

TOLDOT (*generations*)



Isaac Blessing Jacob (engraving by Gustave Doré from the 1865 *La Sainte Bible*)

Genesis 25:19 And these *are* the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham gave birth to **את־** Isaac: C-MATS

Question: Why does the Torah stress that Isaac was the son of Abraham? The Torah stresses that Abraham and Isaac were father and son. The cynics of that generation had been saying that Sarah must have become pregnant by Abimelech, since she and Abraham had been married for many decades without a child, but she had given birth only after being taken by the Philistine king. Therefore **יהוה** made Isaac's features so undeniably similar to Abraham's that even the scoffers had to admit that "it was indeed Abraham who begot Isaac!" (Tanchuma; Rashi).

20 Isaac was 40 years old when he took **את־** Rebekah as a wife, the daughter of Bethuel, the Syrian of Padan-aram and the **אחות** sister to Laban the Syrian. C-MATS

Question: How old was Isaac when he married Rebekah? 40

Question: Did Rebekah keep herself pure while she was in Aram? Although Rebekah's genealogy was well known, the Torah repeats it to emphasize her praise: Though she was the daughter and sister of wicked men, and she was surrounded by wicked people in Aram, she did not emulate their evil ways (Rashi).

21 Isaac prayed to יהוה for אשתו his wife because she was barren: and יהוה listened to Isaac and Rebekah אשתו his wife conceived. C-MATS

Question: Where did Isaac go to pray? Isaac and his wife rose up and went to the land of Mt. Moriah to pray there and to seek יהוה, and when they had reached that place Isaac stood up and prayed to יהוה on account of his wife. Isaac knew that he would have children because יהוה had promised Abraham his father that he would have many descendants, but he begged יהוה that the blessing be realized through the worthy woman who stood opposite him. (Jasher)

Question: Were all the matriarchs barren? The Matriarchs Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel were barren. The emergence of Israel is a miracle, for each new generation was a gift of יהוה to a mother who could not have given birth naturally. Their experience is a demonstration of the command that יהוה desires the prayers of the righteous (Yevamos 64a), whose pleas for Heavenly mercy and attempts at self-improvement show how human beings can raise themselves to spiritual heights.

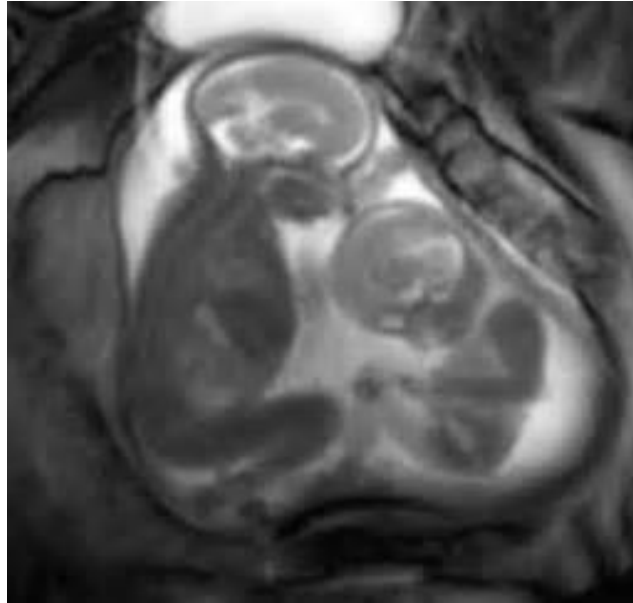
Question: How many years was Rebekah barren? Since Isaac was sixty when Rebekah gave birth (v. 26), Rebekah was barren for twenty years. Rebecca wanted children, but she had to wait a long time after she was married before she became a mother. Yet in the end, after years of hopeful prayers, she not only became a mother - but a foremother of the entire Israelite people! We can learn from this how sometimes the most worthwhile things don't come quickly and we should not give up hope.

Spiritual Exercise: Have you been waiting for something to happen for a long time? Have you been waiting for 20 years? יהוה refined His people by giving them a promise and then making them wait on Him to bring it to pass. This develops trust, patience, faithfulness, and long suffering-the fruits of the spirit. What are you impatiently waiting for? יהוה will move in His perfect timing. Trust in Him to do what is best for you.

Question: What spiritual benefit do you think someone could gain by not getting what he wanted immediately? He would develop patience for one thing, which is an invaluable tool for a happy life. Also, he would begin to gain faith in יהוה, as he saw how time and time again, despite unpromising beginnings, things worked out in the end.

Question: What about those instances when we never get a particular thing that we want? How should we react? First of all, as long as there is life, there is hope. So you can never really know how things will work out in the end. However, assuming that they don't, a person can try to realize that יהוה, who was fully aware of what the person wanted, knew that it ultimately was better for him not to have it. This attitude is not only true, but is a key to happiness.

22 And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it is going to be like this, why go on living? And she went to ask יהוה את־. C-MATS



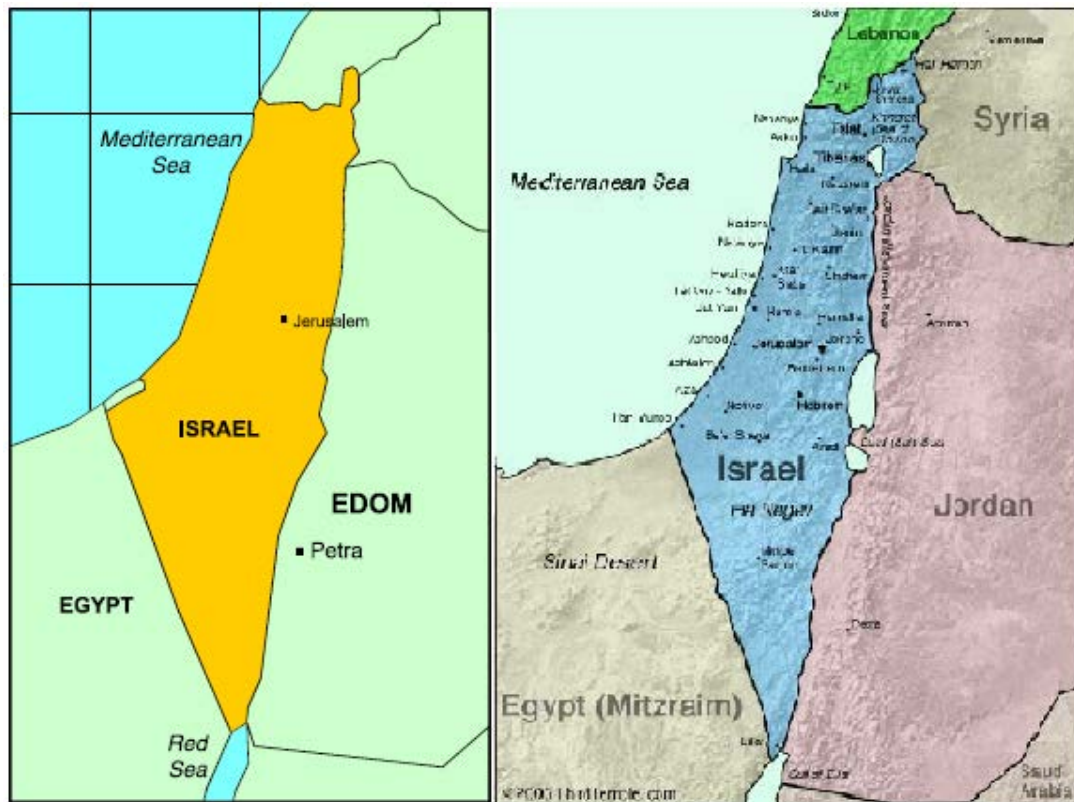
Two nations within her womb

23 And יהוה said to her, two nations *are* in your womb and two people will be rivals from their birth; and one people will be stronger than the other people; and the elder will serve the younger. C-MATS

Question: Why were the children struggling within her womb and giving her pain in her pregnancy? The two sons would be two separate nations-Israel and Edom-with irreconcilable conflict between them. From the womb they are separated, this one to his wickedness, and this one to his innocence. They will not be equal in greatness; when one rises, the other will fall. They will never be mighty at the same time. Every one of us is in the middle of a tug-of-war. There's one voice inside of us that's always telling us to act properly and do good ... and another voice that's telling us to do just the opposite. We feel being pulled in opposite directions because יהוה built within each of us two conflicting urges: the *yetzer ha-tov* (the urge to do good brought through His Spirit), and the *yetzer ha-ra* (the urge to do bad brought through the flesh). It is up to us to decide which of these two voices we're going to listen to. Jacob chose to listen to the voice to do well, while Esau listened to the other voice. From the very beginning of their lives, they struggled against each other. Their struggle also represents the tug-of-war we feel inside of us. When we feel this struggle, we shouldn't feel bad or confused since that is how we are made. We need to remember that יהוה wants us to choose good, but He knows it isn't always going to be easy.

Question: Having the *yetzer ha-ra* voice (the flesh) inside of us is ultimately for our benefit. How can that be? While it might seem that the *yetzer ha-ra* wants us to listen to it and thereby fail, really it wants us *not* to listen. יהוה planted it inside of us to be a sort of spiritual 'sparring partner' whose job it is to train and strengthen our ability to do good, by providing some resistance to our doing so.

Question: What's a constant struggle you often have? How can you overcome and have victory?



Israel (Jacob) and Edom (Esau)
Edom became today's Jordan

24 When it was time for her to deliver *there were* twins in her womb. **25** And the first came out red, all over like a hairy garment; and they called his name Esau (*red/hairy*). C-MATS

Question: What did Esau look like when he was born? Esau's name means completely developed, because he had as much hair as a child several years older (Rashi). His complexion was reddish and he was as hairy as a woolen garment. The redness of his complexion foreshadowed his murderous nature (Rashi), since there is no other reason for the Torah to have mentioned it (Mizrachi).

Question: Could Esau have controlled his personality? The young King David, too, was reddish, and Samuel feared that this might indicate a tendency toward bloodshed on his part. But יהוה reassured him, saying that David had **beautiful eyes** (I Samuel 16:12), meaning that he would kill only upon the will of יהוה, whereas Esau would kill whenever the mood moved him (Midrash). All character traits, even the basest, can be used for good. Man must harness his nature and not let his nature harness him. David and Esau had similar personalities, but David utilized it for good and became one of the greatest people who ever lived. Esau let his nature run rampant, and became the eternal symbol of evil.

Question: Although all study is valuable, Torah study is a qualitatively different experience. Why do you think this might be so? While all study imparts information, Torah study is actually the study of an instruction manual of successful living. It is timeless wisdom of incredible depth, as those who seriously delve in it will testify. The study of Torah brings a tremendous positive energy to the one studying it and the entire world.

Question: What benefits do you think a person gains from developing good study habits? Besides the obvious acquisition of information, a person also disciplines and trains his mind. The study habits we develop early in life stick with us for better or worse and determine to a large extent whether we will reach our greatest potential.

Question: Is it good to learn about everything and anything or are there some things we should avoid? A thirst and ability to learn is a great tool with an ability to lift us up, but like all tools, it must be used wisely. Learning about ideas and subjects that aren't appropriate and/or run contrary to Torah will bring us nothing positive and can really infuse us with negative energy and ideas.

26 And after that his brother came out and his hand אָחַז *holding* Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob (*heel-catcher*): and Isaac was 60 years old when Rebekah gave birth to אֶתָּם *them*. C-MATS

Question: What does Jacob's name mean? Jacob's name in Hebrew means to follow at the heel, assail, circumvent, supplant.



Rebekah and her twins

Question: Why was Jacob holding onto Esau's heel? Jacob held onto Esau lawfully, to restrain him. Jacob was formed from the first sperm and Esau from the second sperm. Go forth and learn from a tube that has a narrow opening. Insert two stones into it, one after the other. The one that entered first will emerge last, and the one that entered last will emerge first. The result is that Esau, who was formed last, emerged first, and Jacob, who was formed first emerged last, and Jacob came to restrain him so that Jacob should be the first to be born as he was the first to be formed, and he would open her womb and take the birthright by law.

27 The boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, an outdoorsman; and Jacob was a quiet man, who stayed in the tents. C-MATS

Question: How old was Jacob and Esau when Abraham died? They were 15 years old.

Question: What was the difference between Jacob and Esau? And the boys grew up to their fifteenth year, and they came amongst the society of men. Esau was a designing and deceitful man, and an expert hunter in the field, and Jacob was a man perfect and wise, dwelling in tents, feeding flocks, and learning the instructions of יהוה and the commands of his father and mother. (Jasher)

Question: Where did Jacob go when he was 18 years old? At that time Isaac sent his younger son Jacob to the house of Shem and Eber, and he learned the instructions of יהוה, and Jacob remained in the house of Shem and Eber until Shem died, and Esau his brother did not go, for he was not willing to go, and he remained in his father's house in the land of Canaan. Shem, the son of Noah, was six hundred years old at his death. (Jasher)

Question: Do you think all of a person's character traits are changeable, or are there really some we are 'stuck' with? Certainly each of us is predisposed to certain character traits - one person calmer, another more easily angered, etc. However, we are never 'stuck' with negative traits and can always improve. It takes commitment and motivation but with steady effort we can literally re-design ourselves into better, more perfected people.

Question: How do you think a person can go about changing a negative character trait? One tried and true way is by going out of our way to act the opposite of the negative trait (within reason and for a limited time). For instance, someone who feels he is too cheap and miserly can temporarily act even more generous and giving than the average person, etc. Eventually this can bring our character traits into their proper balance.

28 And loved Isaac את Esau, because he ate his venison: and Rebekah אהבת loved את Jacob. 29 Jacob cooked pottage: and Esau came from the field and he was faint. C-MATS

Question: Why was Jacob preparing the lentil stew? Some say that Abraham died that day and Jacob was preparing the stew as the traditional mourner's meal for his father (Bava Basra 16b) -- and on that very day, Esau's sinfulness became public knowledge. Therefore Abraham his grandfather did not see Esau's sinfulness and was not grieved over it.

Question: Where had Esau come from? Esau was not interested in the grieving of his family. Esau went into the field to hunt. And Nimrod king of Babel also frequently went with his mighty men to hunt in the field, and to walk about with his men in the cool of the day. And Nimrod was observing Esau all his days and a jealousy was formed in the heart of Nimrod against Esau. On a certain day Esau went in the field to hunt, and he found Nimrod walking in the wilderness with his two men. And all his mighty men and his people were with him in the wilderness, but they were at a distance from him, and they went from him in different directions to hunt, and Esau concealed himself from Nimrod, and he lied in wait for him in the wilderness. And Nimrod and his men that were with him did not know he was there. And Nimrod and two of his men that were with him came to the place where Esau was and Esau jumped suddenly from his hiding place, and drew his sword, and ran to Nimrod and cut off his head. And Esau fought a desperate fight with the two men that were with Nimrod, and killed them with his sword. And all the mighty men of Nimrod, who had left him to go to the wilderness to hunt, heard the cry at a distance, and they knew the voices of those two men, and they ran to know the cause of it, when they found their king and the two men that were with him lying dead in the wilderness. And when Esau saw the mighty men of Nimrod coming at a distance, he fled, and escaped; and Esau took the valuable garments of Nimrod, which Nimrod's father had bequeathed to Nimrod, and with which Nimrod prevailed over the whole land, and he ran and concealed them in his house. And Esau took those garments and ran into the city on account of Nimrod's men, and he came unto his father's house wearied and exhausted from fight, and he was ready to die through grief when he approached his brother Jacob and sat before him. (Jasher)

30 Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, please, some of that red *pottage*; because I *am* faint: therefore, his name was called Edom. C-MATS

Question: What is **red *pottage***? Lentils (Heb. *adashim*), a leguminous plant bearing seeds resembling small beans. The red pottage which Jacob prepared and for which Esau sold his birthright was made from them. (**Genesis 25:34**) There are three or four kinds of lentils, all of which are much esteemed in those countries where they are grown, viz., the south of Europe, Asia and north Africa. The red lentil is still a favorite article of food in the East. Lentil bread is eaten by the poor of Egypt. The lentil is much used with other pulse in Roman Catholic countries during Lent; and some are of opinion that from this usage the season derives its name. *Smith's Bible Dictionary*



Red lentil stew

Question: Why was his name changed? The word Edom means red. Esau was ruddy and sold his birthright for the sake of red food, just a pot of beans. Thus the name Edom is a term of hatred.

31 Jacob said, Sell me this day את־ your birthright. C-MATS

Question: Why did Jacob want to “purchase” the birthright so badly? יהוה's blessing to Abraham specified that only one of Isaac's children would be heir to the mission of Israel, but not to both.



The Mess of Pottage (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by James Tissot)

Question: Why did Jacob think that he deserved the birthright? The firstborn son prepared the burnt offering for יהוה, so Jacob said, “This wicked man does not deserve to sacrifice to יהוה.” (Esau would assist Isaac in presenting the burnt offering to יהוה.)

Question: Why does scripture say, “so despised Esau his את־ birthright”? (Genesis 25:34) Scripture attests to Esau’s wickedness, that he despised the service of יהוה and giving Him sacrifices.

Question: What did the birthright include? Esau's portion in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham had bought from the children of Heth for the possession of a burial ground, Esau also sold to Jacob, and Jacob bought all this from his brother Esau for value given. Jacob wrote this in a book, and he testified the same with witnesses, and he sealed it, and the book remained in the hands of Jacob. (Jasher)

Question: What happened after Nimrod died? And when Nimrod the son of Cush died, his men lifted him up and brought him in dismay, and buried him in his city, and all the days that Nimrod lived were two hundred and fifteen years and he died. And the days that Nimrod reigned upon the people of the land were one hundred and eighty-five years; and Nimrod died by the sword of Esau in shame and contempt, and the seed of Abraham caused his death as he had seen in his dream. And at the death of Nimrod his kingdom became divided into many divisions, and all those parts that Nimrod reigned over were restored to the respective kings of the land, who recovered them after the death of Nimrod, and all the people of the house of Nimrod were for a long time enslaved to all the other kings of the land. (Jasher)



Esau sells his birthright

32 Esau said, I am at the point of death: so what use is this birthright to me? C-MATS

Question: Why would a person ever hold himself back from doing something that he feels like? Often by holding back from doing one thing, we are able to gain something else that we want even more. If someone holds back from the short-term pleasure of eating fast food and sodas, that person can maintain his commitment to his diet, which in the long-term is more valuable. Another example would be someone who resists an urge to smoke because he would prefer having healthy lungs and the best chance of a long life. This is what it means to live like a soul.

Question: Does that mean that a person can never just 'go for it' and have some spur-of-the-moment fun? There is definitely a time and a place for spontaneous fun. But the main thing is that a person should keep his eyes open and calculate what is actually at stake, and whether or not it's really worth it. It's fine to have some fun, but a person has to always know how far he is willing to go.

Question: How is long-term thinking the sign of a spiritually developed person? We all have impulses, whether it is a desire for fast food, sodas, or anything else. It's a normal part of being human. However, besides these short-term, generally physical impulses, each of us has a deeper, spiritual essence with its own set of goals and desires. Some of these might include developing our minds, improving our character traits, getting along better with others, etc. Most often these spiritual goals take time before they yield their results and bring us pleasure. The more spiritually tuned in we are, the more real these things are to us, and the more likely we will be willing to invest ourselves in them even at the expense of some of our short-term desires.

Question: Did Esau have long-term thinking? Esau was only able to value what was in front of his eyes. But the Torah teaches us that the things that are truly valuable don't always come right away. If we can give up the need for immediate gratification often we get so much more in return.

Question: Certain things provide immediate gratification whereas others provide long-term gratification. Which is more valuable and why? Long-term gratification is more valuable, because the truly good things are worth waiting for and usually require hard work and patience to obtain.

Question: How can a person learn to recognize which is which? One pretty reliable indicator is that things providing immediate gratification may make us feel good at the beginning when we first partake of them, but then afterwards the good feeling leaves and we may even regret our action. In contrast, long-term gratification might not be as pleasurable right away, but afterwards we will feel very good about what we have done.

Question: There is a story of a man who while traveling, encounters a fork in the road with a sign pointing to the "Long way that's shorter", and the other to the "Short way that's longer". How can we understand these two ways? What do they teach us? Often we are tempted to take "shortcuts" in life. They seem like the "easy way out". We choose to escape the problems rather than face them. Or, to save time and energy, do things only "half-way", rather than the "right way". But his is the "short way that's longer" as in the end we don't really accomplish what we need to, and have to start all over again. The "long way that's shorter" is to do things right the first time. We face our problems and work them through. It may seem like more effort but in truth it's a much more productive approach.

Question: What do you think it means that a wise man is able to see what will develop out of his choices? It refers to an ability to look beyond the immediate results of a given decision, and project several steps into the future, to realize what that decision is likely to bring about.

Spiritual Exercise: Think of a choice that you are making today and look into the future and see if this choice is beneficial to you.

33 Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and Esau swore to him: and Esau sold אֶת his birthright to Jacob. 34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil pottage; and he ate and drank and rose up and went his way: so despised Esau *his* אֶת birthright. C-MATS

Question: What is a birthright? According to Torah, all sons receive a portion of the inheritance of their father, but the eldest son receives a double portion. He would also be the head of the family.

Question: What does **despise** mean? *To treat something as worthless or with contempt* Esau's willingness to sell his birthright was evidence that he considered it to be unimportant. He gave up in addition to his father's property, a promise to father many nations, be a blessing to other nations, and a close relationship with יְהוָה.

Question: Did Esau show remorse for his actions? Esau's had indifference to the spiritual privileges of which he had denuded himself. There is no regret, no sad feeling that he had prolonged his life at too high a cost. Esau's decision was impulsive and stemmed from years of disregarding spiritual things. He lived for the here and now and was not concerned about spiritual matters. He wanted instant gratification. Later when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. Even though he sought this blessing with tears, he could not change what he had done.

Spiritual Exercise: Seriously think through the choices you make. Did you ask יְהוָה to guide you? Will be this be a choice that you will later regret with many tears? Are you living for instant gratification? **SMALL CHOICES CAN HAVE DRASTIC CONSEQUENCES. YOU CAN LOSE GREAT BLESSINGS IF YOU DO NOT APPRECIATE THEM.**

Question: Did Jacob take advantage of his brother? Were his actions righteous? Jacob was cunning, and mean in the advantage he took of his brother, still he valued these privileges, and in the sequel he had his reward and his punishment. He was confirmed in the possession of the birthright, and became the progenitor of the chosen race, and of the Messiah; but henceforward his life was full of danger and difficulty. He had to flee from his brother's enmity, and was perpetually the victim of fraud and the most cruel deceit. But gradually his character ripened for good. He ceased to be a scheming, worldly-minded Jacob, and became an Israel, and in his pious old age we see a man full of trust and faith in God, unworldly and unselfish, and animated by tender and loving feeling. Purified from his early infirmities, and with all his better nature strengthened and sanctified by sorrow, he shows himself worthy of his second name, and becomes "a prince with God." *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers.*

Genesis 26:1 There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. Isaac went to Abimelech, king of the Philistines, in Gerar. 2 יְהוָה appeared to Isaac and said, Do not go down into Egypt; live in the land which I will show you. C-MATS

Question: Why did יהוה tell Isaac not to go to Egypt? Isaac had in his mind to go down to Egypt as his father had gone down in the days of the famine. יהוה appeared to him in a dream and said to him, *Do not go down into Egypt*. You are [as] a perfect burnt offering, and being outside the Promised Land is not fitting for you.

3 Live in **הָאָרֶץ** *this land* and I will be with you and will bless you; **אֶתְּךָ** *I will give to you and to your seed* **אֶתְּ** all these countries and I will perform **אֶתְּ** the oath which I swore to Abraham your father; 4 And I will multiply **אֶתְּ** your seed as the stars of heaven and will give to your seed **אֶתְּ** all these countries; and in your seed will all the nations of the earth be blessed, 5 **Because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My commandments, My statutes and My Torah.**
Prophecy Fulfilled-Gen.26:2-5 The Seed of Isaac promised as the Redeemer-Hebrews11:18.

Question: Why was Isaac not allowed to leave the Land? Isaac was the unblemished offering, and it did not suit him to reside outside the Land (Rashi). Mizrachi explains that when Isaac was placed on the altar, he became equal to an elevation-offering, a burnt-offering that is completely consumed on the Altar. Just as such an offering may not be removed from the Temple Courtyard, so was Isaac forbidden from leaving the sacred soil of the Land. יהוה said: "I will indicate to you from time to time where to establish residence, but for the time being, sojourn in this land" (Ramban). יהוה assured Isaac of His blessing and sufficient pasture, despite the famine (Sforno).



Isaac caresses his wife

6 Isaac lived in Gerar: 7 And the men of the place asked *him* about his wife; and Isaac said, *She is my sister*: because he was afraid to say, *she is my wife*; otherwise the men of the place might kill me for Rebekah; because she *was* beautiful to look upon. 8 And it came to pass, when Isaac had been there a long time that Abimelech, king of the Philistines, looked out of a window and saw Isaac caressing אֶת Rebekah אִשְׁתּוֹ *his wife*. 9 Abimelech called Isaac and said, *She is your wife*: so why *did* אַמְרַת *you say she is my sister*? Isaac said to him, Because if אַמְרַתִּי *I said otherwise אֶמְרַת I shall die on account of her*. 10 Abimelech said, What is זֶאת *this* you have done to us? Might have laid, one of the people with אֶת־ *your wife* and you would have brought guilt on us. 11 Warned Abimelech אֶת־ *all his people* saying, He who touches this man or his wife will certainly be put to death. C-MATS

Question: How did Abimelech charge his people? At that time Abimelech gave orders to all his princes and great men, and they took Isaac and Rebekah his wife and brought them before the king. And the king commanded that they should dress them in princely garments, and make them ride through the streets of the city, and proclaim before them throughout the land, saying, "This is the man and this is his wife; whoever touches this man or his wife shall surely die". And Isaac returned with his wife to the king's house, and יהוה was with Isaac and he continued to increase greatly and lacked nothing. And יהוה caused Isaac to find favor in the sight of Abimelech, and in the sight of all his subjects, and Abimelech acted well with Isaac, for Abimelech remembered the oath and the covenant that existed between his father and Abraham. (Jasher)

12 Then Isaac planted crops in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold: and יהוה blessed him. 13 Isaac became rich and prospered more and more and grew until he became very wealthy: 14 He had large flocks and herds and a large household: and the Philistines envied אֹתוֹ *him*. 15 For all the wells, which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them and filled them *with earth*. 16 Abimelech said to Isaac, Go away from us; because you are much mightier than we. C-MATS

Question: Why did the king ask Isaac to leave his country? Though I am king, I do not have in my home as many possessions as you. It is a disgrace to us that you should be wealthier than the king! (Ramban). Abimelech asked Isaac to leave the town where the nobles and ministers lived, for they were embarrassed by his superior wealth.

17 Isaac departed *from* there and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar and lived there. 18 And again Isaac dug אֶת־ *the wells of water*, which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father; *because* the Philistines had stopped them *up* after the death of Abraham: and he called the wells the same names that his father had called them. C-MATS

Question: Why did the Philistines stop up the wells? The Philistines claimed that these wells could become a menace because of enemy troops (Rashi), because in a country where water was in short supply, such wells might attract robbers, or an invading army could use them as its water supply.

19 Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found a well of spring water there. 20 The herdsmen of Gerar argued with Isaac's herdsmen saying, The water *is* ours: and Isaac called the name of the well Esek (*strife*), because they quarreled with him. 21 They dug another well and they quarreled over that one also: and Isaac called the name of it Sitnah (*opposition*). C-MATS

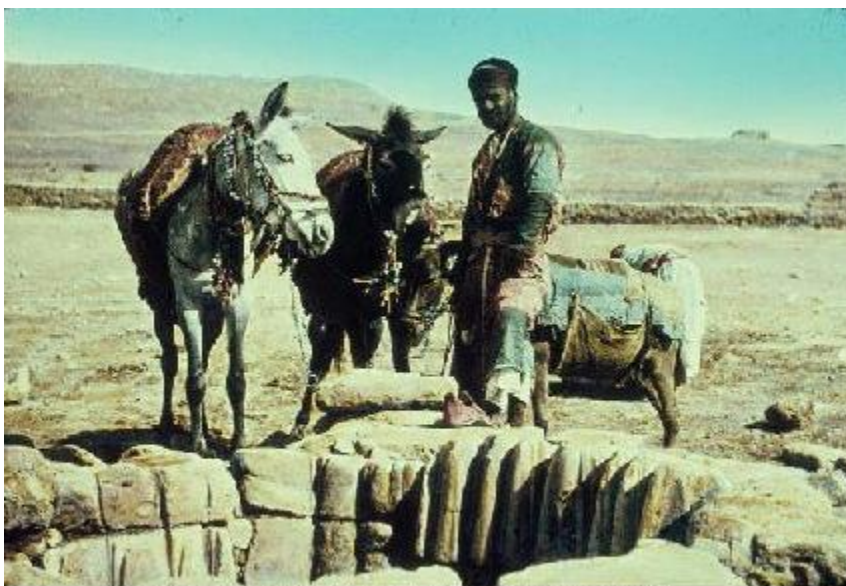
Question: Why did Isaac rename the wells with the same names that Abraham had given them? Isaac wanted to keep the memory of Abraham alive in the land. Isaac was motivated by respect for his father. Thus the Torah teaches that one should not deviate unnecessarily from his father's way (R' Bachya).



The herdsmen argue with Isaac

22 And Isaac moved from there and dug another well; and over that one they did not quarrel: And Isaac called the name of it Rehoboth (*room for all*); and he said, For now יהיה has made room for us and we will be fruitful in the land. C-MATS

Question: Isaac 'held his tongue' and didn't argue back with the herdsmen who had come to start a quarrel with him. People save themselves from all sorts of grief when they learn to hold their tongues. How is it possible to win an argument by losing it? Getting in the 'last word' (often with 'interest') may give a person a brief moment of pleasure, but avoiding arguments by holding our tongues will give us a calmer, happier life. Not only will people respect us more (yes, ironically it is the one who can hold back from answering back who appears strong), but people will like us more and even those who would bother us, won't start up with us when they realize they're not going to rile us up. So we come out a winner in many ways. **Proverbs 21:23 Watch your words and hold your tongue; you'll save yourself a lot of grief.**



"Abraham's Well at Beersheba" in the early 20th century
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23 And Isaac went up from there *to Beer-sheba*. **24** יהוה appeared to Isaac that night and said, I *am* the Elohim of Abraham your father: do not be afraid because I *am* **אתך** *with you* and will bless you and multiply **את** your seed for My servant Abraham's sake. **25** Isaac built an altar there and called upon the name of יהוה and he pitched his tent there: and there Isaac's servants dug a well. C-MATS

Question: Why did יהוה appear to Isaac? Isaac was afraid that the Philistines would launch an attack and try to kill him (Ramban), or that he would continue to lose assets because of their hatred (Sforno). In response, יהוה appeared to him and promised him protection.

Question: Why did Isaac build an altar? As Abraham had done (Genesis 12:7, 13:18), Isaac brought an offering to thank יהוה for His kindness and the prophecy of protection. Whenever יהוה appeared to one of the Patriarchs, they would usually build an altar to acknowledge His presence there.

26 Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath, *one of his friends* and Phichol, the chief captain of his army. **27** Isaac said to them, Why have **באתם** you come to me since **באתם** you hate **אתי** me **ואתם** and you have sent me away **מאתכם** from with you? C-MATS

Question: Why was Isaac angry with Abimelech? Abimelech ignored the treaty that he made with his father Abraham and stopped up all his wells.

28 And they said, We saw that יהוה was with you: and we said, Let there be an oath between us and you and let us make a covenant with you; **29** That you will do us no harm, since we have not touched you and we have done nothing to you but good and have sent you away in peace: **אתה** you now *are* blessed of יהוה. **30** Isaac made them a feast and they ate and drank. C-MATS

Question: Why did Isaac make them a feast? Since gentlemen partake of a meal after concluding a transaction, Isaac prepared the feast to consummate the mutual acceptance of the treaty.



Isaac and Abimelech Swear an Oath of Friendship to Each Other

31 And they rose up early in the morning and swore one to another: and Isaac sent them away and they departed **אָהָרָא** from him in peace. **32** And it came to pass the same day that Isaac's servants came and told him about the well, which they had dug and said to him, We have found water. **33** And Isaac called **אֶתָּהּ** it (her) Shebah: therefore, the name of the city is Beer-sheba to this day. **34** Esau was 40 years old when he took as wives **אֶתָּהּ** Judith the daughter of Beeri (fountain), the Hittite **אֶתָּהּ** and Bashemath (fragrance), the daughter of Elon (oak-grove), the Hittite: **35** Which were a source of grief to Isaac and to Rebekah. C-MATS

Question: Why did Esau marry at forty years old? When he was forty years old, he said: "My father married at forty; I, too, will do the same". The women he married were daughters of great lords among the Canaanites. He took upon himself the authority, and pretended to have dominion over his own marriages, without so much as asking the advice of his father. If Isaac had been the arbitrator of the marriages, he would not have given him permission to marry these women, because he was not pleased with contracting any alliance with the people of that country. Since he did not want to upset his son, he did not command him to put away these wives, but he decided to be silent.

Question: Isaac decided to remain silent when Esau married Canaanite women. What is the *sin of silence*? There are sins of omission just as there are sins of commission. What we don't do is equally important to what we do. When we know we should do something but fail to do it, that for us is sin. Remaining silent when we should rebuke someone is a sin. In Matthew 16:15 Yahshua said,

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between you and him: if he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear you, then take with you one or two more, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall not hear them, tell it to the assembly: but if he shall not hear the assembly, treat him as a heathen man or a publican. C-MATS

Question: How was Isaac affected by his silence? And the wives of Esau vexed and provoked Isaac and Rebekah with their works, for they did not walk in the ways of יהוה, but served their father's gods of wood and stone as their father had taught them, and they were more sinful than their father. And they went according to the evil desires of their hearts, and they sacrificed and burnt incense to the Balaam, and Isaac and Rebekah became weary of them.



Jacob deceives Isaac

Question: What is interesting about Chapter 27? This chapter is one of the most crucial and mystifying in the Torah -- crucial because the decision about which son was to receive the Patriarchal blessings would determine which would be יהוה's Chosen People, so that the eternal destinies of Jacob and Esau and their offspring were in the balance. And mystifying because it is hard to fathom how the righteous Isaac could be so adamant in choosing Esau and why Rebekah would resort to such a blatant deception to secure the blessings for Jacob.

Genesis 27:1 And it came to pass that when Isaac was old and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see. Isaac called **את** Esau, his son the eldest (*great one*) and said to him, My son and he said to him, Here am I. C-MATS

Question: What is important about verse 27:1? Concerning the life of Jacob and Esau, in Gen 25:28, both Jacob and Esau have **את** symbols in front of their names in the beginning of their life together but the LAST time we see the **את** symbol used in front of Esau's name is in Gen 27:1, on the day Isaac calls to Esau to ask him to hunt him some savory meat so that he (*Isaac*) may bless Esau as the first born. Once Jacob deceives Isaac and receives the first born blessing in Esau's place, we NEVER see the **את** symbol in front of Esau's name again, even though it is used another 86 times in the Tanakh but continues to be only in front of Jacob's name thereafter. In Malachi 1:2, where **יהוה** states He loves Jacob but in verse 3 **יהוה** states He HATES Esau. Again we see the **את** symbol only in front of Jacob's name and NOT before Esau's name. Verse 3 goes on to say that it will be **את** that brings judgment onto Esau's lands and his heritage (*descendants*). The reasoning why Esau has no **את** symbols after Gen 27:1 is explained by Moses in Gen 25:34 so despised Esau *his את birthright!* C-MATS

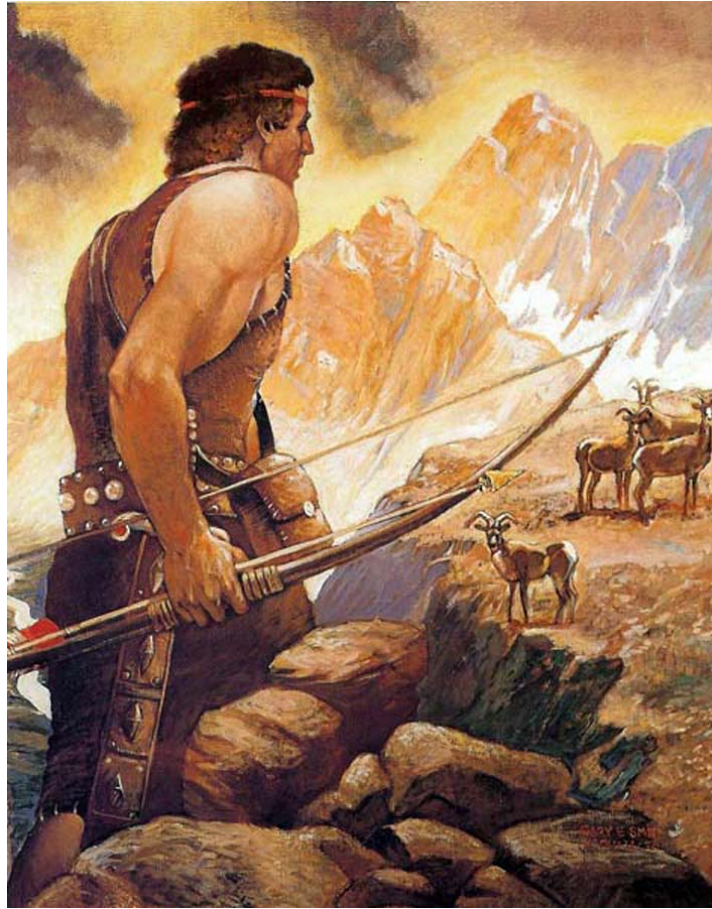
Question: How old was Isaac at this time? Isaac was 123 years old. Isaac had come within five years of the age at which his mother died, 127, and once man reaches such a milestone, one should begin to think that he might not exceed the age of whichever parent died first (Midrash).

Question: Why did Isaac call Esau to him? Isaac called Esau to him, and told him, that besides his blindness, and the disorder of his eyes, his very old age hindered him from his worship of **יהוה** [by sacrifice]; he bid him therefore to go out hunting, and when he had caught as much venison as he could, to prepare him a supper and assist him in making the sacrifice to **יהוה**.

Question: Did Isaac plan to give two sets of blessings, one for Esau and one for Jacob, each set suited to the needs and nature of its intended recipient? Isaac may have felt that the two brothers should both be parts of **יהוה's** nation: Jacob with the higher calling of Torah scholarship and spiritual superiority, and Esau with material success that he would use to support and assist Jacob. Had Esau been worthy, this could have happened, just as the tribe of Zebulun undertook to engage in commerce to support the Torah scholarship of Issachar. Rebekah, however, guided by Divine inspiration, knew that Esau was not entitled even to this.

Question: Why were Isaac's eyes dim? It was in punishment for Isaac's failure to restrain Esau's wickedness (Sforno). Isaac closed his eyes to Esau's sin, so **יהוה** closed his eyes. Providence caused his blindness so that Jacob might receive the blessing without Isaac realizing whom he was blessing (Tanchuma).

2 And Isaac said, Now I am old and I do not know the day of my death: **3** Now therefore, take your weapons, your quiver and your bow and go out to the field and hunt me *some* venison.
C-MATS



Esau hunts for venison

Question: Why did Isaac tell Esau to take his weapons (knife) with him? Sharpen your knife and slaughter the animal properly, so you can feed me an animal slaughtered kosher according to יהוה's law.

Question: What is venison in this verse? Venison is derived (through the French venaison) from the Latin venari, "to hunt," and means properly "the spoils of the chase." As, however, the object of the chase, paragraph excellence, was the deer, venison came to mean usually (as it invariably does in modern English) "deer's flesh." But in English Versions of the Bible this technical force seems not to be implied, for "venison" is used only for the two Hebrew words tsayidh (Genesis 25:28; 27:5), and tshedhah (Genesis 27:3), and both these words (from tsudh, "to hunt") mean simply "game" of any kosher kind. *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. 1915

4 And make me flavorful meat, which אהבתי *I love* and bring it to me, so that I may eat; that I may bless you before אמות *I shall die*. **5** Rebekah heard when Isaac spoke to Esau, his son. Esau went to the field to hunt for venison and to bring it. **6** Rebekah spoke to Jacob, her son, saying, I heard אתה your father speak to Esau your brother saying, **7** Bring me venison and make me flavorful meat, that I may eat and bless you before יהוה before my death. **8** Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command אתך *you*.

9 Go now to the flock and get me two good kids from the goats and I will make אֶתָם *them* flavorful meat for your father, such as he loves: 10 And you will bring *it* to your father, so that he may eat it and he may bless you before his death. 11 And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Esau my brother *is* a hairy man and I *am* a smooth man: 12 My father perhaps will feel me and I will seem to him as a deceiver; וְהִבֵּאתִי *and I will bring* a curse upon myself and not a blessing. C-MATS

Question: How was Jacob tested by his mother? For Jacob, this was the ultimate test-- a test of awesome proportions -- because Jacob personified truth and he was to receive the blessings that would be ratified by יהוה whose very seal is "Truth". But his mother was commanding him to secure those blessings by perpetrating a falsehood against his father. For Jacob to behave in such a way was totally foreign to his nature.

13 And his mother said to him, May your curse come on me, my son: only obey my voice and go get me *the kids*. 14 Jacob went and got *them* and brought *them* to his mother: and his mother made flavorful meat, such as his father loved. 15 And took Rebekah אֶתָּ the garments of Esau, her eldest son, which were אִתָּהּ *with her in* the house and put them on אֶתָּ Jacob, her younger son. C-MATS

Question: What garments did Rebekah give Jacob to wear? They were the precious garments that Esau stole from the great hunter Nimrod (Rashi). Esau would always wear these precious garments while he served his father (Rashbam).

16 אֶתָּ *And* the skins of the kids of the goats she put upon his hands and upon the smooth *part* of his neck: 17 And she gave אֶתָּ the flavorful meat אֶתָּ *and* the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob. 18 Jacob came to his father and said, My father: and Isaac said, Here am I; who *are* אַתָּה *you, my son?* C-MATS

Question: How did Jacob come to his father Isaac? Jacob came to Isaac with head bowed and in tears, so unhappy was he that he had to use deception, even though it was to gain what was truly his.

19 Jacob said to his father, I *am* Esau, your firstborn; I have done according as you told me: Arise, sit and eat of my venison, so you may bless me. 20 Isaac said to his son, How *is it* that you have found *it* so quickly, my son? And Jacob said, Because יהוה your Elohim brought *it* to me. 21 Isaac said to Jacob, Come near, please, that I may feel אֶתָּךְ *you, my son, whether you are* my son Esau or not. 22 Jacob went close to Isaac his father; and Isaac felt him and said, The voice *is* Jacob's voice, but the hands *are* the hands of Esau. C-MATS



Question: Did Isaac mean the sound of Jacob's voice was different? Isaac could not have meant the sound of the voice, since Jacob and Esau sounded so alike that Isaac could not tell them apart. Rather, his statement that the voice is Jacob's voice refers to Jacob's manner of speaking, inasmuch as Jacob spoke gently and invoked the name of Elohim. Jacob always spoke entreatingly: "Please rise," but Esau spoke harshly, "Let my father arise!" (Rashi).



23 And Isaac did not know him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him. 24 And Isaac said, *Are אַתָּה you my son Esau?* And he said, *I am.* 25 And Isaac said, *Bring it near to me and I will eat of my son's venison, so I may bless you.* Jacob brought it to him and he ate: and he brought him wine and he drank it. 26 And his father Isaac said to him, *Come near now and kiss me, my son.* 27 And Jacob came near and kissed him: and Isaac smelled *את־ the smell of his garments* and blessed him and said, *See the smell of my son is like the smell of a field which יְהוָה has blessed:* 28 Therefore, Elohim give you the dew of heavens and the fatness of the earth and plenty of corn and wine: 29 Let people 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 every one that curses you and blessed be he that blesses you.* C-MATS

Question: Why did Isaac bless Jacob if he had any doubt about who he was? Since the Divine Presence was resting upon him, Isaac knew that the person standing before him was worthy of the blessings.



30 And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing *את־ Jacob* and Jacob had barely gone out of the presence of Isaac his father, when Esau his brother came in from his hunting. 31 Esau also had made flavorful meat and brought it to his father and said to his father, *Let my father arise and eat of his son's venison, so you may bless me.*

32 Isaac his father said to him, Who **are אה** you? And Esau said, I *am* your son, your firstborn Esau. 33 Isaac trembled violently, *uncontrollable* and said, Who? Where *is* he that has taken venison and brought *it to* me and I have eaten all of it before you came and have blessed him? Yes and he will be blessed. 34 When heard Esau **אה** the words of his father he cried *with* a great and exceedingly bitter cry and said to his father, Bless me also, my father. 35 And Isaac said, Your brother came deceitfully and has taken away your blessing. 36 And Esau said, *Isn't* he rightly named Jacob because he has supplanted me these two times: **אה** my birthright he took away; and now he has taken away my blessing. And he said, Have you not reserved a blessing for me? C-MATS

Question: Did Jacob “take” away Esau’s birthright? Esau had the audacity to claim to his father's face that Jacob had "taken" his birthright, when in reality Esau himself sold it under oath and obviously despised it, as the Torah attests [25:34].

Discuss: Was Jacob named according to prophecy? Was he named Jacob because of the future, because he was destined to deceive Isaac or outwit Esau?

37 Isaac answered and said to Esau, Your master I have made him **אה** and all his brothers have I given to him for servants and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what will I do now for you, my son? 38 And Esau said to his father, Have you *but אה* one blessing, my father? Bless me, also, my father. And Esau lifted up his voice and wept. 39 Isaac his father answered and said to him, Your home will be away from the fatness of the earth and away from the dew of heavens from above. 40 And by your sword you will live **אה** and your brother, shall *you* serve; and it will come to pass when you break loose that you will break his yoke from off your neck. C-MATS

Question: What blessing did Isaac give to Esau? This blessing does not conflict with Jacob's, since יהוה's natural blessing is abundant enough for both of them. Furthermore, since Jacob was Abraham's heir, he would realize his blessing in Israel, while Esau would realize his in another land (Ramban).

Rom 9:6 I am not saying that the promise of יהוה has failed; for not all the people of Israel are the people of יהוה. 7 Nor are all of Abraham's descendants the children of יהוה. יהוה said to Abraham, "It is through Isaac that you will have the descendants I promised you." 8 This means that the children born in the usual way are not the children of יהוה; instead, the children born as a result of יהוה's promise are regarded as the true descendants. 9 For יהוה's promise was made in these words: "At the right time I will come back, and Sarah will have a son." 10 And this is not all. For Rebekah's two sons had the same father, our ancestor Isaac. 11 But in order that the choice of one son might be completely the result of יהוה's own purpose, יהוה said to her,

"The elder will serve the younger."(Genesis 25:23)

He said this before they were born, before they had done anything either good or bad; so יהוה's choice was based on his call, and not on anything they had done. 13 As the scripture says, "yet I loved **אה** Jacob, 3 And I hated Esau." (Malachi 1:2) C-MATS

Heb 11:20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future. 12:14 Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see יְהוָה. 15 See to it that no one misses the grace of יְהוָה and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. 16 See that no one is sexually immoral, or is unrighteous like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. 17 Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears. C-MATS

Question: Did this blessing force Esau to become a robber and plunder with his sword to provide his food? Jacob was blessed with food from the fatness of the earth and the dew of the heavens. Rather, Esau's blessing was that he would be victorious in war and survive his battles (Ramban). Since the Roman Empire, conqueror of the world, was descended from Esau, the fulfillment of this blessing is obvious (Abarbanel.) Serving his brother was also a blessing, because it is better to serve a brother than an alien conqueror (Radak).

Question: When did Esau have dominion over the descendants of Jacob and no longer served him? When the Israelites fell into sin and did not keep the Torah, the descendants of Esau "**broke his yoke from off your neck**" and no longer served the Israelites. Esau's descendants were those of the Roman Empire, which destroyed the Second Temple and exiled us from our land. This is in agreement with the prophecy given Rebekah while she was pregnant: Her two sons would not be able to coexist; when one rose to power, the other would decline (25:23).

41 And hated Esau אֶת־ Jacob because of the blessing which his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning *for* my father are at hand; then I will kill אֶת־ Jacob my brother. 42 And was told Rebekah אֶת־ the words of Esau, her elder son: and she sent for Jacob, her younger son and said to him, Your brother Esau comforts himself by *purposing* to kill you. 43 Now therefore, my son obey my voice; and arise, flee to Laban, my brother, in Haran; 44 And remain with him a few days until your brother's anger turns away. C-MATS

Question: How did Rebekah know Esau's plan for Jacob if Esau only thought it in his heart? יְהוָה told Rebekah what Esau was thinking in his heart.



Esau hated Jacob

Question: How does this hatred affect us today? The eternal rivalry between the brothers became intensified with Esau's determination to kill Jacob when the opportunity time came. It was a resolve that his descendants would attempt to carry out time after time to this very day, but יהוה continues to rescue us from their hand.

Question: Who are the descendants of Esau? Leading Orthodox Jewish Bible scholars believe the Palestinians are the descendants of Amalek, the grandson of Esau (Genesis 36:12)." The Palestinians live in the Gaza strip and make up more than 65 percent of Jordan's population. Why is that important? It is critically important because יהוה breathed an End of the Age prophecy against the "House of Esau" in Obadiah 15-18, one of the most startling prophecies in the Bible -- and one working its way forward toward fulfillment.

"But on Mount Zion [in Jerusalem] there shall be deliverance [for those who escape], and it shall be holy; and the house of Jacob shall possess its [own former] possessions. The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, but the house of Esau shall be stubble; they shall kindle and burn them and consume them, and there shall be no survivor of the house of Esau, for יהוה has spoken it." C-MATS

This conflict has escalated since the early 1970's when Yassir Arafat's terrorists murdered 11 Israeli athletes in the 1972 Olympics in Munich.

Question: Why did Esau want to wait until Isaac died before he killed Jacob? Esau's devotion to his father was intact and he did not wish to cause him grief (Rashi). Perhaps he feared that Isaac would curse him if he harmed Jacob, and the blessing would then turn into a curse (Ramban). Nevertheless, Rebekah feared for Jacob's life, even while Isaac was still alive. Perhaps she knew that Jacob's daily proximity would inflame Esau so much that he might lose control of himself and kill Jacob. Although Esau implied that he would not carry out his intention until Isaac died, Rebekah could not be sure when that would happen, so she ordered Jacob to flee before it was too late (Or HaChaim).

Question: Esau settled things with his fists and Jacob used his mouth to make peace. Does it take more strength to fight things out or to talk them out? There are different types of strength. Physical strength, the strength of our hands is one level. But there is a much higher level than physical strength called moral or spiritual strength. This higher level strength often calls upon us to refrain from the impulse to pick up our fists, but instead to put them down, and work out any conflicts we may have in a thoughtful and non-violent manner.



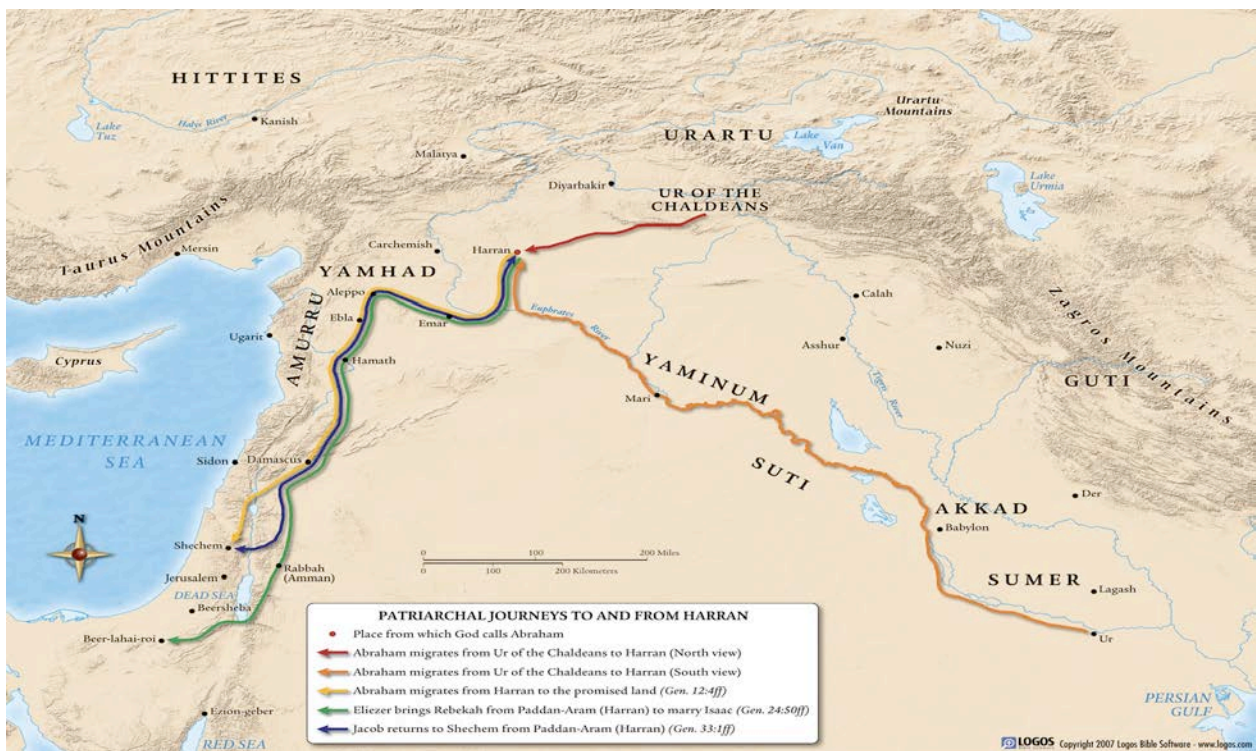
Question: If someone uses his mouth abusively to settle an argument, is this the way יהוה would want us to bring peace? Verbal violence is still violence. It is essentially using one's mouth as a fist, and is a very unspiritual way of dealing with conflict. It is not enough to use our mouths, but we have to use them properly, to heal and not to harm.

Question: You should 'make one's mouth and heart as one.' What does this mean, and how can we achieve this? This is a process of learning to be our genuine selves and to express ourselves sincerely, saying what we really mean. This internal consistency will help us to feel good about ourselves and draw the good feelings of others who sense that we're being straight with them.

Question: Sometimes what others say about us and how they treat us makes us lose our self-respect and confidence in ourselves. Esau would ridicule Jacob because of his hatred and jealousy. Jacob walked in the ways of Torah and remained confident in יהוה and did not lose his self-respect. Self-respect isn't dependent on what others say about you. No one can take away your self-respect, but you.

Question: Is there anything that can take away someone's self-respect? Our self-respect exists in proportion to how we walk in righteousness. If we lose sight of doing what is right, our self-respect can slip - but the good news is we can get it back by repenting and walking in the ways of Torah.

Question: Where did Laban live? Jacob resided in Haran with Laban (Genesis 30:43). Haran stood on the river Belik, a branch of the Euphrates, about 70 miles above where it joins that river in Upper Mesopotamia or Padan-aram, and about 600 miles northwest of Ur in a direct line. It was on the caravan route between the east and west.



45 Until your brother's anger turns away from you and he forgets אה what you have done to him: then I will send for you from there: why should I be deprived of you both in one day?

C-MATS

Question: Was Rebekah prophesying about the future? Esau died and was buried on the day Jacob was brought to burial in the Cave of Machpelah. Thus, it was not their death, but their burial that took place on the same day.

Question: What punishment came on Rebekah because she encouraged Jacob to deceive his father? Rebekah had innocently hoped that Esau's anger would subside after a while, but she was mistaken. Jacob was in exile for over twenty years, and she never saw him again.

46 Rebekah said to Isaac, I am sick of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob takes a wife from the daughters of Heth, like those who live here, will my life be worth living?

Question: Have you ever been "sick of your life"? Even Rebekah was sick of her life, because of Esau's pagan wives that lived with her.

Question: What should you do when you are "sick of your life"? We need to trust in יהוה especially when we are depressed because our future seems bleak. Consider elderly Naomi, who lost her husband and her two sons by death from her enemy. When she returned to Judah from Moab, she lamented: **Call me not Naomi, call me Mara (bitter); for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. 21 I went out full and יהוה has brought me home again empty; why call you me Naomi, seeing יהוה has testified against me and the Almighty has afflicted me? Ruth 1:20, 21.** Although Naomi was distressed, she kept on trusting in יהוה. And how things changed for her! Naomi's widowed daughter-in-law Ruth became the wife of Boaz and gave birth to a son. Naomi became the child's nurse, and the account says: **And the women said to Naomi, Blessed be יהוה, who has not left you this day without a near kinsman; and let his name be famous in Israel. 15 And he shall be to you a restorer of life and nourish את your old age, for your daughter-in-law, who loved you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him. 16 And took Naomi את the child and laid it in her bosom and became nurse to it. 17 And the women her neighbors gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed (serving): he is the father of Jesse, the father of David. Ruth 4:14-17** He was an ancestor of the Messiah. (Matt. 1:5, 6, 16) Like Naomi, we cannot be sure of how negative situations will turn out. Therefore, let us always trust in יהוה, just as we are admonished at **Proverbs 3:5 Trust in יהוה with all your heart and lean not upon your own understanding: 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths.** C-MATS

Question: Should you live your life in fear? Even when the memories pinch your heart, the pain of all your experience is what makes you the person you are now. And without your experience---you are an empty page, a blank notebook, a missing lyric. What makes you brave is your willingness to live through the challenging situations in your life and hold your head up high the next day. So don't live life in fear. Because you are stronger now, after all the pain has happened, than you ever were back before it started."

Genesis 28:1 Isaac called to Jacob and blessed אהוּ *him* and warned him and said to him, You will not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. 2 Arise go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father; and take a wife from there from the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother. 3 And El Shaddai bless אהוּ *you* and make you fruitful and multiply you, so that you may be a multitude of people; 4 And give you אהוּ *the* blessing of Abraham, to you and your descendants אהוּ *with you*; that you may inherit אהוּ *the* land you will travel through, which Elohim gave to Abraham. C-MATS

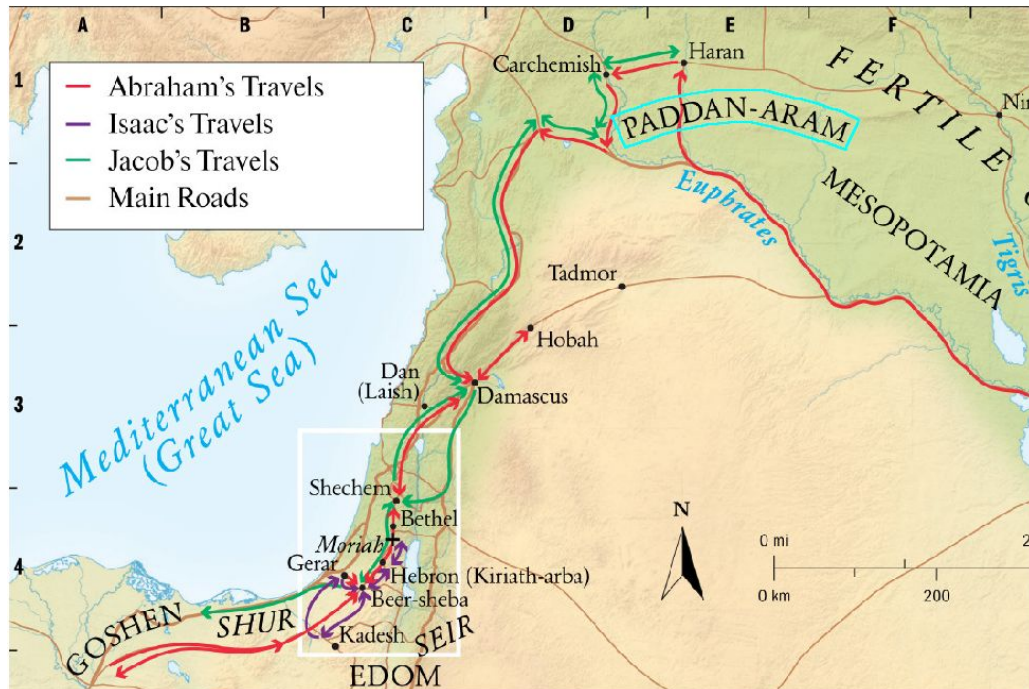
Question: Why did Isaac give Jacob the blessing of Abraham now? For the first time in the entire episode Isaac said explicitly that he was granting Jacob the "blessing of Abraham." The Patriarchs did not function as individuals; their mission in life required the partnership of a wife worthy to be a Hebrew Matriarch. This is clear in the relationship of Abraham and Sarah. So, too, only after Isaac married Rebekah did Abraham give him "everything" he had, which included all his blessings. Only now, therefore, when Jacob was going to find his proper match, could Isaac confer upon him the blessing of Abraham (R' Yosef Dov Soloveitchik).

Question: How does יהוה want a man to treat his wife since they do not function as individuals, but as one? Eph 5:25 **Husbands, love your wives, just as Yahusha loved the church and gave himself up for her** 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Yahusha does the church- 30 for we are members of his body. 31 Therefore, will leave a man אהוּ his father אהוּ and his mother and will cling to his wife: and they will be one flesh. (Genesis 2:24) 32 This is a profound mystery-but I am talking about Yahusha and the church. 33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. C-MATS

5 And Isaac sent away אהוּ Jacob: and he went to Padan-aram to Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother. C-MATS

Question: Where is Padan-aram? Padan Aram meaning *plain of Aram* was the name for the region around the northern-Syria city of Haran, located at the northernmost reach of the Euphrates River. Aram became the present day Syria. Two of modern-day Israel's most persistent enemies have been Syria and Iraq. Why is that so ironic? Abraham was born in what is today Iraq, and all but one of the Israelite patriarchs were born in what is today Syria.

Question: How did Isaac send Jacob away to Padan-aram? And Isaac finished commanding Jacob and blessing him, and he gave him many gifts, together with silver and gold, and he sent him away; and Jacob listened to his father and mother; he kissed them and arose and went to Padan-aram.



And when Jacob went away to go to Haran Esau called unto his son Eliphaz, and secretly spoke unto him, saying, "Now hurry, take thy sword in thy hand and pursue Jacob and pass before him in the road, and hide from him, and slay him with your sword in one of the mountains, and take all belonging to him and come back. And Eliphaz, the son of Esau, was an active man and expert with the bow as his father had taught him, and he was a noted hunter in the field and a valiant man. And Eliphaz did as his father had commanded him, and Eliphaz was at that time thirteen years old, and Eliphaz rose up and went and took ten of his mother's brothers with him and pursued Jacob. And he closely followed Jacob, and he hid from him in the border of the land of Canaan opposite to the city of Shechem. And Jacob saw Eliphaz and his men pursuing him, and Jacob stood still in the place, in which he was going, in order to know what was happening, and Eliphaz drew his sword and he went on advancing, he and his men, toward Jacob; and Jacob said unto them, "Why are you advancing on me with swords?" And Eliphaz came near to Jacob and he answered and said unto him, "My father commanded me to kill you, and now I will not deviate from the orders which my father gave me; and when Jacob saw that Esau had spoken to Eliphaz to kill him, Jacob then approached and pleaded with Eliphaz and his men, saying to him, "Behold all that I have which my father and mother gave unto me, take for yourselves and go from me, and do not slay me, and may this thing be accounted unto thee as righteousness. And יהוה caused Jacob to find favor in the sight of Eliphaz, the son of Esau, and his men, and they listened to Jacob, and they did not put him to death, and Eliphaz and his men took all belonging to Jacob together with the silver and gold that he had brought with him from Beersheba; they left him nothing. And Eliphaz and his men went away from him and they returned to Esau to Beersheba, and they told him all that had occurred to them with Jacob, and they gave him all that they had taken from Jacob. And Esau was angry with Eliphaz his son, and at his men that were with him, because they had not put Jacob to death. Esau took all the silver and gold, which Eliphaz had taken from Jacob and he put it in his house. (Jasher)

5 And sent away Isaac את־ Jacob: and he went to Padan-aram to Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother. 6 When saw Esau that had blessed Isaac את־ Jacob and sent אתו־ him away to Padan-aram to take a wife from there; and as Isaac blessed him אתו־ he gave him a warning saying, You will not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. 7 And Jacob obeyed his father and his mother and went to Padan-aram. 8 Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan did not please Isaac his father; 9 Then Esau went to Ishmael and took in addition to the wives he had, he took את־ Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the אֵהוּת sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife. C-MATS

Question: What does this verse tell us about Esau's character? This passage justifies the portrait of Esau as a selfish person, oblivious to all but his own desires. For twenty-three years he had permitted the behavior of his Canaanite wives to cause anguish to his parents, yet it seems to have dawned on him only now. Instead of divorcing them, however, he merely took another unsuitable wife in addition to them. Thus he proved that he had no feeling for the House of Abraham, and Rebekah's assessment of his complete unfitness for the future leadership of the nation was fully justified (R' Hirsch).

Do You know?

1. Isaac married Rebekah at ___ years old.
2. Rebekah was barren for ___ years.
3. יהוה told Rebecca she is carrying two ___ in her womb.
4. Rebekah had twins named ___ and ___.
5. Isaac loved ___ and Rebekah loved ___.
6. The older twin, born hairy and red-headed
7. Jacob held onto Esau's _____ as he was born.
8. Esau's favorite activity
9. ___ killed Nimrod and took his garments.
10. Esau sold his birthright for a pot of _____.
11. ___ made Jacob deceive his father to obtain Isaac's blessing.
12. Rebekah's brother
13. Jacob went to stay with ___ to escape his brother's anger
14. Isaac was sent away from King Abimelech because he was too _____.
15. Esau's _____ grieved Rebekah and Isaac

Answers:

1. 40
2. 20
3. Nations
4. Esau, Jacob
5. Esau. Jacob
6. Esau
7. heel
8. hunting
9. Esau
10. lentils
11. Rebekah
12. Laban
13. Laban
14. wealthy
15. wives

Haftorah

This week's *Haftorah* opens with a mention of the tremendous love יהוה harbors for the children of Jacob, and the retribution He will visit upon the children of Esau who persecuted their cousins. This follows the theme of this week's Torah reading, whose two protagonists are Jacob and Esau.

Malachi 1:1 The burden of the word of יהוה to Israel by Malachi.

2 I have loved you, said יהוה. Yet you say where have you loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? Said יהוה: yet I loved את־ Jacob,

3 And I hated Esau and laid את־ his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.

4 Even though Edom said, we are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; so said יהוה of hosts, they will build, but I will throw down; and they will call them, the border of wickedness and, the people *against* whom יהוה has indignation forever.

5 And your eyes will see and you will say, "יהוה will be magnified from the border of Israel.

6 A son honors *his* father and a servant his master: if then I *be* a father, where *is* My honor? And if I *be* a master, where *is* My fear? Said יהוה of hosts to you, O priests that despise My name and you say where have we despised your את־ name?

7 You offer polluted bread upon My altar; and you say where have we polluted you? In that you say, the table of יהוה *is* despised.

8 And if you offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And if you offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer *it* now to your governor; will he be pleased with you, or accept your person? Said יהוה of hosts.

9 And now, Please, beseech Elohim that he will be gracious to us: this has been by your means: will he regard your persons? Said יהוה of hosts.

10 Who *is there* even among you that would shut the doors for *no reason*? Neither do you kindle *fire on My altar* for no reason. I have no pleasure in you, said יהוה of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand.

11 For from the rising of the sun even to the going down of *the same My name will be great* among the nations (*gentiles*); and in every place incense *will be* offered to My name and a pure offering: for My name *will be* great among the heathen, said יהוה of hosts.

12 But you *have* profaned it, in that you say, the table of יהוה *is* polluted; and the fruit of it, *even his meat, is* despised.

13 You said also, see, what a burden it *is!* And you have sniffed at it, said יהוה of hosts; and you brought *that which was* torn and the lame and the sick; so you brought a **את** offering: should I accept this of your hand said יהוה?

14 But cursed *be* the deceiver, which has in his flock a male and vowed and sacrificed to יהוה a corrupt thing: for I *am* a great King, said יהוה of hosts and My name *is* fearful among the heathen.

Malachi 2:1 And now, O you priests, this commandment *is* for you.

2 If you will not hear and if you will not lay *it* to heart, to give glory to My name, said יהוה of hosts, I will even send upon you **את** a curse and I will curse **את** your blessings: indeed, I have cursed them *already*, because you do not lay *it* to heart.

3 See, I will corrupt your **את** seed and spread dung upon your faces, *even* the dung of your solemn feasts; and one will take you away with it.

4 And you will know that I have sent to you **את** commandment, this, *that* might be My covenant **את** with Levi, said יהוה of hosts.

5 My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him *for* the fear *wherewith* he feared Me and was afraid before My name.

6 The law of truth was in his mouth and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity and did turn many away from iniquity.

7 For the priest's lips should preserve knowledge and they should seek the Torah at his mouth: for he *is* the messenger of יהוה of hosts. C-MATS

Question: Is fighting the only way to solve a problem? When people get into a conflict, it may seem the only way out is to fight it out. But the Torah teaches us there is a better way. Unlike his warlike brother, Esau, our forefather Jacob's way was to use his mouth and try to talk things out and settle them peacefully whenever possible. We, his descendants, can learn from him that our real strength is often found not in our fists, but our words.

"HANDS DOWN"

"Don't forget - three o'clock sharp, in the park, and be ready to fight!" said Marc, with steam nearly coming out of his ears. "Don't worry," answered an equally angry looking Larry, "I'll be there! I'll see you then, unless you chicken out that, that is!" The two boys, despite being in the same class, were not exactly what you would call the best of friends. Everything one of them would do would just annoy the daylight out of the other. To say they rubbed each other the wrong way was an understatement. Trouble had been brewing between them for a long time now, and they were finally going to fight it out, once and for all. The 'rules' they made up were to fight bare-fisted, and each of them could bring along one friend to lend a hand. Marc knew just the guy to ask, and if he agreed to come, he was sure he would have the fight won, before it even started...

Big Jake Howard wasn't just big - he was HUGE. The kid just seemed to be made out of iron, and his hands looked like they were wearing baseball gloves, even when they weren't. He also happened to be one of Marc's best friends. He was sure that one look at Big Jake would be enough to sink Larry six feet into the ground. He walked over to Big Jake, who was just coming out of class. "Hey Marc, how's it going? I just learned something really interesting about Jacob and Esau." This was hardly the time for a history lesson, and Marc cut the boy off and started to tell him every good reason why Larry deserved to be crushed and pulverized. "So, will you come, buddy. Will you help me out?"

Big Jake scratched his head a moment, cracked his giant knuckles, and said, "If you need my help, then why not?" Marc couldn't stop smiling. With Big Jake at his side, it was all over before it even started. The two of them got to the park. Marc sneered when he saw Larry in the distance, and saw that he had brought with him a kid named 'Shark.' He was pretty tough kid, but compared to Jake, the 'Shark' was just a goldfish. The combatants eyed each other, each waiting for the other to make the first move. Finally Larry lifted his fist to hit Marc, but he had barely begun to move when Jake, with lightening speed, flashed out one of his giant hands and grabbed Larry by the collar, dangling him mid-air like a little puppy. Marc took it as his signal to make his move, but just as he raised his fist, he suddenly felt himself swinging high in the air. "What in the...?" He looked up and realized Jake had lifted him up with his other hand. Meanwhile, 'Shark' had swum off in the other direction, not waiting around to become the third layer in Big Jake's 'people sandwich.' The two swinging boys squirmed around for a couple of minutes and then gave up, realizing there was no way they were getting down until Jake *put* them down.

"Hey Jake," said Marc, "C'mon man, what's going on? Didn't you come here to help me settle things with this kid?" Jake smiled, "That's right. You guys are going to settle things right here and now." "So put us down and let us fight it out!" demanded Larry from his perch. Jake shook his big head. "Listen guys, I'm gonna put you down, but you're not going to fight it out. You're going to *talk* it out." With that, he plunked the two boys down on a bench, and gave them a look that made sure they would listen. "As I was saying to you before, Marc, today I learned about how Jacob, our forefather was different from Esau. Esau would settle things with his fists, but Jacob believed in using his mouth, and making peace by talking things out. Now we are Jacob's descendants - and even though I could easily let these big hands of mine do my talking, I don't, because it's not the right way. And neither should you. Now let's sit down and talk this thing out until it's solved. Deal?"

Marc looked at Larry, and Larry looked at Marc. They both looked at Jake and knew the big guy was right. With the big guy's help, the two of them started talking things out, and were surprised to realize that once they tried to really communicate, they could work out most of the problems between them without fighting. From then on, Larry and Marc got along much better, all thanks to the big guy with the strong hands who taught them a way to use their mouths, and be even stronger.

Question: Do you think that Jake's solution was a good one? Even though the boys felt like they had no choice but to fight, Jake showed them that they actually could work things out peacefully, by talking them out, and prevented them from hurting each other for no reason.

Question: Can problems always be settled by talking instead of fighting? There are very rare times, like when we are in genuine physical danger, when we may have no choice but to fight. We can almost always come to live peacefully with others if both sides are willing to talk it out.

Question: Does it take more strength to fight things out or to talk them out? There are different types of strength. Physical strength, the strength of our hands is one level. But there is a much higher level called moral or spiritual strength. This higher level strength often calls upon us to refrain from the impulse to pick up our fists, but instead to put them down, and work out any conflicts we may have in a thoughtful and non-violent manner.

Question: Would you say that quarreling and name calling falls under the category of Jacob's way of settling things, or Esau's? At first it might seem like Jacob's, since it involves using one's mouth instead of one's fists. However verbal violence is still violence. It is essentially using one's mouth as a fist, and is a very unspiritual way of dealing with conflict. It is not enough to use our mouths, but we have to use them properly, to heal and not to harm.

Spiritual Exercise: Work out a conflict without harsh words.

Resources: "Weekly Torah Portion" from www.aish.com

The Stone Edition of The Chumash

The Complete Messianic Aleph Tav Scriptures **C-MATS** www.AlephTavScriptures.com

The Book of Jashar. Joshua 10:13 So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies, as it is written in the Book of Jashar.