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Toldot As A Tragedy Of Communication - Summary

The What Ifs Of Ch.27 And The Stolen Blessings

Midrashic Diversity

Let's Go Back: What Do We Know Of Rivka And Yitzchak's Relationship? See end of Ch.24 (p118) and the Netziv

Two Critical Qs:

Did Rivka ever tell Yitzchak of her vision?

What beracha did Yitzchak intend to give?

The real work. Compare closely:

- **27:2-4** What Yitzchak says to Eisav (p134)
- **27: 6-7** Rivka tells Yaakov what Yitzchak said to Eisav. Is there a difference? (p134)
- **27:28-29** Yitzchak's blessing to the person he thinks is Eisav. (p138)
- **28:3-4** Yitzchak's blessing to Yaakov as Yaakov (p142)

Oh the irony and tragedy!

Rivka as the key actor: 27:12-15 (top of p136) and 27:42-45 (p140)

How does the Torah judge Rivka? Does Rivka send for Yaakov? Are they reunited?

- **35:8** On Yaakov's journey home, who dies? (bottom of **p186**)
- **35:27** Yaakov's eventual return home (**p190**)

<u>Concluding Thoughts:</u>

- Do the blind see best?
- Yitzchak's heroism acting against his natural love?
- Rivka's tragedy – could she have easily got what she wanted?
- Eisav's teshuva?
- Yaakov's burden

Midrashic Diversity On How To Look At The Story Of The Berakhot

Bereishit Rabba Toldot #65

כֵּיוָן שֶׁאָמַר יִצְחָק לְיַעֲקֹב (בראשית כז, כא): גְּשָׁה נָּא וַאֲמֻשְׁךָ בְּנִי, נִשְׁפְּכוּ מַיִם עַל שׁוֹקָיו וְהָיָה לִבּוֹ רָפֶה כַּשַּׁעֲוָה, וְזִמֵּן לוֹ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא שְׁנֵי מַלְאָכִים אֶחָד מִימִינוֹ וְאֶחָד מִשְּׂמֹאלוֹ, וְהָיוּ אוֹחֲזִין אוֹתוֹ בְּמַרְפֵּקוֹ כְּדֵי שֶׁלֹּא יִפֹּל,

When Isaac said to Jacob: “Please approach, that I may feel you, my son,” water spilled on his [Jacob's] thighs, and his heart was as soft as wax. The Holy One blessed be He appointed two angels for him, one to his right and one to his left, and they were holding his elbow so he would not fall.

Bereishit Rabba Toldot #65

וַיָּבֹא אֶל אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר אָבִי וגו' אָנֹכִי עֵשָׂו בְּכֹרֶךָ (בראשית כז, יח יט), אָמַר רַבִּי לֵוִי אָנֹכִי עָתִיד לְקַבֵּל עֲשָׂרֶת הַדִּבְּרוֹת, אֲבָל עֵשָׂו בְּכֹרֶךָ. (בראשית כז, יט): קוּם נָא שְׁבָה, אָמַר לוֹ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא לְיַעֲקֹב אַתָּה אָמַרְתָּ קוּם נָא שְׁבָה, חַיֶּיךָ בּוֹ בַּלָּשׁוֹן אֲנִי פּוֹרֵעַ לְךָ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (במדבר י, לה): קוּמָה ה' וְיָפֻצוּ אֹיְבֶיךָ.

“Jacob said to his father: I am Esau your firstborn; I did as you spoke to me. Arise please, sit and eat from my game, so that your soul will bless me” (Genesis 27:19).

“He came to his father, and said…I am Esau your firstborn” – Rabbi Levi said: I (Anochi) am destined to receive the Ten Commandments, but Esau is your firstborn.

“Arise please, sit” – the Holy One blessed be He said to Jacob: ‘You said: “Arise please, sit.” As you live, I will repay you,’ as it is stated: “Arise Lord, and may Your enemies be dispersed” (Numbers 10:35)

Bereishit Rabba, Vayetze 70

וְכָל הַהוּא לֵילְיָא הֲוָה צָוַח לָהּ רָחֵל, וְהִיא עָנְיָא לֵיהּ. בְּצַפְרָא וְהִנֵּה הִיא לֵאָה, אָמַר לָהּ מָה רַמָּיְתָא בַּת רַמָּאָה, לָאו בְּלֵילְיָא הֲוָה קָרֵינָא רָחֵל וְאַתְּ עָנֵית לִי. אָמְרָה לֵיהּ אִית סַפָּר דְּלֵית לֵיהּ תַּלְמִידִים, לֹא כָךְ הָיָה צוֹוֵחַ לָךְ אָבוּךְ, עֵשָׂו, וְאַתְּ עָנֵי לֵיהּ.

All that night he called her Rachel and she answered him. “In the morning, and behold, she was Leah.” He said to her: ‘What, you are a deceiver, daughter of a deceiver, did I not call you Rachel at night and you answered me?’ She said to him: 'Is there a barber without disciples? Did your father not call you Esau and you answered him?' “Laban said: So will not be done in our place, to give the younger before the elder” (Genesis 29:26).

Bereishit Rabba, Toldot #67

כְּשֶׁמֹּעַ עֵשָׂו אֶת דִּבְרֵי אָבִיו (בראשית כז, לד), אָמַר רַבִּי חֲנִינָא כָּל מִי שֶׁהוּא אוֹמֵר שֶׁהַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא וַתְּרָן הוּא יִתְוַתְּרוּן בְּנֵי מְעוֹהִי, אֶלָּא מַאֲרִיךְ אַפַּיהּ וְגָבֵי דִּילֵיהּ, זְעָקָה אַחַת הִזְעִיק יַעֲקֹב לְעֵשָׂו, דִּכְתִיב: כְּשֶׁמֹּעַ עֵשָׂו אֶת דִּבְרֵי אָבִיו וַיִּזְעַק זְעָקָה, וְהֵיכָן נִפְרַע לוֹ בְּשׁוּשַׁן הַבִּירָה, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (אסתר ד, א): וַיִּזְעַק זְעָקָה גְּדוֹלָה וּמָרָה עַד מְאֹד.

“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).

What Sort Of Bracha Did Yitzchak Intend To Give?

Bereishit 27:29 Yitzchak’s Blessing To Yaakov (thinking he is Eisav)

יַעַבְדוּךָ עַמִּים וְיִשְׁתַּחֲוּ לְךָ לְאֻמִּים הֱוֵה גְבִיר לְאַחֶיךָ וְיִשְׁתַּחֲוּ לְךָ בְּנֵי אִמֶּךָ אֹרְרֶיךָ אָרוּר וּמְבָרְכֶיךָ בָּרוּךְ

Peoples will serve you, and nations bow to you; Be master over your brothers,
And your mother’s sons will bow to you…

Bereishit 49:8 Yaakov’s Blessing To Yehuda

יְהוּדָה אַתָּה יוֹדוּךָ אַחֶיךָ יָדְךָ בְּעֹרֶף אֹיְבֶיךָ יִשְׁתַּחֲוּ לְךָ בְּנֵי אָבִיךָ:

You, O Judah, your brothers shall praise; Your hand shall be on the nape of your foes; **Your father's sons shall bow low to you**.

Rashi to Bereishit 49:8

בני אביך - על שם שהיו מנשים הרבה לא אמר בני אמך, כדרך שאמר יצחק (לעיל כז כט):

Your father's sons - since Yaakov had multiple wives, he didn't say 'your mother's sons' as Yitzchak had said

Rivka & Yitzchak's Relationship

Netziv, Emek Bracha to Bereishit 24:65 - When Rivka First Sets Eyes On Yitzchak

ותשא רבקה וגו׳ ותרא את יצחק. בעודו עומד ומתפלל והי׳ אז כמלאך אלהים נורא מאד. וכמבואר ברבה שראתה ידיו שטוחות בתפלה ע״כ נבעתה מאד: **ותפל מעל הגמל.** מרוב פחד ואימה. אמנם לא ידעה ממי היא מתפחדת…

"And Rivka raised her eyes, etc. and saw Yitzhak"--as he still stood and prayed, and he was then like an angel of God, awesome. **"And she fell from the camel"** out of great fear and dread, though she did not know of whom she was afraid…

מי האיש הלזה. אשר אני מתפעל ומתפחד ממנו. וכמבואר בב״ר בלשון הלזה משמעו אדם מאוים ונורא. ע״כ כששמעה שהוא אישה **ותקח הצעיף ותתכס.** מרוב פחד ובושה כמו שמבינה שאינה ראויה להיות לו לאשה ומאז והלאה נקבע בלבה פחד. ולא היתה עם יצחק כמו שרה עם אברהם. ורחל עם יעקב. אשר בהיות להם איזה קפידא עליהם לא בושו לדבר רתת לפניהם. משא״כ רבקה.

'Who is this man' from whom I am so overcome and frightened?' For, as explained in *Bereishit Rabbah*, the expression *'halazeh'* ('this one') denotes someone awe-inspiring and fearsome. Therefore, when she heard that he was the man,' **she took the veil and covered herself'**— out of great fear and shame, as though she understood that she was not worthy to be his wife. And from that moment on, fear became fixed in her heart. She was not with Isaac as Sarah was with Abraham, nor as Rachel was with Jacob — for when those women had some complaint against their husbands, they were not ashamed to speak trembling before them; not so with Rebekah.

וכ״ז הקדמה להסיפור שיבוא בפ׳ תולדות שהיו יצחק ורבקה מחולקים בדעות. ומכ״מ לא מצאה רבקה לב להעמיד את יצחק על דעתה בדברים נכוחים כי היא יודעת האמת כי עשו רק ציד בפיו. וכן בשעת הברכות. וכ״ז הי׳ סיבה מהקב״ה שיגיעו הברכות ליעקב דוקא באופן כזה וכאשר יבואר במקומו. ואלו הית׳ רבקה עם אישה כמו שרה ורחל עם אנשיהן לא הי׳ מגיע בזה האופן. והכל בהשגחה פרטית מראש שתגיע רבקה ליצחק בשעה שתבהל ממנו ויצא אחרית דבר כפי רצונו ית׳:

All this is a preface to the story that will appear in Parashat *Toldot* — that Isaac and Rebekah were divided in their opinions. Yet Rebekah could not bring herself to present Isaac with her own view, that she knew the truth: that Esau was but a hunter. The same was true at the time of the blessings. All of this was caused by God so that the blessings would reach Jacob specifically in this manner. For had Rebekah been with her husband as Sarah and Rachel were with theirs, the blessings would not have come about in this way.