hebrew, in **verse 2**, indicates 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 which is completely consumed on the Altar. Such an offering was not to be removed from the Temple Courtyard. Therefore, it was forbidden for Yitz’chak to leave the sacred soil of The Land.

Notice **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” are laws which man’s moral sense would dictate
- “My decrees” (“statutes”) are laws which reason cannot explain and
- “My Torah” (“law”) or teaching, the Written Torah.

The general opinion is Avraham arrived at the 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 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 had 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 filled in by the Philistines which was in direct violation of the covenant Abimelech had made with Avraham (**B'resheet/Genesis 21:22**). In one of Rabbi Ya'akov Youlus' teachings, we learn about the behavior of people who are not people of G~d. Although the Philistines had made a covenant with Avraham, they dishonored the agreement and filled in the wells. This shows us people who are "not of G~d" break agreements. This kind of behavior is relevant to now, as we see the Arabs today breaking agreements. We see and experience this type of behavior in today's culture as people break agreements and/or commitments without giving reason.

Back to the wells which were reopened by Yitz'chak's men. These wells were renamed with the same names out of respect for his father. It is said the experiences of the Patriarchs are signposts of Hebrew history and the three wells correspond to the three Temples; the two which were destroyed and the eternal one yet to be built. In **verses 19-22**, we learn . . .

- The first well is named (eh-sehk) **Esek/contention and strife** 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, enmity and bitterness**. Even today, it is referred to as 'baseless hatred' and is most often listed as the true cause for the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in 70 BCE, when Israel's enemies were longer lasting and more violent.
- The third well is called (Reh-hoe-both) **Rehoboth**, which means **spaciousness** or **to make open and wide**. We are told, this alludes to and is prophetic of the future Temple which we now await. This Temple will be built for the arrival of King Messiah who will reign over all the nations from Jerusalem during the Messianic Era when strife and enmity will be things of the past.

The Artscroll Chumash states "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."

Just as Yitz'chak persisted, this Parashah exhorts us to seek the Holy One of Israel in a deeper and more intimate way with each passing day, each passing week. To do so, we must apply ourselves to "digging the well". In other words, we must be students of His Word. It is never enough to simply skim the surface. Without personal study in greater depth, we will not reap

the blessing of a profound relationship with Him. Knowing Him in a deep and intimate way is the highest and most important goal of life.

Three things can happen when we “dig”.

- We can be tempted to quit because it’s challenging work. If we quit, we gain nothing.
- We can be discouraged at what we find when we dig and decide it’s not worth the trouble. If we choose this path, we stop short of revelation.
- We can press through with all our hearts and find those treasures of truth that the Psalmist spoke of when he penned the words: “The secrets of the L~rd are for those who fear Him; to them He makes known His covenant.” Or, The Complete Jewish Bible says . . .
“Adonai relates intimately with those who fear him; he makes them know his covenant.”
(Tehillim/Psalm 25:14)

One note: **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 Hebrew tradition than we can begin to imagine!!!

HaShem prospered Yitz’chak while he lived in the Philistine territory, but his prosperity incited the jealousy of the Philistines who drove him out. Yitz’chak reopened the wells, but each time he did, the Philistines came, claiming the well as their own. Rather than fight each time it happened, Yitz’chak moved on and attempted to open a new well. (When we are pushed by others, our tendency is to push back and demand our rights. Rarely do we see someone turn the other cheek. Even among disciples of Yeshua, it is rare to see someone back down from a slight or injury.)

Yitz’chak and his servants were busy opening another well when Abimelech and his men showed up. “Here we go again”, Yitz’chak must have thought. However, this long story short, Abimelech sees HaShem is blessing Yitz’chak and wants to enter into a treaty with him. The testimony of Yitz’chak’s life had an impact on Abimelech and his people. They saw HaShem was with Yitz’chak. Perhaps they noticed he conducted himself in a godly manner and felt ashamed. **Verses 30 & 31** tell us 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 the oath was taken in less than a sober state.

In **verse 33**, we learn 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 commemorating the seven ewes which Avraham had given to Abimelech, in addition to the oath made. (**B’resheet/Genesis 21: 28-31**)

This journey into our Hebrew Roots of faith is much like Yitz'chak's journey back to the wells of his father, Avraham. We find these original sources have been filled in and hidden from us.

- The Sabbath is been concealed.
- The Festivals have been concealed
- The Torah itself has been filled in with earth.

However, we don't have to dig new wells or create new names. If we will only make the effort to open the original wells again, we will find they are as deep and as they were when they were first dug! AND, they are filled with living water!!!

Finally, in **verse 34**, Esau marries at the age of 40 (that sounds familiar) and takes two Hittite women as his brides. Rashi, the noted Sage, states "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 lived immorally, enticing married women from their husbands. 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 physical blindness is a common biblical metaphor for spiritual blindness.) It is said, one of the reasons given for the loss of his eyesight was due to the smoke of the incense Esav's wives offered to their idols. Along those same lines, his blindness kept him from seeing the excessive idol worship taking place in his home. Another reason stated providence caused his blindness so Ya'akov could receive the blessing without Yitz'chak realizing whom he was blessing. Yet still another reason had to do with *Yitz'chak/Isaac's* consumption of non-kosher food which was brought to him by Esav from the field. 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, as righteous as Yitz'chak was, 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 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, 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. Yet the teaching is the fragrance of the (Gahn Eh-dehn) *Gan Eden/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*". Here is a quote from the Chumash. "*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 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 who, we already know, did not fare well with Momma and Poppa.

CHAPTER 28

Verse 4 specifically mentions the "blessing of Abraham" was given to Ya'akov. We learn the Patriarchs did not function as individuals but their mission in life required the partnership of a wife worthy to be a Hebrew Matriarch. So Ya'akov leaves for Padadan-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 frying pan into the fire"? 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. Clearly we see HaShem's choice of Ya'akov was a sign of His love for Ya'akov and His hatred for *Esav/Esau*. The enmity, beginning here, can be seen 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, became part of the Roman Empire which caused the latest Diaspora and the destruction of the second Temple by the Romans.
- And there are reports 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 Esau will not prosper eternally. They are doomed to destruction, and will ultimately be destroyed. Like most prophecies, we do not know when this one will be fulfilled. We only know it **WILL** be fulfilled (**verses 4-5**).

In **verses 6-2:4** Israel is sharply chastised, as are the (Ko-ha-neem) *Kohanim/priests* for thinking they can turn their service of HaShem into an insincere practice by offering old, crippled and ill animals to HaShem while keeping the best for themselves. I believe this portion parallels Esau's lack of respect for his birthright, since 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. Teaching and leading by example, they will 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 and 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 if we are . . .

- Torah pursuant
- 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 "**F R O G**" means!!!!)

. . . we will be blessed!

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

Next week's lesson: Parashah #7

VaYetze ~ וַיֵּצֵא ~ He went out

Torah: B' resheet/Genesis 28:10 ~ 32:3

Haftarah: Hoshea/Hosea 11:7 ~ 14:10

B'rit Hadashah: Yochanan/John 1:43-51

Shavuah Tov (Have a good week)!!!

Who fills his mind with Torah clears it of fear and folly.

Rabbi Chanina Sgan HaKohanim