

HADAR Children & Families
VOLUME 3 ISSUE 6

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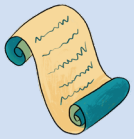
כ״ח מַרְחֶשְׁוָן–ד׳ כִּסְלֵו תשפ״ז November 8–14, 2026

מָה בַּפָּרָשָׁה • In This Week's Parashah



- Yitzhak prays for Rivkah to have children, and she becomes pregnant with twins. The twins struggle inside her. God tells her this is because there are two nations within her.
- The firstborn is reddish and covered with hair. They call him Esav. The second is born holding onto Esav's heel. He's called Yaakov. Yitzhak loves Esav; Rivkah loves Yaakov.
- Years later, Yaakov buys the birthright (special privileges or responsibilities of the firstborn) from Esav and feeds him lentil stew.
- Yitzhak goes blind. He tells Esav that he is going to give him a בְּרָכָה (berakhah, blessing).
- Rivkah hears this, but she wants Yaakov to receive the berakhah. She tells Yaakov to wear Esav's clothes and puts goatskins on his arms so that they would feel like Esav's, which are hairy. Yaakov then goes to get the berakhah from Yitzhak.
- Yitzhak notices that his son sounds like Yaakov but has the hands of Esav, and Yitzhak gives him the berakhah.
- When Esav finds out what happened, he is very upset and says he will kill Yaakov.
- Rivkah hears what Esav said, and she and Yitzhak tell Yaakov to go to Rivkah's brother, Lavan.







מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

When is your personality determined?

The Torah describes Yaakov and Esav when they were growing inside Rivkah's belly:

Bereishit 25:22

The children fought within her

בראשית כה:כב

וַיִּתְרֹצְצוּ הַבָּנִים בְּקִרְבָּהּ



What does this mean?

Bereishit Rabbah 63:6

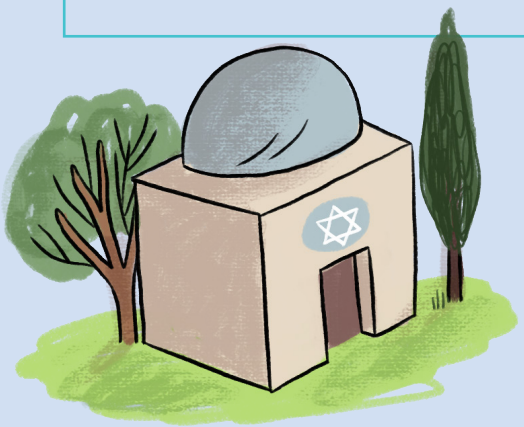
When she passed by houses of idolatry, Esav would struggle to get out—that's what is written, "Wicked people are devious from the womb" (Tehillim 58:4).

When she passed by synagogues and houses of study, Yaakov would struggle to get out—that's what is written, "Before I formed you in the belly I knew you; and before you came out of the belly I made you holy" (Yirmiyahu 1:5).

בראשית רבה סג:ו

עוֹבֶרֶת עַל בָּתֵּי עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה וְעֵשָׂו מְפַרְכֵּס לָצֵאת הֲדָא הוּא דִכְתִיב "זָרוּ רְשָׁעִים מֵרָחֶם" (תהלים נח:ד).

עוֹבֶרֶת עַל בָּתֵּי כְנֵסִיּוֹת וּבָתֵּי מִדְרָשׁוֹת וְיַעֲקֹב מְפַרְכֵּס לָצֵאת הֲדָא הוּא "בְּטֶרֶם אֶצָּרְךָ בַּבֶּטֶן" (ירמיה א:ה).



Our Rabbis often view Esav as a bad guy who loves idolatry, and Yaakov as a good guy who loves Torah. According to this midrash, the twins had their personalities even before they were born!



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- Do you have any interests or desires you've had your whole life? What is the midrash trying to teach us about Yaakov and Esav?
- If you've felt one way about something your whole life, is it possible to change?
- In this midrash, Yaakov is naturally good and Esav is naturally bad. Do you think good acts still count if they come naturally to you, or is it necessary to have to struggle for it? What about bad acts - can someone be blamed if doing bad comes naturally? Why?



פַּרְשָׁנוּת • Commentary

Bereishit 25:32

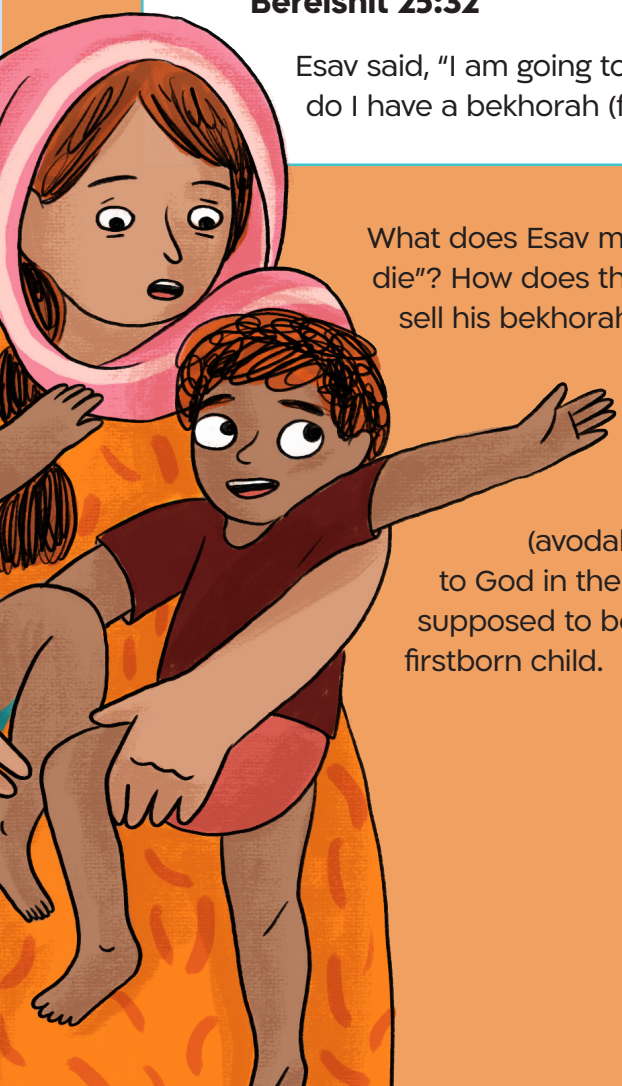
Esav said, "I am going to die, so for what do I have a bekhorah (firstborn rights)?"

בראשית כה:לב

וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ לָמוּת
וְלָמָּה זֶּה לִי בְּכֹרָה:

What does Esav mean when he says, "I am going to die"? How does this explain why he was so willing to sell his bekhorah to Yaakov?

Rashi suggests that Esav's comment was part of a conversation he was having with Yaakov about the עֲבוֹדָה (avodah, service) of offering sacrifices to God in the Beit Ha-Mikdash. This was supposed to be the responsibility of a firstborn child.





Rashi (France, 1,000 years ago)

Esav said: What's the nature of this avodah?

Yaakov said: Many warnings and punishments and death penalties are connected to it (if you don't do it properly).

Esav said: If I am going to die by it, why do I need it at all?

רש"י

אָמַר עֵשָׂו: מַה טִּיבָהּ שֶׁל עֲבוֹדָה זוֹ?

אָמַר לוֹ: כַּמָּה אַזְהָרוֹת וְעֹנָשִׁין וּמִיתוֹת תְּלוּיִין בָּהּ...

אָמַר: אֲנִי הוֹלֵךְ לָמוּת עַל יָדָהּ, אִם כֵּן מַה חֵפֶץ לִי בָּהּ?



Rashi thinks Esav is admitting that he's not spiritually ready to assume the responsibility of the bekhorah.

Rashbam sees it differently.

רשב"ם

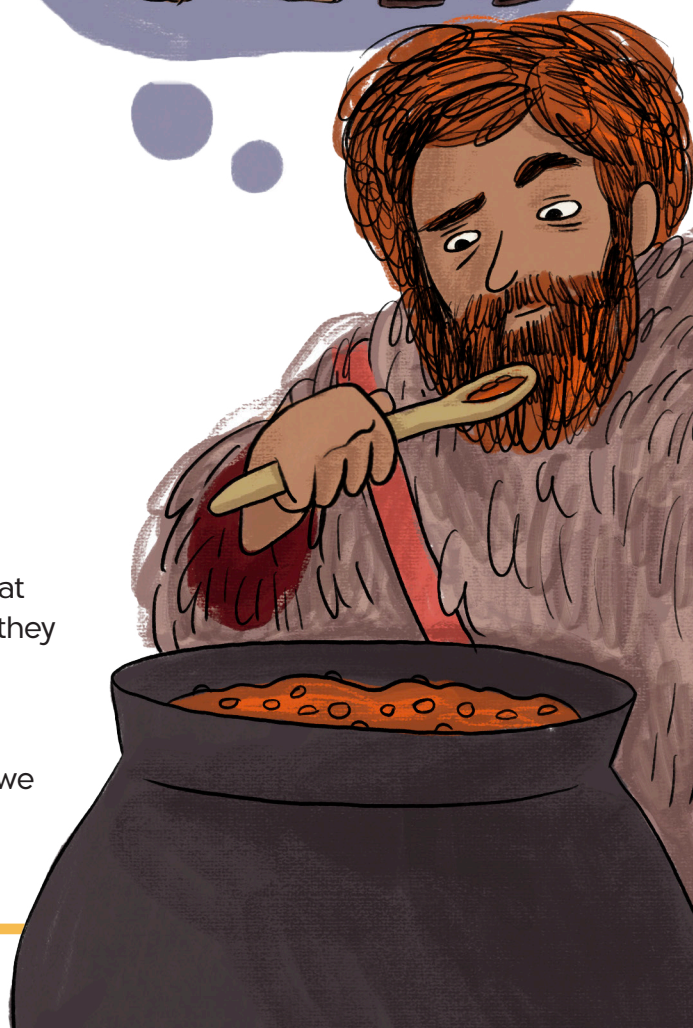
בְּכָל יוֹם אֲנִי הוֹלֵךְ לָצוּד חַיּוֹת בַּיְּעָרִים הַמְּצוּיִים שָׁם דֻּבִּים וַאֲרָיוֹת וְחַיּוֹת רָעוֹת וַאֲנִי מְסֻכָּן לָמוּת.

Rashbam (France, 950 years ago)

Every day I go hunting in the forests where there are bears and lions and other wild animals, so I'm in danger of dying any time.



According to Rashbam, Esav feels like he probably won't live long enough to enjoy the benefits of being the firstborn (like the double portion of inheritance when their father dies). He might as well exchange his rights to whatever he'll get later for something he can enjoy right now, like Yaakov's soup.



- What do these interpretations have in common? What do they teach us about Esav's personality? How are they different from each other?
- Can you find evidence for either interpretation in the pesukim that tell this story or from any other stories we know about Esav?



שְׁאֵלוֹת הַשָּׁבוּעַ • Parashah Scavenger Hunt

The answers to the first seven questions can be found in the matching numbered aliyah in the Torah reading. The answers to questions 8 and 9 are harder and can come from anywhere in the parashah. The answer to question 10 is in this week's haftarah.

aliyot:
1) Bereishit 25:19 to 26:5
2) 26:6 to 26:12
3) 26:13 to 26:22
4) 26:23 to 26:29
5) 26:30 to 27:27
6) 27:28 to 28:4
7) 28:5 to 28:9

haftarah: Malakhi 1:1 to 2:7

Good luck!



1. Where does God tell Yitzhak not to go?
2. What neighborhood in Yerushalayim is mentioned?
3. What are the names of the first three wells that Yitzhak digs?
4. What is the name of the town where Avimelekh lives?



5. Which two people say הִנֵּנִי (hineini, here I am)?
6. According to Yitzhak's blessing, what will Esav live on?
7. What are the two ways that Esav and Yishmael are related?
8. How many times does Rivkah tell Yaakov שְׁמַע בְּקֹלִי (shema b'koli, listen to my voice/what I'm saying)?
9. Two names are used to describe the place where Rivkah's brother, Lavan, lives. What are they?
10. **From the haftarah:** What line from the Hallel prayer appears here?

* Look for the answers on page 7!



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דַּקָּה שֶׁל דִּיּוּן • One-Minute Debate

Debate: Sibling rivalry is inevitable.

How to play:

Here are some arguments to get you started, but try to come up with your own. Then debate someone!

For a true one-minute debate, give each side 30 seconds to make its best case.





Agree!

- It's what happens when two or more people have to share the same parents.
- Yaakov and Esav aren't the only siblings in the Torah to have major conflicts. There's also Kayin and Hevel, and Yosef and his brothers. It's a regular part of life.



Disagree!

- If parents treat each child fairly, and give each child enough attention, sibling rivalry can be avoided. Yaakov and Rivkah chose favorites and that's where their family troubles began.
- Efrayim and Menashe seem to get along just fine. So peace is possible!

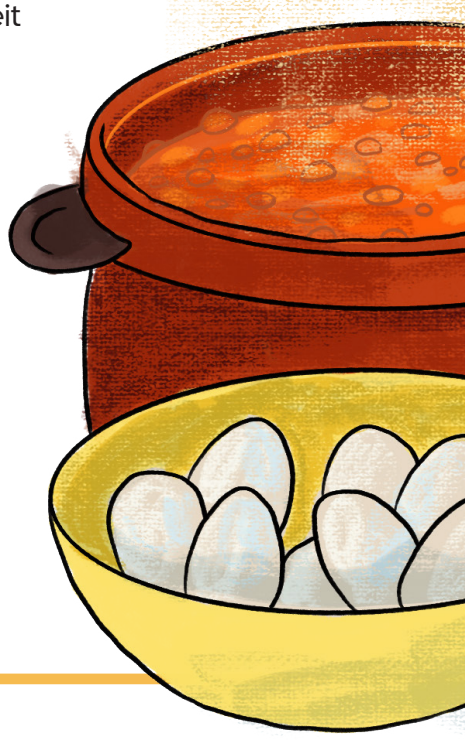


הַפְטָרָה • Haftarah

Malakhi was a prophet who lived about 2500 years ago, at the time of שִׁיבַת צִיּוֹן (shivat tziyon, the return to Zion/Yerushalayim). The Jewish people were coming back from גָּלוּת בָּבֶל (galut Bavel, the Babylonian exile), and beginning to serve God again in the second בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ (Beit Ha-Mikdash, Holy Temple).

Though shivat tziyon was a happy time, Malakhi points out that the עֲבוֹדָה (avodah, service) in the second Beit Ha-Mikdash had some major problems. The biggest issue was that the כֹּהֲנִים (kohanim, priests) weren't doing a good job. Malakhi says that they were making God's name profane by bringing unfit animals as sacrifices. He warns that God will send curses to kohanim who act this way, and that we owe it to God to do better because, after all, God showed great love to Yaakov, our ancestor, and completely rejected Esav.

Malakhi's message includes some words and phrases that echo בִּרְכַּת כֹּהֲנִים (birkat kohanim), the special prayer that God gave to Aharon and his sons for blessing Benei Yisrael (Bemidbar 6:24-26).



- Can you find words in the haftarah that connect to the שֹׁרֶשׁ (shoresh, root) א.ו.ר (light)?
- Can you find words in the haftarah that connect to the shoresh נ.ש.א (to lift)?
- Can you find the word שָׁלוֹם (shalom, peace) in the haftarah?
- Why might Malakhi have used these words and phrases? What's powerful about the way he connected his prophecy to birkat kohanim?

like in birkat kohanim:

יָאֵר ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וִיחֻנֶּךָּ

May God show a bright face to you and be gracious to you

like in birkat kohanim:

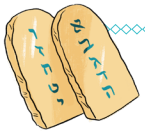
יִשָּׂא ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ

May God lift God's face toward you

like in birkat kohanim:

וְיָשֵׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם

and grant you shalom



הֲלָכָה • Halakhah



The Gemara explains that Yaakov was cooking lentil stew for Yitzhak because Yitzhak was mourning Avraham's death (Bavli Bava Batra 16b). Rashi explains that Yaakov chose to cook lentils because round foods have symbolic meaning for mourners.

Round foods can represent the idea that everyone in the world is sometimes impacted by sadness or mourning, just like each part of a wheel will at some point touch the ground. Another explanation is that round foods have no opening (no "mouth"), and it is customary for mourners to speak very little at the beginning of their mourning period (Bavli Moed Kattan 21b). It's really true - when you're sad, it can be very hard to talk about anything.

Mourners often eat round foods, such as hard boiled eggs or lentils, at the first meal following their relative's burial. This meal is known as the סְעוּדַת הַבְּרָאָה (Seudat Havra'ah) (Shulhan Arukh Yoreh Deah 378:9).



Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

1. Mitzrayim (26:2)
2. Me'ah She'arim (26:12)
3. Eisek, Sitnah, Rehovot (26:20-22)
4. Gerar (26:26)
5. Esav (27:1) and Yitzhak (27:18)
6. His sword (27:40)
7. Yishmael is Esav's uncle (his father Yitzhak's brother), and also his father-in-law (the father of his wife Mahalat) (28:9)
8. Three (27:8, 27:13, 27:43)
9. Haran (27:43) and Paddan-Aram (25:20)
10. מִמִּזְרַח שֶׁמֶשׁ וְעַד מְבוֹאוֹ (from where the sun rises to where it sets) (Malakhi 1:11; compare to Tehillim 113:3, the source for Hallel)

דִּקְדּוּק • Grammar

At the beginning of our parashah, we get two different versions of the same verb (action word) in the same verse:

Bereishit Rabbah 25:21

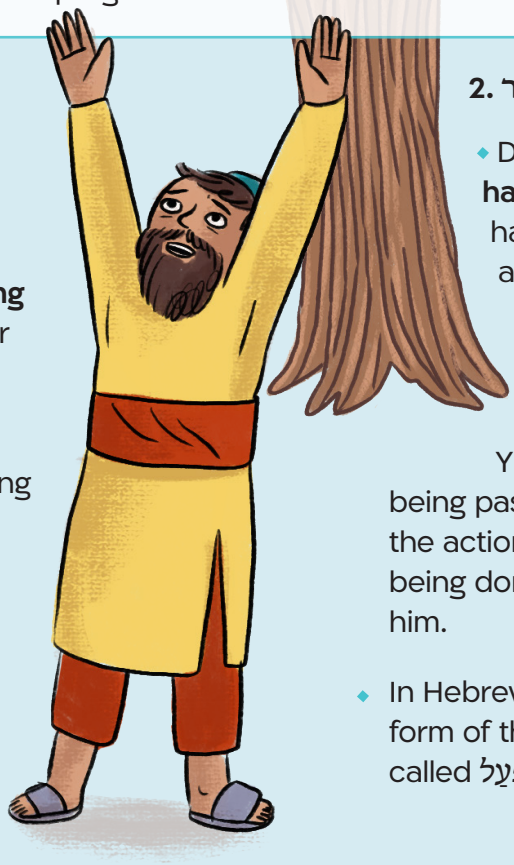
Yitzhak **pleaded (va-ye'etar)** with God on behalf of his wife, because she had no children;

and his **plea was answered (va-yay'ater)** for him by God, and his wife Rivkah became pregnant.

בראשית כה:כא

וַיֶּעְתַּר יִצְחָק לַה' לְנֹכַח אִשְׁתּוֹ
כִּי עֲקָרָה הִוא

וַיֵּעָתֶר לוֹ ה'
וַתַּהַר רִבְקָה אִשְׁתּוֹ׃



Both highlighted words come from the שֹׁרֶשׁ (shoresh, root) ע.ת.ר:

1. וַיֶּעְתַּר (va-ye'etar)

- Describes **Yitzhak doing something**: pleading or praying.
- This is an **active** verb, because Yitzhak is being active - he's doing the action.
- In Hebrew this form is called קַל (kal) or פָּעַל (pa'al).

2. וַיֵּעָתֶר (va-yay'ater)

- Describes **something happening to Yitzhak**: having his prayer answered.
- This is a **passive** verb, because Yitzhak is being passive - the action is being done to him.
- In Hebrew the form of the verb is called נִפְעַל (nif'al).



Here are a few other examples from our parashah and beyond:

PA'AL/KAL ACTIVE	NIF'AL PASSIVE
וַיַּרְא (va-yar, saw)	וַיֵּרָא (va-yeira, was seen)
שָׁבוּ (shavu, captured)	נִשְׁבּוּ (nishbu, were captured)
שָׁבַר (shavar, broke)	נִשְׁבַּר (nishbar, was broken)

Keep your eyes open for these kinds of words that take the same idea in two different directions!

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