

# מאמרי תורה – Torah Talk



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**Parashat Toldot**  
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**פרשת תולדות**  
**ב' בכסלו תשע"ט**

Torah Reading: *Bereshit* (Genesis) 25:19-28:9

In this *parasha*, Rivka gives birth to twins, Esav and Yaakov, who struggle with each other, and Yaakov engages in bargaining and deception to obtain the birthright and Yitzchak's blessing.

The word שדה – *sadeh* (field) appears four times in the two chapters of this *parasha* that deal with the relationships in the Jacobite family. It occurs three times in the context of Yitzchak's connection to Esav:

כה: כז וַיִּגְדְּלוּ, הַנְּעָרִים, וַיְהִי עֲשׂוֹ אִישׁ יָדַע צִיד, אִישׁ שָׂדֵה; וַיַּעֲקֹב אִישׁ תָּם, יוֹשֵׁב אֹהֳלִים. כח וַיֶּאֱהָב יִצְחָק אֶת-עֲשׂוֹ, כִּי-צִיד בְּפִיו; וַרְבֵּקָה, אֲהַבְתָּ אֶת-יַעֲקֹב.

**25:27** And the boys grew; and Esav was a cunning hunter, a man of the **field**; and Yaakov was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. **28** Now Yitzchak loved Esav, because he did eat of his venison; and Rivka loved Yaakov.

כז: א וַיְהִי כִּי-זָקֵן יִצְחָק, וַתִּכְהֶינּוּ עֵינָיו מֵרָאִת; וַיִּקְרָא אֶת-עֲשׂוֹ בְּנֵו הַגָּדֹל, וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו בְּנִי, וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו, הֲנִנִּי. ב וַיֹּאמֶר, הִנֵּה-נָא זִקְנָתִי; לֹא יָדַעְתִּי, יוֹם מוֹתִי. ג וְעַתָּה שָׂא-נָא כְּלִיד, תִּלְיִד וְקִשְׁתֶּךָ; וַיֵּצֵא, הַשָּׂדֵה, וַצֹּדֵה לִי, צִיד.

**27:1** And it came to pass, that when Yitzchak was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esav his elder son, and said to him: 'My son'; and he said to him: 'Here I am.' **2** And he said: 'Behold now, I am old, I do not know the day of my death. **3** Now therefore,

please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the **field**, and catch me venison;

כּוֹזֵב וְיִגָּשׁ, וְיִשְׁק-לוֹ, וְיִרַח אֶת-רֵיחַ בְּגָדָיו, וְיִבְרַכְהוּ; וַיֹּאמֶר, רְאֵה רֵיחַ בְּנִי,  
כְּרֵיחַ שָׂדֵה, אֲשֶׁר בְּרַכּוֹ ה'.

**27:27** And he [Yitzchak] came near, and kissed him [Yaakov, thinking it was Esav]. And he smelled the smell of his clothing and blessed him, and said: See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a **field** which Hashem has blessed.

It is understandable that Yitzchak would be drawn to Esav and his wide-open world of the field. After Yitzchak's sanctification on the altar during *Akeidat Yitzchak*, the binding of Isaac, his life became narrow. He never left the Holy Land; the Torah does not record any travels other than replicating his father's sojourns in Gerar. Further, as his eyesight faded, his world became even more constricted. Esav, by contrast, was a man of the field; the vast expanse of the world was open to him. Yitzchak could hear about it, taste it, and smell it.

But it was Esav's connection to the field that began his downward spiral in relation to the birthright:

כּוֹזֵב וְיִזָּד יַעֲקֹב, נָזִיד; וַיָּבֵא עֵשׂוֹ מִן-הַשָּׂדֵה, וְהוּא עָיִף. ל וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשׂוֹ אֶל-  
יַעֲקֹב, הֲלֵעִיטִנִּי נָא מִן-הָאֲדָם הָאֲדָם הַזֶּה--כִּי עָיִף, אֲנֹכִי; עַל-כֵּן קָרָא-  
שְׁמוֹ, אֶדּוֹם. ל א וַיֹּאמֶר, יַעֲקֹב: מַכְרָה כִּיּוֹם אֶת-בְּכֹרְתְךָ, לִי. ל ב וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשׂוֹ,  
הֲנִה אֲנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ לָמוּת; וְלָמָּה-זֶּה לִי, בְּכֹרָה.

**27:29** And Yaakov cooked stew; and Esav came in from the **field**, and he was faint. **30** And Esav said to Yaakov: 'Let me swallow, please, some of this red, red stew; for I am faint.' Therefore was his name called Edom [the Hebrew word for "red"]. **31** And Yaakov said: 'Sell me first your birthright.' **32** And Esav said: 'Behold, I am at the point to die; and what profit shall the birthright do to me?'

As we see in these verses, it was the fatigue of being a hunter in the field that devalued the birthright in Esav's eyes.

This episode opened the door for Yaakov to deceive his father and receive the blessing of the firstborn as well as the birthright. And the blessing Yaakov received

was the blessing of the field – which makes sense, because Yitzchak thought he was giving the blessing to Esav: “--וְיִתְּן-לְךָ, הָאֵל-לְהִים, מְטַל הַשָּׁמַיִם וּמִשְׁמַנֵּי הָאָרֶץ--” 27:28 May Hashem give you of the dew of heaven, and of the fat places of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine.” Esav conversely receives the “leftover” blessing, in which “the fat places of the earth shall be your dwelling, and of the dew of heaven from above; and by your sword you shall live...”

By the end of the *parasha*, Yaakov has become the “man of the field” and Esav has become a nomad.

In next week’s *parasha*, Yaakov proves himself an able farmer when working for Lavan. Thus, by the close of the story, the real “man of the field” has ended up carrying on the traditions of Yitzchak, his father.

Shabbat Shalom.

For Discussion:

- Both major stories about the birthright revolve around food – the lentil stew and food for Yitzchak. Why do you think this is? How does it relate to the frequent appearance of the “field”?