

## How to Educate a Child

### Genesis, Chapter 25

19. And these are the generations of *Isaac the son of Abraham; Abraham fathered Isaac.*

20. And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebecca the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Padan Aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean, to himself for a wife.

21. And Isaac prayed to the L-rd opposite his wife because she was barren, and the L-rd accepted his prayer, and Rebecca his wife conceived.

22. *And the children struggled within her,* and she said, "If [it be] so, why am I [like] this?" And she went to inquire of the L-rd.

23. And the L-rd said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two kingdoms will separate from your innards, and one kingdom will become mightier than the other kingdom, and the elder will serve the younger.

24. And her days to give birth were completed, and behold, there were twins in her womb.

25. And the first one emerged ruddy; he was completely like a coat of hair, and they named him Esau.

26. And afterwards, his brother emerged, and his hand was grasping Esau's heel, and he named him Jacob. Now Isaac was sixty years old when she gave birth to them.

27. And the youths grew up, and Esau was a man who understood hunting, a man of the field, whereas *Jacob was an innocent man, dwelling in tents.*

28. And Isaac loved Esau because [his] game was in his mouth, but Rebecca loved Jacob.

29. Now Jacob cooked a pottage, and *Esau came from the field, and he was exhausted...*

### *...Isaac the son of Abraham; Abraham fathered Isaac (25:19)*

#### Rashi

The cynics of that generation were saying that Sarah had become pregnant from Abimelech, since she had failed to conceive in all the years she was with Abraham. What did G-d do? He formed the countenance of Isaac to resemble that of Abraham, so that all might attest that Abraham had fathered Isaac. This is the meaning of the repetitious wording of the verse: "Isaac (is certainly) the son of Abraham (since there is proof that) Abraham fathered Isaac."

#### Midrash

There are children who are embarrassed of their parents, and there are parents who are embarrassed by their children. Isaac prided himself that he was "Isaac the son of Abraham," and Abraham prided himself in that "Abraham fathered Isaac."



### פרק כה

יט. וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת יִצְחָק  
בֶּן אַבְרָהָם אֲבִרְהָם הוֹלִיד  
אֶת יִצְחָק:

כ. וַיְהִי יִצְחָק בֶּן אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה בְּקַחְתּוֹ אֶת  
רֵבֶקָה בַּת בְּתוּאֵל הָאַרְמִי מִפְּדַן אַרְם אַחֹת לְבֶן  
הָאַרְמִי לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה:

כא. וַיַּעֲמֵר יִצְחָק לָהּ לְנֹכַח אִשְׁתּוֹ כִּי עֲקָרָה  
הוּא וַיַּעֲתֵר לוֹ ה' וַתְּהַר רֵבֶקָה אִשְׁתּוֹ:

כג. וַיֹּאמֶר ה' לָהּ שְׁנֵי גֵוִים בְּבִטְנָהּ וְשְׁנֵי  
לְאֻמִּים מִמֶּעַיִן יִפְרְדוּ וְלֵאמֹם מְלֹאִם יִאֶמְצוּ וְרֵב  
יַעֲבֹד צָעִיר:

כד. וַיִּמְלֹאוּ יְמֵיהָ לְלֶדֶת וְהִנֵּה תוֹמֵם בְּבִטְנָהּ:  
כה. וַיֵּצֵא הָרֵאשׁוֹן אֲדָמוֹנִי כִּלּוֹ כְּאֲדָרֶת שֶׁעָר  
וַיִּקְרְאוּ שְׁמוֹ עֵשָׂו:

כו. וְאַחֲרָי כֵן יָצָא אָחִיו וַיְדוּ אַחֲזָת בְּעֵקֶב עֵשָׂו  
וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ יַעֲקֹב וַיִּצְחָק בֶּן שְׁשִׁים שָׁנָה בְּלֶדֶת  
אֹתָם:

כז. וַיִּגְדְּלוּ הַנְּעָרִים וַיְהִי עֵשָׂו אִישׁ יָדָע צִיד אִישׁ  
שָׂדֶה וַיַּעֲקֹב אִישׁ תָּם יֹשֵׁב אֹהֲלִים:

כח. וַיֹּאֲהֵב יִצְחָק אֶת עֵשָׂו כִּי צִיד בְּפִיו וְרֵבֶקָה  
אֹהֶבֶת אֶת יַעֲקֹב:

כט. וַיִּזְדַּע יַעֲקֹב נֹזֵד וַיָּבֵא עֵשָׂו מִן הַשָּׂדֶה וְהוּא  
צָעִיר:

## Rambam, Laws of Idolatry 1:2-3

Each of the patriarchs maintained an academy of learning in which he taught about the existence of G-d. Abraham's academy had hundreds of students, Isaac had an academy of one. His lone student was Jacob whom he trained and appointed to teach others.

## *And the children struggled within her (25:22)*

### Yalkut Shimoni; Rashi

Whenever she would pass a house of prayer or house of study, Jacob would struggle to come out ... and when she passed a house of idol-worship, Esau would struggle to come out. Also, they were fighting over the inheritance of the two worlds (i.e., the material world, and the "world to come").

## Talmud (Shabbos 156a)

R' Nachman son of Isaac said, "He who is born under the sign of Mars will be a shedder of blood." R' Ashi commented, "Either a surgeon, a (murderous) thief, a slaughterer or a circumciser." Rabbah said, "I was born under Mars (yet I am none of those.)" Abaye retorted: "You too inflict punishment and kill (as a judge)."

## *And Jacob was an innocent man, dwelling in tents (25:27)*

### Midrash Rabbah

The academy of Shem and the academy of Eber.

## *Esau came from the field, and he was exhausted (25:29)*

### The Talmud

Esau committed five sins on that day: he dishonored a betrothed maiden, he committed a murder, he denied G-d, he denied the resurrection of the dead, and he spurned the birthright.

## The Lubavitcher Rebbe

Jacob personified the naturally pious type and Esau personified the individual challenged by an inborn evil inclination. Esau's G-d given mission in life was to demonstrate that a person with a strong propensity for evil is capable of overcoming temptation and remaining righteous. Until he turned 13, Esau channelled his innate cunning toward outsmarting his evil inclination, co-opting the material and sensual aspects of life for holy purposes.

## SUMMARY

- Recognize your G-d given talents, skills, abilities. Appreciate your unique personality.
- Develop your abilities to their maximum by using them to bring more G-dliness, goodness and holiness into our world.
- Educate a child by realizing that every individual is unique. Children are not miniature replicas of their parents and students don't all fit into a box.
- People are born with certain tendencies and characteristics but we each have the freedom to choose how to use those natural inclinations.

