<u>Torah in Motion Parsha Shiur 5784 Parshat Toldot: What Does It Mean to Struggle</u> <u>with Jacob?</u>

Source Sheet by Sofia Freudenstein, sfreudenstein@yeshivatmaharat.org

The Pain of Esav

Genesis 27:36-38

(36) [Esau] said, "Was he, then, named Jacob that he might supplant**supplant Heb.* 'aqab, connected with "Jacob." me these two times? First he took away my birthright and now he has taken away my blessing!" And he added, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?" (37) Isaac answered, saying to Esau, "But I have made him master over you: I have given him all his brothers for servants, and sustained him with grain and wine. What, then, can I still do for you, my son?" (38) And Esau said to his father, "Have you but one blessing, Father? Bless me too, Father!" And Esau wept aloud.

בראשית כייז:לייו-לייח

(לו) וַיֹּאֶמֶר הַכִּי⁰ קָרָּא שְׁמֹוֹ יַצְאָֹב וְיֵּאָקְבַנִיֹ זֶה פַּצְמִים אֶת־בְּכֹרְתִי לָלֶח וְהַנָּה עַחָּה לָקָח בְּרְכָתֵי וַיֹּאמֵר הַלֹא־אָצַלְתָּ לֵי בָּרָכָה: (לז) וַיַּצַן יִצְחָק וַיֹּאמֶר לְצַשָּׁו הֵן גְּבִיר שַׂמְתִיו לָה וְאֶת־כָּל־אָחָיו נַתַּתִי לוֹ לַצְבָדִים וְדָגָן וְתִירָשׁ סְמַרְתֵיו וּלְכָה אֵפוֹא מָה אֶצֶשָׁה בְּנִי: (לח) וַיֹּאמֶר צַשִׁו אֶל־אָבִיו הַכְרָכָה אַחַת הוּא־לְדּ אָבִי בָּרְכַנִי גַם־אָנִי אָבֵי וַיִּאָלָא צַעָּון קלו וַיֵּרָהָ:

Bereshit Rabbah 67:4

"When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out, a very great and bitter cry, and he said to his father: Bless me too, my father" (Genesis 27:34).

"When Esau heard the words of his father" – Rabbi Ḥanina said: Anyone who says that the Holy One blessed be He is lax, may his intestines become lax. Rather, He shows patience and collects His due. Jacob caused Esau to cry out one cry, as it is written: "When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out." Where did He punish him [Jacob]? It was in the Shushan citadel, as it is stated: "[When Mordekhai learned what had happened...] and cried out an exceedingly loud and bitter cry" (Esther 4:1).

How Did We Get Here?

Genesis 25:27-34

(27) When the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the outdoors; but Jacob became a mild man, raising livestock.**raising livestock* Heb. yoshev 'ohalim; NJPS "who stayed in camp," lit. "a sitter in tents." The idiom for a pastoralist; cf. 4.20.

בראשית רבה ס״ז:די

כּשְׁמֹעַ עֵשָׁו אֶת דְּבְרֵי אָבִיו (בראשית כז, לד), אָמַר רַבִּי חַנִינָא כָּל מִי שָׁהוּא אוֹמֵר שָׁהַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּהְ הוּא וַתְּרָן הוּא יַתְוַתְרוּן בְּנֵי מְעוֹהִי, אֶלָּא מַאֲרִיה אַפֵּיה וְגָבֵי דִּילֵיה, וְעָקָה אַחַת הַזְעִיק יַעֲקֹב לְעֵשָׂו, דְּרָתִיב: חַזְעָקָה, וְהֵיכָן נִפְרַע לוֹ בְּשׁוּשַׁן הַבִּירָה, שֶׁנֶאֲמַר (אסתר ד, א): הַדִּיןַעַק וְעָקָה גְדוֹלָה וּמֶרָה עַד מְאֹד.

בראשית כייה:כייז-לייד

(כז) וִיּגְדְלוֹ הַנְּעָרִים וַיְהָי עֵשָׁו אֵישׁ יֹדֵעַ אַיִד אַישׁ שָׂבָה וְיַעַקֹב אִישׁ תָם ישֵׁב אָהָלִים: (כח) וַיֶּאֲהַב יִצְחָק אֶת־עַשָּו כִּי־צַיִד כְּפֵיו וְרַבְקָה אָהָבֶת אֶת־יַעַקֹב:

(28) Isaac favored Esau because he had a taste for game;*he had a כט) וַיָּזֶד יַעֵקֹב נָזֵיד וַיָּבָא עֵשָׂו מִן־הַשָּׂדָה (כט) taste for game Lit. "game was in his mouth." but Rebekah favored וְהָוּא עֵיֵף: (ל) וַיּּאמֶר עֵשָׂו אֶל־יַעֵקֹב הַלְעִיטֵנִי נָא מִן־הָאָדָם הָאָדם הַזֶּה כִּי עַיַף from the open, famished. (30) And Esau said to Jacob, "Give me אַגָּכִי עַל־כֵּן קַרָא־שָׁמָו אָדָוֹם: (לא) some of that red stuff to gulp down, for I am famished"-which is וַיָּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב מִכְּרָה כַיָּוֹם אֶת־בְּכָׂרְתָדָ לִי: (לב) וַיָּאמֶר עֵשָּׁו הָנָה אַנֹכִי הוֹלֵך לָמָוּת Jacob said, "First sell me your birthright." (32) And Esau said, "I וְלָמָּה־זֶּה לֵּי בְּכִרְה: (לג) וַיָּאמֶר יַעֲלְב am at the point of death, so of what use is my birthright to me?" הַשָּׁבְעָה לְּי כַּיּוֹם וַיִּשָּׁבַע לְוֹ וַיָּמְכָּר (33) But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore to him, and אֶת־בְּכֹרָתָוֹ לְיַעֵּקְׂב: (לד) וְיַעֵּקְׁב נָתַן ַלְעֵשָּׁו לֶחֶם וּנְזַיִד עֲדָשִים וַיָּאכַל וַבּּשְׁת sold his birthright to Jacob. (34) Jacob then gave Esau bread and וַיָּקֵם וַיָּלֵך וַיָּבֶז עֵשָׂו אֶת־הַבְּכִרָה: {פ}

Sforno on Genesis 25:34:1

did Esau spurn the birthright.

ויעקב נתן לעשו, he had used the lentils or the dish containing them as the קנין חליפין, a token used to serve as symbol of the transfer of ownership of the object constituting the one being sold. Compare Ruth 4,7 where a shoe is mentioned as serving as such a token.

Jacob. (29) Once when Jacob was cooking a stew, Esau came in

why he was named Edom.* Edom Play on Heb. 'adom "red." (31)

lentil stew; he ate and drank, and he rose and went away. Thus

Sforno on Genesis 25:34:2

Eisov scorned the birthright. Even after the sale he did not consider the birthright to be worth the money he received for it. Therefore it is not correct to say that he was cheated.

Berakhot 7b:6-8

Tangential to the mention of Leah's son, Judah, and the reason for his name, the Gemara explains the sources for other names, including Reuben. Rabbi Elazar said: Reuben's name should be considered a prophecy by Leah, as Leah said: See [re'u] the difference between my son [beni] and the son of my father-in-law, Esau, son of Isaac. Even though Esau knowingly sold his birthright to his brother Jacob, as it is written: "And he sold his birthright to Jacob" (Genesis 25:33), nonetheless, behold what is written about him: "And Esau hated Jacob" (Genesis 27:41). Esau was not only angry over Isaac's blessing, but he was angry about another matter as well, as it is written: "And he said, 'Is he not rightly named Jacob, for he has supplanted me twice? He took my birthright, and behold, now he has taken my blessing'" (Genesis 27:36). Despite having sold his birthright, he refused to relinquish it. While

ספורנו על בראשית כ״ה:ל״ד:א׳

ויעקב נתן לעשו. לקנות בקנין חליפין בנזיד או בכלי אשר בו הנזיד על דרך שלף איש נעלו ונתן לרעהו:

ספורנו על בראשית כ״ה:ל״ד:ב׳

ויבז עשו את הבכורה. גם אחר מעשה היתה הבכורה בעיניו בלתי ראויה לאותו המחיר שפסקו ובכן התבאר שלא נתאנה המוכר כי לא היה הממכר שוה אצלו כל כך:

ברכות זי ב:וי-חי

רְאוּבֵן. אַמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר: אַמָרָה לֵאָה: רְאוּ מָה בֵּין בָּנִי לְבֶן חָמִי. דְאִילוּ בֵּן חָמִי, אַף עַל גַּב דְּמִדַּעְתֵּיה זַבְּנֵיה לְבָכֵירוּתֵיה, דְּכָתִיב: ״וַיָּמָכֹר אֶת בְּכֹרַתוֹ לְיַעֵּקֹב״, חֲזוֹ מָה כְּתִיב בֵּיה: ײַוַיִּשְׂטֹם עֵשָׂו אֶת יַעֵּקֹב״. וּכְתִיב: ״וַיֹּאמֶר הַכִי קָרָא שָׁמוֹ יַעֲקֹב וַיַּעָקְבָנִי זֶה פַּעֵמַיִם״ וְגוֹ׳. וְאִילּוּ בִּנִי, אַף עַל גַּב דְעַל כַּרְחֵיה שֵׁקְלֵיה יוֹסֵף לְבְכֵירוּתֵיה מִנֵּיה, דְּכְתִיב: ״וּבְחַלְלוֹ יִצוּעֵי אַבִיו נִתְּנָה בְּכֹרֵתוֹ לְבָנֵי יוֹסֵף״, אֲפִילּוּ הָכִי — לָא אָקַנָּא בֵּיה, דְּכָתִיב: ״וַיִּשְׁמַע רָאוּבֶן וַיַּצְּלֵהוּ מִיָּדָם״.

my son, Reuben, even though Joseph took his birthright from him by force, as it is written: "And the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, for he was the firstborn; but, since he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph, son of Israel" (I Chronicles 5:1). Nevertheless, he was not jealous of him, as it is written when Joseph's brothers sought to kill him: "And Reuben heard and he saved him from their hands, saying 'Let us not take his life'" (Genesis 37:21).

Sotah 11a:11

Alternatively, there is an additional way to punish the Egyptians with water: He does not bring a flood upon them, but they may come and fall into water, and so it says: "And the sea returned to its strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled toward it; and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea" (Exodus 14:27), indicating that the Egyptians fell into the water. And this is what Rabbi Elazar says: What is the meaning of that which is written: "Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods, for in that which they conspired [*zadu*] against them" (Exodus 18:11)? The phrase means: In the pot in which they cooked, they themselves were cooked, as they were punished through drowning, measure for measure, for drowning the Jewish babies. The Gemara asks: From where may it be inferred that this word "*zadu*" is a term meaning a pot? The Gemara answers: As it is written: "And Jacob simmered a pot [*vayyazed Ya'akov nazid*]" (Genesis 25:29).

Beit HaLevi on Torah, Toldot 8

SELL ME YOUR BIRTHRIGHT TODAY - (Our sages) have already inquired how it is proper (for Jacob) to entice his brother to sell the birthright, in particular, for lentils. It is certainly not the case that he intended to gain the right to the (firstborn's double share of) the estate; also, who even knows whether prior to the giving of the Torah it was customary that the firstborn received a double share of the inheritance. The benefit of the birthright at that time was apparently a sign of virtue and the right to carry on the family name (literally, "to rise to his father's name".) The scripture already stated, "through Isaac your heirs will be named" (with regards to Abraham, Bereishit 21:12) and our sages learned "in Isaac" and not "all of Isaac," meaning that the one who holds on to Isaac's (righteous) ways has the pedigree to carry on the family name. After (the sale) Esau went out to a bad culture that very day, and therefore to Esau there was no difference whether he had the birthright or not, since how could he rightly be called "firstborn" if he couldn't be called (Isaac's) "son" (as a result of his decision to

סוטה יייא א:יייא

אִי נָמֵי: הוּא אֵינוֹ מֵבִיא, אֲבָל הֵן בָּאִין וְנוֹפְלִין בְּתוֹכוֹ. וְכֵן הוּא אוֹמֵר: "וּמִצְרַים נָסִים לְקָרָאתוֹ". וְהַיִינוּ דְּאָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר: מַאי דְּרָתִיב "כִּי בַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר זָדוּ עֵלֵיהֶם" — בַקְדֵירָה שֶׁבִּישָׁלוּ, בָּה נַתְבַּשְׁלוּ. מַאי מַשְׁמַע דְהַאי "זָדוּ" לִישָׁנָא דְקָדֵירָה הוּא — דְּכְתִיב: "וַיָּזֶד יַעֵלֵב נָזִיד".

בית הלוי על התורה, תולדות חי

מכרה כיום את בכורתך לי. הנה כבר חקרו היאך נכון לפתות לאחיו למכור הבכורה ובפרט בעד עדשים. והענין דודאי לא על ממון ירושה היה הכוונה וגם מי יודע אם גם אז קודם מתן תורה היה נוהג שהבכור נוטל פי שנים. וענין הבכור לפי הנראה היה אז רק לענין מעלה ולקום על שם אביו. והנה הכתוב אמר כי ביצחק יקרא לך זרע ודרשו ביצחק ולא כל יצחק, וזהו האוחז מעשיו יהיה מיוחס להקרא בנו. ואחרי כי עשו יצא לתרבות רעה באותו יום וא"כ אין שום נ"מ לעשו בבכורה כי איך יקרא בכור אחרי שאינו נקרא גם בן. וכל בכורתו של עשו אינו רק להחסיר ליעקב שהוא לא יהיה בכור אבל לעשו אינו מעלה כלל, וזהו שביקש יעקב engage in bad behavior.) The only benefit to Esau in having the birthright was to deprive Jacob of it so that he did not have the birthright; Esau so no positive benefit for himself in it. That is the reason Jacob asked Esau to sell it, since Esau did not lose anything in the sale and Jacob had benefit from the sale. This is also why Esau said, "why do I need the birthright" – he stated that it made no difference at all to him whether he had the birthright, since he had no desire at all to be (Isaac's) son (i.e., to live up to the family name.) This is the reason the scripture states among the attributes of Israel, "Israel, my son, my firstborn." (Shemot 4:22) Apparently, the word "firstborn" already implies "son" (so why the redundant language?) This language is coming only to repudiate Esau – that Israel has two positive attributes, "son" and also "firstborn," whereas Esau was not content to spurn the birthright, he also spurned being Isaac's son.

Derashot HaRan 2:35

And the acts, too, which they participated in were geared to arouse hatred and envy. First (in this connection), Jacob's strange appropriation of Esau's birthright demands explanation. For how could Jacob, the "simple man," ask Esau to sell his birthright to him for a mess of lentils? In general, this episode raises many questions. First, how could this righteous man desire what is not his and tell his neighbor: "Sell me your inheritance?" Second, how could he so cheat him as to take such a noble birthright for such a cheap, shameful price? Even if Esau, in his ignorance, would consent to such a thing, Jacob should counter his corruption and not cheat him in this unheard of manner. And even if we grant that the selling of the birthright had no monetary implications at all, that the first-born's receiving a double portion was something originated by the Torah, never having obtained before, and that the selling of the birthright had implications of honor alone — that the younger brother receive the honor due the elder — it still does not seem befitting of Jacob to ask Esau to exchange his honor for something worthless. And even if we adopt that view which holds that the birthright was sold not for a mess of lentils but for its full value, the chain of events leading to the sale is still very difficult to follow. For if Jacob evinced a desire for the birthright, there should have been a cogent mediating catalyst causing Esau to accede to the transference of his honor to Jacob for full payment. But for Esau to come back weary from hunting, to ask for something to "restore his soul," and for Jacob to exploit this to snatch away his birthright — this, indeed, demands explanation.

ממנו שימכור אותה לו דהרי הוא זה נהנה וזה לא חסר, וזהו ג"כ שהשיב לו עשו ולמה זה לי בכורה, אמר דלו אין שום נ"מ בהבכורה כלל אחרי שאין ברצונו להיות בנו כלל. וזהו שאמר הכתוב במעלות ישראל בני בכורי ישראל, ולכאורה במלת בכורי הרי ישראל, ולכאורה במלת בכורי הרי לעשו ואמר דלישראל יש שני המעלות דהם בני וגם בכורי, ובא לשלול לעשו דלא די שאינו בכור רק אינו גם בן כלל:

דרשות הר''ן בי:ל״ה

גם המעשים אשר היו ביניהם, היו ראויים לסבב ביניהם שנאה וקנאה. ראשונה, אשר לקח יעקב בכורת עשו בענין זר מאד צריך ישוב, כי איך היה מחק יעקב איש תם, לאמר לעשו שימכור אליו בכורתו בנזיד עדשים. וכבר כלל זה המעשה תמיהות רבות, ראשונה כי אין בחוק השלם שיתן עיניו במה שאינו שלו לומר לרעהו מכרה נחלתך לי. ושנית איך יונהו לקחת ממנו בכורה נכבדה במחיר בזוי ושסוי, כי עם היות יסכים בזה עשו לסכלותו, כבר היה ראוי ליעקב לתקן עותו, ולא יונהו אונאה מרובה אין ערוך אליה. כי אם שנניח שמכירת הבכורה לא היתה נוגעת לדבר ממון כלל, אבל לקיחת הבכור פי שנים הוא דבר חידשה אותו התורה לא היה כו לעולמים, ושמכירת הבכורה לא היה דבר כי אם לכבוד לבד שיכבד הצעיר הכבוד הראוי לבכור, עדין לא יראה שיאות ליעקב לאמר לעשו שימיר כבודו בלא יועיל. ואם שנניח כדברי האומר שמכירת הבכורה לא היה נזיר עדשים אבל כסף רב כערכה, עדין יקשה הסדר והגלגול אשר בו נתגלגל דבר מכירת הבכורה, כי אם היה יעקב נותן עיניו בה, היה ראוי להיות(ם) מליץ ביניהם, מעורר עשו מצד יעקב [ש]יתן אליו כבודו בכסף מלא, אבל כשיבא עשו מצידו עיף מבקש ממנו אוכל להשיב נפשו, ושעל זה יתעורר יעקב לצוד את בכורתו לקחתה, זה מאד צריך ישוב.

Kiddushin 8b:12-9a:3

The Gemara discusses a similar case. If a man said to a woman: Be betrothed to me with a loaf of bread, and she said to him: Give it to a dog, she is not betrothed. And if this dog was hers, she is betrothed. Rav Mari raises a dilemma: If a dog was chasing her to bite her, and she said to him: Give the loaf to the dog, what is the halakha? The Gemara presents the two sides of the dilemma: Does one say that she commits herself to betrothal and transfers herself to him through this benefit that she receives by being rescued from the dog? Or perhaps she can say to him: By Torah law you are required to rescue me, due to the injunction: "Neither shall you stand idly by the blood of your neighbor" (Leviticus 19:16), and therefore she is not betrothed with the loaf because she does not owe him anything. This problem is also left unanswered, and the Gemara again states that the dilemma shall stand unresolved. If a man said to a woman: Be betrothed to me with a loaf of bread, and she said: Give it to a poor person, she is not betrothed, even if it was a poor person who is dependent upon her, i.e., a poor person who regularly receives food from that woman. What is the reason for this? She could say to him: Just as I am required to give charity to him, so too you are required to give charity to him. Therefore, this donation is not an indication that she has agreed to the betrothal. The Gemara relates: There was a certain man who was selling beads [humrei] of glass [petakhyata]. A certain woman came and said to him: Give me one string. He said to her: If I give you this string will you be betrothed to me with it? She said to him: Give, give. Rav Hama said: Any use of the expression: Give, give, is nothing. Although she said: Give, give, she did not agree to the condition, as she was mocking him and had no intention of actually becoming betrothed. The Gemara relates a similar incident: There was a certain man who was drinking wine in a store. A woman came in and said to him: Give me one cup of wine. He said to her: If I give you a cup of wine will you be betrothed to me with it? She said to him: Give to drink, give it to me to drink. Rav Hama said that any use of the expression: Give to drink, give it to me to drink, is nothing, i.e., she certainly did not intend to accept the condition and she is not betrothed. The Gemara further relates: There was a certain man who was picking dates from a date tree. A certain woman came and said to him: Throw me two. He said to her: If I throw two dates to you will you be betrothed to me with them? She said to him: Throw, throw. Rav Zevid said: Any use of the expression: Throw, throw, is nothing, and she is not betrothed.

קידושין חי ב:יייב-טי א:גי

״הָתָקַדְּשִׁי לִי בִּכִפַּר״ – ״תִּנֵהוּ ּלְכֶלֶב״ – אֵינָה מְקוּדֵּשֶׁת. וְאָם הַיָה כַּלֶב שֶׁלָּה – מְקוּדֶּשֶׁת. בַּעֵי רַב מַרִי: כָּלֶב רָץ אַחֲרֵיהָ, מַהוּ? בּהָהוּא הַנָאָה דְקָא מַצְּלָה נַפִּשָׁה מִינֵיה גַּמְרָה וּמַקְנָיָא לֵיה נַפִּשָׁה, אוֹ דַלְמָא מָצֵי אָמָרָה לֵיה: יִמִדְאוֹרַיִיתָא חַיּוֹבֵי מְחַיִּיבַתִּ לַאֲצוּלַן״? הֵיקוּ. ״הָתְקַדְּשִׁי לִי בְּכַבָּר״ – ״הָנֵהוּ לְעַנִי״ – אֵינָה מָקוּדֶּשֶׁת, אֲפִילּוּ עַנִי הַסָּמוּךָ עַלֶיהָ. מַאי טַעָמָא? אָמָרָה לֵיהּ: כִּי הֵיכִי דַמְחַיֵּיבְנַא בֵּיה אַנַא, הַכִי מְחַיִּיבַתָּ בֵּיה אַתְ. הָהוּא גַּבְרָא דַהָוָה קָא מุזַבֵּין חוּמָרֵי פָּתַכִיָתָא. אֲתַאי הָהִיא אִיתִּתָא, אֲמַרָה לֵיה: ״הַב לִי חַד שׂוֹכָא״. אֲמַר לַה: ״אָי יָהַבִינָא לִיךְ מִיקֵּדְשֵׁתָּ לִי״? אֲמֵרָה לִיה: ״הַבָה מֵיהֲבָה״. אָמַר רַב חָמָא: כֹּל ״הַבָה מֵיהַבָה״ לָאו כּּלוּם הוּא. הָהוּא גַּבְרָא דַהָוָה קָא שָׁתֵי חַמָרָא בָּחָנוּתָא. אֲתַאי הָהִיא אִיתָּתָא, אַמַרָה לֵיה: ״הַב לִי חַד כָּסָא״. אַמַר לַהּ: ״אָי יָהֵיבְנָא לִידְ מִיקֵדְשַׁתָּ לִי״? אַמַרָה לֵיה: יאַשָּקוֹיֵי אַשָּקיַיִן״. אַמַר רַב חָמָא: כּל ״אַשָׁקוֹיֵי אַשָּקיַין״ לָאו כָּלוּם הוא. הָהוּא גַּבְרָא דַהָוָה קָא שָׁדֵי תַּמְרֵי מִדְקָלָא. אֲתַאי הָהִיא אִיתִּתָא, אֲמַרָה לֵיה: ״שָׁדִי לִי הַרְהֵי״! אַמַר לַה: ״אָי שָׁדֵינָא לִידְ מִיקַדְשַׁתִּ לִי״? אֲמַרָה לֵיה: ״שָׁדִי מִישְׁדָּא״. אַמַר רַב זְבִיד: כֹּל ״שִׁדִי מִישָׁדַא״ לָאו כָּלוּם הוּא.

Shabbat 88a:5

The Gemara cites additional homiletic interpretations on the topic of

שבת פייה א:הי

ײַוַיָּתְיַצְּבוּ בְּתַחְתִּית הָהָר״, אָמַר

the revelation at Sinai. The Torah says, "And Moses brought forth the רַב אַבִדִּימִי בַּר חַמַא בַּר חַסַא: מִלַמֵּד שֶׁכָּפָה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךָ הוּא lowermost part of the mount" (Exodus 19:17). Rabbi Avdimi bar עַלֵיהֶם אֶת הָהָר כְּגִיגִית, וְאָמַר Hama bar Hasa said: the Jewish people actually stood beneath the לַהֶם: אָם אַתֵּם מִקַבָּלִים הַתּוֹרָה mountain, and the verse teaches that the Holy One, Blessed be He, מוּטָב, וָאָם לָאו — שָׁם תִּהָא overturned the mountain above the Jews like a tub, and said to קבוּרַתְכֵם. אַמַר רַב אַחַא בַּר them: If you accept the Torah, excellent, and if not, there will be יַעֲקֹב: מִכָּאן מוֹדָעָא רַבָּה your burial. Rav Aha bar Ya'akov said: From here there is a יְאוֹרַיִיתָא. אַמַר רָבָא: אַף עַל פּי substantial caveat to the obligation to fulfill the Torah. The Jewish כֵן הֲדוּר קַבְּלוּהָ בִּימֵי אֲחַשָׁוֵרוֹשׁ, people can claim that they were coerced into accepting the Torah, and דְּכָתִיב: ״קִיָּמוּ וְקִבָּלוּ הַיָּהוּדִים״ it is therefore not binding. Rava said: Even so, they again accepted it קַיִימוּ מֵה שֵׁקִיבָּלוּ כָּבַר. willingly in the time of Ahasuerus, as it is written: "The Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all

רש"י על שבת פייח א:הי:גי

מודעא רבה - שאם יזמינם לדין למה לא קיימתם מה שקבלתם עליכם יש להם תשובה שקבלוה באונס:

Rashi on Shabbat 88a:5:3

through coercion at Sinai.

A substantial caveat: As if they are called to judgment [as to] why you (the Jews) did not fulfil what you have accepted upon yourselves, they have an answer: They accepted it under duress.

such as joined themselves unto them" (Esther 9:27), and he taught: The Jews ordained what they had already taken upon themselves

people out of the camp to meet God; and they stood at the

The Stolen Blessing:

Midrash Tanchuma Buber, Vayetzei 11:1

Another interpretation (of Gen. 29:31): WHEN THE LORD SAW THAT LEAH WAS HATED. < She was hated >, not because she was abhorrent to her husband, but because she had scolded him when Jacob had worked seven years for Rachel. Now his mother had said to him (in Gen. 27:44): AND YOU ARE TO STAY WITH HIM (Laban) FOR A WHILE, and he had stayed seven years. (Gen. 29:21, 23:) THEN JACOB SAID UNTO LABAN: GIVE ME MY WIFE.... AND, WHEN IT WAS EVENING, HE TOOK HIS DAUGHTER LEAH < AND BROUGHT HER TO HIM >. ALL NIGHT SHE PRETENDED TO BE RACHEL. When he arose in the morning (according to Gen. 29:25), THERE WAS LEAH. He said to her: Daughter of a swindler, why did you trick me? She said to him: < What about > you! Why did you trick your father? When he said to you: Is this my son Esau, you said to him (in Gen. 27:19): I AM ESAU YOUR FIRST-BORN. Now you are saying: Why have you tricked me? And did your father not say < to Esau > (in Gen. 27:35): YOUR BROTHER CAME WITH DECEIT? So because of these things with which she scolded him, he began to hate her. The Holy One said: There is no cure for this but sons. Then her

תנחומא בובר, ויצא י״א:א׳

ד"א וירא ה' כי שנואה לאה. לא מפני שהיא שנואה בפני בעלה, אלא מפני שהוכיחה אותו שעבד יעקב שבע שנים ברחל, שאמרה לו אמו וישבת עמו ימים אחדים (בראשית כז מד) וישב שם שבע שנים. ויאמר יעקב אל לבן הבה את אשתי וגו', ויהי בערב ויקח את לאה בתו וגו' (שם כט כא כב) כל הלילה היתה עשה עצמה כרחל, כיון שעמד בבקר והנה היא לאה, אמר לה בת הרמאי למה רמית אותי, אמרה לו ואתה למה רמית אביך, כשאמר לך האתה זה בני עשו, ואמרת לו אנכי עשו בכורך, ואתה אומר למה רימיתני, ואביך לא אמר בא אחיך במרמה, ומתוך הדברים הללו שהוכיחה אותו התחיל שונאה. אמר הקב"ה אין רפואתה של זו אלא בבנים, ובעלה נכסף לה, לפיכך וירא husband will desire her. Thus (in Gen. 29:31): WHEN THE LORD SAW THAT LEAH WAS HATED, HE OPENED HER WOMB. David also gives praise (in Ps. 146:7): THE ONE WHO EXECUTES JUSTICE FOR THE OPPRESSED. ה' כי שנואה לאה ויפתח את רחמה, ודוד מקלס עושה משפט לעשוקים (תהלים קמו ז).

Abarbanel on Torah, Genesis 33:1:1

•••

אברבנאל על תורה, בראשית לייג:אי:אי

ואמנם לענין הברכו' שעליהן אמר לו יש לי רב אחי השיב יעקב קה נא את ברכתי אשר הובאת לך רוצה לומר הברכה אכר ברכני אבי במרמה קח אותה כי מודה אני שהובאת לך ולא לי כי מבלתה חנני אלדים וכי יש לי כל הצריך לכבודי ומה לי בברכות.

How We Reckon With Troubling Texts:

Sefer Halkkarim, Maamar 3 23:3

This is why the Rabbis say, God made a covenant with Israel only for the sake of the oral law. This is because the written law can not be understood except with the oral law, and also because the law of God can not be perfect so as to be adequate for all times, because the ever new details of human relations, their customs and their acts, are too numerous to be embraced in a book. Therefore Moses was given orally certain general principles, only briefly alluded to in the Torah, by means of which the wise men in every generation may work out the details as they appear.

ספר העקרים, מאמר ג כייג:גי

ועל זה הוא שאמרו רבותינו ז״ל לא כרת הקדוש ברוך הוא ברית עם ישראל אלא בשביל תורה שבעל פה, וזה לפי שאין מציאות להבנת התורה שבכתב אלא עם תורה שבעל פה. ועוד לפי שאי אפשר שתהיה תורת השם יתברך שלמה באופן שתספיק בכל הזמנים, לפי שהפרטים המתחדשים תמיד בעניני האנשים, במשפטים והדברים הנפעלים הם רבים מאד משיכללם ספר, על כן נתנו למשה בסיני על פה דרכים כוללים נרמזו בתורה בקצרה, כדי שעל ידם יוציאו החכמים שבכל דור ודור הפרטים המתחדשים.

Prof. Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert - "Feminist Interpretations of Rabbinic Literature: Two Views," *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues*, No. 4, Feminist Interpretations of Rabbinic Literature (Fall, 5762/2001), pp. 7-14

...However, a starting point for the way out from between these two fronts would be the assertion that a text, in and of itself, never simply is sexist or misogynist, unless we endow it with power over us, or unless institutions use the text to support a given power structure. Talmudic texts certainly lend themselves to such a use, and they have been used in Jewish cultural

history, for instance, to exclude women from the most prized aspect of a Jewish religious life, that of learning. Nonetheless, the most powerful claim brought forth by feminist thinking in the Jewish context has perhaps been the claim that these texts belong to women also, that they are part of women's heritage, religious commitments and aesthetic pleasures...

[W]e pick up threads that have been left hanging and continue to spin with them, adding different colors and textures to the web....[t]o use the texts as a springboard for philosophical and poetic reflections on the function of the body in religion. Either way, the Talmud will have a different future, and the talmudic beit midrash will change its collective face in ultimately unpredictable ways.

Genesis 32:29

(29) Said he, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven**striven* Heb. saritha, connected with first part of "Israel." with beings divine and human,**beings divine* and human Or "God (Elohim, connected with second part of 'Israel') and human beings." and have prevailed."

Rashi on Genesis 32:29:1

לא יעקב [THY NAME SHALL] NO MORE BE CALLED JACOB [BUT ISRAEL] (literally, "not Jacob — supplanting — shall any more be said to thee") — It shall no longer be said that the blessings came to you through supplanting and subtlety but through noble conduct (שררה) and in an open manner. Because later on the Holy One, blessed be He, will reveal Himself to you at Bethel and will change your name.

Mishneh Torah, Repentance 2:4

(4) Among the paths of repentance is for the penitent to: ... to change his name, as if to say "I am a different person and not the same one who sinned;" to change his behavior in its entirety to the good and the path of righteousness; and, to travel in exile from his home. Exile atones for sin because it causes a person to be submissive, humble, and meek of spirit.

Shmuel Klitsner - Wrestling Jacob, Introduction and Afterword

A close reading of various biblical text, however, may reveal that the more dominant theme in the Hebrew Bible is that of a divinely inspired human autonomy and an uncompromising demand from on high for human accountability. Ultimately, it is an invitation to "mere" mortals to transcend their self-imposed limits, to develop their innate divine image, to struggle with themselves, and even to "struggle with God....and prevail".

If a similarity between the psychoanalysis enterprise and the biblical narratives emerges from the texts themselves, it would seem to be found in the biblical hero's struggle to achieve identity and autonomy, this seems to occur, much as in the therapeutic model, by courageously confronting our own masquerades and evasions.

Source Sheet created on Sefaria by Sofia Freudenstein

בראשית ל״ב:כ״ט

(כט) וַיֹּאמֶר לְא יַעֲקֹב יֵאָמֵר עוֹד שָׁמְדָ כִּי אָם־יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי־שָׂרִיתָ עִם־אֱלֹהָים וְעִם־אֲנָשִׁים וַתּוּכָל:

רש"י על בראשית ל״ב:כ״ט:אי

לא יעקב. לא יֵאָמֵר עוֹד שֶׁהַבְּרָכוֹת בָּאוּ לְךָּ בְעַקְבָּה וּרְמִיָּה כִּי אִם בִשְׂרָרָה וְגִלּוּי פְּנִים, וְסוֹפְרָ שֶׁהַקֶבָּ"ה נִגְלֶה אֵלֶיךָ בְּבֵית אַל וּמַחֵלִיף שִׁמְרָ וְשָׁם הוּא מְבָרָכְדָ/

משנה תורה, הלכות תשובה בי:די

(ד) מִדַּרְכֵי הַתְּשׁוּבָה לְהִיוֹת: ... וּמְשַׁנָה שְׁמוֹ כְּלוֹמַר אֲנִי אַחֵר וְאֵינִי אוֹתוֹ הָאִישׁ שֶׁעָשָׂה אוֹתָן הַמַּעֲשִׁים וּמְשַׁנֶּה מַעֲשָׁיו כֵּלָן לְטוֹבָה וּלְדֶרֶף יְשָׁרָה וְגוֹלֶה מִמְקוֹמוֹ. שֶׁגָלוּת מְכַפֶּרֶת עָוֹן מִפְּנֵי שֶׁגוֹרֶמֶת לוֹ לְהַכְּנַע וְלִהִיוֹת עָנָו וּשְׁפַל רוּחַ: