

Maamarei Mordechai

הסבר לפי ממש פשוט

Parshas Vayishlach 5786

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Eisav abandons Eretz Canaan.

וַיָּשֶׁב עֵשָׂו בְּהָר שֵׁעִיר עֵשָׂו הוּא אֶדוֹם:

“And Eisav settled in Har Seir, Eisav is Edom.” (Bereishis 36:8).

When did Eisav leave to Har Seir and why did he leave? How old was Yaakov when he left to Charan? How old was he by the brochos he received over the goats?

The Torah does not always explicitly state the ages of people when events occurred. The Torah gives some ages so that the rest might be calculated. Some timelines are complicated and up to different interpretations. Take the age of Rivka, for example. The Torah does not state what age Yitzchok was at the Akeida. The Torah only writes that Sarah was 90 when she had Yitzchok. (Ibid 17:17). She passed when she was one hundred-twenty-seven. (Ibid 23:1). Therefore, Yitzchok was thirty-seven when his mother passed away. It is also known that he married Rivka when he was forty. (Ibid 25:20). Now, Avraham seemed to hear about the birth of Rivka right after the Akeida. (Ibid 22:20). This is the basis for Rashi (who quotes Seder Olam) to opine that Rivka was three when Yitzchok married her. ($40 - 37 = 3$). However, the pasuk says, “And it was after these matters that it was told to Avraham saying, ‘Behold! Milca also bore sons to Nachor....and Besuel begot Rivka.’” (Ibid 22:20-22). These pesukim follow a break {פ} from the narrative of the Akeida. This indicates a time lapse. The wording, too, indicates a time lapse. Further, Midrash says he heard the news because of the promise made during the Akeida that Yitzchok will grow into a great nation (ibid 20:17). (Bereishis Rabbah 56). Also, there is another break in the Torah between the news and the death of Sara. Therefore, there is no direct indication that the Akeida happened simultaneous with the news of the birth. Even if it did, the news only came because of the Promise and the birth of Rivka could have occurred many years prior. The news had to come from Padan Aram. There is also no proof that the Akeida took place when Yitzchok was thirty-seven.

It is also uncertain the age Yaakov was when he received the brochos. This is what the Torah is clear about. He died at one hundred-forty-seven. This is known because he came to Mitzrayim when he was one hundred-thirty. (Ibid 47:9). He lived in Mitzrayim for seventeen years. (Ibid 47:28). ($130 + 17 = 147$).

Yosef was thirty when he stood before Pharaoh. (Ibid 41:46). Yaakov came down to Mitzrayim nine years later. This is known because there were seven good years (41:53). Then there were two years of famine before Yaakov came down. This is calculated because Yosef tell his brothers there has been two years of famine. (Ibid 45:6). He then sends for his father. (Ibid 45:9). Therefore, Yosef was 39 years old when Yaakov came down to Mitzrayim. ($30 + 7 + 2 = 39$).

Yosef was born at the end of the seven years that Yaakov worked for Rochel, again. (Ibid 30:25). Yaakov was 91 when Yosef was born. ($130 - 39 = 91$). By then he had worked

for fourteen years. Yaakov was 77 when he arrived in Charan. ($91 - 14 = 77$). The brochos were given to Yaakov no older, but possibly earlier, than that age.

Yitzchok said to Eisav, "Behold, please! I am old, I do not know when I am going to die." (Ibid 27:2). Not knowing when he was going to die, he wanted to bless Eisav. (Ibid 27:4). Why did Yitzchok feel old? The pasuk says his eyes were dimming. (Ibid 27:1). However, that seems to be said for a reason why he could not see the difference between Yaakov and Eisav. It does not, in it of itself, seem like a reason why he thought he would die.

It is possible to estimate how old he was. Yaakov was born when Yitzchok was sixty. (Ibid 25:26). Yitzchok was also no older than one hundred-thirty-seven when Yaakov left to Charan. ($60 + 77 = 137$). Why would Yitzchok feel old at one hundred and thirty-seven, when he lived another 43 years? (Ibid 35:28).

It could be he was the same age as relatives when they died. Avraham was one hundred-seventy-five when he died (ibid 25:7) and Yitzchok was not close to that age. His brother, Yishmael, though, was one hundred-thirty-seven when he died. (Ibid 25:17). It could be that he was that age, so he felt old. However, there is a problem in this timeline. "And Yaakov sent messengers before him, to Eisav, in the Land of Seir, Edom." (Ibid 32:4). This was as Yaakov was returning to Eretz Canaan. However, the Torah says why Eisav moved to Seir. He moved because the possessions of both brothers were too much for the land to handle. (Ibid 36:6-7). Therefore, Eisav had to have moved to Seir before Yaakov left. Yaakov's wealth in Padam Aram would not compel Eisav to move away. It had to be while Yaakov was living in the land with him.

The first brochos that Yitzchok gave were for wealth. (Ibid 27:28). Yaakov had to have time to accumulate this wealth in order to force Eisav to move out, prior to Yaakov leaving to Charan. Since Yitzchok's mother died at one hundred-twenty-seven it is possible it was ten years earlier, when Yitzchok was that age and Yaakov only sixty-seven. It can also be when Yishmael died. Yishmael was fourteen years older than Yitzchok. He was thirteen a year prior to the birth of Yitzchok. (Ibid 17:25). Therefore, Yishmael died when Yitzchok was one hundred-twenty-three. ($137 - 14 = 123$). Yaakov, then was sixty-three at the time, and it was fourteen years prior to his leaving to Charan. That would give him enough time to accumulate the wealth and force Eisav to go to Seir. The Gemara states that there were fourteen years missing between the brochos and Yaakov's arrival at Charan. (Megillah 17a). The Gemara says he was attending to Ever for those fourteen years. While that is a homiletic approach, practically, Yaakov needed those years, be it ten or fourteen, or even somewhat longer, possibly, to accumulate the wealth so that Eisav would leave Eretz Canaan.

Yes, Eisav did want to kill Yaakov, but he kept it a secret. (Ibid 27:41). Some time later, Rivka heard of the threat and had to send for Yaakov. (Ibid 27:42). This indicates he had moved away and was living elsewhere. Yitzchok then called to Yaakov to give him the primogeniture. (Ibid 28:1). This also indicates Yaakov had moved on. It appears that Yaakov received the first brochos—perhaps at age sixty-three—and then accumulated wealth, and Eisav moved on, and then Rivka heard about the threat. Yitzchok then called to and gave Yaakov the second brochos and sent him to Charan. (Ibid 28:5).