

א שטיקל תורה A LITTLE SLICE OF TORAH

פון פרשת דער וואָך FROM THE WEEKLY PORTION

November 30, 2024



בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלֶּךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְעֲסוֹק בְּדַבְרֵי תוֹרָה:

“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 25:24-34

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 Ya'aqov as the founder of the Israelite people.*

Content: *This week's portion features the ultimate origin-story, depicting the birth of our forebear Ya'aqov— founder of the nation of Israel— securing primacy over his older twin brother, Eisav.*

25:24] - When it was time for [Rivqah] to give birth was at hand, there were twins in her womb. [25:25] - The first one emerged red, like a hairy mantle all over; so they named him Eisav [= “Shaggy”].

25:26] - Then his brother emerged, holding on to the heel of Eisav; so his name was called Ya'aqov [= “Heel-grabber; usurper”]. Isaac was sixty years old when they were born.

25:27] - When the boys grew up, Eisav became a skillful hunter, a rugged outdoorsman, while Ya'aqov was a mild-mannered herdsman. [25:28] - Isaac favored Eisav, who put game in his mouth, whereas Rivqah favored Ya'aqov.

25:29] - One day, Ya'aqov was cooking up a stew when Eisav came in exhausted from the field. [25:30] - Eisav said to Ya'aqov: “Pour me out some of that red, red stuff, for I am famished.” (Which is why [the nation he founded] is named Edom [= “Red”]).

וַיִּמְלֹאוּ יָמֶיהָ לְלֶדֶת וְהָיָה תוֹמָם
בְּבִטְנָהּ וַיֵּצֵא הָרֵאשׁוֹן אֶדְמוֹנִי כֶּלֶם
כְּאֶדְרָת שַׁעַר וַיִּקְרְאוּ שְׁמוֹ עֵשָׂו

וְאַחֲרָיו כֵּן יָצָא אָחִיו וַיִּדּוּ אַחֲזָתוֹ
בְּעֵקֶב עֵשָׂו וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ יַעֲקֹב
וַיִּצְחַק בֵּן שָׁשִׁים שָׁנָה בְּלֶדֶת אֹתָם

וַיִּגְדְּלוּ הַנְּעָרִים וַיְהִי עֵשָׂו אִישׁ יָדָע
צִיד אִישׁ שֵׂדָה וַיַּעֲקֹב אִישׁ תָּם יֹשֵׁב
אֲהָלִים וַיִּאָּהֵב יִצְחָק אֶת עֵשָׂו כִּי
צִיד בְּפִיו וְרִבְקָה אֲהָבָת אֶת יַעֲקֹב

וַיִּזַּד יַעֲקֹב נָזִיד וַיָּבֵא עֵשָׂו מִן
הַשֵּׂדָה וְהוּא עֵיף וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו אֶל
יַעֲקֹב הֲלֵעִיטָנִי נָא מִן הָאֲדָמָה
הָאֲדָמָה הִזָּה כִּי עֵיף אָנֹכִי עַל כֵּן
קָרָא שְׁמוֹ אֲדָמָה

- more over

25:31] - Ya'aqov said, "First sell me your first-born status." [25:32] - And Eisav said, "Hey, I am about to die, here— so what use to me is my first-born status?"

וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב מְכֹרָה כִּי־אִם אֶת
בְּכֹרְתְךָ לִי וַיֹּאמֶר עֲשׂו הֲיֵנָה אֲנֹכִי
הוֹלֵךְ לָמוּת וְלָמָּה זֶה לִי בְּכֹרָה

25:33] - But Ya'aqov said, "Swear to me, nonetheless." So he swore to him, thereby **selling his first-born status** to Ya'aqov, [25:34] - after which Ya'aqov gave Eisav bread and lentil stew.

וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב הֲשָׁבְעָה לִי כִּי־אִם וַיִּשָּׁבַע
לוֹ וַיִּמְכֹּר אֶת בְּכֹרְתוֹ לְיַעֲקֹב וַיַּעֲקֹב
נָתַן לְעֲשׂו לֶחֶם וּנְזִיד עֲדָשִׁים

He ate;

וַיֹּאכַל

he drank;

וַיִּשְׁתֵּ

he got up;

וַיָּקָם

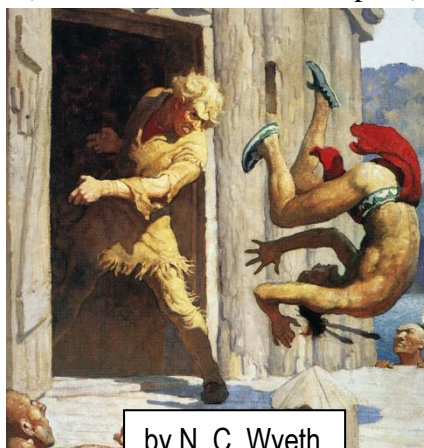
and he left—

וַיֵּלֶךְ

thereby did Eisav **spurn** the birthright.

וַיִּבֹז עֲשׂו אֶת הַבְּכֹרָה

A) James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851), *The Deerslayer* - His real name was Henry



by N. C. Wyeth

March but the appellation of Hurry Harry was far oftener applied to him than his proper designation, and not unfrequently he was termed Hurry Skurry, a nickname he had obtained from **a dashing, reckless offhand manner, and a physical restlessness that kept him constantly on the move.** . . . He wore everything in a careless, slovenly manner, as if he felt a noble scorn for the trifling accessories of dress and ornaments. Perhaps the peculiar effect of his fine form and great stature was increased rather than lessened, by **this unstudied and disdainful air of indifference.**

וְהוּא עָבַר לְפָנֵיהֶם וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַרְצָה שְׁבַע פְּעָמִים
עַד גִּשְׁתּוֹ עַד אָחִיו

B) Genesis 33:3-4 - [Ya'aqov himself] went out in front [of his wives and children], bowing low to the ground seven times until he came up to his brother.

וַיָּרַץ עֲשׂו לְקִרְאתוֹ

Meanwhile, Eisav **ran** up to him.

וַיַּחֲבֹקְהוּ

He **embraced** him;

וַיַּפֵּל עַל צְוֹאָרוֹ

he **fell** on his neck;

וַיִּשָּׁקְהוּ

he **kissed** him,

וַיִּבְכוּ

and they both wept.



**Detective Work:
Developing a
Personality Profile**

- Genesis 25:29 - Ya'aqov is cooking stew.
Genesis 25:30 - the stew in question is distinctly red in color.
Genesis 25:34 - the stew is made of [red] lentils.
RaSHI on 25:30 - lentils are served at the funeral feast, because they are round:

Just as a circle has no beginning or end, the bereaved may not open their mouths to question God's dispensations.

It is a comfort for the mourners to be reminded of the eventual reincarnation of the soul, so that "death is not the end."

- Midrash** Genesis Rabbah 53:14 - the twins' grandfather, Abraham, has just died.

Both to honor his illustrious ancestor and to solace his father Isaac, Ya'aqov is at home preparing the Meal of Condolence... whereas Abraham's other grandson, Eisav, goes afield hunting, as usual (and not for the funeral feast, which is always meatless).

- Genesis 21:5 - Abraham was 100 when Isaac was born.
Genesis 25:26 - Isaac is 60— hence Abraham was 160— when the twins were born.
Genesis 25:7 - Abraham attained the age of 175.

∴ **on this day in which...**

- the saintly family founder and Covenant-maker Abraham dies;
- the arrogant **Eisav** comes in tired from the hunt, demanding a bowl of stew; and
- the “mild-mannered” **Ya'aqov** demands the first-born status in exchange, **the twins are 15 years old.**

C) Divya Ya'aqov and Pallavi Suyog Uttekar, “How Does a 15-Year-Old Boy Typically Develop?” in *MedicineNet* -

At this age, a boy continues to grow in height. He eats a lot and is **almost always hungry**.

As his thought process becomes complex, by 15 he is starting to **make his own decisions; understanding the long-term effects** of his decisions; starting to **set a goal for the future**.

Searching for a sense of who he is, he **wants to be more independent and in control**. He is likely to **spend less time with family, and more time with friends or alone**; to be excited— and at the same time overwhelmed— **by the possibilities for his future**; to want to **argue more and talk less**.

- more over

וַיֶּאֱהָב יִצְחָק אֶת עֵשָׂו כִּי צִיד בְּפִיו
25:28 - Isaac favored Eisav, who put game in his mouth;
וַרְבֵּקָה אֶהְבֶּת אֶת יַעֲקֹב
Rivqah, however, favored Ya'aqov

וַיִּתְרַצְצוּ הַבְּנִים בְּקִרְבָּהּ וַתֹּאמֶר אִם כֵּן לָמָּה זֶה אֲנֹכִי
D) Genesis 25:22-24 - The children ran around within [Rivqah], to the point that she
cried out: “If it’s going to be like this, why should I go on living?!”

וַתֵּלֶךְ לְדַרְשׁ אֶת יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה לָהּ
So she went to inquire of The Eternal One. At which The Eternal One told her:

שְׁנֵי גוֹיִם בְּבֶטְנֶךָ וְשְׁנֵי לְאֻמִּים מִמֶּעֶיךָ יִפְרְדוּ
Two peoples are within your womb;
two nations will be separated out from your belly.

וְלֹא אֶם מְלֹאִם יֶאֱמָץ וְרַב יַעֲבֹד צָעִיר
Although one nation will be mightier than the other,
yet the **greater/larger/elder** shall be servant to the **lesser/smaller/younger**.

וַיִּמְלְאוּ יָמֶיהָ לֵלְדֹת וְהִנֵּה תוֹמִם בְּבֶטְנָהּ
Thus when her time came to bear there were, indeed, twins within her womb.

אֲרִישׁ בֶּן גַּמְלִיאֵל כָּל יְמֵי הַיִּיְתִי מִשְׁמַשׁ אֶת אָבִי וְלֹא שִׁמְשֵׁתִי אוֹתוֹ אֶחָד מִמָּאָה
שִׁשְׁמֵשׁ עָשׂוּ אֶת אָבִי

E) Midrash Genesis Rabbah 65:16 - [President of the Sanhedrin] Rabban Shim'on
ben-GamliEil declared: “I served my father all my life, and **yet I never served him one
hundredth so faithfully as Eisav served his father** [Isaac].

אֲנִי בִשְׁעָה שֶׁהֵייתִי מִשְׁמַשׁ אֶת אָבִי הֵייתִי מִשְׁמֹשׁ בְּבִגְדִים מְלוּכְלָכִין וּבִשְׁעָה
שֶׁהֵייתִי יוֹצֵא לְדֶרֶךְ הַיִּיְתִי יוֹצֵא בְּבִגְדִים נְקִיִּים
“I wore dirty garments when I would go in to attend to [my frail aged] father, yet upon going
out into the street I would go out well dressed in clean clothes.

אֲבָל עָשׂוּ בִשְׁעָה שֶׁהָיָה מִשְׁמַשׁ אֶת אָבִיו לֹא הָיָה מִשְׁמֹשׁוֹ אֶלֶּא בְּבִגְדֵי מַלְכוּת
אָמַר אֵין כְּבוֹדוֹ שֶׁל אָבִי לֵהֵיוֹת מִשְׁמֹשׁוֹ אֶלֶּא בְּבִגְדֵי מַלְכוּת
“And yet **Eisav**, when he went in to attend to his father, would not go in until he was attired
in regal garb, reasoning ‘**there is no honor to my father in my attendance upon him,
wearing anything less than regal garb!**’”—

הִיד אֲשֶׁר אֶתָּה בְּבֵית
even as it is written “[then Rivqah took some of her son **Eisav**’s clothes,] which were with her
in the house [and dressed her son **Ya'aqov** in them” - Genesis 27:15].

תַּנִּי אֲבִימִי בְּרִיָּה דְרַבִּי אַבְהוּ יֵשׁ מֵאֲכִיל לְאֲבִיו פְּסִיוֹנִי וְטוֹרְדוֹ מִן הָעוֹלָם
F) Babylonian Talmud, Qiddushin 31a-b - Avimi, son of Rabbi Abbahu, taught that
one who [is harsh and rude to his elders] **may serve his father** [the finest delicacies, such as]
roast pheasant, and yet be driven from the world,
וְיֵשׁ מִטַּחֲנֵינוּ בְּרִיחִים וּמִבִּיאוֹ לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבֵּא

whereas one who[– with regret, but for a higher purpose and with gentle encouragement–] puts his own father to grinding grain with the hand-mill earns himself eternal reward in The World To Come.

G) Chaim Mordechai Katz (1894-1964), Lil'mod uL'lameid - Although Rivqah recognized Ya'aqov's spiritual superiority to his older brother Eisav, Isaac lacked this insight. That is because **he was misled by Eisav's practice of kibbud-av** (honoring his father [by bringing him the venison he liked to eat]), and as a result **Isaac did not realize Eisav's true unworthy character**. He thought that Eisav was just as scrupulous and observing all the *mitzvahs* as he was in showing respect to his parents.

This illustrates the power of the *mitzvah* of *kibbud-av*— for it led even Isaac, a saintly prophet, **to believe that a person as degenerate as Eisav was an honorable person.**

מִי אֲפֹא הוּא הַצֵּד צִיד וַיִּבֶּא לִי - למה שני פעמים

H) Midrash Tanchuma, Toldot 11 - “Then who is it *ha-tzad tzayid* [that has trapped game] and brought it to me?” – [Genesis 27:33] - Why does this word “trapped” appear twice?

אלא אמר יצחק לעשו את הלכת לצוד

Because Isaac said to Eisav: “You went out to trap,

ואתה נוצדת

“yet it is you, yourself, who were trapped.”

ועתה שא נא כליך - שחזו מאני זינך שלא תאכילני נבילות וטריפות

I) Midrash Genesis Rabbah 65:13 - “Now, please take your *gear*” [27:13] signifies, “hone your hunting tools, so [they will cut true to render the game as kosher meat, and] you will not be feeding me carcasses and carrion.”

מאני זינך שלא תאכילני גזילות וחמסים

Why does he stipulate “your hunting weapons”? To signify: “so you will not feed me stolen or forcibly-taken items.”

תליך - אמר לו הרי הברכות תלויות למאן דחמי ליה למתברכא הוא מתברך

[When Isaac stipulated] “Your quiver [*tel-y'cha*],” he was telling him: “The blessings are provisional [*t'luyot*]. **The one who is worthy to be blessed, is the one who will be blessed.**”

ד"א שא נא כליך זו בבל ואת הכלים הביא בית אוצר אלהיו

An alternate reading of the same verse: “Please take your *gear* [*keilecha*]” refers to **Babylon**— even as it is written: “The marauding Emperor of Babylon] brought the sacred vessels [*keilim*] into the treasure house of his god” [Daniel 1:2].

תליך זו מדי ויתלו את המן על העץ

“Your quiver [*tel-y'kha*]” refers to **the Persian Empire of the Medes**— even as it is written: “they hanged [*vayitlu*] Haman on the gibbet” [Esther 7:10].

קשתך זו יון שנאמר כי דרכתני לי יהודה קשת

“Your bow” refers to **the Greeks**, even as it is written: “for I bend Judah as My bow [against your children, O Ionians” - Zechariah 9:13].

וצא השדה - זו אדום ארצה שעיר שדה **אדום**

“And go out to the field” refers to **Edom** [– even as it is written:] “to the land of Se’ir, the field of **Edom**” [Genesis 32:4].

J) Moshe Chaim Ephraim of Sudilkov (1748-1800), *Degel Machaneh Efrayim* - In his explication of the verse **וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ עִשָׂו** “**they called** his name ‘Eisav’ [Genesis 25:25, highlighting the use of the **plural** verb], RaSHI remarks:

הכל קראו לו כן
everyone called him that.

Eisav represents falsehood and deceit, while Ya’aqov was truth personified. So it is that we are told of **Eisav** that “**they called** his name **Eisav**”— because, unfortunately, **deceit attracts many followers**.

Of his younger brother **Ya’aqov**, however, the Biblical account states:

וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ יַעֲקֹב
so his name was called Ya’aqov.

In this case, the singular form of the verb serves as emphasis of the painful reality that **truth has a much smaller number of adherents than does falsehood**.

K) Alexander Zussia Friedman (1897-1943), *Avnei Ezel* -

וַיֹּאכַל וַיִּשֶׂת וַיִּקֶם וַיֵּלֶךְ
He ate; he drank; he got up; and he left—
וַיִּבֹז עֲשׂוֹ אֶת הַבְּכֹרָה
thereby did Eisav spurn the birthright.
[Genesis 25:34]

This is the way of **Eisav**: **he and his ilk are ready to give away their most sacred legacy for a little immediate gratification**. When they are hungry, they care little for their gloriously sacred birthright— Torah-study and worship— because their entire being is dominated by the **גשמייות gashmiyut** [= coarse physicality] of their craving for food and drink.

Not so **Ya’aqov** and those like him. Their senses are not governed by the bodily urges for food and drink; **they laboriously acquire their sacred birthright by industry and toil, and thereby gain predominance in matters of the spirit**.

At that point **Eisav** becomes angry, and complains that **Ya’aqov** has deceived him:

הֲכִי קָרָא שְׁמוֹ יַעֲקֹב וַיִּעֲקֹבֵנִי זֶה פְּעַמִּים הֲכִי קָרָא שְׁמוֹ יַעֲקֹב
וַיִּעֲקֹבֵנִי זֶה פְּעַמִּים אֶת בְּכֹרְתִי לָקַח וְהִנֵּה עִתָּה לָקַח בְּרַכְּתִי

“Is he not well named ‘the deceiver,’ for he has now outwitted me on two occasions: he already **took away** my **first-born right**, and now he has **taken away** my **blessing!**” [Genesis 27: 36].

To which we reply to him: “remember, O wicked **Eisav**, that **you, yourself, cast away your precious birthright by your own indolence and base cravings**, whereby **Ya’aqov** earned that same sacred legacy by means of honest toil. He gained the birthright not through deceit, but through moderation in every form of physical pleasure— including eating and drinking.”