

your mistakes
do not define
you.

Parshat Toldot

Becky Portman

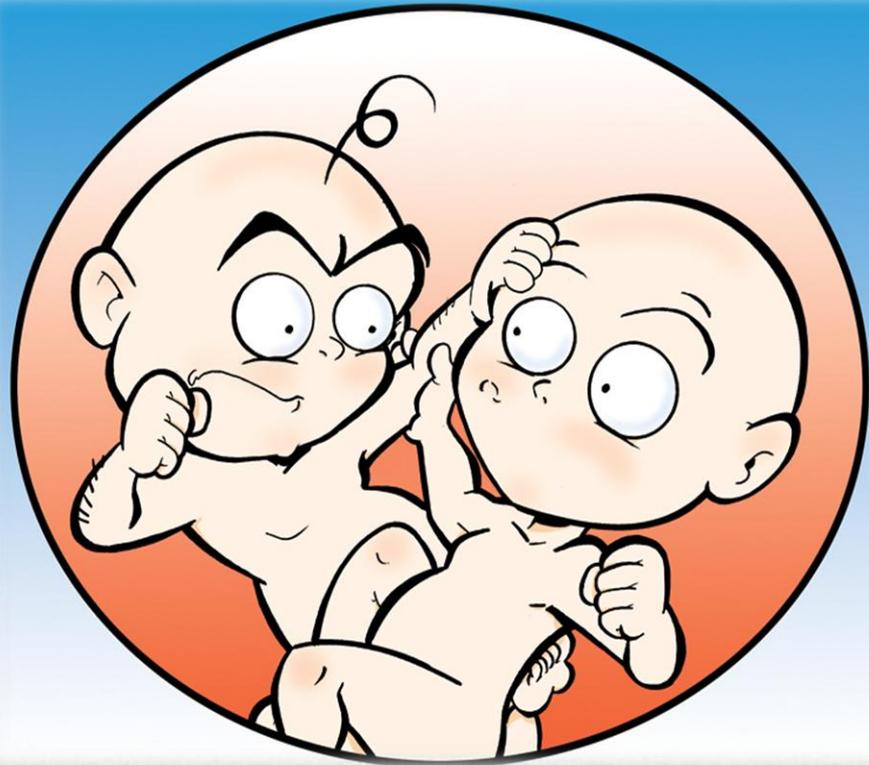


Family Tree

22. And the children struggled within her, and she said, "If [it be] so, why am I [like] this?" And she went to inquire of the Lord.

כב.

וַיִּתְרַצְצוּ הַבָּנִים בְּקֶרֶבָּהּ
וַתֹּאמֶר אִם כֵּן לָמָּה זֶה אֲנֹכִי
וַתִּלְךְ לְדַרֵּשׁ אֶת יְהוָה:



Rashi Explains: When Rivka passed by a place of Torah study Yaakov would get excited and Want to come out, while if she passed by a place of idolatry, Esav would get excited to come Out.

Rivka's Pregnancy Pains

23. And the Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two kingdoms will separate from your innards, and one kingdom will become mightier than the other kingdom, and the elder will serve the younger.

כג.

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה לָהּ שְׁנַי גוֹיִם
בְּבֶטְנֶךָ וּשְׁנַי לְאֻמִּים מִמְּעִיךָ
יִפְרְדוּ וְלֵאמֹם מְלֹאִם יִאֶמֶץ וְרַב
יַעֲבֹד צָעִיר:

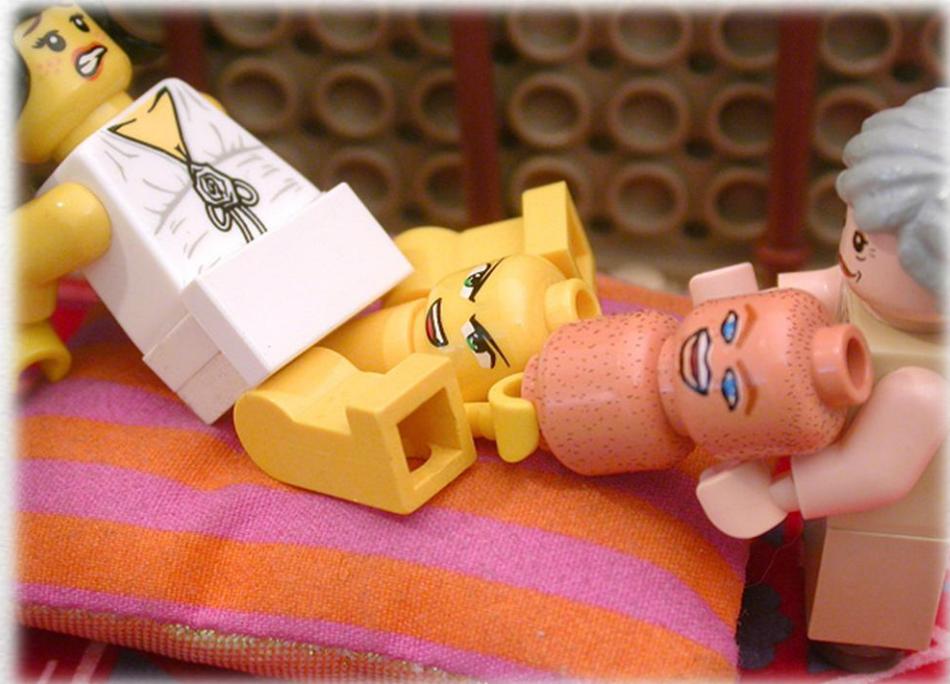


Rashi: From the womb they are separated, this one to his wickedness, and this one to his innocence.

25. And the first one emerged ruddy; he was completely like a coat of hair, and they named him Esau.

כה.

וַיֵּצֵא הָרֵאשׁוֹן אֲדָמוּנִי כְּלוֹ
כְּאֶדְרַת שֵׁעָר וַיִּקְרְאוּ שְׁמוֹ
עֵשָׂו:



Rashi: They called him this because he was complete (] (ליעשוי lit., made,) and fully developed with hair, like one many years old.

Esav is Born First

26. And afterwards, his brother emerged, and his hand was grasping Esau's heel, and he named him Jacob. Now Isaac was sixty years old when she gave birth to them.

כו.

וְאַחֲרַי כֵּן יֵצֵא אָחִיו וְיָדוּ
אֶחָזֶת בְּעֵקֶב יֵשׁוּ וְיִקְרָא שְׁמוֹ
יַעֲקֹב וְיֵצֵק בֶּן שְׁנַיִם שָׁנָה
בְּלֶדֶת אֲתָם:



Rashi: This is a sign that this one (Esav) will not manage to complete his reign until this one (Jacob) rises up and takes it from him.

Jacob is Born Second



EIKEV



YAAKOV



The Meaning of Eikev

27. And the youths grew up, and Esau was a man who understood hunting, a man of the field, whereas Jacob was an innocent man, dwelling in tents.

כז.

וַיִּגְדְּלוּ הַנְּעָרִים וַיְהִי יַעֲקֹב
אִישׁ יָדַע צִיד אִישׁ שָׂדֵה
וַיַּעֲקֹב אִישׁ פֶּהם יֹשֵׁב אֹהֳלִים:



All Grown Up: The Hunter and the Learner



29. Now Jacob cooked a pottage, and Esau came from the field, and he was faint.
 כט. וַיָּזַד יַעֲקֹב נֹזֵד

וַיָּבֵא עֲשׂוֹ מִן הַשְּׂדֵה וְהוּא עֵיִף:

.30 And Esau said to Jacob, "Pour into [me] some of this red, red [pottage], for I am faint"; he was therefore named Edom.

ל. וַיֹּאמֶר עֲשׂוֹ אֶל יַעֲקֹב הֲלַעֲיִטְנִי נָא מִן הָאֲדָם

הָאֲדָם הַזֶּה כִּי עֵיִף אָנֹכִי עַל כֵּן קָרָא שְׁמוֹ אֲדוֹם:

.31 And Jacob said, "Sell me as of this day your birthright."

לא. וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב מְכַרְהָ כִּיּוֹם אֵת בְּכֻרְתְּךָ לִי:

.32 Esau replied, "Behold, I am going to die; so why do I need this birthright?"

לב. וַיֹּאמֶר עֲשׂוֹ הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ

לְמוֹת וְלָמָּה זֶה לִי בְכֻרָה:

.33 And Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day"; so he swore to him, and he sold his birthright to Jacob.

לג.

וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב הַשְּׂבָעָה לִי כִּיּוֹם וַיִּשְׁבַּע לוֹ וַיִּמְכַר אֵת בְּכֻרְתּוֹ לְיַעֲקֹב:

.34 And Jacob gave Esau bread and a pottage of lentils, and he ate and drank and arose and left, and Esau despised the birthright.

לד. וַיַּעֲקֹב נָתַן לְעֲשׂוֹ לֶחֶם וְנֹזֵד עֲדָשִׁים וַיֹּאכֵל

וַיִּשְׁתֶּה וַיִּקָּם וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיִּבֹז עֲשׂוֹ אֵת הַבְּכֻרָה:

Rashi: This is the wake of Avraham. Jacob cooked Red Lentils because their round shape resembles the wheel of life. Just as lentils have no mouth, so the mourner has no mouth because he is forbidden to speak/ initiate conversation/greet people

The Selling of the Birthright

We see Perek Chaf Vav deviates from the story of Esav and Jacob. The Perek talks about Isaac's digging wells, dwelling in Gerar and familiar interaction with Avimelech King of the Philistines

- Nehama Leibowitz explains that the story of the wells must have a symbolic purpose. The wells can be understood as the wells of true faith which our forefathers caused to flow and end the desolation and idolatry.
- The wells which had been dug were stopped up with Earth by the Philistines, why? The wells represent the seven Mitzvot Bnei Noach that Avraham had promoted and they had forgotten/disregarded

Well, Well, Well...?





1. Deceit: Because Jacob deceived his Father. He was deceived by his sons regarding Joseph and by Lavan.
2. Firstborn Right: Lavan- “It must not be done so in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn” This is to remind Jacob of how he tricked his brother and father
3. Name: Jacob (supplanter) → Israel (a Prince of G-d)

“Your Brother Came With Deceit”: Motifs Surrounding Jacob

אנכי
אני

Let's Break it Down Now

1. “**Anochi** Esav Bechorachah”
 2. “Hashomer achi **Anochi?**”
 3. “**Anochi** Hashem!”
 4. VaTomer Im Ken, Lama zeh **Anochi?**”
- Anochi appears very infrequently in the Torah, the answer to why Jacob lied, lies in this word
 - **Anochi** → WHO AM I?

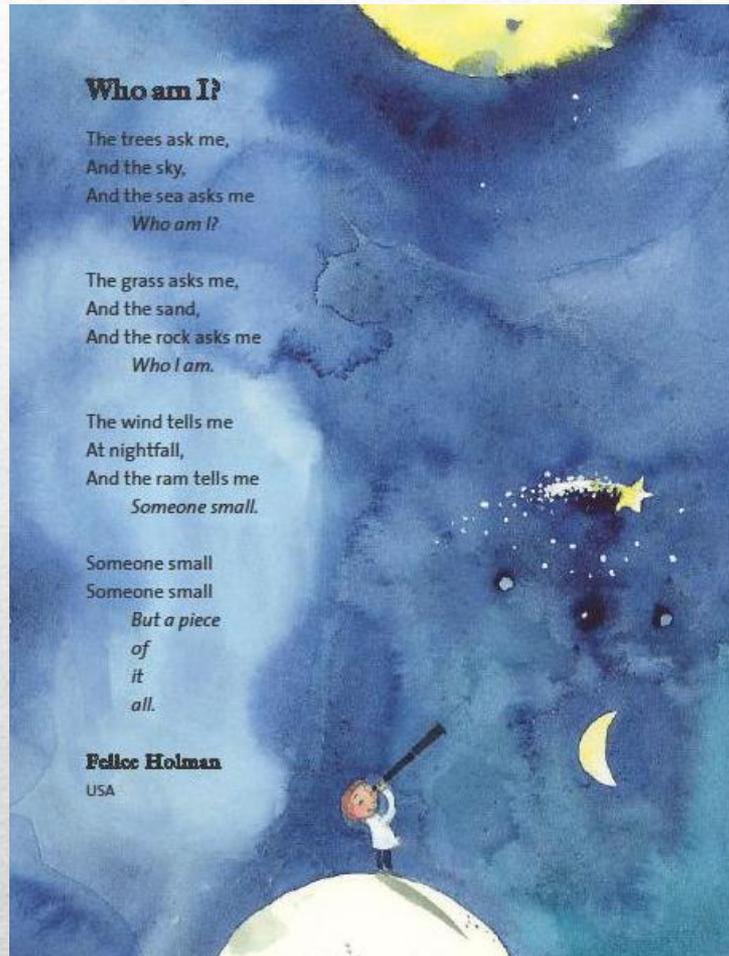


Interpretation by Rabbi Binny Freedman



- Rashi: I am me, Yaakov, comma, and Esav is your First born
- This is Jacob, the forefather associated with Truth??
- Let's talk about the midrash we approached before, of Rebecca's pregnancy pains... She didn't realize she was having twins and began to think, Who am I for producing a child with such different sides. Who am I? Is my future in monotheistic ethics or a product of the pagan world I come from?
- Hashem says to comfort her, that two nations live within her and will be at war with the younger ultimately winning

Anochi Continued...



- Jacob needs the blessing as a part of G-d's plan and part of that plan is that he has to incorporate a little bit of Esav into his life, using trickery to attain the birthright. Yaakov must be in the midst of a major identity crisis!
- **WHO AM I??**
- Am I Jacob, the epitome of truth, or am I Esav, willing to deceive my father to achieve what is necessary?
- Isaac says: HINENI! Here I am! A word that suggests I know exactly who I am, why I am here and what I have to offer the world. Perhaps Isaac's word choice is more of a confrontation: I know who I am, but do you know who you are?

- This is the challenge of Anochi. If Cain could kill Abel, what does that mean about who he really is? Perhaps this is what Hashem meant at the beginning of the 10 commandments.
- Before you develop a relationship with Me, you have to know who you are. Because the first place to look for G-d is deep inside ourselves
- Yaakov's challenge was deciding who he was. The challenge is how events shape our lives and affect who we really want to be.



- **Blessing meant for Esav:**

- 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.

כח. וַיִּתֵּן לְךָ הָאֱלֹהִים
מִטַּל הַשָּׁמַיִם וּמִשְׁמַנֵּי הָאָרֶץ וְרֹב דָּגָן וְתִירֹשׁ:

- 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."

כט. יַעֲבֹדוךָ עַמִּים
וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ לְךָ לְאֻמִּים הִנֵּה גִבִּיר לְאַחֶיךָ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ
לְךָ בְּנֵי אִמְךָ אֲרָרֶיךָ אֲרוּר וּמְבָרְכֶיךָ בְּרוּךְ:

- **Blessing meant for Jacob:**

- And may the Almighty God bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, and you shall become an assembly of peoples.

ג. וְאֵל שַׁדַּי יְבָרַךְ אֶתְךָ וַיַּפְרֶךָ וַיַּרְבֶּךָ
וְהָיִיתָ לְקָהָל עַמִּים:

.And may He give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your seed with you, that you may inherit the land of your sojournings, which God gave to Abraham."

ד. וַיִּתֵּן לְךָ
אֵת בְּרִכַּת אַבְרָהָם לְךָ וּלְזַרְעֶךָ אֶתְךָ לְרִשְׁתָּךְ אֵת
אָרֶץ מְגֻרֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר נָתַן אֱלֹהִים לְאַבְרָהָם:

Esav, by his OWN behavior and intermarriages, forfeited his right to such a blessing. It cannot be argued that if Jacob had not deceived Esav, the former would not have been chosen to become the third patriarch and ancestor of the Jewish People. – Nehama Leibowitz

And Isaac sent Jacob,
and he went to Padan
aram, to Laban the son
of Bethuel the
Aramean, the brother
of Rebecca, the mother
of Jacob and Esau.

ה.

וַיִּשְׁלַח יִצְחָק אֶת יַעֲקֹב וַיֵּלֶךְ
פָּדָנָה אֲרָם אֶל לָבָן בֶּן בְּתוּאֵל
הָאֲרָמִי אָחִי רִבְקָה אִם יַעֲקֹב
וַעֲשׂוֹ:

- Rashi comments: אם יעקב ועשו: איני יודע מה מלמדנו: I don't know what this teaches us.

Since when does Rashi NOT know?

45. Until your brother's rage subsides from you, and he forgets what you did to him, and I will send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereft of both of you on one day?"

מה. עד שוב אף

אחיה ממך ושכח את אשר
עשית לו ושלתתי ולקחתיה
מנשם למה אפשר גם שניכם יום
אחד:



- “Rebecca said: Whichever of you is slain I shall be bereaved in one day, since one will be no more, slain, and the murderer of his brother will be detested by me as an enemy and a stranger, and will be, in my eyes, as non-existing. I will thus be bereaved of both of them” (Benanozegh: Em Lemikra)
- This teaches us that Rebecca rescued Jacob from death and Esav from being a murderer. Throughout we have seen her as mostly looking out for Jacob, but here we can see she is “Jacob and Esav’s Mother”