

THE 14 HINENIS IS THE BIBLE:
OUR WILLINGNESS TO RESPOND TO OTHERS
B. JACOB AND MOSES

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B.1. Genesis 27:18

Genesis 27

Toledot

וַאֲכָלָה מִצֵּיד בְּנִי לְמַעַן תִּבְרַכֶּה נַפְשִׁי וַיֵּשְׁלוּ וַיֹּאכְלֻ
 כו וַיָּבֹא לוֹ יֵן וַיֵּשֶׁת׃ וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו יִצְחָק אָבִיו וְשֶׁהָיָא
 כז וַיִּשְׁקֶה־לִּי בְנִי׃ וַיֵּשֶׁל וַיִּשְׁקֶלְלוּ וַיֵּרַח אֶת־רִיחַ בְּגָדָיו
 כח וַיִּבְרַכְהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר רָאֵה רֵיחַ בְּנִי כְרִית שָׂרָה אֲשֶׁר
 כט בָּרַכְנוּ יְהוָה׃ וַיַּתְּדֶלֶה הָאֱלֹהִים מִטֵּל הַשָּׁמַיִם וּמִשְׁמָנִי
 לו הארץ ורֵב דָּגָן וְחִירָשׁ׃ יַעֲבֹדוּךָ עַמִּים וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָּהּ
 לא לְאֻמִּים הַגּוֹי גְּבִיר לְאַחִיד וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָּהּ בְּנֵי אִמָּהּ
 לב אֲרֻרֶיהָ אֲרוּר וּמִבְרַכְיָהּ בְּרוּךְ׃ וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר כָּלָה
 לִי יִצְחָק לְכַרֵּךְ אֶת־יַעֲקֹב וַיְהִי אָךְ יֵצָא יֵצָא יַעֲקֹב
 לד מֵאֵת פָּנָיו יִצְחָק אָבִיו וַעֲשׂוֹ אָחִיו כֹּאֵם מִצֵּיד׃ וַיַּעַשׂ
 לו גַּם־הוּא מִטַּעַמִּים וַיָּבֹא לְאָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר לְאָבִיו יִקָּם
 לו אֲבִי וַיֹּאכְלֻ מִצֵּיד בְּנוֹ כַּעֲבֹר תִּבְרַכְנִי נַפְשִׁי׃ וַיֹּאמֶר
 לו יִצְחָק אָבִיו מִיָּאֲתָה וַיֹּאמֶר אָנִי בְנוֹת בְּכֹרֶת
 טו בְּנֵה הַקָּטָן׃ וְאֵת עֶרְתָּ גִדְנִי הַעֲזִים׃ הַלְבִּישָׁה עַל־
 טז יָדָיו וְעַל חִלְקָת צוּנָאֲרָיו׃ וְתַתֵּן אֶת־הַמַּטַּעַמִּים וְאֵת־
 טז הַלֶּחֶם אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂתָה בְּיַד יַעֲקֹב בְּנֵה׃ וַיָּבֹא אֶל־אָבִיו
 טז וַיֹּאמֶר אָבִי וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִי מִי אַתָּה בְנִי׃ וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב
 טז אֶל־אָבִיו אֲנֹכִי עֲשׂוֹ כַּכֹּרֶת עָשִׂיתִי כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ
 טז אֵלָי קוֹס־נָא שָׂכָה וַאֲכָלָה מִצֵּידִי כַּעֲבֹר תִּבְרַכְנִי
 טז נַפְשִׁי׃ וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק אֶל־בְּנוֹ מַה־זֶּה מַה־רַתְּ לַמָּצָא
 טז בְנִי וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי הִקְרָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיהָ לִפְנָי׃ וַיֹּאמֶר
 טז יִצְחָק אֶל־יַעֲקֹב וְשֶׁהָיָא וְאִמָּשָׁה בְנִי הָאֲתָה זֶה בְנִי
 טז עֲשׂוֹ אִסְלָא׃ וַיֵּשֶׁל יַעֲקֹב אֶל־יִצְחָק אָבִיו וַיִּמְשְׁהוּ
 טז וַיֹּאמֶר הַקָּל קוֹל יַעֲקֹב וְהִיָּדִים יָדֵי עֲשׂוֹ׃ וְלֹא הִפִּירוּ
 טז כִּי־הָיוּ יָדָיו כִּי־דִי עֲשׂוֹ אָחִיו שְׁעֵרֶת וַיִּבְרַכְהוּ׃ וַיֹּאמֶר
 טז אַתָּה זֶה בְנִי עֲשׂוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אָנִי׃ וַיֹּאמֶר הַגִּשָּׁה לִי

כס וישתחונו קרי

the hairless part of his neck with the skins of the kids. 17] Then she put in the hands of her son Jacob the dish and the bread that she had prepared.

[18] He went to his father and said, "Father." And he said, "Yes, which of my sons are you?" 19] Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau, your first-born; I have done as you told me. Pray sit up and eat of my game, that you may give me your innermost blessing." 20] Isaac said to his son, "How did you succeed so quickly, my son?" And he said, "Because the LORD your God granted me good fortune." 21] Isaac said to Jacob, "Come closer that I may feel you, my son—whether you are really my son Esau or not." 22] So Jacob drew close to his father Isaac, who felt him and wondered, "The voice is the voice of Jacob, yet the hands are the hands of Esau." 23] He did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau; and so he blessed him.

24] He asked, "Are you really my son Esau?" And when he said, "I am," 25] he said, "Serve me and let me eat of my son's game that I may give you my innermost blessing." So he served him and he ate, and he brought him wine and he drank. 26] Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come close and kiss me, my son"; 27] and he went up and kissed him. And he smelled his clothes and he blessed him, saying, "Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of the fields that the LORD has blessed. 28] May God give you / Of the dew of heaven and the fat of the earth, / Abundance of new grain and wine. / 29] Let peoples serve you, / And nations bow to you; / Be master over your brothers, / And let your mother's sons bow to you. / Cursed be they who curse you, / Blessed they who bless you."

30] No sooner had Jacob left the presence of his father Isaac—after Isaac had finished blessing Jacob—than his brother Esau came back from his hunt. 31] He too prepared a dish and brought it to his father. And he said to his father, "Let my father sit up and eat of his son's game, so that you may give me your innermost blessing." 32] His father Isaac said to him,

29] Bow to you. The younger one. This had been predicted by the birth oracle (Gen. 25:23).

B1a. Voices from Genesis, pp 112-113
Norman Cohen

Jacob seemed to gain strength and power from his daring act of trickery. At the moment when he put on Esau's clothes and the animal skins that his mother provided for him, he was not merely dressing himself up as his brother. He was demonstrating that he really possessed the qualities that were so evident in Esau.

At first when my mother placed the animal skins on my arms and neck, and I put on Esau's clothes, I felt very strange. Nothing seemed to fit. The skins kept sliding off my arms, and I kept scratching my neck. I kept thinking that it just wasn't right to disguise myself as my brother. And besides, father would surely be able to tell the difference between the costume I was wearing and my brother's true nature. And he would curse me, not bless me.

But soon I began to feel more comfortable. It was almost as if the clothes and the skins were meant for me. A strange sensation overcame me—it was as if a part of me that had been there, dormant all along, had now emerged. I felt as if a side of me had awakened at that moment. So when I carried the food mother had prepared into my father's tent, and he responded by asking, "Who are you, my son?" it seemed almost natural for me to say, without thinking, "I am Esau, your firstborn." At that moment, I truly felt like my brother.

B.2. Genesis 37:13

בראשית לו

וישב

וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה חֲלֹמֹתִי חֲלוּם עוֹד וְהִנֵּה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְהַיָּרֵחַ
וְאַחַד עֶשְׂרִי כּוֹכָבִים מִשְׁתַּחֲוִים לִי: וַיֹּסֶפֶר אֶל־אָבִיו
וְאֶל־אֶחָיו וַיַּגִּידֵם לָם וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא מִן הַחֲלוּם הָיָה
אֲשֶׁר חֲלַמְתָּ הִבּוֹא נִבּוֹא אֲנִי וְאַחִיךָ וְאַחִיךָ לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת
לְךָ אֶרְצָה: וַיִּקְנָאֵרְבוּ אֶחָיו וְאָבִיו שָׁמַר אֶת־הַדְּבָר:
וַיֵּלְכוּ אֶחָיו לְרֻעוֹת אֶת־צֹאן אֲבִיהֶם בְּשֶׂכֶם: וַיֹּאמֶר
יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־יוֹסֵף הֲלוֹא אֶחָיִךָ רָעִים בְּשֶׂכֶם לָכֵה
וְאַשְׁלַחְתָּךְ אֲלֵיהֶם וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הִנְנִי: וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ לִדְנָא
רֵאה אֶת־שְׁלוֹם אֶחָיִךָ וְאֶת־שְׁלוֹם הַצֹּאן וְהַשֶּׁבִּי
דָּבָר וַיִּשְׁלַחְהוּ מַעֲמֵק חֶבְרוֹן וַיָּבֹא שָׁכְמָה: וַיִּמְצְאוּ
אִישׁ וְהִנֵּה תַעֲזָה בַּשָּׂדֶה וַיִּשְׁאַלְהוּ הָאִישׁ לֵאמֹר מַה

* י"ב נקוד על אח.

dream: And this time, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me." 10] And when he told it to his father and brothers, his father berated him. "What," he said to him, "is this dream you have dreamed? Are we to come, I and your mother and your brothers, and bow low to you to the ground?" 11] So his brothers were wrought up at him, and his father kept the matter in mind.

12] One time, when his brothers had gone to pasture their father's flock at Shechem, 13] Israel said to Joseph, "Your brothers are pasturing at Shechem. Come, I will send you to them." He answered, "I am ready." 14] And he said to him, "Go and see how your brothers are and how the flocks are faring, and bring me back word." So he sent him from the valley of Hebron.

When he reached Shechem, 15] a man came upon him wandering in the fields. The man asked him, "What are you looking for?" 16] He answered, "I am looking for my brothers. Could you tell me where they are pasturing?" 17] The man said, "They have gone from here, for I heard them say: Let us go to Dothan." So Joseph followed his brothers and found them at Dothan.

18] They saw him from afar, and before he came close to them they conspired to kill him. 19] They said to one another, "Here comes that dreamer! 20] Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; and we can say, 'A savage beast devoured him.' We shall see what comes of his dreams!" 21] But when Reuben heard it, he tried to save him from them. He said, "Let us not take his life." 22] And Reuben went on, "Shed no blood! Cast him into the pit out in the wilderness, but do not touch him yourselves"—intending to

11] Kept the matter in mind. Because he believed that as a dream it revealed the future.

14] From the valley of Hebron. Joseph will not return here, but hundreds of years later his remains will reach Shechem once again (Josh. 24:32).

/ The Talmud connects the passage with Gen. 15:13 and following, which predict enslavement in a foreign

land and return to Canaan after 400 years [2].

15] A man. His namelessness suggests a comparison with the nameless man who wrestled with Jacob.

17] Dothan. Today's Tell Dothan, north of Shechem. The city, excavated in 1953-1960, dates back to 3000 B.C.E.

B2a. Bereshit Rabbah 84:13

AND ISRAEL SAID UNTO JOSEPH: DO NOT THY BRETHREN FEED THE FLOCK, etc. (xxxvii, 13). R. Tanhum said in R. Berekiah's name: He [Joseph] treated him with honour, in accordance with the reverence due to a father from his son.²

AND HE SAID TO HIM: HERE AM I. R. Hama b. R. Hanina said: Our ancestor [Jacob] was ever mindful of these words and was consumed with remorse.⁴ 'I knew that thy brethren hate thee, and yet thou didst answer me: HERE AM I.'

¹ The sign of the accusative.

² On dotted letters v. *supra*, XLVIII, 15. Here the *eth*, the sign of the acc., is disregarded, as it is traditionally dotted in the Scrolls, and the verse rendered: And they went to feed themselves on their father's flocks—i.e. they went to revel and make merry.

³ This follows from the end of the verse: *And he said to him: Here am I—ready to obey.*—He honoured and obeyed him, though he felt that he was running into danger (commentaries).

כח אתו ותחי רוח יעקב אביהם: ויאמר ישראל רב
 עוד יוסף בני חיי אלה ואראנו בטרם אמות:
 " ויסע ישראל וכל אשר-לו ויבא בארה שבע ויובח
 " ובחים לאלהי אביו ויצחק: ויאמר אלהים לישראל
 במראת הלילה ויאמר יעקב יעקב ויאמר הנני:
 " ויאמר אנכי האל אלהי אביך אלי-תבא מקדח
 " מצרימה קרלני גדול אשימך שם: אנכי ארד עמך
 " מצרימה ואנכי אעלה גם-עלה ויטף ישיית ידו
 " על-עיניו: ויקם יעקב מבאר שבע וישאו בני
 ישראל את-יעקב אביהם ואת-טפם ואת-נשיהם

of their father Jacob revived. 28] "Enough!" said Israel. "My son Joseph is still alive! I must go and see him before I die."

[1] So Israel set out with all that was his, and he came to Beer-sheba, where he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. 2] God called to Israel in a vision by night: "Jacob! Jacob!" He answered, "Here." 3] And He said, "I am God, the God of your father. Fear not to go down to Egypt, for I will make you there into a great nation. 4] I-Myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I-Myself will also bring you back; and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes."

5] So Jacob set out from Beer-sheba. The sons of Israel put their father Jacob and their children and their wives in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to transport them; 6] and they took along their livestock and the wealth that they had amassed in the land of Canaan. Thus Jacob and all his offspring with him came to Egypt: 7] he brought with him to Egypt his sons and grandsons, his daughters and granddaughters—all his offspring.

8] These are the names of the Israelites, Jacob and his descendants, who came to Egypt. Jacob's first-born Reuben; 9] Reuben's sons: Enoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. 10] Simeon's sons: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Saul the son of a Canaanite woman. 11] Levi's sons: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. 12] Judah's sons: Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah—but Er and Onan had died in the land of Canaan; and Perez's sons were Hezron and

46:1] He came to Beer-sheba. Probably from Hebron.

2] Israel. He is called Israel in his response though he remains Jacob. The fusion of past and present is complete [6] (see Gen. 35:10 and commentary to Gen. 32:4-33:17).

4] Bring you back. That is, your descendants.

Joseph's hand shall close your eyes. Jewish tradition [7] demands that the eyes of the deceased be closed, preferably, by a son.

/Others render the biblical text figuratively: "He will take care of you" [8].

8-27] The list of descendants is probably from another tradition; its insertion here creates some difficulties and discrepancies; e.g., that Perez and Benjamin are reported to have children, although they are too young to be fathers.

9] Enoch. The usual English rendering of עֲנוֹךְ.

10] Jemuel. Called Nemuel in Num. 26:12; 1 Chron. 4:24.

Saul. The usual English rendering of שָׁאוּל.

B3.a. Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer
Chapter 39

THE fourth descent was (when) He descended into Egypt, (as it is said),¹ "I will go down with thee into Egypt" (Gen xlv. 4). Jacob heard concerning Joseph that he was living, and he was thinking in his heart, saying: Can I forsake the land of my fathers, the land of my birth, the land of the sojournings of my fathers,² the land where the Shekhinah of the Holy One, blessed be He, is in its midst, and shall I go to an unclean land in their midst,³ for there is no fear of Heaven therein?⁴ The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him: Jacob, do not fear; "I will go down with thee into Egypt,⁵ and I will also surely bring thee up again" (*ibid.*).

B.36. Rashi to Genesis 46:2-3

TO THE GOD OF HIS FATHER, ISAAC — The duty of honouring one's father is more imperative than that of honouring one's grandfather (Genesis Rabbah 94:5); therefore the sacrifices are associated with the name of Isaac and not with that of Abraham.

46:2

יעקב יעקב יעקב יעקב. לשון חבה

JACOB, JACOB — The repetition of the name is a mark of affection (Sifra, Vayikra Dibbura d'Nedavah, Chapter 1 12).

46:3

אל תירא מרדה מצרימה. לפי שהיה מצר על שנזקק לצאת לחוצה לארץ
תירא מרדה מצרימה

FEAR NOT TO GO DOWN TO EGYPT — God said this to him because he was grieved that he was compelled to leave the Land of Israel (Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer 39).

B4. Exodus 3:4

Exodus 3

Shemot

סר לראות ויקרא אליו אלהים מתוך הסנה ויאמר
 משה משה ויאמר הנני ויאמר אליהקרב הלם
 של-עליה מעל רגליה כי המקום אשר אתה
 עומד עליו אדמתיקדש הוא ויאמר אנכי אלתי
 אביה אלתי אברהם אלתי יצחק ואלתי יעקב
 ויסתר משה פניו כי ראה מהבים אלההאלהים:

ומושה היה רעה את-צאן יתרו חתנו כהן מדגן
 ויבנה את-הצאן אתר המדבר ויבא אל-הר האלהים
 חרבה: וירא מלאך יהוה אליו בלבת-אש מתוך
 הסנה וירא והנה הסנה בער באש והסנה איננו
 אכל: ויאמר משה אסרה-נא ואראה את-המראה
 הנדל הזה מדוע לא-יבער הסנה: וירא יהוה כי

1] Now Moses, tending the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, drove the flock into the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2] An angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire out of a bush. He gazed, and there was a bush all aflame, yet the bush was not consumed. 3] Moses said, "I must turn aside to look at this marvelous sight; why doesn't the bush burn up?" 4] When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to look, God called to him out of the bush: "Moses! Moses!" He answered, "Here I am." 5] And He said, "Do not come closer. Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you stand is holy ground. 6] I am," He said, "the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

3:1] *Jethro*. In 2:18 he was called Reuel.

Horeb. Usually considered identical with Sinai. Critical scholars distinguish between a "Horeb" and a "Sinai" tradition (the former assigned to E and D, the latter to J and P), even as they distinguish between a "Jethro" and a "Reuel" tradition. For instance, the names of Horeb and Sinai may point to different mountains; one (Horeb) located in Midian and the other (Sinai) to be found somewhere in the Sinai peninsula. Hobab-Reuel, the Midianite priest, would fit with Horeb, while Jethro would be part of the Sinai story. In later ages these strands were interwoven into the text as we now have it [3].

Mountain of God. Its exact location is not known (see chs. 13 f.). Either the writer anticipates the experience that Moses will have here, or the mountain was already so known. (Some understand *הר האלהים* as "lordly mountain.")

2] *Angel*. A visible manifestation of God (see at Gen. 18).

In a blazing fire. An anticipation of the theophany at Mt. Sinai (19:18). Or, God appeared to

Moses "as a blazing fire," a parallel to 6:3, שדי [4]. ויאמר . . . בא אל שדי

Bush. *סנה* (*seneh*) apparently related to the Arabic *sina*, a thorny shrub, *cassia obovata* (note also the plants called "senna" in English).

4] *Moses! Moses!* Call and answer resemble the experience of Abraham (Gen. 22:1).

5] *Remove your sandals*. Many explanations have been offered for the custom of removing one's footwear when entering a sacred place (practiced in various cultures, for instance, Moslem and Japanese): one enters the presence of divinity as clean as possible; one lowers his status in a gesture of self-abnegation; one unties all knots when coming before God. Joshua, too, when meeting a divine apparition, is bidden to remove his sandals, and the priests followed this custom when entering the Temple Mount [5].

6] *Your father*. Probably meant as a collective and indicating that God will protect Moses as He protected his ancestors. The repetition of the word "God" conveys a sense of divine constancy.

B4a. Shemot Rabbah 2:5-6

[Further, because when God spoke to Moses,⁷ the latter was unwilling at first to desist from his work, He therefore showed him this thing, so that he might turn his face to see⁸ and speak with Him. Hence you find at first: AND THE ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED UNTO HIM; and yet Moses did not go [to see what it was]. As soon as Moses stopped his work and went to see, straightway *God called unto him* (III, 4).]

6. AND MOSES SAID: I WILL TURN ASIDE NOW, AND SEE (III, 3). R. Johanan said, Moses took five steps⁹ then, as it is said: '*I will turn aside now, and see.*' R. Simeon b. Lakish said: He simply turned his face to see, as it is said: *And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see.* When God saw this,¹ He said: This man is worthy to tend Israel.]