

SHABBAT SHALOM. Today is 2 Kislev 5786, corresponding to November 22, 2035.

TORAH DIALOGUE
(p. 93 Hz) (p. 140 S) (p. 121 Hi) (p. 124 AS)

TOLDOT תולדות
Genesis 25:19
[Compiled by Rabbi Edward Davis]

1. "And these are the offspring of Yitzchak, son of Avraham; Avraham begot Yitzchak." (25:19). The obvious question is what the Torah is telling us with the latter clause. If Yitzchak is the son of Avraham, then obviously Avraham begot him. Rashi answers the question with the Midrash that says that there were people who suspected that maybe Avimelech was the father, since after many years of not conceiving, all of a sudden after being taken by Avimelech, Sarah becomes pregnant. So the Torah made it obvious by making Yitzchak look like Avraham. I would add that Yitzchak modeled his whole life after what he saw his father do. He referred to his wife as his sister. He dug the same wells in Philistine as his father. He entered into a peace treaty with Avimelech. He invited guests into his home and influenced them to monotheism. Every thing he did in his life was modeled after his father.

2. With the birth of Esav and Yaakov, their father Yitzchak had a warm spot in his heart for Esav. Yitzchak never saw deceit in his home. Rivkah, his wife, was brought up in a home filled with deceit. Therefore she could tell who was bad and who was good. Yitzchak never saw bad in Esav. Esav's wives had idols, but Yitzchak never saw Esav worship idols. And he never saw Esav doing anything bad or deceitful. Yitzchak knew that this son was a hunter and therefore risked his life when he went hunting, but that was no reason to suspect him of any wrongdoing. Esav was always respectful toward his father, and attentive to his father's needs. According to the Netziv, Rivkah could never communicate with her husband directly. (Oznaim L'Torah).

3. In the aftermath of Yitzchak's financial success in Philistine, Avimelech tells Yitzchak: Go away from us for you have become much mightier than we. (26:16). In the Talmud (Shabbat), the Gemara gives a verse to demonstrate the usage of the Final Letters in the Hebrew alphabet. The Talmud quotes this section of this verse to show the letter Mem. There are six letter Mems in this verse, but the irony is that none of them is a Final Mem. So what gives. I believe that the Gemara is telling us what will happen in the Final Days. The Jews of the world will return to Israel. They will come either as Avraham heard from Hashem "Go to

the Land", the Jews will hear the divine message to return to Israel. (That's the Final Letter Choff). Or they will be expelled from their host country. Today there is an organization that works as if the Jews heard the divine message: Nefesh B'Nefesh. Or they will feel persecuted and therefore the need to leave as in the case of the Soviet Jewry Aliyah or from Ethiopia, just like Yitzchak felt here in our Parshah. (RED)

4. Like he saw with his father, Esav decided to get married at the age of 40. He took two wives, which was common for those days. Yehudit and Basmat. Although Yehudit is a Jewish names, she was not a Jewish woman. Names can be deceiving. (think as in Whoopi Goldberg!). Back in Parshat Bereishit, the Torah records that Lemech had two wives: Adah and Tzilah. Rashi comments that one was for her beauty and would be the intimate soulmate to her husband. The second wife was for having children. Turns out that both wives bore children. So much for methods of birth control back then. Note also the Kli Yakar who wrote the reason Yaakov felt he can return home now to his homeland once Yosef was born. If Yaakov returned home before Yosef's birth, it would appear to all that Yaakov had two wives. One for child bearing: Leah. And one to be beautiful and nearby to her husband: Rachel.

5. After Yaakov received his father's blessing when Yaakov posed as Esav, Esav became furious and pledged that his plan was to kill Yaakov. Rivkah had the idea to send Yaakov to Lavan to acquire wives from within the family, and give time for Esav to calm down. She altered her plan a bit. She told Yaakov that she would send her handmaiden Devorah to call him back to Canaan when Esav calmed down. When that time came, decades later, why was Yaakov still afraid. Obviously Yaakov was still afraid since Yaakov felt that his return would rekindle the anger. [RED's note. I have seen in my career when siblings argue and decide to part ways. Twenty five years would go by with no contact. The separation of many years will cause each sibling to almost forget what the fight was about. But they remember that they still hate each other nevertheless.)

6. Near the end of the Parshah, Yitzchak sent Yaakov to Padan Aram, to Lavan, Rivkah's brother; Rivkah, the mother of Yaakov and Esav. (28:5). Rashi comments that he doesn't know what the Torah was telling us by noting that Rivkah was the mother of Yaakov and Esav. This was pedagogically correct in Rashi's method of commentary. He states these words about 7 or 8 times in the Chumash. I can think of an answer to Rashi's comment. What Sarah wanted Avraham to

expel Yishmael, we could accept her favoritism because Yitzchak was her son; Yishmael was not. But here,, Rivkah played favoritism to one son even though she was the mother of both of them. This was teach us that there was a real reason to why she favored Yaakov and rejected Esav. (RED)

7. The very end of the Parshah, the Torah states that Esav noted that his parents did not want their sons to marry Canaanite women, so Esav went and married Machalat, Yishmael's daughter. Later, in Parshat Vayishlach, the Torah records that Yishmael's daughter's name was actually Basmat. Rashi notes the Midrash that states three people have their sins forgiven. A convert when he converts to Judaism. A person who experiences an elevation in his position. And a person on the day of his marriage. The reason cited for the last case was Esav's marriage to Yishmael's daughter. The daughter referred to here as Machalat, the route of this Hebrew name means forgiveness.

8. MIDRASH. Yaakov tried desperately to buy the Birthright from Esav because he saw what kind of wicked person Esav was. He went hunting during the time of Avraham's funeral, his own grandfather. Yaakov felt that it was a terrible idea that this person would bring sacrifices on behalf of the entire family.

QUESTIONS FOR PARSHAT TOLDOT 5786

I. From the Text

1. How old was Yitzchak when he married Rivkah? (25:20)
2. Why did Yitzchak love Esav? (25:27)
3. What was the name of the well that Yitzchak dug that the Philistines did not argue with him? (26:22)
4. What was the reaction of Yitzchak and Rivkah when they saw whom Esav married? (25:35)
5. What convinced Yitzchak that Yaakov was Esav? (27:25)

II. From Rashi

6. After stating that Yitzchak was Avraham's son, why does the Torah add that Avraham sired Yitzchak? (25:19)
7. To whom did Rivkah go to ask about her difficult pregnancy? (25:22)
8. Where did Yaakov learn Torah? (25:27)
9. Why was Yaakov cooking lentils on the day that Esav came in hungry? (25:50)
10. What examples does Rashi give for a Chok, a divine decree that we do not understand why? (26:5)

III. From the Rabbis

11. According to the Ramban, why did Esav say that "I am going to die"?

12. What message is imparted by the Torah describing the Philistines stopping up the wells that Avraham had dug?

13. According to the Ramban, who did Yitzchak think was approaching him after he blessed Esav?

IV. MIDRASH.

14. When Yitzchak sent Yaakov to Aram to seek a wife, he gave him much wealth. What happened to these gifts?

V. Haftarah

15. What group of Jews will lead the Jewish people back to glory?

VI. Relationships

16.

- a) Oholimamah - Yehudit
- b) Esav - Amalek
- c) Zilpah - Asher
- d) Moshe - Uziel
- e) Chur - Betzalel

ANSWERS FOR PARSHAT TOLDOT 5786

1. 40 years old.
2. Because Esav always gave his father fresh meat to eat.
3. Rechovot
4. They felt that Esav was rebelling against them.
5. Because Yaakov's arms were hairy.
6. To tell us that Yitzchak was the spitting image of Avraham, rebuking what some said that Avimelech was really Yitzchak's father.
7. To Shem, Noach's son.
8. At the Yeshivah of Shem and Eiver.
9. Because on that day Avraham had died.
10. The prohibitions against eating pork and wearing Shatnez.
11. As a hunter, he was subject to constant danger.
12. The three wells symbolized the Holy Temples. The first two were stopped up due to strife. The Third Temple, to be built, will last forever.
13. Yitzchak thought that it was Yaakov, who came for a Berachah as well.
14. Esav had sent his son, Eliphaz, to chase after Yaakov and kill him. When caught, Yaakov convinced him to take all the gifts. Yaakov would become poor and a poor person is considered as if he were dead.
15. The Kohanim.
16.
 - a) The same person
 - b) Grandfather Esav
 - c) Mother Zilpah
 - d) Uncle Uziel. Uziel was the brother of Amram, Moshe's father.
 - e) Grandfather Chur