

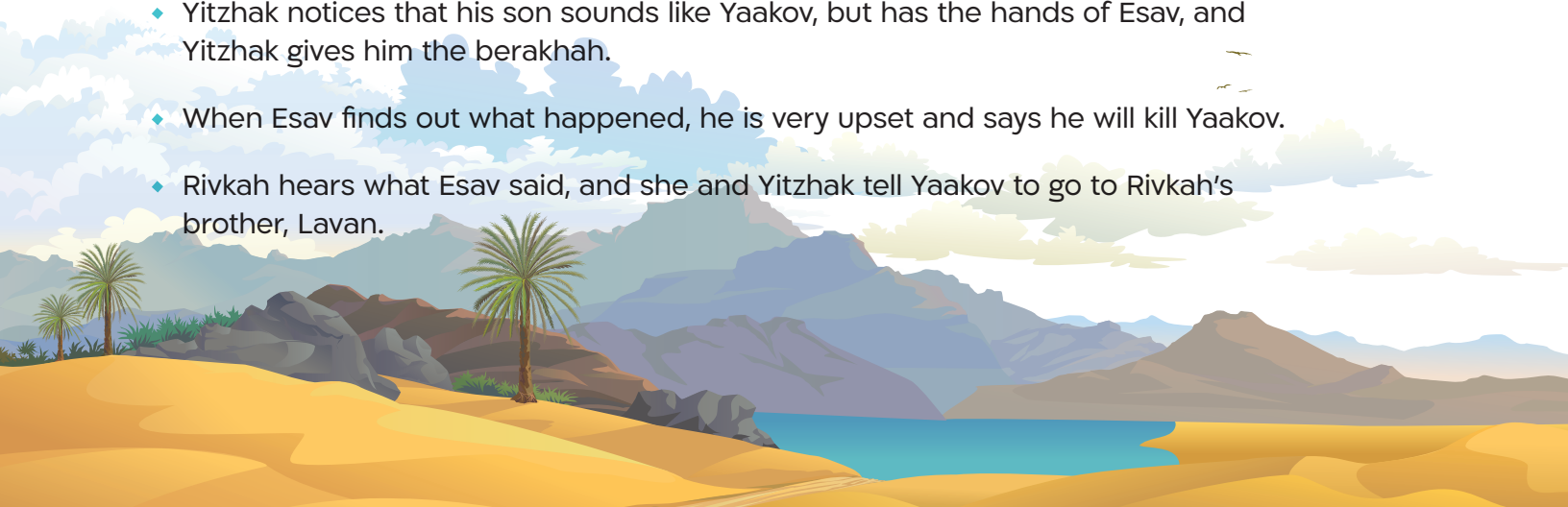


October 31 - November 6, 2021 כ"ה מרחשון - ב' כסלו תשפ"ב



## קַה בַּפֶּרֶשֶׁה • In This Week's Parashah

- ◆ Rivkah becomes pregnant with twins. The twins struggle within Rivkah. God tells her this is because there are two nations within her.
- ◆ The firstborn, Esav, is reddish and covered with hair. The second, Yaakov, is born holding onto Esav's heel. Yitzhak loves Esav, but Rivkah loves Yaakov.
- ◆ Years later, Yaakov buys the birthright from Esav and feeds him lentil stew. (The birthright refers to special privileges or responsibilities belonging to the firstborn.)
- ◆ Yitzhak goes blind. He tells Esav that he is going to give him a בְּרָכָה (berakhah, blessing).
- ◆ Rivkah hears this, but she wants Yaakov to receive the berakhah. She tells Yaakov to wear Esav's clothes and puts goatskins on his arms, so that they would feel like Esav's, which are hairy. Yaakov then goes to get the berakhah from Yitzhak.
- ◆ Yitzhak notices that his son sounds like Yaakov, but has the hands of Esav, and Yitzhak gives him the berakhah.
- ◆ When Esav finds out what happened, he is very upset and says he will kill Yaakov.
- ◆ Rivkah hears what Esav said, and she and Yitzhak tell Yaakov to go to Rivkah's brother, Lavan.





## מִדְרָש • Midrash



Midrashim are ideas or stories that explain the Torah. They often come from listening very carefully to what the Torah says and how it says it. Here, we will look for what clues this midrash sees in the Torah's words, and try to understand its messages.

### Bereishit 25:28

Yitzhak loved Esav because there was [hunted] game in his mouth; and Rivkah loved Yaakov.

### בראשית כה:כח

וַיֶּאֱהָב יִצְחָק אֶת-עֵשָׂו כִּי-צַיִד בִּפְיוֹ  
וְרִבְקָה אֲהָבָת אֶת-יַעֲקֹב:

The simple reading of this verse is that Yitzhak loved Esav because of the food that Esav hunted for him. We see a hint of this later in the parashah, when Yitzhak asks Esav to go hunting to prepare him the food he likes (Bereishit 27:3-4).

However, the way the Torah explains why Yitzhak loved Esav is confusing. Whose mouth is being referred to here: is it Yitzhak's or Esav's? What does it mean that there is something hunted in that mouth? Is it referring to food, or could it be referring to something else?

A midrash, cited by Rashi, offers another way of understanding this verse, which can influence our understanding of the entire parashah.

### Rashi (11th century, France)

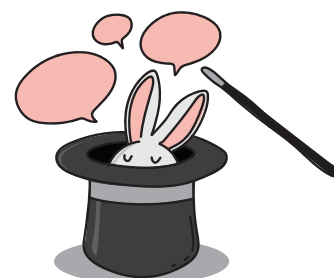
He trapped him [Yitzhak] and tricked him with his words.

### רש"י

הָיָה צָד אוֹתוֹ וּמְרָמֶהוּ בְדִבְרָיו:

According to this midrash, Esav used his own mouth in order to hunt or trap Yitzhak, purposely misleading Yitzhak about who he was, so that Yitzhak would love him.

- ♦ What is wrong with tricking people, and why might that be similar to hunting?
- ♦ Why does the midrash suggest that Esav would trick Yitzhak? Are there other hints in the parashah that Esav might do something like that? How would you describe Esav based on your reading of the parashah?
- ♦ Who else in the parashah tricks Yitzhak? How does this midrash change the way we understand that part of the parashah?



## פְּרָשְׁנוֹת • Commentary

Toward the beginning of the parashah, Yaakov purchases the firstborn birthright from Esav (Bereishit 25:33). (The birthright refers to special privileges or responsibilities belonging to the firstborn.) In the very next verse, Yaakov feeds Esav bread and lentil stew (25:34). What is the significance of this meal? How does it connect to Yaakov buying the birthright from Esav?



Radak offers two possibilities:

### Radak (12th–13th century, France)

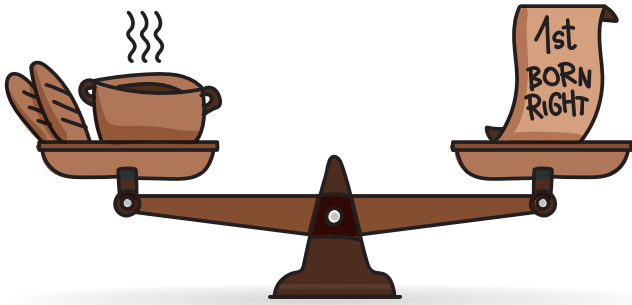
“And Yaakov gave to Esav” bread as the price of the firstborn birthright...

My father, of blessed memory, wrote that Yaakov paid for the firstborn birthright with money, and giving him bread and lentils to eat together was in order to uphold the sale.

### רד"ק

וַיַּעֲקֹב נָתַן לְעֵשָׂו בְּמַחִיר  
הַבְּכוֹרָה לֶחֶם...

וְאֶדְוֵי אָבִי ז"ל כָּתַב כִּי מַחִיר כֶּסֶף  
נָתַן לוֹ עַל הַבְּכוֹרָה וְכֵן שָׁנְתָן לוֹ  
לֶחֶם וְנִזְיָד עֲדָשִׁים שִׂיאָכְלוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם  
עַל הַמְכִירָה כְּדִי לְקַיְמָהּ.



According to Radak's first interpretation, the meal was payment for the birthright Yaakov bought from Esav.

Radak also quotes his father, however, who thought that Yaakov paid money (not food) for the firstborn birthright, and that this meal was a way of making their agreement final, like a handshake.

The Malbim offers a different understanding:

### Malbim (19th century, Eastern Europe)

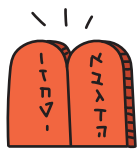
[Yaakov gave Esav the stew] because the responsibilities of the house now fell upon Yaakov.

### מלבי"ם

שְׁמֵעָתָה הוּטַל עַל יַעֲקֹב  
פְּרֻסַּת הַבֵּית

The Malbim also believes that Yaakov purchased the firstborn birthright with something other than food. Now that Yaakov owned that birthright, though, he had new responsibilities, including the obligation to provide food for his family members. So, this meal was a way of taking care of his responsibility to provide food to his brother.

- ♦ Can you find evidence for each of these interpretations from the pesukim?
- ♦ Food plays an important role in the stories of this parashah. When you consider the interpretations above, how many different uses of food are there, and what does that teach us about the ways we should view and treat food in our lives?



## הלכה • Halakhah

Our rabbis highlight the way in which Esav—perhaps more than anyone else in the Torah—performed the mitzvah of **כִּיבוּד אָב וָאֵם** (kibbud av va-em, honoring your parents).



## Bereishit Rabbah 65:16

Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said: My entire life I have served my father, and I have not even served one-hundredth of how Esav served his father.

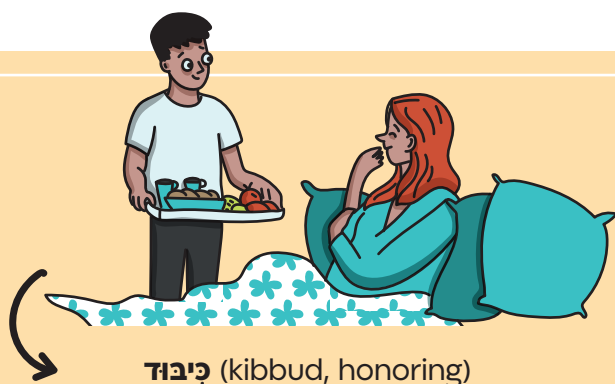
## בראשית רבה סה:טז

אמר רבן שמעון בן גמליאל  
כל ימי היותי משמש את אבא  
ולא שמשתי אותו אחד ממאה  
ששמש עשו את אביו.

The mitzvah of honoring our parents is one of the עשרת הדברות (Aseret Hadibrot, Ten Commandments) given at הר סיני (Har Sinai, Mount Sinai). It's also one of the few mitzvot whose reward (living a long life) is written in the Torah (see Shemot 20:12).

In addition to the mitzvah of honoring our parents, the Torah includes a parallel mitzvah to fear our parents (from Vayikra 19:3).

What is the difference between these two mitzvot of honoring and fearing?



- ◆ Standing up when our parents enter the room, as we would for a teacher or an elder.
- ◆ Serving our parents food and drink.
- ◆ Providing financial support if needed.

(Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Mamrim 7:3)



- ◆ We may not call our parents by their names. Instead, we call them "my mother," or, "my father."
- ◆ We should not stand or sit in our parents' designated places, so sitting in their chairs is not allowed.
- ◆ We should not contradict our parents to their faces.

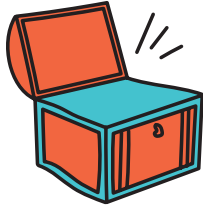
(Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh Deah 240:2)

## What about grandparents?



The Rema (Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh Deah 240:20) writes that the mitzvot of kibbud av va-em apply even to grandparents, but we have a greater obligation to our own parents.

The Sefer Ha-Hinukh (33) explains that honoring one's parents is a mitzvah in all places and at all times. It's not just for kids, and perhaps it's even more important for grown-ups.



## מה קרה • What's Going On Here?

Why did Yitzhak give the בְּרָכָה (berakhah, blessing) to Yaakov?



When Yaakov dresses up as Esav in order to receive the berakhah, Yitzhak notices that something is strange.

### Bereishit 27:22

Yaakov approached Yitzhak, his father, and he [Yitzhak] felt him. He said: "The voice is the voice of Yaakov, but the hands are the hands of Esav."

### בראשית כז:כב

וַיִּגַּשׁ יַעֲקֹב אֶל-יִצְחָק אָבִיו  
וַיִּמְשְׁהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר הֲקֵל קוֹל  
יַעֲקֹב וְהַיָּדִים יְדֵי עֵשָׂו:

If Yitzhak was able to correctly identify Yaakov's voice, then why did he still give him the berakhah?

Rashbam (12th century, France) explains that, since Yaakov and Esav were twins, their voices sounded very similar. For this reason, Yitzhak trusted his sense of touch more than his sense of hearing. The hairy hands that he felt made him believe that it was Esav, not Yaakov, who was in front of him.



## רגע של עברית • A Moment of Hebrew

### Bereishit 25:26

Then his brother came out, holding on to the **heel** of Esav; so they named him Yaakov.

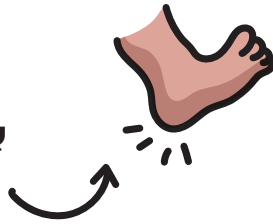
### בראשית כה:כו

וַאֲחֵרֵיכֵן יָצָא אָחִיו וַיִּדּוּ  
אֶחָזֶת בְּעֵקֶב עָשָׂו וַיִּקְרָא  
שְׁמוֹ יַעֲקֹב:



עֵקֶב (שָׁרֵשׁ ע.ק.ב.)

Heel



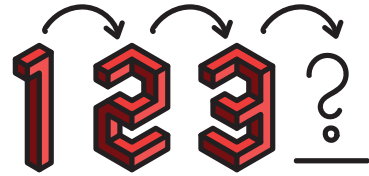
High heels = נַעֲלֵי עֵקֶב



Footprints = עֵקֵבוֹת



to follow or = לַעֲקֹב  
track, to pay attention



Consecutive number = מְסֻפֵּר עוֹקֵב

## Find the Word!

Which parashah in the Torah has the same שָׁרֵשׁ (shoresh, root) in its name? (Hint: it can be found in Sefer Devarim.)



## דִּקְהָה שֶׁל דִּיּוּן • One-Minute Debate

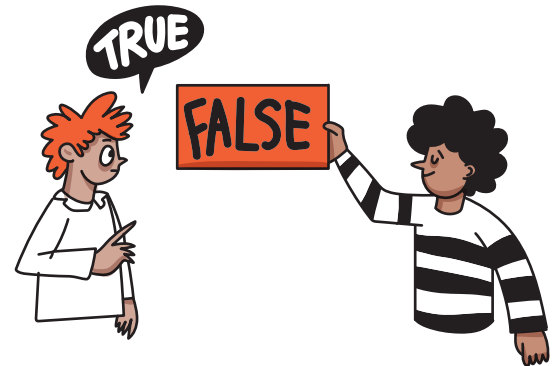
### How to play:

Here is a topic for debate along with some suggested arguments, but feel free to come up with your own.

- ◆ Assign people to the "true" or "false" sides.
- ◆ Each side gets 30 seconds to make their case.
- ◆ At the end, the group votes on a winner.

**Debate: Yaakov's deal with Esav was not a fair deal.**

(See this week's Parshanut section for more details, p. 3)



- ◆ True:
  - ◆ When someone is hungry, they will say yes to anything.
  - ◆ What does it even mean to give away a birthright?! It's not something you can sell.
- ◆ False:
  - ◆ A deal is a deal. Esav agreed and even swore to Yaakov that the birthright was no longer his.
  - ◆ After Esav ate, he didn't change his mind or regret the deal he had made.



## שאלות השבוע • Parashah Scavenger Hunt

The answers to the first seven questions can be found in the matching numbered aliyah in the Torah reading. The answers to the last three are harder and can come from anywhere in the parashah.

*Good luck!*

1 Twice in our parashah, the same exact word appears twice in a row. Where are the two places where this happens?

2 What neighborhood in Yerushalayim is mentioned in our parashah?

3 What are the first three names of the wells that Yitzhak digs?

4 What is the name of the town where Avimelekh lives?

5 What does Yitzhak say when his son feels like Esav but sounds like Yaakov?

6 What did Esav say he would do as soon as his father died?

7 How was Esav related to his third wife, Mahalat?

8 How old was Yitzhak when Esav and Yaakov were born? Was Avraham alive at that time?

9 What made both Yitzhak and Rivkah upset at Esav?

10 Two names are used to describe the place where Rivkah's brother, Lavan, lives. What are they?





## מֶרְכָּא כְּפוּלָה Merkha Kefulah



This week, we get a very special and rare note, the merkha kefulah. It only appears five times in the whole Torah, and this is the first time. The מֶרְכָּא כְּפוּלָה (merkha kefulah װ) always appears after a דָּרְגָא (darga ך).

Different people sing it in different ways, but it is a long note that moves around to a bunch of different sounds. Here is where it appears in our parashah:

בראשית כז:כה

וַיָּגֶשׁ-לוֹ וַיֹּאכַל וַיִּבֹא לוֹ  
יַיִן וַיִּשְׁתְּ:



Bereishit 27:25

He (Yaakov) brought [the food] close to him (Yitzhak) and he ate; he brought **to him** wine and he drank.



### QUICK FACTS

1

How many times does it appear in the Torah?  
5! Very rare!

2

Does it end a phrase?  
Yes

3

Is it above or below the word?  
Below

4

Does it fall on the accent?  
Yes (so the word is pronounced with emphasis where the merkha kefulah appears)

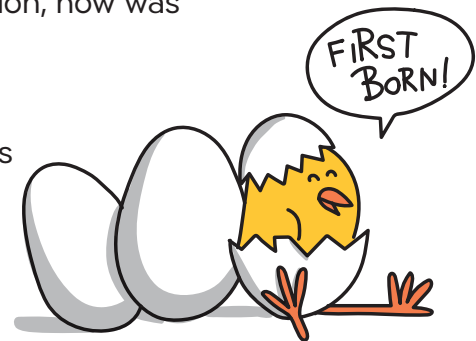


## בואו נדבר על זה • Talk About It!

This week's Parshanut section talks about Esav selling the firstborn birthright to Yaakov (p. 3). But what exactly is the firstborn birthright, and why is it important?

Being a firstborn son in the Tanakh—like Esav—comes with the responsibility to look after your family and your father's property after he dies. On top of that, there are other ways a firstborn is also supposed to represent the parents and the whole family. (For this reason, some of the honor we show to our parents may even extend to the firstborn!) To go with this added responsibility, the Torah makes sure that the firstborn son also gets an extra portion of his father's inheritance (Devarim 21:15-17). You can't even pretend that your firstborn son isn't your firstborn, and give the double inheritance to someone else. The real firstborn son still deserves the double portion.

- ♦ If a father can't choose who gets the double portion, how was Esav able to sell his birthright to Yaakov?
- ♦ Why do you think Esav doesn't care about his birthright? What might this say about how he feels about his family or his father, Yitzhak?

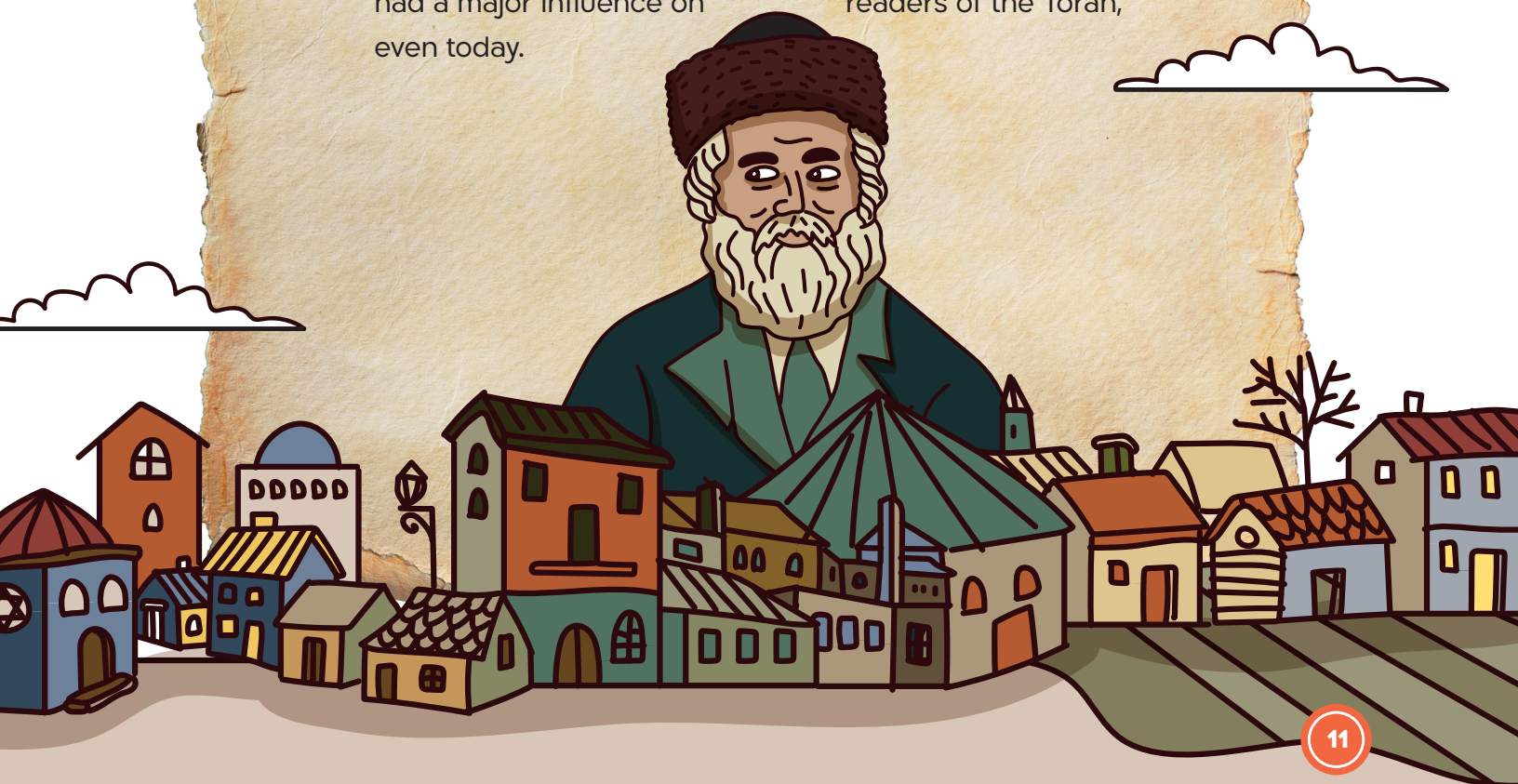




## מי היו חכמינו • Who Were Our Sages?

The **Malbim's** full name was **Meir Leibush ben Yehiel Michel Wisser** (מלבי"ם = מאיר ליבוש בן יחיאל מיכל), and he was a rabbi of Eastern Europe 200 years ago. He wrote a commentary on the whole Tanakh.

His commentary is very clear and sensitive to literary details, aiming to show how every little detail can be used to support traditional halakhah. He also included insights from modern philosophy. Unfortunately, his strong commitment to tradition made many Jews across Europe upset that he wouldn't be more lenient or allow changes, and he had a hard time settling or working as a rabbi anywhere for very long. Still, his style and originality has had a major influence on readers of the Torah, even today.





# Shabbat Shalom!

~ שבת שלום ~

## Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

1. אַבְרָהָם-אַבְרָהָם (Avraham-Avraham) and הָאָדָם-הָאָדָם (ha'adom-ha'adom)
2. Me'ah She'arim
3. 1) Eisek, 2) Sitnah, 3) Rehovot
4. Gerar
5. הַקוֹל קוֹל יַעֲקֹב וְהַיָּדִים יְדֵי עֵשָׂו (the voice is the voice of Yaakov, but the hands are the hands of Esav)
6. Kill his brother, Yaakov
7. Mahalat was the daughter of Yishmael, who was the brother of Yitzhak, who was the father of Esav—Esav was her first cousin
8. 60, and yes, Avraham was still alive—he died when the twins were 15
9. That he married Hittite women
10. Haran and Paddan-Aram



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This publication contains words of Torah,  
so please treat it with appropriate reverence

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