

Parsha Plug: Parshat Toldot

Bereshit 27:18-41

בראשית כג: יז-כ, כז: יח-מא

**18** And he came to his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?" **19** And Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you have spoken to me. Please rise, sit down and eat of my game, so that your soul will bless me." **20** And Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have found [it] so quickly, my son?" And he said, "Because the Lord your God prepared it before me." **21** And Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come closer, so that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not." **22** So Jacob drew near to Isaac his father, and he felt him, and he said, "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau." **23** And he did not recognize him because his hands were hairy like the hands of his brother Esau, and he blessed him. **24** And he said, "Are you [indeed] my son Esau?" And he said, "I am." **25** And he said, "Serve [it] to me that I may eat of the game of my son, so that my soul will bless you." And he served him, and he ate, and he brought him wine, and he drank. **26** And his father Isaac said to him, "Please come closer and kiss me, my son." **27** And he came closer, and he kissed him, and he smelled the fragrance of his garments, and he blessed him, and he said, "Behold, the fragrance of my son is like the fragrance of a field, which the Lord has blessed! **28** And may the Lord give you of the dew of the heavens and [of] the fatness of the earth and an abundance of grain and wine. **29** Nations shall serve you and kingdoms shall bow down to you; you shall be a master over your brothers, and your mother's sons shall bow down to you. Those who curse you shall be cursed, and those who bless you shall be blessed." **30** And it came to pass, when Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and it came to pass Jacob had just left his father Isaac's presence, that his brother Esau came from his hunt. **31** And he too had made tasty foods, and he brought [them] to his father, and he said to his father, "Let my father arise and eat of the game of his son, so that your soul will bless me. " **32** And his father Isaac said to him, "Who are you?" And he said, "I am your son, your firstborn, Esau." **33** And Isaac shuddered a great shudder, and he said, "Who then is the one who hunted game and brought it to me, and I ate of everything while you had not yet come, and I blessed him? He, too, shall be blessed." **34** When Esau heard his father's words, he cried out a great and bitter cry, and he said to his father, "Bless me too, O my father!" **35** And he said, "Your brother came with cunning and took your blessing." **36** And he said, "Is it for this reason that he was named Jacob? For he has deceived me twice; he took my birthright, and behold, now he has taken my blessing." And he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?" **37** And Isaac answered and said to Esau, "Behold, I made him a master over you, and I gave him all his brothers as servants, and I have sustained him with corn and wine;

יח ויבא אל-אביו, ויאמר אביו; ויאמר הנני, מי אתה בני. יט ויאמר יעקב אל-אביו, אנכי עשׂו בכרך--עשיתי, כאשר דברת אלי; קום-נא שבה, ואכלה מציד--בעבור, תברכני נפשך. כ ויאמר יצחק אל-בנו, מה-זה מהרת למצא בני; ויאמר, כי הקרה ה' אלקיך לפני. כא ויאמר יצחק אל-יעקב, גשה-נא ואמשך בני: האתה זה בני עשׂו, אם-לא. כב ויגש יעקב אל-יצחק אביו, וימשהו; ויאמר, הקל קול יעקב, והזדים, ידי עשׂו. כג ולא הכירו--כי-היו ידיו עשׂו אחיו, שערת; ויברכהו. כד ויאמר, אתה זה בני עשׂו; ויאמר, אני. כה ויאמר, הגשה לי ואכלה מציד בני--למען תברכך, נפשי; ויגש-לו, ויאכל, ויבא לו יין, וישת. כו ויאמר אליו, יצחק אביו: גשה-נא וישקה-לי, בני. כז ויגש, וישק-לו, וירח את-ריח בגדיו, ויברכהו; ויאמר, ראה ריח בני, פריח שדה, אשר ברכו יהוה. כח ויתן-לך, האלהים, מטל השמים, ומשמני הארץ--ורב דגן, ותירש. כט ועבדוך עמים, וישתחו (וישתחו) לך לאמים--היה גביר לאחיו, וישתחו לך בני אמך; ארריך ארו, ומברכך ברוך. ל ויהי אך צא יצא יעקב, מאת פני יצחק אביו; ועשׂו אחיו, בא מצידו. לא ויעש גם-הוא מטעמים, ויבא לאביו; ויאמר לאביו, יקם אבי ואכל מציד בנו--בעבר, תברכני נפשך. לב ויאמר לו יצחק אביו, מי-אתה; ויאמר, אני בנך בכרך עשׂו. לג ויחרד יצחק חרדה, גדלה עד-מאד; ויאמר מי-אפוא הוא הצד-ציד ויבא לי ואכל מפל בטרם תבוא, ואברכהו; גם-ברוך, יהיה. לדכשמע עשׂו, את-דברי אביו, ויצעק צעקה, גדלה ומרה עד-מאד; ויאמר לאביו, ברכני גם-אני אבי. לה ויאמר, בא אחיך במרמה; ויקח, ברכתך. לו ויאמר הכי קרא שמו יעקב, ויעקבני זה פעמים--את-בכרתי לקח, והנה עתה לקח ברכתי; ויאמר, הלא-אצלת לי ברכה. לז ויען יצחק ויאמר לעשׂו, הן גביר שמתי לך ואת-כל-אחיו נתתי לו לעבדים, ודגן ותירש, סמכתי; ולכה אפוא, מה אעשה

<p>so for you then, what shall I do, my son?" <b>38</b> Esau said to his father, "Have you one blessing, my father? Bless me too, my father." And Esau raised his voice and wept. <b>39</b> And his father Isaac answered and said to him, "Behold, your dwelling place shall be the fat places of the earth and of the dew of the heaven from above. <b>40</b> And you shall live by your sword, and you shall serve your brother, and it will be, when you grieve, that you will break his yoke off your neck." <b>41</b> Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing that his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, "Let the days of mourning for my father draw near, I will then kill my brother Jacob. "</p>	<p>בְּנֵי. לַח וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו אֶל-אָבִיו, הֲבִרְכָה אֶחָת הוּא-לְךָ אָבִי--בְּרַכְנִי גַם-אֲנִי, אָבִי; וַיִּשָּׂא עֵשָׂו קוֹלוֹ, וַיִּבְכֶּה. לִטְוִיעֵן יִצְחָק אָבִיו, וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו: הֲנִה מְשֻׁמְנֵי הָאָרֶץ, יִהְיֶה מוֹשְׁבֶךָ, וּמִטַּל הַשָּׁמַיִם, מִמָּעַל. מִוְעַל-חֲרַבְךָ תַּחֲיֶה, וְאֶת-אֶחִיךָ תַעֲבֹד; וְהָיָה פֶּאֶשֶׁר תַּרְיִד, וּפְרַקְתָּ עָלָיו מִמָּעַל צִוְאַרְךָ. מֵאָּ נִישָׁטֶם עֵשָׂו, אֶת-יַעֲקֹב, עַל-הַבְּרָכָה, אֲשֶׁר בְּרַכּוֹ אָבִיו; וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו בְּלִבּוֹ, יִקְרְבוּ יְמֵי אָבִל אָבִי, וְאֶהְרָגֶה, אֶת-יַעֲקֹב אָחִי.</p>
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<p><b>Midrash Aggadah Bereshit 27:19:1</b></p>	<p><b>מדרש אגדה בראשית כז:יח:א</b></p>
<p>And Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn". His statement had a break in the middle, "It is I". And afterward he said, "Esav is your firstborn".</p>	<p>ויאמר יעקב אל אביו אנכי. הפסיק הדבור, ואחר כך אמר עשו בכורך:</p>

<p><b>Chizkuni on Bereshit 27:19</b></p>	<p><b>חזקוני בראשית כז:ד</b></p>
<p>There are some commentators who claim that due to the need in the moment, Yaakov permitted himself a lie. As Avraham referred to his wife as his sister and also at the Akeidah, when he told the lads that both he and Yitzhak would return...Alternatively: He did not lie, but rather said, "I am taking the place of Esau your firstborn, for he already sold me the birthright".</p>	<p>אנכי עשו בכרך י"מ שלפי צורך שעה אפשר לשנות הדבור כגון אברהם אמרי לי אחי הוא, ונשתחזה ונשובה אליכם..ד"א לפי שקול הדעת לא כחש לו, כך אמר לו אנכי במקום עשו בכרך שהרי כבר מכר לי את הבכורה.</p>

<p><b>Shnei Luchot HaBerit, Torah Shebikhtav, Toldot, Torah Ohr 44</b></p>	<p><b>שני לוחות הברית</b></p>
<p>Let us now explore the mystical dimension of the name יעקב. Isaac says to Esau: "Your brother came with wisdom to take the blessings." This means that Jacob came to outwit Esau. Isaac referred to Jacob having outwitted what Esau stands for, the satan, the pollutant of the original serpent, seeing Esau is also Edom, the classic symbol of all that is polluted and cursed. This original serpent had been described in the Torah as sly. So, Jacob had to resort to a wily strategy to outwit such an opponent. He had to counter with slyness, in order to defeat the serpent or its representative at its own game.</p>	<p><b>ועתה</b> אבאר הסוד. הנה בשם יעקב בא במרמה (שם כז, לה) פירוש בחכמה ליטול הברכות, דהיינו לרמות את עשו, דהיינו אחיזתו מלמעלה השטן המקטרג כמו שכתבתי לעיל, כי עשו הוא אדום, והוא מזוהמת נחש הקדמוני הארוך, והנחש היה ערום על כן צריך יעקב לבוא עליו בערמה להכניע באומנותו.</p>

<p><b>Kitzur Baal HaTurim on Bereshit 27:35</b></p>	<p><b>קיצור בעל הטורים בראשית כז:לה</b></p>
<p>Since he came to his father with deceit, his sons treat him with deceit.</p>	<p>בשביל שהוא בא לאביו במרמה באו בניו במרמה.</p>

<b>Ramban on Bereshit 27:33</b>	<b>רמב"ן בראשית כז:לג</b>
Thus the reason for Yitzchak's great trembling was that he realized that his beloved son Esav had lost his blessing forever, and this is why he said, "Your brother came with cunning and took your blessing"...	וזהו טעם החרדה הגדולה אשר חרד כי ידע שאבד בנו האהוב לו ברכתו לעולם וזה טעם בא אחיך במרמה...

<b>Seforno on Bereshit 27:35</b>	<b>ספורנו בראשית כז:לה</b>
And he said, "Your brother took your blessing": The blessing that would have been appropriate for you. For it had to do with things of this world.	ויקח ברכתך אותה הברכה שהיתה ראויה לחול עליך שהיתה בענייני העולם הזה:

<b>Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, <i>Faith in the Future (The World's Oldest Man: Chayei Sarah 5778)</i></b>	
<p>The phrase in Rivka's oracle, <i>Ve-rav yaavod tsair</i> (Gen. 25: 23), is in fact ambiguous. It may mean, "The elder will serve the younger," but it may also mean, "The younger will serve the elder." It was what the Torah calls a <i>chidah</i> (Numbers 12: 8), that is, an opaque, deliberately ambiguous communication. It suggested an ongoing conflict between the two sons and their descendants, but not who would win. Isaac fully understood the nature of his two sons. He loved Esau but this did not blind him to the fact that Jacob would be the heir of the covenant. Therefore Isaac prepared two sets of blessings, one for Esau, the other for Jacob. He blessed Esau (Gen. 27: 28-29) with the gifts he felt he would appreciate: wealth and power...These are <i>not</i> the covenantal blessings. The covenantal blessings that God had given Abraham and Isaac were completely different. They were about <i>children</i> and a <i>land</i>. It is this blessing that Isaac later gave Jacob before he left home...<i>This was the blessing Isaac had intended for Jacob all along</i>. There was no need for deceit and disguise. Jacob eventually came to understand all this, perhaps during his wrestling match with the angel during the night before his meeting with Esau after their long estrangement. What happened at that meeting is incomprehensible unless we understand that Jacob was giving back to Esau the blessings he had wrongly taken from him...<i>It is possible all four people acted rightly as they understood the situation, yet still tragedy occurred</i>. Isaac was right to wish Esau blessed as Abraham sought for Ishmael. Esau acted honourably toward his father. Rivka sought to safeguard the future of the covenant. Jacob felt qualms but did what his mother said, knowing she would not have proposed deceit without a strong moral reason for doing so...It is only after we have read about the fate of Jacob in Laban's house, the tension between Leah and Rachel, and the animosity between Joseph and his brothers that we can go back and read Genesis 27, the chapter of the blessing, in a new light and with greater depth. There is such a thing as an honest mistake, and it is a mark of Jacob's greatness that he recognized it and made amends to Esau. In the great encounter twenty-two years later the estranged brothers meet, embrace, part as friends and go their separate ways. But first, Jacob had to wrestle with an angel. That is how the moral life is. We learn by making mistakes. We live life forward, but we understand it only looking back. Only then do we see the wrong turns we inadvertently made. This discovery is sometimes our greatest moment of moral truth. For each of us there is a blessing that is ours. That was true not just of Isaac but also Ishmael, not just Jacob but also Esau. The moral could not be more powerful. Never seek your brother's blessing. Be content with your own.</p>	