

Parsha QA



Parshat Toldot

For the week ending 4 Kislev 5760
12 & 13 November 1999

Parsha Questions

1. Why was it important that Yitzchak look like Avraham?
2. Why does the Torah stress that Rivka was Betuel's daughter and Lavan's sister?
3. What are the two differences between Tamar's pregnancy and Rivka's pregnancy?
4. Why was Esav named Esav?
5. Who gave Yaakov his name?
6. How did Esav deceive his father?
7. Why was Esav faint when he returned from the field?
8. Why are lentils a food for mourners?
9. What was the birthright that Yaakov bought from Esav?
10. Why was Yitzchak not permitted to go to Egypt?
11. Why did the Philistines plug up the wells?
12. Why did Yitzchak lose his sight? (three reasons)
13. At what age should one anticipate his own death?
14. Why did Rivka ask Yaakov to bring two kid goats?
15. Why did Esav leave his special garments with Rivka?
16. What fragrance did Yitzchak detect on Yaakov's garments?
17. What was the "fat of the land" promised to Esav?
18. When will Esav be freed from subjugation to Yaakov?
19. What inspired Esav to marry the daughter of Yishmael?
20. Knowing that Machalat was Yishmael's daughter, it's self-evident that she was the sister of Nevyot. Why, then, does the Torah state that Esav married "Yishmael's daughter, the sister of Nevyot?"

Kasha!

(*kasha means "question"*)

How would you answer this question on the Parsha?
"He (Yitzchak) said: 'The voice is Yaakov's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esav.' And he didn't recognize him, because his hands were hairy, like Esav's hands." (Bereishet 27:22-23)

How could Yitzchak be fooled by Yaakov's hairy hands? Didn't Yitzchak recognize that it was Yaakov based on his voice?

Answer: Esav knew that Yaakov might try to imitate him in order to get the blessings, and assumed that Yaakov would try to imitate his voice as well. So, in an attempt to preempt this possibility, Esav arranged with his father that

Esav would imitate Yaakov's voice when receiving the blessings. Yaakov foresaw this, and therefore used his regular voice.

Beit Halevi

I Did Not Know That!

"And he gave straw...for the camels...and food was placed before him to eat." (24:32-33)

From here we learn that a person should feed his animals before he himself eats.

Midrash Hagadol

Recommended Reading List

Ramban

- 25:23 Two Nations
- 26:1 Yitzchak in Exile
- 26:5 The Avot and Mitzvah Observance
- 26:20 The Wells and the Future
- 27:4 Rivka's Secret
- 27:33 Why Yitzchak Trembled

Sforno

- 25:24 Esav's Name
- 25:26 Yaakov's Name
- 27:1 Yitzchak's Blindness
- 27:29 Yaakov's Portion

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Answers to this Week's Questions

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated

1. 25:19 - So everyone would agree that Avraham was indeed his father.
2. 25:20 - To praise her, that even though her family was evil she was righteous.
3. 25:24 - Rivka gave birth at full term to two children, one righteous and one wicked. Tamar gave birth after seven months to two righteous children.
4. 25:25 - He was born fully developed. The name Esav is based on the Hebrew word for "made."
5. 25:26 - Hashem.
6. 25:27 - Esav deceived Yitzchak by asking questions that suggested that he was very strict in *mitzvah* observance.
7. 25:29 - From having murdered.
8. 25:30 - They are round like a wheel and mourning is like a revolving wheel that eventually touches everyone.
9. 25:31 - The right to bring sacrifices.
10. 26:2 - Through the *akeida* he had attained the status of a *korban* and was forbidden to leave *Eretz Canaan*.
11. 26:15 - They felt that either marauders would attack to capture the wells, or if attacking for other reasons, they would use the wells as a water supply.
12. 27:1 - a) From the smoke of the incense offered by Esav's wives to their idols; b) From the angel's tears which fell into Yitzchak's eyes at the time of the *akeida*; c) In order for Yaakov to receive the blessings.
13. 27:2 - When he reaches five years from the age his parents were when they passed away, until five years after.
14. 27:9 - One for Yitzchak and the other to offer as a *korban Pesach*.
15. 27:15 - He suspected that his wives might steal them.
16. 27:27 - The scent of *Gan Eden*.
17. 27:36 - Italy.
18. 27:40 - When the Jewish People transgress the Torah.
19. 28:7 - Seeing that his father despised his current wives, he resolved to take a wife from his father's family.
20. 28:9 - To indicate that Yishmael died between her betrothal and her wedding, and that it was Nevayot who gave his sister in marriage to Esav. Knowing the date of Yishmael's death, we can determine the date of Esav's marriage and thus Yaakov's age, 63, at the time of his flight from Esav.