

**THE 14 HINENIS IS THE BIBLE:
OUR WILLINGNESS TO RESPOND TO OTHERS**

A. ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

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A.1. Genesis 22:1

Genesis 22

Vayera

וַיֵּצֵר גִּלְכָּה עַד-לָהּ וַיִּשְׁמְחֶנָּה וַיְשׁוּבָה אֲלֵיכֶם:
וַיִּקַּח אֲבִרְהָם אֶת-עֶצֶי קֵלְעָה וַיִּשֶׁם עַל-יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ
וַיִּקַּח בְּיָדוֹ אֶת-הָאֵשׁ וְאֶת-הַמֶּאֱכָלֹת וַיִּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם
יַחְדָּו: וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק אֶל-אֲבִרְהָם אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר אָבִי
וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִי בְנִי וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה הָאֵשׁ וְהָעֵצִים וַאֲנִי הִשָּׁה
לְעֵלָה: וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִרְהָם אֱלֹהִים יִרְאֶה-לּוֹ הִשָּׁה לְעֵלָה
בְּנִי וַיִּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו: וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל-הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר
אָמַר-לּוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּבְנוּ שָׁם אֲבִרְהָם אֶת-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
וַיַּעֲרֹךְ אֶת-הָעֵצִים וַיַּעֲקֹד אֶת-יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ וַיִּשֶׁם אֹתוֹ

וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַהֲאֱלֹהִים נִסָּה אֶת-
אֲבִרְהָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲבִרְהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִי: וַיֹּאמֶר
קַח-נָא אֶת-בְּנֶךָ אֶת-יִצְחָק אֲשֶׁר-אֶהְבֶּתָּ אֶת-יִצְחָק
וְלֶךְ-לָךְ אֶל-אֶרֶץ הַמֹּרְיָה וְקַעֲלֵהוּ שָׁם לְעֵלָה עַל-
אֶתֶר קְהָרִים אֲשֶׁר אָמַר אֱלֹהִים: וַיִּשְׁכֶּם אֲבִרְהָם
בַּבֶּקֶר וַיַּחֲבֹשׁ אֶת-חֲמֹרֹו וַיִּקַּח אֶת-שְׁנֵי נַעֲרָיו אֹתוֹ
וְאֶת יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ וַיִּבְקַע עֶצֶי עֲלָה וַיִּקֶּם וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל-
הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר-אָמַר-לּוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים: בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וַיֵּשֶׂא
אֲבִרְהָם אֶת-עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא אֶת-הַמָּקוֹם מֵרָחֵק: וַיֹּאמֶר
אֲבִרְהָם אֶל-נַעֲרָיו שְׁבִדְלָכֶם פֹּה עִם-הַחֲמֹר וְאֲנִי

[1] Some time afterward, God put Abraham to the test. He said to him, "Abraham," and he answered, "Here I am." 2] And He said, "Take your son, your favored one, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the heights which I will point out to you." 3] So early next morning, Abraham saddled his ass and took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. He split the wood for the burnt offering, and he set out for the place of which God had told him. 4] On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place from afar. 5] Then Abraham said to his servants, "You stay here with the ass. The boy and I will go up there; we will worship and we will return to you."

6] Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and put it on his son Isaac. He himself took the firestone and the knife; and the two walked off together. 7] Then Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!" And he answered, "Yes, my son." And he said, "Here are the firestone and the wood; but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?" 8] And Abraham said, "God will see to the sheep for His burnt offering, my son." And the two of them walked on together.

9] They arrived at the place of which God had told him. Abraham built an altar there; he laid out the wood; he bound his son Isaac; he laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.

22:1] Some time afterward. According to the Rabbis, Isaac was thirty-seven years old. However, the story should be read not in chronological order but rather as an unrelated unit; here Isaac is a mere boy.

/The Rabbis took the death of Sarah (Gen. 23:1) to be immediately related to the Akedah (see Gleanings to Gen. 23:1-20, "Why Sarah Died"); therefore, with Sarah dying at 127 years of age, Isaac would be 37, having been born when his mother was 90 [1].

2] Moriah. The original name is obscure and the actual location unknown. Subsequent biblical

tradition, however, has suggested that it refers to the Temple mount in Jerusalem (II Chron. 3:1) [2]. It is believed that the city's famed Dome of the Rock is built over the rock on which Abraham bound his son.

/The Vulgate relates Moriah to מֹרְיָה (vision); the Septuagint to "high" or "lofty"—two word plays rather than etymologies./

9] Note the staccato phrases that heighten the tension. Abraham seems to move "like a sleep-walker" [3].

A.1a - Genesis 12

נח; לך-לך

בראשית יא:יב

פ פ פ

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-אַבְרָם לֵךְ-לָךְ מֵאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וּמִמְלַכְתָּהּ
וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֵרָאָה: וְאָעֲשֶׂה לָּנִי
גְדוֹל וְנִבְרַכְךָ וְנִגְדַּלְתָּ שְׁמִי וְהָיָה בְּרָכָה: וְאַבְרָמָה
מִבְרַכְיָה וּמְקַלְלָה אָאָר וְנִבְרַכְךָ בְּךָ כָּל מִשְׁפַּחַת
הָאָדָמָה: וַיֵּלֶךְ אַבְרָם בְּאֶשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֵלָיו יְהוָה וַיֵּלֶךְ
אִתּוֹ לוֹט וְאַבְרָם בְּנֵי-חָמֶשׁ שָׁנִים וְשִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה בְּצֵאתוֹ
מִחָרָן: וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָם אֶת-שָׂרַי אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת-לוֹט בֶּן
אָחִיו וְאֶת-כָּל-רְכוּשָׁם אֲשֶׁר רָכְשׁוּ וְאֶת-הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר-
עִשְׂי בְּחָרָן וַיֵּצְאוּ לָלֶכֶת אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶרֶץ
כְּנָעַן: וַיֵּלֶךְ תֶּרַח הֹלִיד אֶת-אַבְרָם אֶת-
נְחוֹר וְאֶת-הָרָן וְהָרָן הֹלִיד אֶת-לוֹט: וַיָּמָת הָרָן עַל-
פְּנֵי תֶרַח אָבִיו בְּאֶרֶץ מִלְכָּהּ בְּאֹר כְּשָׂדִים: וַיִּקַּח
אַבְרָם וְנְחוֹר לָהֶם נָשִׁים שֵׁם אִשְׁת־אַבְרָם שָׂרַי וְשֵׁם
אִשְׁת־נְחוֹר מִלְכָּה בְּתִּי-הָרָן אֲבִימִלְכָּה וְאָבִי יִסְכָּה:
וַיְהִי שָׁרַי עֲקָרָה אֵין לָהּ וָלֵד: וַיִּקַּח תֶּרַח אֶת-
אַבְרָם בְּנוֹ וְאֶת-לוֹט בְּנֵי-הָרָן בְּרָבֻנוֹ וְאֵת שָׂרַי כַּלְתּוֹ
אִשְׁת־אַבְרָם בְּנוֹ וַיֵּצְאוּ אִתָּם מֵאֹר כְּשָׂדִים לָלֶכֶת
לְאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד-חָרָן וַיֵּשְׁבוּ שָׁם: וַיְהִי
יְמֵי-תֶרַח חֲמֵשׁ שָׁנִים וּמָאתַיִם שָׁנָה וַיָּמָת תֶּרַח
בְּחָרָן:

Haftarah Noach, p. 326

27] Now this is the line of Terah: Terah begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begot Lot. 28] Haran died in the lifetime of his father Terah, in his native land, Ur of the Chaldeans. 29] Abram and Nahor took to themselves wives, the name of Abram's wife being Sarai and that of Nahor's wife Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah. 30] Now Sarai was barren, she had no child.

31] Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and they set out together from Ur of the Chaldeans for the land of Canaan; but when they had come as far as Haran, they settled there. 32] The days of Terah came to 205 years; and Terah died in Haran.

[1] The LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2] I will make of you a great nation, / And I will bless you; / I will make your name great, / And you shall be a blessing. / 3] I will bless those who bless you / And curse him that curses you; / And all the families of the earth / Shall bless themselves by you." 4] Abram went forth as the LORD had commanded him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. 5] Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother's son Lot, and all the wealth that they had amassed, and the persons that they had acquired in Haran; and they set out for the land of Canaan. When they arrived in the land of

11:28] Ur. In southeastern Mesopotamia, near the mouth of the Euphrates at the Persian Gulf. / Or Ura in northern Syria, which is much closer to Haran [3]. /

12:1] Your native land. However, according to a different tradition, Ur, not Haran, was Abraham's native place (Gen. 11:26-28).

/ Harmonizers therefore render "land of your kindred."

2] A great nation. גוֹי (goy, nation); used in the Bible to refer to the descendants of Abraham as well as to other peoples.

3] Shall bless themselves. When they utter a blessing they will invoke Abraham as a model [4] (cf. Gen. 48:20). Others interpret this: "In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed," i.e., "you will be the cause of their blessings."

A. 4b - Nahmanides
on Genesis 22:1

RAMBAN- NAHMANIDES on Genesis 22:1

AND G-D TRIED ABRAHAM. The matter of "trial," *See Rambam's discussion of this problem, ibid., III, 24.*

In my opinion, is as follows: Since a man's deeds are at his absolute free command, to perform them or not to perform them at his will, on the part of one who is tried it is called "a trial." But on the part of the One, blessed be He, who tries the person, it is a command that the one being tested should bring forth the matter from the potential into actuality so that he may be rewarded for a good deed, not for a good thought alone.

Know further that *G-d trieth the righteous,*³⁶⁵ *Psalms 11:5.* *See also Bereshith Rabbah 34:2. "The Holy One, blessed be He, trieth only the righteous."* for knowing that the righteous will do His will, He desires to make him even more upright, and so He commands him to undertake a test, but He does not try the wicked, who would not obey. Thus all trials in the Torah are for the good of the one who is being tried.

וַהֲוֹעַר נִלְכָּה עֲרִכָּה וְשִׁמְחָה וְשׁוּבָה אֲלֵיכֶם:
וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָהָם אֶת־עִצֵּי הָעֵלֶה וַיִּשֶׂם עַל־יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ
וַיִּקַּח בְּיָדוֹ אֶת־הָאֵשׁ וְאֶת־הַמֶּאֱכָלֶת וַיֵּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם
יַחְדָּו: וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק אֶל־אַבְרָהָם אָבִי וַיֹּאמֶר אָבִי
וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִי בִנִּי וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה הָאֵשׁ וְהָעֵצִים וְאַיֵּה הֵשֶׁה
לְעֹלָה: וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהִים יִרְאֶה־לּוֹ הֵשֶׁה לְעֹלָה
בִּנִּי וַיֵּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו: וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר
אָמַר־לּוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּבֶן שָׁם אַבְרָהָם אֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
וַיַּעֲרֹךְ אֶת־הָעֵצִים וַיַּעֲלֵךְ אֶת־יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ וַיִּשֶׂם אוֹתוֹ

א וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וְהָאֱלֹהִים נִסָּה אֶת־
ב אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִי: וַיֹּאמֶר
קַח־נָא אֶת־בְּנֶךָ אֶת־יִצְחָק אֲשֶׁר־אֹהֲבָהּ אֶת־יִצְחָק
וְלֶךְ־לָךְ אֶל־אֶרֶץ הַמֹּרִיָּה וְהַעֲלֵהוּ שָׁם לְעֹלָה עַל־
י אֶתֶד הַהָרִים אֲשֶׁר אָמַר אֱלֹהִי: וַיִּשְׁכֶּם אַבְרָהָם
בְּבֶקֶר וַיַּחֲבֹשׁ אֶת־חֲמֹרֹו וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שְׁנֵי נַעֲרָיו אֹתוֹ
וְאֶת יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ וַיִּבְקַע עִצֵּי עֹלָה וַיִּקֶּם וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל־
ד הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־אָמַר־לּוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים: בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וַיֵּשֶׂא
ה אַבְרָהָם אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא אֶת־הַמָּקוֹם מֵרָחֹק: וַיֹּאמֶר
אַבְרָהָם אֶל־נַעֲרָיו שְׂבִרְלָכֶם פֹּה עִם־הַחֲמֹר וְאֲנִי

[1] Some time afterward, God put Abraham to the test. He said to him, "Abraham," and he answered, "Here I am." 2] And He said, "Take your son, your favored one, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the heights which I will point out to you." 3] So early next morning, Abraham saddled his ass and took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. He split the wood for the burnt offering, and he set out for the place of which God had told him. 4] On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place from afar. 5] Then Abraham said to his servants, "You stay here with the ass. The boy and I will go up there; we will worship and we will return to you."

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9] They arrived at the place of which God had told him. Abraham built an altar there; he laid out the wood; he bound his son Isaac; he laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.

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tradition, however, has suggested that it refers to the Temple mount in Jerusalem (II Chron. 3:1) [2]. It is believed that the city's famed Dome of the Rock is built over the rock on which Abraham bound his son.

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9] Note the staccato phrases that heighten the tension. Abraham seems to move "like a sleep-walker" [3].

A.2a. B.T. Sanhedrin 98a

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi **said to Elijah: When will the Messiah come?** Elijah **said to him: Go ask him.** Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi asked: **And where is he sitting?** Elijah said to him: **At the entrance of the city of Rome.** Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi asked him: **And what is his identifying sign** by means of which I can recognize him? Elijah answered: **He sits among the poor who suffer from illnesses. And all of them untie their bandages and tie them all at once, but the Messiah unties one bandage and ties one at a time. He says: Perhaps I will be needed to serve to bring about the redemption. Therefore, I will never tie more than one bandage, so that I will not be delayed.**

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi **went to the Messiah. He said to the Messiah: Greetings to you, my rabbi and my teacher.** The Messiah **said to him: Greetings to you, bar Leva'i.** Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi **said to him: When will the Master come?** The Messiah **said to him: Today.** Sometime later, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi **came to Elijah. Elijah said to him: What did the Messiah say to you?** He said to Elijah that the Messiah said: **Greetings [shalom] to you, bar Leva'i.** Elijah **said to him:** He thereby **guaranteed that you and your father will enter the World-to-Come, as he greeted you with shalom.** Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi **said to Elijah: The Messiah lied to me, as he said to me: I am coming today, and he did not come. Elijah said to him that this is what he said to you: He said that he will come "today, if you will listen to his voice" (Psalms 95:7).**

בראשית כב

וירא

על־המוֹפֶת מִפְעַל לַעֲצִים: וַיִּשְׁלַח אַבְרָהָם אֶת־
 יָדוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־הַמֶּאֱכָלֶת לִשְׁחֹט אֶת־בְּנוֹ: וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו
 מֵלֶאֱיָהּ יְהוָה מִדְּהַשְׁמַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אַבְרָהָם
 וַיֹּאמֶר הִנְנִי: וַיֹּאמֶר אֵל־תִּשְׁלַח יָדְךָ אֶל־הַנֶּעָר וְאֶל־
 תַּעֲשֵׂה לוֹ מֵאֻמָּה כִּי עֲתָה יָדַעְתִּי כִּי־רָא אֱלֹהִים
 אֶתָּה וְלֹא חֲשַׁכְתָּ אֶת־בְּנוֹת אֶת־חִידָךְ מִמֶּנִּי: וַיִּשָּׂא
 אַבְרָהָם אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא וְהִנֵּה־אֵיל אֲחֵר נֹאֲחַז בִּסְבָּךְ
 בְּקֶרְנוֹ וַיִּלֶּךְ אַבְרָהָם וַיִּקַּח אֶת־הָאֵיל וַיַּעֲלֵהוּ לַעֲלֹה
 תַּחַת בְּנוֹ: וַיִּקְרָא אַבְרָהָם שְׁם־הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא יְהוָה
 יִרְאָה אֲשֶׁר יֹאמַר הַיּוֹם בְּהָר יְהוָה יִרְאָה: וַיִּקְרָא

מֵלֶאֱיָהּ יְהוָה אֵל־אַבְרָהָם שְׁנֵית מִדְּהַשְׁמַיִם: וַיֹּאמֶר
 בְּנִי וְשָׁבַעְתִּי נֶאֱמַר יְהוָה כִּי־עַן אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ אֶת־הַדָּבָר
 הַזֶּה וְלֹא חֲשַׁכְתָּ אֶת־בְּנוֹת אֶת־חִידָךְ: כִּי־רָא
 אַבְרָהָם וְהָרְבִּית אַרְבֵּה אֶת־זֶרְעוֹ כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם
 וְכָחֹל אֲשֶׁר עַל־שֵׁפֶת הַיָּם וַיֵּרָשׁ וַיִּרְעָה אֶת שְׂעִיר
 אֵיבָיו: וְהַתְּבָרְכוּ בְּזֶרְעוֹ כָּל־גִּיּוֹן הָאָרֶץ עָקֹב
 אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעַת בְּקִלְיִ: וַיֵּשֶׁב אַבְרָהָם אֶל־עֵרְיוֹ וַיִּקְמוּ
 וַיִּלְכוּ יַחְדָּו אֶל־בְּאֵר שָׁבַע וַיֵּשֶׁב אַבְרָהָם בְּבֵאֵר
 שָׁבַע: פ
 וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַיֵּגַד לְאַבְרָהָם לֵאמֹר

[10] And Abraham picked up the knife to slay his son. [11] Then an angel of the LORD called to him from heaven: "Abraham! Abraham!" And he answered, "Here I am." [12] And he said, "Do not raise your hand against the boy, or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your favored one, from Me." [13] When Abraham looked up, his eye fell upon a ram, caught in the thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering in place of his son. [14] And Abraham named that site Adonai-yireh, whence the present saying, "On the mount of the LORD there is vision."

[15] The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, [16] and said, "By Myself I swear, the LORD declares: because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your favored one, [17] I will bestow My blessing upon you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sands on the seashore; and your descendants shall seize the gates of their foes. [18] All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants, because you have obeyed My command." [19] Abraham then returned to his servants, and they departed together for Beer-sheba; and Abraham stayed in Beer-sheba.

[20] Some time later, Abraham was told, "Milcah too has borne children to your brother

[13] *Ram.* The ram occupied an important place in ancient Israel's sacrificial cult (e.g., Lev. 5:15, 18; 19:21; Num. 5:8; 6:17). The image of a ram caught in the thicket was known in Ur of the Chaldees, where archeologists have found two Sumerian statues depicting the animal tied to a bush [4]. A similar substitutional offering is portrayed in Greek mythology [5].

The above translation is based, following ancient versions, on the reading אֵיל אֲחֵר (a ram),

while the Masoretic text has אַחֲרֵי (after or after-ward).

[14] *Adonai-yireh.* "The Lord will see," an allusion to verse 8.

There is vision. Another assonance: *Adonai yera-eh.*

[17] *Seize the gates of their foes.* Whereby they will possess the city.

[20] *Milcah too.* Like Sarah. The names listed represent twelve tribes or princes. They parallel the

7. AND THE ANGEL OF THE LORD CALLED UNTO HIM OUT OF HEAVEN, AND SAID: ABRAHAM, ABRAHAM (XXII, II). R. Hiyya taught: This is an expression of love and encouragement. R. Liezer said: [The repetition indicates that He spake] to him and to future generations: There is no generation which does not contain men like Abraham, and there is no generation which does not contain men like Jacob, Moses, and Samuel.¹

A.4. Genesis 27:1

תולדות

בראשית כו

וַיְהִי כִּי־זָקֵן יִצְחָק וַתִּכְהֶינּוּ עֵינָיו מִרְאֹת וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־
 עֶשָׂו בְּנוֹ הַגָּדֹל וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו בְּנִי וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו הִנְנִי:
 וַיֹּאמֶר הַנְּהִינָא וְקִנְיָתִי לֹא יִדְעָתִי יוֹם מוֹתִי: וַעֲתָה
 שְׂאֵנָא בְלִידָה תְלִידָה וְקִשְׁתְּךָ וְצֵד הַשָּׂדֶה וְצִוְדָה לִי
 צִידָה: וַעֲשֵׂה־לִּי מִטַּעֲמִים כַּאֲשֶׁר אֶהְבֵּתִי וְהִבִּיֵּאתָ
 לִי וְאֶכְלָה כַּעֲכוּר תִּבְרַכְךָ וּפְשִׁי בְטָרִם אֲמוֹת:
 וְרִבְקָה שָׁמְעַת בְּדַבָּר יִצְחָק אֶל־עֶשָׂו בְּנוֹ וַיֵּלֶךְ עֶשָׂו
 הַשָּׂדֶה לְצוּד צִיד לְהִבְיֹא: וְרִבְקָה אָמְרָה אֶל־
 יַעֲקֹב בְּנֶה לֹאֲמַר הִנֵּה שָׁמְעָתִי אֶת־אֲבִידָה מִדַּבָּר
 אֶל־עֶשָׂו אָחִידָה לֹאֲמַר: הִבִּיֵּאתָ לִי צִיד וַעֲשֵׂה־לִּי
 מִטַּעֲמִים וְאֶכְלָה וְאֶבְרַכְכָּה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לִפְנֵי מוֹתִי:
 וַעֲתָה בְנִי שָׁמַע בְּקֻלִּי לֹאֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצוּה אֲתָךְ: לֹד־
 נָא אֶל־הַצֹּאֵן וְקַח־לִּי מִשָּׁם שְׁנֵי גְדֵי עִזִּים טָבִים
 וְאֶעֱשֶׂה אֲתָם מִטַּעֲמִים לְאֲבִידָה כַּאֲשֶׁר אֶהְבֵּה: וְהִבִּיֵּאתָ
 לְאֲבִידָה וְאָכַל כַּעֲבָר אֲשֶׁר יִבְרַכְךָ לִפְנֵי מוֹתִי:
 וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל־רִבְקָה אִמּוֹ הֵן עֹשֶׂה אֲחִי אִישׁ שָׂעִר
 וְאֲנֹכִי אִישׁ חֲלָק: אוֹלֵי יִמְשְׁנִי אָבִי וְהִנֵּיתִי בְּעֵינָיו
 כַּמְתַּעֲתֵעַ וְהִבִּיֵּאתִי עָלַי קִלְלָה וְלֹא בִרְכָה: וְהֹאֲמַר
 לוֹ אִמּוֹ עָלַי קִלְלָתְךָ בְּנִי אֵךְ שָׁמַע בְּקֻלִּי וְלֹד־
 לִי: וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיִּקַּח וַיָּבֵא לְאִמּוֹ וַתַּעַשׂ אִמּוֹ מִטַּעֲמִים
 כַּאֲשֶׁר אֶהְבֵּה אָבִיו: וַתִּקַּח רִבְקָה אֶת־בְּגָדֵי עֶשָׂו בְּנֶה
 הַגָּדֹל הַחֲמֹדֹת אֲשֶׁר אֶתָּה בִּבְגֵית וּמִלְבָּשׁ אֶת־יַעֲקֹב

[1] When Isaac was old and his eyes were too dim to see, he called his older son Esau and said to him, "My son." He answered, "Here I am." 2] And he said, "I am old now, and I do not know how soon I may die. 3] Take your gear, your quiver and bow, and go out into the open and hunt me some game. 4] Then prepare a dish for me such as I like, and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you my innermost blessing before I die."

5] Rebekah had been listening as Isaac spoke to his son Esau. When Esau had gone out into the open to hunt game to bring home, 6] Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "I overheard your father speaking to your brother Esau, saying, 7] 'Bring me some game and prepare a dish for me to eat, that I may bless you, with the LORD's approval, before I die.' 8] Now, my son, listen carefully as I instruct you. 9] Go to the flock and fetch me two choice kids, and I will make of them a dish for your father, such as he likes. 10] Then take it to your father to eat, in order that he may bless you before he dies." 11] Jacob answered his mother Rebekah, "But my brother Esau is a hairy man and I am smooth-skinned. 12] If my father touches me, I shall appear to him as a trickster and bring upon myself a curse, not a blessing." 13] But his mother said to him, "Your curse, my son, be upon me! Just do as I say and go fetch them for me."

14] He got them and brought them to his mother, and his mother prepared a dish such as his father liked. 15] Rebekah then took the best clothes of her older son Esau, which were there in the house, and had her younger son Jacob put them on; 16] and she covered his hands and

27:2] *I am old now.* Nuzi records indicate that these words were a legal formula introducing a death-bed declaration and last will.

4] *My innermost blessing.* Indicating a blessing of special importance. Eating a meal was probably part of the ritual.

7] *With the Lord's approval.* Rebekah adds this to what Isaac has said in order to convince Jacob that the blessing will have divine sanction, thereby implying that once given it cannot be revoked [1] (see verse 33).

/According to some, Rebekah expected the blessing to have prophetic power [2]./

A4.b. Beresht Rabbah 65:16

(Gen. 27:15) [16. AND REBEKAH TOOK THE COVETED [E.V. 'CHOICEST'] GARMENTS OF ESAU HER ELDER SON (ib. 15): viz. those which he had coveted from Nimrod, as it is written, *The wicked coveteth the prey of evil men* (Prov. XII, 12). WHICH WERE WITH HER IN THE HOUSE—in these he used to attend upon his father. R. Simeon b. Gamaliel said: All my lifetime I attended upon my father, yet I did not do for him a hundredth part of the service which Esau did for his father. I used to attend upon my father in soiled garments and go out in the street in clean ones; but when Esau attended on his father, he attended upon him in royal robes, 'For,' said he, 'nought but royal robes befits my father's honour.']

A.4a.

Voices from Genesis, pp 104-105

Norman Cohen

[The rather unfortunate gravitation of Isaac to Esau, and Rebekkah to Jacob, caused hatred between the siblings. Yet, Isaac's feelings for Esau were probably very honest. Isaac favored him because Esau cared for him and provided for the family. Not only did Isaac develop a taste for the game that Esau brought home, but he knew he could count on his son to be there for him. He needed the fidelity of his son—the reassurance that he would not be alone as he grew older. Perhaps all this was the result of the horrible memories Isaac still harbored of the experience on Mount Moriah and his own father's abandonment of him.

Isaac truly loved Esau and wanted to demonstrate to him how much he meant to him. Esau deserved nothing less. After all, this was the son who cared for him and would be there for him in his old age. How could he not give him his innermost blessing?

Esau, my son, I am not a youngster anymore. I do not know how long God will allow me to enjoy this life. But one thing I do know is how much you give to me: your selfless devotion and loyalty. Please, take your gear and hunt some game, and prepare it just the way I love. Bring it to me so that we can eat together. Then I will give you my blessing. So often you have been my support, doing all that I have needed. It is now time for me to give to you that which you deserve as my first-born son: to reciprocate your affection and love.]

Esau, my son...
Based on
Genesis 27:1-4.