

א שטיקל תורה A LITTLE SLICE OF TORAH

פון פרשת דער וואך FROM THE WEEKLY PORTION

November 26, 2022



ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם,
אשר קדשנו במצותיו, וצונו לעסוק בדברי תורה:

“Tachometer Torah”



...read down to the red line

Parashat-haShavu'a Stats

Weekly Portion: Tol'dot

Consists of: Genesis 25:19-28:9

Sequence—

in annual Torah cycle: 6th of 54

in Genesis: 6th of 12

- A Salient Selection from the Portion -

Genesis 25:19-28

Context: *Genesis, first of the Five Books of the Torah, is an outline of the Creation of the physical universe; a description of the origin of the human family by their respective nations; and an account of Abraham's and Sarah's lineage through their grandson Jacob as the founder of the Israelite people.*

This week's portion lays the rails for Israelite history, by portraying the birth of Jacob, who will eventually become the founder of the twelve Tribes.

25:19]- Now this is the generational lineage of Isaac, son of Abraham. Abraham engendered Isaac, [25:20]- and Isaac was forty years old when he took to wife Rivkah, daughter of B'tuEil the Aramean, of Padan in Aram, and sister of [B'tuEil's son] Lavan. [25:21]- Isaac entreated The Eternal One on behalf of his wife, who was infertile; The Eternal One responded to him, so his wife Rivkah conceived.

25:22]- But the children bustled about within her, so that she declared: “If it's going to be like this, how can I go on?!?” So she went to consult with The Eternal One.

25:23]- The Eternal One informed her: “**two nations** are within your abdomen; **two peoples** will be separated out from within your womb. One nation will be mightier than the other— but the greater shall be servant to the younger.”

וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת יִצְחָק בֶּן-אַבְרָהָם
אַבְרָהָם הוֹלִיד אֶת-יִצְחָק וַיְהִי יִצְחָק
בֶּן-אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה בְּקַחְתּוֹ אֶת-רִבְקָה
בִּת-בְּתוּאֵל הָאֲרָמִי מִפְּדַן אֶרֶם אָחוֹת
לְבִן הָאֲרָמִי לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה וַיַּעֲתֶר יִצְחָק
לַיהוָה לֵנַכַח אִשְׁתּוֹ כִּי עֲקָרָה הוּא
וַיַּעֲתֶר לוֹ יְהוָה וַתֵּהָר רִבְקָה אִשְׁתּוֹ

וַיִּתְרַצְצוּ הַבָּנִים בְּקִרְבָּהּ וַתֹּאמֶר אִם-
וְלָמָּה זֶה אֲנֹכִי וַתֵּלֶךְ לְדַרְשׁ אֶת-יְיָ
יְהוָה

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה לָהּ שְׁנֵי גוֹיִם בְּבִטְנָךְ
וְשְׁנֵי לְאֻמִּים מִמֶּעֶינֶךָ יִפְרְדּוּ וְלֹא-
מִלֵּאם יִאָּמֵץ וְרַב יַעֲבֹד צָעִיר

- more over

25:24]- When she had come to full term to give birth, there were, indeed, twins within her abdomen. [25:25]- The first one came out entirely reddish, like a shaggy cloak— so they called his name “Eisav.” [25:26a]- Then afterwards his brother came out, his hand clutching Eisav’s heel— so he called his name “Ya’aqov.”

וַיִּמְלֹאוּ יָמֶיהָ לִלְדֹת וְהִנֵּה תוֹמֵם בְּבֶטְנָהּ וַיֵּצֵא הָרֹאשׁוֹן אֲדָמוֹנִי כְּלוֹ כְּאֲדָרֶת שֵׁעָר וַיִּקְרְאוּ שְׁמוֹ עֵשָׂו וְאַחֲרָיו-כֵּן יָצָא אָחִיו וַיִּדּוּ אֶחְזֹת בְּעֵקֶב עֵשָׂו וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ יַעֲקֹב

25:26b]- Isaac was sixty years old at the time of their birth. [25:27]- As the lads grew, Eisav became a skilled hunter, knowledgeable in fieldcraft, while Ya’aqov was a simple fellow, residing among the tents. [25:28]- Now Isaac loved Eisav, **because he liked eating his wild game**, while Rivkah loved Jacob.

וַיִּצְחַק בֶּן-שָׁשִׁים שָׁנָה בְּלֶדֶת אֶתֶם וַיִּגְדְּלוּ הַנְּעָרִים וַיְהִי עֵשָׂו אִישׁ יָדָע צֹד אִישׁ שָׂדֵה וַיַּעֲקֹב אִישׁ תָּם יֹשֵׁב אֲהָלִים וַיֶּאֱהָב יִצְחָק אֶת-עֵשָׂו כִּי-יָד בָּפִיו וַרְבֵּקָה אֲהָבֵת אֶת-יַעֲקֹב

וַיֶּאֱהָב יִצְחָק אֶת-עֵשָׂו כִּי-צֹד בָּפִיו

25:28 - Now Isaac favored Eisav, **because he liked eating his wild game**

A) Genesis 27:3 –

וַעֲתָה **שָׂא**-נָא כְּלִיךָ
So now **take up**, I pray, **your equipment**—
תְּלִיךָ וְקִשְׁתְּךָ
your quiver and your bow—
וְצֵא הַשָּׂדֵה וְצוּדָה לִי צֹדָה
and go afield to hunt me some game.

B) RaSHI (Shlomo Yitzchaqi, 1040-1105) on Genesis 27:3 -

שָׂא נָא - לשון השחזה כאותה ששנינו אין משחזין את הסכין אבל משיאה על גבי חברתה
“**Take up**” – **this verb signifies sharpening**, as we learn [in the Babylonian Talmud, Beitzah 28a] “one does not hone the slaughtering knife in the usual manner, but **sharpens** it against another knife.”
חַדַּד סְכִינְךָ וּשְׁחוֹט יָפֵה שְׂלָא תֹאכִילֵנִי נְבֵלָה
[According to Midrash Genesis Rabbah 65:13, Isaac is instructing his son Eisav:] “Hone your knife well, and **slaughter the game properly so that you are not feeding me carrion.**”

רבא הוה בדיק ליה גירא לרי יונה בר תחליפא ושחט בה עופא בהדי דפרח

C) Babylonian Talmud, Chullin 30b - Rabba certified [the unimpaired sharpness of] an arrowhead for Rabbi Yonah bar-Tachlifa, who **with it slaughtered a bird in flight**.

וַיִּגַשׁ יַעֲקֹב אֶל-יִצְחָק אָבִיו וַיִּמָּשְׁהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר הִקַּל קוֹל יַעֲקֹב וְהִיָּדִים יְדֵי עֵשָׂו
 D) Genesis 27:22 - Jacob approached his father, Isaac; who, upon feeling him, declared: “**while the voice is that of Jacob**, the hands are those of Eisav.”

<p><u>Eisav – Genesis 27:31 -</u></p> <p>וַיֹּאמֶר לְאָבִיו יָקָם אָבִי וַיֹּאכַל מִצֵּיד בְּנִי</p> <p>He said: “let my father sit up and eat of his son’s game,</p> <p>בְּעֵבֶר תִּבְרַכְנִי נְפֹשָׁךְ</p> <p>“so that you may endow your legacy upon me.”</p>	<p><u>Jacob – Genesis 27:29 -</u></p> <p>וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל-אָבִיו אֲנֹכִי עֵשָׂו בְּכַרְךָ עָשִׂיתִי כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ אֵלַי</p> <p>Jacob declared to his father: “I am Eisav, your first-born. I have done as you said to me.</p> <p>קוּם-נָא שֹׁבָה וְאָכַלְהָ מִצֵּידִי בְּעֵבוּר תִּבְרַכְנִי נְפֹשָׁךְ</p> <p>“Please to rise up; seat yourself, if you would; and then perhaps you might eat of my game, so that you may endow your legacy upon me.”</p>
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↑
third-person - formal address

↑
second-person - imperative softened into courtesy with petitionary interjection נָא and jussive suffix ה-

Eisav in the Genesis text as a coarse and impetuous fellow:

- 25:27 - prefers running afield to tending the family flocks.
- 25:34 - readily and heedlessly **relinquishes his legacy**.
- 26:34 - **without notice to or license from his parents, marries** [foreign women].
- 27:31 - in eagerness to secure his legacy, **speaks tersely to his father**.
- 27:36 - petulantly **blames Jacob** for the natural consequence of his own actions.
- 27:41 - sulking on the loss, **plots to murder his brother**.
- 28:9 - makes an **ill-considered and impetuous bid** to win his parents’ favor.
- 32:7 - with Jacob once more in reach, he **launches a private war** to garner long-delayed revenge against his usurping younger brother.
- 33:12ff - in spite of seeming reconciliation, **seeks to keep Jacob under his control** and accessible for possible future vindictive action.

וישקהו שלא נשקו בכל לבו ר' שמעון בן יוחאי אומר הלכה בידוע שעשו שונא ליעקב אלא נהפכו רחמיו באותה שעה ונשקו בכל לבו

E) Midrash Sifrei [Numbers], b'Ha'alotcha 11 - When Eisav kissed [his brother at their reconciliation in Genesis 33:4,] it was not a genuine and whole-hearted kiss. Rabbi Shim'on ben YoChai says that **it is an immutable rule that Eisav hates Jacob**— but on this one occasion his compassion was aroused so that the kiss he gave him was sincere.

רבת שכנה לה נפשי וגוי - וכי יש אדם שונא שלום עשו שונא השלום

F) Midrash T'hillim 120:6 - “Too long have I resided [among those who hate peace” - Psalm 120:6] - Is there in fact any person who “hates peace”? **Eisav was a hater of peace.**

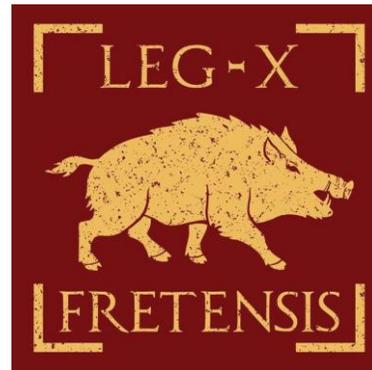
וכה"א ונתתי שלום בארץ אימתי
יהיה כן והשבתי חיה רעה מן הארץ

This is even as it is said in Scripture: “I will put peace in the land” [Leviticus 26:6]— and when will that be? “Once I have given the land respite from wild beasts [and no sword will cross your land” - *loc. cit.*].

ואין חיה רעה אלא **חזיר** שנאמר
יכרסמנה חזיר מיער זה עשו הרשע

“Wild beasts” signifies nothing other than **pigs**, even as it is said in Scripture “wild boars gnaw at [the ruins of Your city; creatures of the field graze in it” - Psalm 80:14]— and **this is the wicked Eisav.**

wild-boar insignia of Legio X Fretensis



Redirected in 66 CE from a campaign in Egypt to put down a rebellion in the Judaeen district of Galilee, the Tenth Roman “Legion of the Strait” under Vespasian reduced Jerusalem and Masada by siege, then remained in the rebranded Roman Province of Palestina as a police force until the 4th century.

G) Jerusalem Talmud, Ta'anit 24a -

רבי היה דורש הקול קול יעקב
והידים ידי עשו

[Yehudah HaNassi] used to expound on the verse “the voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Eisav” [Genesis 27:22] as signifying

קולו של יעקב צווח ממה שעשו לו
ידיו של עשו בביתו

“it is the voice Jacob lamenting **what ‘the hands of Eisav’ did to us at Beitar.**”

self to the Romans and told his officials:

“I want you to proclaim me a god, since I have subjugated the entire world.”

אמרו לו עדיין לא שלטת בעירו
ובביתו

But they told him: “You have not yet established your rule over God’s Own city and His house.”

הלך והספיקו בידו והחריב בית
המקדש והגלה את ישראל

So he went and conquered it, destroying the Holy Temple and exiling the Israelites.

וחזר לרומי אמר להם כבר החרבת
ביתו ושרפתי היכלו והגלתי עמו

Then he went back to the Romans and told them: “Now I have destroyed His house and burned His shrine and exiled his people;

עשו אותי אלוה

“proclaim me a god!”

H) Midrash Tanchuma, b'Reisheet 7 -

אנדריאנוס מלך אדום כיון שכבש
את העולם כולו הלך לו לרומי אמר
לבני פלטרין שלו מבקש אני מכם
שתעשו אותי אלוה שהרי כבשתי
את כל העולם

Hadrian, king of Edom, once he had subjugated the entire world, **betook him-**

א"ל מי אתה לפי שבשעה שנכנס יעקב נכנסה עמו ריח גן עדן

I) Midrash Tanchuma, Tol'dot 11 - The reason [when Eisav arrives to claim the birth-right, after Jacob has already received it and departed, that Isaac] asks [Eisav] “who are you” [27:32] is that whenever Jacob entered, the fragrance of Paradise came in which him—

ריח ניחוח ונתישבה דעתו של אותו צדיק שנאמר ראה ריח בני כריח שדה אשר ברכו ה' התחיל לברכו אבל כשנכנס עשו נפתח לו גיהנם

a mollifying aroma, that was reassuring to his saintly father, so that he could declare of him: “Behold, the fragrance of my son is like that of a field which The Eternal One has blessed” [27:27], after which he proceeded to give him his blessing. But **whenever Eisav entered, the gates of Gehenna opened for him** [releasing the stench of hell].



לפיכך ויחרד יצחק חרדה גדולה והיה תמיה יצחק בלבו ואומר אני רואה גיהנם ועשו מסיק אותו

It is for that reason that the narrative declares “Isaac trembled greatly” [27:33]: struck to the heart, Isaac cried out: “I behold Gehenna, and it is Eisav who stokes its fires!”

Isaac dispatches Eisav to the hunt
Jacques Joseph “James” Tissot, c. 1900

wild game in his [Isaac's] mouth

ציד בפיו he liked eating his wild game

J) Midrash Tanchuma, Tol'dot 8 -

מהו כי ציד בפיו היה צד את יצחק הצדיק בפיו

What is this “tzayid [entrapment] in his mouth”? That **he would spuriously deceive the saintly Isaac** by the words of his mouth.

אתה מוצא כל עבירות שהקב"ה שונא כלן היו בעשו

Indeed, you will find that of all the transgressions which The Holy And Blessed One hates, all of them are to be found in Eisav!

K) RaMBaN (Bonastruc da Porta, 1194-1270) on Genesis 25:28 -

ציד בפיו - והנכון בעיני כי היא מליצה

“**Hunter** was in his mouth” – the proper understanding of this, as I see it, is that this is merely a conceptual allusion.

כי עשו ציד בפי אביו יכנה האיש במעשה לתדירותו

Because Eisav put game in his father's mouth, **his father nicknamed him after his constant occupation.**

ואין לך ימים שאדם שרוי בטובה יותר מאותן הימים שנאמר מי יתנני כירחי קדם כימי אלוה ישמרני ואיזהו ימים שיש בהם ירחים ואין בהם שנים הוי אומר אלו ירחי לידה

- more over

L) Babylonian Talmud, Niddah 30b - And there is no time in which a person enjoys greater happiness than in those days [within the womb]— even as it is said in Scripture: “Would that I were as the months of old, as in the days when God watched over me” [Job 29:2]. Now which are the “days” that make up “months,” but do not constitute years? Those are the months of pregnancy.

ומלמדין אותו כל התורה כולה שנאמר ויורני ויאמר לי יתמד דברי לבך שמור מצותי וחיה . . . וכיון שבא לאויר העולם בא מלאך וסטרו על פיו ומשכחו כל התורה כולה שנאמר לפתח חטאת רובץ

[And in addition to the fetus being provided for in all the aforementioned ways during its time in the womb,] **it is also taught all the Torah in its entirety**— even as it is said in Scripture: “And He taught me, instructing me: ‘Let your heart hold fast My words; keep My commandments and live’ [Proverbs 14:4]. But once it comes out into the air of the world, an angel approaches and slaps it on its mouth, **causing it to forget the entire Torah in its entirety**— even as it is said in Scripture: “Sin crouches at the door” [Genesis 4:7].

ואינו יוצא משם עד שמשביעין אותו

It does not emerge from there before it is made to take an oath

ומה היא השבועה שמשביעין אותו **תהי צדיק ואל תהי רשע** ואפילו כל העולם כולו אומרים לך צדיק אתה היה בעיניך כרשע והוי יודע שהקב"ה טהור ומשרתיו טהורים **ונשמה שנתן בך טהורה היא**

What is the nature of the oath that it is made to take? **“Be righteous, and be never wicked;** and even if all the world tells you, ‘You are righteous,’ regard yourself as one flawed and imperfect. Always bear in mind that the Holy One, blessed be He, is pure, that his ministers are pure and that **the soul which He gave you is pure.**”

Morning Liturgy - Birkot haShachar

אֱלֹהֵי, נִשְׁמָה שְׁנַתָּת בִּי טְהוֹרָה
הִיא

My God, the soul You have im-
planted within me is pure.
אֲתָה בְּרָאֲתָהּ, אֲתָה יִצְרָתָהּ, אֲתָה
נִפְחַתָּהּ בִּי, וְאֲתָה מְשַׁמְרָהּ בְּקִרְבִּי,
וְאֲתָה עֲתִיד לְטַלְּהָ מִמֶּנִּי,
וְלְהַחְזִירָהּ בִּי לְעֵתִיד לְבוֹא

You created it; You formed it;
You breathed it into me; You
preserve it within me; and You
are destined both to recover it
from me, and to restore it within
me in the future to come.

Eisav in the Genesis text (and beyond) as faithful and loyal:

- 25:28 - **honors his father**, by furnishing Isaac with fresh game meat.
- 27:5 - **honors his father**, by going out in response to a specific request for game.
- 27:31 - **honors his father**, by dressing and preparing the game as Isaac likes it.
- 27:38 - **seeks his father's approval** and blessing.
- 28:8 - **seeks his parents' approval**, by marrying within the family circle.
- 33:4 - **facilitates peace** by reconciling with the brother who had wronged him.
- 35:29 - **honors his father and supports his brother** at Isaac's burial.
- 36:6ff - **honors his father's will, and promotes his brother's interests**, by relinquishing claim to Canaan and relocating his family elsewhere.

- continued

M) Moses Chayim Efrayim of Sudilkof (17?-1800), *Simchat YisraEil* - We find that when the twin sons of Isaac and Rivkah were born, the Torah says of the elder

וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ עִשָׂו

they [3rd-person plural] called his name “Eisav” [Genesis 25:25].

Now this verb ק-ר-ק *qara* “calling” signifies “drawing towards oneself” and “becoming attracted by and attached to.” **Eisav, who stands for falsehood and evil conduct and unworthy living**, attracted a significant number of equally unworthy people— as evidenced by the fact that, as the Torah bears testimony, **many** came to “name” him.

But of the younger twin that followed him, the Torah declares

וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ יַעֲקֹב

he [3rd-person singular] called his name “Ya’akov” [*loc. cit.*].

Jacob, **who stands for truth and self-restraint and purity of life, did not attract such a quantity of advocates and bystanders.** It remained for him to be named by **the one person** who understood his true worth, and who was himself drawn to truth and morality.

N) Menachem-Mendel Morgenstern of Kotzk (1787–1859) -

Eisav showed his loyalty to his father Isaac by **leaving his sidelocks untrimmed, and by enwrapping himself in a tallit and wearing t’fillin** while leading morning worship services. But for Eisav these rote gestures of filial loyalty were predominantly an exercise of his prerogatives as the first-born son.

Jacob, on the other hand, performed the same religious duties with love as a humble and sincere gesture of commitment to God— for which Eisav despised him.



O) Ellen Frankel (1951-), *Five Books of Miriam: A Woman’s Commentary on the Torah* -

OUR DAUGHTERS ASK: For most of our history, we’ve lived as an alien minority among a larger host culture. And we always face the same dilemma: How can we maintain our separate identity so we won’t be swallowed up by the people all around us? The issue usually comes to a head over the question: Whom are we allowed to marry? But in the case of Abraham’s clan, who could they marry, when theirs was the only Jewish family?

SARAH THE ANCIENT ONE ANSWERS:

Abraham solved the problem by importing a kinswoman for our son. And Jacob also turned to that branch of our family to find a wife. But Eisav, like his uncle Yishma’Eil before him, “married out,” choosing two Hittite women. . . “and they were a source of bitterness to Isaac and Rivkah” [Genesis 26:35].

HAGAR THE STRANGER PROTESTS:

But Eisav didn’t understand the rules by which his family played! For when his parents sent Jacob off to Padan-Aram to find a wife from among his mother’s family, Eisav “realizing that the Canaanite women displeased his father” [28:8] countered by marrying as his third wife a kinswoman from his uncle Yishma’Eil’s family, Mahalat, the daughter of Yishma’Eil and his Egyptian wife. By so doing **he hoped to win back his parents’ blessing.**

LILITH ADDS:

The deck was stacked against him from the beginning!

- more over

OUR BUBBEHS OBSERVE: The Torah's silence about this match should speak for itself.

OUR DAUGHTERS ASK: **Does Rivkah love Eisav?** From her actions, it seems that she doesn't. After all, the Torah tells us "Rivkah loved Jacob," whereas "Isaac loved Eisav" [25:28]. And even though Eisav's marriage to two Hittite women embittered both his parents, it's Rivkah, not Isaac, who insists that Jacob be sent away to marry one of his relatives, saying: "I am disgusted with my life because of these Hittite women" [27:46]. And of course the most damning evidence of all is Rivkah's act of betrayal of both Isaac and Eisav in order to grab the birthright for her favored younger son Jacob. **Are these the actions of a mother who loves her children equally?**

RIVKAH ANSWERS: Didn't you hear me cry out when I urged Jacob into exile to escape Eisav's revenge: "Why should I lose you both in one day" [27:45]? **How clearly I understood what a high price I'd pay for my actions: losing Eisav's love in exchange for Jacob's blessing.** From the moment that God told me the destiny awaiting my two sons, while they were still struggling in my womb—"the greater shall be servant to the younger" [25:23]—I devoted myself to forcing that blessing from Isaac's lips. But when I finally succeeded— when at last



I heard Isaac tell Jacob "be master over your brother, and let your mother's sons bow to you" [25:28]— **I'd also lost.** Jacob's curse was now upon me, just as I'd set it up [ref. 27:13]. And for the next twenty years, I suffered Eisav's revenge: my beloved Jacob's absence.

Jacob's Departure
by Rodolfo Amoedo, 1884