

THE BEIT MIDRASH WAY - UNIT 2: Fear War or Trust Peace? From Jacob and Esau through Chamberlain and Menachem Begin to Today

Ibayau Lehu (a question was asked in the beit midrash):

When should we trust the sincerity of our enemy's intentions to make peace, and when should we not?

Text Study 1

Witnessing the Shared "Facts" of the Biblical Story of Jacob's Fear of Meeting Esau

Study the following verses in *havruta* (study partners). Note the differences in these translations. List all questions you have on these verses, especially verse 7.

Text 1

Genesis 32:4-8 (The New JPS)

4 Jacob sent messengers ahead to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom, 5 and instructed them as follows, "Thus shall you say, 'To my lord Esau, thus says your servant Jacob: I stayed with Laban and remained until now; 6 I have acquired cattle, asses, sheep, and male and female slaves; and I send this message to my lord in the hope of gaining your favor.'" 7 **The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau; he himself is coming to meet you, and there are four hundred men with him."** 8 Jacob was greatly frightened; in his anxiety...*

בראשית לב:ד-ח

(ד) וַיִּשְׁלַח יַעֲקֹב מַלְאָכִים לְפָנָיו, אֶל-עֵשָׂו אָחִיו, אֶרְצָה שְׂעִיר, שְׂדֵה אֲדוֹם. (ה) וַיֹּצֵא אֹתָם, לֵאמֹר, כֹּה תֹאמְרוּן, לְאֲדֹנָי לְעֵשָׂו: כֹּה אָמַר, עַבְדְּךָ יַעֲקֹב, עִם-לְבָן גֵּרָתִי, וְאַחֵר עַד-עַתָּה. (ו) וַיְהִי-לִי שׂוֹר וַחֲמֹר, צֹאן וְעֶבֶד וְשִׁפְחָה; וְאֲשַׁלְּחָה לְהַגִּיד לְאֲדֹנָי, לְמַצְאֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ. (ז) וַיֹּשְׁבוּ, הַמַּלְאָכִים, אֶל-יַעֲקֹב, לֵאמֹר: בָּאוּ אֵל-אָחִיךָ, אֶל-עֵשָׂו, וְגַם הֵלֵךְ לִקְרֹאתְךָ, וְאַרְבַּע-מֵאוֹת אִישׁ עִמּוֹ. (ח) וַיִּירָא יַעֲקֹב מְאֹד, וַיִּצְרַח לוֹ...

Bereishis 32:4-8 (Artscroll/Stone Edition)

4 Then Jacob sent angels ahead of him to Esau his brother to the land of Seir, the field of Edom. 5 He charged them, saying: "Thus shall you say, 'To my lord, to Esau, so said your servant Jacob: I have sojourned with Laban and have lingered until now. 6 I have acquired oxen and donkeys, flocks, servants, and maidservants and I am sending to tell my lord to find favor in your eyes.'" 7 **The angels returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother, to Esau; moreover, he is heading toward you, and four hundred men are with him."** 8 Jacob became very frightened, and it distressed him...**

MAHLOKET MATTERS

HOW TO DISAGREE CONSTRUCTIVELY



*Reproduced from the Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures by permission of the University of Nebraska Press. Copyright 1985 by the Jewish Publication Society.

** Reproduced from "The Chumash: The Stone Edition, Full Size (ArtScroll) (English and Hebrew Edition) The Torah: Haftaros and Five Megillos with a Commentary Anthologized from the Rabbinic Writings" by Rabbi Nossan Scherman with permission of the copyright holders, ArtScroll / Mesorah Publications, Ltd.

Exercise 1 - Writing My 'Intuitive Tweet'

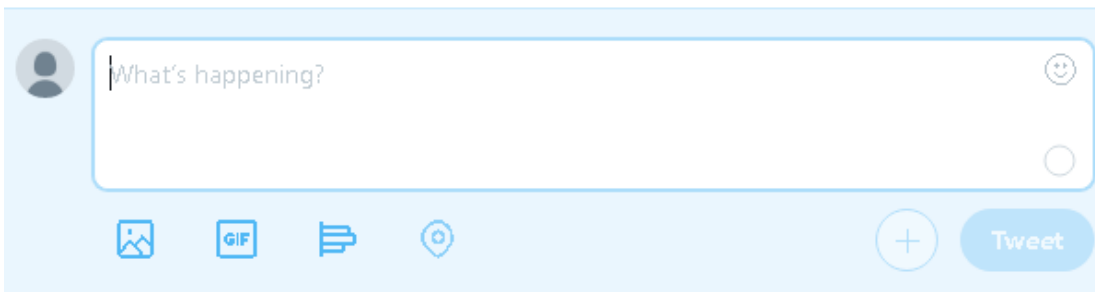
Background

One pillar of the Beit Midrash Way is the ability to be aware of our own bias, or our own '49' reasons that lead us to interpret a particular text or conflict the way we do. Today, very often people write these intuitive interpretations on social media thus contributing to the 'texts' of the conflict.

Instructions

If you were reporting on a "leak" from Jacob's private conversation with the anonymous messengers on how he is interpreting Esau's intentions, what would you tweet? How do you understand Jacob's fears here? Is Esau really coming with ill-intent?

Compose New Tweet



Reply Tweet

Consider exchanging your 'intuitive tweet' with your *havruta* or someone sitting near you and writing a positive or critical reply tweet. Then pass it back.

Personal Reflection

Would you define your 'intuitive tweet' as more "pro-Jacob" (sympathetic to him and his fears as being grounded in reality) or more "anti-Jacob" (critical of him and of his fears not being grounded in reality)? Explain why.



Text Study 2

Understanding the 49 vs 49 Conflicting Interpretations of the Facts of the Biblical Story

How did the following commentators understand Jacob's fears here? Is Esau really coming with ill-intent?

Understanding the First 49

Text 2.1

Don Isaac Abarbanel, Commentary on Genesis 32, (Answer to Question 4)

(Rabbi Don Isaac Abarbanel, 1437 – 1508, Portugal, Spain, Italy)

'And he is coming toward you': And it seems from the messengers, that they did not know Esau's hatred toward Jacob, and so when they went to him and spoke to him regarding their mission, he replied to them, 'behold he is coming toward you.' And they thought that he was coming toward him to honor him, and because of this they went back to Jacob and said to him, 'we came to your brother, to Esau', meaning 'why should you call him: "my master", and he is none other than your loving loyal brother, and behold he is also coming toward you, meaning it is not enough that he should receive your messengers, but he himself is going and coming toward to you, to receive you, and four hundred men are with him to honor you. But Jacob, who knew the truth, and (knew about) his (Esau's) wickedness, (See Genesis 27:41-45) he alone was not convinced of this matter, and was very afraid of his coming, "and concerned" about the four hundred men he was coming with, because he knew that he was coming for the purpose of war.

אברבנל בראשית לב, (תשובה לשאלה ד')

יגם הולך לקראתך: והנראה מהשלוחים שלא היו יודעים משטמת עשו מיעקב ולכן כאשר הלכו לו ודברו אליו שליחותם הוא השיבם הנה הוא הולך לקראתו. וחשבו שהיה הולך לכבדו ומפני זה שבו אל יעקב ואמרו לו באנו אל אחיך אל עשו כלומר למה תקראהו 'אדוני' והוא אינו אלא כאח אוהב נאמן כי הנה גם הוא הולך לקראתך ר"ל לא די שיקבל שליחותיך אבל גם הוא בעצמו הולך ובא לקראתך לקבל אותך וארבע מאות איש עמו לכבדך. אבל יעקב שהיה יודע אמתת הדבר ורשעתו לבדו לא נתפתה בזה ויירא יעקב מאד מביאתו ויצר לו מדי מאות איש שהיה מביא עמו כי ידע כי למלחמה הוא בא.



Image courtesy of Sinai Publishing.

MAHLOKET MATTERS

HOW TO DISAGREE CONSTRUCTIVELY

Understanding the Other 49

Text 2.2

Shadal, Genesis 32:7 (Rabbi Samuel David Luzzatto, 1800 – 1865, Italy)

“And he is coming toward you”: For they believed that Esau was only coming to honor and protect him on his way. And perhaps this really was Esau’s intention, and perhaps they also understood from Esau’s answer that he did not have in his heart any evil or hatred for his brother, and perhaps they also told Jacob all these things that he said to them, words of peace and brotherhood. However, Jacob did not trust all of this, for he was afraid when he heard that he was coming with four hundred men, and Scripture did not want to expand upon the conversation of Esau and the messengers, since they did not have any benefit to him, because Jacob did not trust them.

שד"ל בראשית לב:ז

וגם הולך לקראתך: כסבורים שאין עשו בא אלא לכבדו ולשמרו בדרך. ואולי כן היתה באמת כוונת עשו, ואולי ג"כ הבינו מתשובת עשו שלא היה בלבו רעה ושנאה על אחיו, ואולי ג"כ סיפרו ליעקב את כל הדברים אשר דיבר אליהם דברי שלום ואחוה. אמנם יעקב לא בטח בכל זה, כי פחד בשמעו שהוא בא אליו בתי איש, והכתוב לא רצה להאריך בדברי עשו והמלאכים, מאחר שלא הועילו כלום, כי לא בטח בהם יעקב.



Samuel David Luzzatto, Torah Commentary, Vol. II, Genesis/Vayishlach-Exodus/Shmot-Yitro (Translated and Annotated by Eliyahu Munk), Lambda Publishers, Jerusalem, 2012, p 311.

Image courtesy of the Abraham Schwadron Collection at the National Library of Israel.

Exercise 2 – Writing the 49 vs 49 Faces of the Book

Background

Another pillar of the ‘Beit Midrash Way’ is the ability to understand contradictory interpretations of texts as well as ideological and political issues today. This has been referred to in short as the ‘49 vs 49’ and more precisely in rabbinic literature as the 49 *panim* or faces (מ"ט פנים) why a matter may be understood in contradictory ways. In this exercise we will connect between these multi-dimensional contradictory ‘faces’ of the Book, with the too often singular-dimension, simplistic nature of Facebook.

Instructions

Write two Facebook posts about the biblical story, one for Jacob and one for his anonymous messenger, with each post telling over the story from a different perspective. Feel free to be creative, drawing upon both your own interpretations and the interpretations of the biblical commentaries.

MAHLOKET MATTERS

HOW TO DISAGREE CONSTRUCTIVELY



The 9Adar Project
Jewish Week of Constructive Conflict
WWW.9ADAR.ORG

Jacob

Anonymous Messenger of Jacob

Personal Reflection

To what extent do you feel you portrayed each side's perspective in a manner that the conflicting Biblical characters would "like" your post? Explain why. Which post do you identify with more? Explain why.



Text Study 3 – Historical Precedents

Can you think of examples of when this unit's question has come up in history? How may the following historical events serve as contrasting historical precedents?

3.1. PM Chamberlain trusting Hitler's intentions of making peace in the Munich Agreement of 1938

Text 3.1.1

Neville Chamberlain (British PM), September 30, 1938 ("Peace For Our Time" speech)

We, the German Führer and Chancellor, and the British Prime Minister, have had a further meeting today and are agreed in recognizing that the question of Anglo-German relations is of the first importance for our two countries and for Europe.

We regard the agreement signed last night and the Anglo-German Naval Agreement as symbolic of the desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again. We are resolved that the method of consultation shall be the method adopted to deal with any other questions that may concern our two countries, and we are determined to continue our efforts to remove possible sources of difference, and thus to contribute to assure the peace of Europe."

https://eudocs.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Neville_Chamberlain%27s_%22Peace_For_Our_Time%22_speech

Text 3.1.2

Anthony Eden (British Foreign Secretary, 1935-1938)

You know, the hardest thing for me during that time was to convince my friends that Hitler and Mussolini were quite different from British business men or country gentlemen as regards their psychology, motivations and modes of action. My friends simply refused to believe me. They thought I was biased against the dictators and refused to understand them. I kept saying: "When you converse with the Führer or the Duke, you feel at once that you are dealing with an animal of an entirely different breed from yourself.

Quoted in Victor Davis Hanson, *The Second World Wars: How the First Global Conflict Was Fought and Won*, 2017, chapter 2. Part of this quote was later quoted by Israeli PM, Netanyahu in his remarks at the December 8, 2017, Saban Forum.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Bho92WEizg>

3.2. Prime Minister Menachem Begin trusting Sadat's intentions in making peace and visiting Jerusalem, November 19, 1977



British prime minister, Neville Chamberlain declared the Munich agreement meant "peace for our time."
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SetNFqcayeA>

Image: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c7/MunichAgreement.jpg>



Sadat in Tel Aviv 1977

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tNdnYADumrg>

Image: <http://www.archives.gov.il/en/chapter/no-war-begin-governments-peace-initiative-sadats-visit-jerusalem-november-1977/d164-075-sadat-at-airport-2/>

Text 3.2.1

Chief of Staff (Motta) Gur in interview with Yediot Aharanot on November 15, 1977

It should be clear to President Sadat that if he's planning another fraud like the Yom Kippur War (in 1973), his intentions are clear to us. We know the Egyptian army is at the peak of preparations to begin a war against Israel by 1978, in spite of Sadat's announcements about willingness to come to Jerusalem.

Quoted in Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, *Israel and the Peace Process 1977-1982: In Search of Legitimacy for Peace*, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994, p. 45.

Text 3.2.2

Menachem Begin addressing closed meeting of the Israeli Foreign Affairs and Security Cabinet, (November 18, 1977, 1pm, protocol 35, p. 4 of 9)

There are some who are warning of us of dangers (i.e. in Sadat's visit). I cannot dismiss this... after the visit is over if there is a need to reevaluate the situation I will do so without any hesitation. In the meantime, I don't see any great dangers.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SlIt4hDfKxs>

Text 3.2.3

Prof. William Quandt, a US National Security Council member and the administration's envoy on Middle Eastern affairs

We knew the Israelis were ready with snipers on the airport rooftops, because they were afraid Sadat was deceiving them and that he had Egyptian commando soldiers on the plane with him, who would attack and assassinate the Israeli leadership. But at the point Sadat was in the air they knew everything was in order. Barbara Walters (from ABC News) herself informed the Israelis in advance that there was no cause for concern.

40 years since Sadat visit: 'Israel had snipers ready on the rooftops' <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-5047042,00.html>

Exercise 3 - Studying Today's News 'The Beit Midrash Way'

Can you think of examples of where this unit's question comes up today either in politics or in your personal life? To what extent do you feel you understand the 49 vs 49 on this issue?

Background

The final pillar of the Beit Midrash Way is the interpretive skill of identifying key textual ambiguities, as well as understanding the conflicting interpretations of the commentaries on these textual ambiguities. These same interpretive skills are critical for reading both biblical verses and the news today. Below is an example of where this unit's question comes up in the news today according to previous Mahloket Matters participants. Feel free to use other examples of current events for the following exercise.

Instructions

1. Read in *havruta* the two articles brought below both reporting on Prime Minister Netanyahu's September 27, 2018 speech in the UN.
2. What are the shared facts mentioned in both articles?
3. What facts and interpretation of facts are unique to each article?
4. With which article do you identify with more? Why?
5. What did you learn from reading each article and from reading the news in general this way?



Prime Minister Netanyahu's UN Speech,
September 27, 2018

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B7ZPPaeMmmA>

Image: https://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D7%A7%D7%95%D7%91%D7%A5:Benjamin_Netanyahu_portrait.jpg

Prime Minister Netanyahu's UN Speech, September 27, 2018

Israeli Leader Claims Iran Has 'Secret Atomic Warehouse'

See <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/27/world/middleeast/israel-iran-nuclear-agreement.html>

Netanyahu Reveals Iran Nuclear Site, Demanding Iaea Inspection

See: <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Watch-Live-PM-Netanyahu-address-at-UNGA-568148>

| Prime Minister Netanyahu's UN Speech, September 27, 2018 | | |
|---|--------------|---|
| Article 1 | Article 2 | |
| Additional Facts/ Interpretation of Facts | Shared Facts | Additional Facts/ Interpretation of Facts |
| | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I identify more with this article because: <input type="checkbox"/> I identify less with this article, but still learned: | | <input type="checkbox"/> I identify more with this article because: <input type="checkbox"/> I identify less with this article, but still learned: |

MAHLOKET MATTERS

HOW TO DISAGREE CONSTRUCTIVELY



To continue reading today's news 'The Beit Midrash Way', check out AllSides at www.AllSides.com.



Complete the next step of OpenMind to explore the inner workings of the mind and the psychological mechanisms driving your decision-making.

Supplementary Sources

Supplementary Sources for Text Study 2

Prof. Benzion Netanyahu, father of PM Benjamin Netanyahu, wrote an important book on Abarbanel (Abravanel). How may the following comment connect to Abarbanel's comment on our story of Jacob and his messengers?

Text 2.1.1

Benzion Netanyahu, Don Isaac Abravanel: Statesmen and Philosopher, JPS, Philadelphia, 1968, pp. 89–91.

It is doubtful whether Abravanel or any one else could have succeeded in changing anything substantial in the situation which confronted the Jews of Europe at the time...His responsibility, however, lay in his ... policy which tried to resist the current, to save here and there those engulfed in its course, and stop the gaps through which it broke. Significantly he was described as one who "mends the breaches". But the breaches could not be mended. And it is here where Abravanel's great error lay... With all his experience in politics, his analytical mind, and his vast knowledge of human affairs, he saw the world through a veil. That the veil was removed from time to time, and that Abravanel's genius as financier and diplomat in its full magnitude and effectiveness, must necessarily be assumed...The veil, however, was never completely removed when it came to the Jewish question...



Rabbi Dr. Marc Gopin, one of the founders of the study and practice of religious peacebuilding, wrote extensively about Shadal. How may the following comment connect to Shadal's comment on our story of Jacob and his messengers?

Text 2.2.1

Marc Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon*, Oxford, 2000, pp. 90–91.

Like other moral sense theorists, Luzzato (Shadal) focused on the way that human beings extend their loving sentiments universally. Luzzato's love for non-Jews would be considered bizarre by many ultra-Orthodox or ultranationalist Jews today, at best, and at worst, heretical or traitorous.

How did the following commentators interpret the biblical story differently from Abarbanel and Shadal?

Text 2.3

Ramban, Genesis 32:8

(Rabbi Moses b. Nachman, 1194 Spain – 1270 Land of Israel)

Then Jacob was greatly afraid. This was because they told him that Esau had gone forth from his city and was coming to meet Jacob, and moreover, that he took along many men—four hundred. He thus greatly feared for his life, for he said, “He has not taken all these men except for the purpose of waging war against me.” It appears to me in this matter that Esau did not receive the messengers properly and paid them no heed. Perhaps they did not even come before him for he did not at all give permission for them to come before him and speak to him for otherwise, Scripture would have related that Esau questioned them concerning his brother's welfare and about his circumstances and those of his household and children. [Scripture further would have told how Esau requested] that they convey greetings to Jacob and tell him that he is proceeding towards him to see him, and they would have told it thus to Jacob. Scripture, however, does not narrate that the messengers transmitted a

רמב"ן בראשית לב:

ויירא יעקב מאד - בעבור שאמרו לו כי יצא עשו מעירו והוא בא לקראת יעקב, ועוד שלקח עמו אנשים רבים ארבע מאות, היה ירא לנפשו מאד כי אמר לא לקח כל אלה רק להלחם בי: והנראה בעיני בענין הזה, כי עשו לא קבל השלוחים כהוגן ולא השגיח עליהם, ואולי לא היו לפניו כי לא נתן רשות שיבאו לפניו וידברו עמו כלל, כי היה הכתוב מספר ששאל להם מה שלום אחי ומה ענינו ועניני ביתו ובניו, וקראו לו בשלומו, ואמרו לו כי אני הולך לקראתו לראותו, והם היו מגידים כן ליעקב, והכתוב לא סיפר שיאמרו השליחים דבר בשם עשו, אבל עברתו שמורה בלבו, ולעשות לו רעה היה הולך בחיל הזה. והנה השלוחים חקרו במחנה וידעו כי הוא הולך לקראת יעקב: וזה טעם "וגם", כי אמרו באנו אל אחיך אל עשו ולא ענה אותנו דבר ולא שלח לך דברי שלום, וגם הולך לקראתך בד-רוע וחיל, ולכך הוסיף לו פחד על פחדו, ויירא יעקב מאד ויצר לו.... אמרו באנו אל אחיך אל עשו, אתה נוהג בו כאח והוא נוהג עמך כעשו.

MAHLOKET MATTERS

HOW TO DISAGREE CONSTRUCTIVELY



The 9Adar Project
Jewish Week of Constructive Conflict
WWW.9ADAR.ORG

word in Esau's name. Instead, he [Esau] kept his wrath in his heart, and he came with his army for the purpose of doing Jacob evil. Now the messengers had investigated the matter in the camp, and they knew that he was going to meet Jacob. This is the meaning of the word vegam (and moreover) [in the verse, and moreover he goeth to meet thee], for they said, "We came to your brother Esau", but he did not answer us a word, and he sent you no greeting, and moreover, he goeth to meet thee with might and an army. This is why he added fear to his fear, as Scripture says, And Jacob was greatly afraid, and was distressed..... You behave towards him like a brother, but he behaves towards you like Esau the villain.

Ramban (Nachmanides) Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, Translated Chavel, Shilo publishing, New York, 1971, pp. 396-397.

Text 2.4.1

Bekhor Shor, Genesis 32:7 (Rabbi Joseph ben Isaac Bekhor Shor, 12th century, France)

"And he is coming toward you, and four hundred men are with him"... And we did not know what was in his mind, if good or bad, because he did not respond to us anything, rather he said, 'I will go to him and talk to him mouth to mouth, and since I will speak to him, what should I say to you?'

בכור שור, בראשית לב:ז

וגם הולך לקראתך וארבע מאות איש עמו: ולא ידענו מה בדעתו, אם טוב אם רע, כי לא השיבנו כלום, אלא אמר אני אלך אליו ואדבר עמו פה אל פה, וכיון שאדבר עמו, מה אומר לכם.

Text 2.4.2

Gordon Wenham, Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 2, Genesis 16–50, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1994, p. 290.

The messengers' return is eerie, for they bring no reply from Esau but simply report that he is on his way with four hundred men. The brevity makes for ambiguity. Is Esau coming to wage war or to receive his brother royally? If he is planning an attack, why allow the messengers to return unharmed, allowing Jacob to prepare himself? Or does Esau feel so superior that he is prolonging Jacob's agony before striking the final blow? The suspense is heightened.



Supplementary Sources for Text Study 3

How may the following two stories, one from the Book of Chronicles in the Bible and the other from the Book of Maccabees in the Apocrypha, serve as conflicting historical precedents for this unit's question?

King Josiah not trusting the King of Egypt

Text 3.3

Book of Chronicles II, Chapter 35 (JPS)

20 After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Neco king of Egypt went up to fight against Carchemish by the Euphrates; and Josiah went out against him. 21 But he sent ambassadors to him, saying: 'What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war; and G-d hath given command to speed me; forbear thee from meddling with G-d, who is with me, that He destroy thee not.' 22 Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Neco, from the mouth of G-d, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo. 23 And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants: 'Have me away; for I am sore wounded.' 24 So his servants took him out of the chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had, and brought him to Jerusalem; and he died, And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.

דברי הימים ב פרק לה

(כ) אַחֲרֵי כָּל זֹאת אָשֶׁר הָכִין יִאֲשִׁיהוּ אֶת הַבַּיִת עָלָה נָכוּ מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם לְהִלָּחֵם בְּכַרְכַּמִּישׁ עַל פְּרַת וַיֵּצֵא לְקִרְאָתוֹ יִאֲשִׁיהוּ: (כא) וַיִּשְׁלַח אֵלָיו מְלָאכִים לֵאמֹר מָה לִּי וְלָךְ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה לֹא עָלֶיךָ אֲנִי הַיּוֹם כִּי אֶל בַּיִת מִלְחָמָתִי וְאֱלֹהִים אָמַר לְבַהֲלֵנִי חֲדַל לָךְ מֵאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר עִמִּי וְאַל יִשְׁחִיתֶךָ: (כב) וְלֹא הִסֵּב יִאֲשִׁיהוּ פָּנָיו מִמֶּנּוּ כִּי לְהִלָּחֵם בּוֹ הִתְחַפֵּשׂ וְלֹא שָׁמַע אֶל דְּבָרַי נָכוּ מִפִּי אֱלֹהִים וַיָּבֵא לְהִלָּחֵם בְּבִקְעַת מְגִדּוֹ: (כג) וַיְרוּ הַיָּרִים לְמֶלֶךְ יִאֲשִׁיהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְעַבְדָּיו הֲעִבְרוּנִי כִּי הִחַלִּיתִי מֵאֵד: (כד) וַיַּעֲבִירוּהוּ עַבְדָּיו מִן הַמָּרְכָבָה וַיִּרְכִּיבוּהוּ עַל רֶכֶב הַמִּשְׁנָה אֲשֶׁר לוֹ וַיִּזְלִיכוּהוּ יְרוּשָׁלַם וַיָּמָת וַיִּקְבַּר בְּקֶבֶר רֹת אֲבֹתָיו וְכָל יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלַם מִתְאַבְּלִים עַל יִאֲשִׁיהוּ:

Jonathan, the Maccabees trusting Tryphon the Greek

Text 3.4

Book of Maccabees I, Chapter 12

39: Now Tryphon went about to get the kingdom of Asia, and to kill Antiochus the king, that he might set the crown upon his own head. 40: Howbeit he was afraid that Jonathan would not suffer him, and that he would fight against him; wherefore he sought a way how to take Jonathan, that he might kill him. So he removed, and came to Bethsan. 41: Then Jonathan went out to meet him with forty thousand men chosen for the battle, and came to Bethsan. 42: Now when Tryphon saw Jonathan came with so great a force, he durst not stretch his hand against him; 43: But received him honourably, and commended him unto all his friends, and gave him gifts, and commanded his men of war to be as obedient unto him, as to himself. 44: Unto Jonathan also he said, Why hast thou brought all this people to so great trouble, seeing there is no war betwixt us? 45: Therefore send them now home again, and choose a few men to wait on thee, and come thou with me to Ptolemais, for I will give it thee, and the rest of the strong holds and forces, and all that have any charge: as for me, I will return and depart: for this is the cause of my coming. 46: So Jonathan believing him did as he bade him, and sent away his host, who went into the land of Judea. 47: And with himself he retained but three thousand men, of whom he sent two thousand into Galilee, and one thousand went with him. 48: Now as soon as Jonathan entered into Ptolemais, they of Ptolemais shut the gates and took him, and all them that came with him they slew with the sword.

Supplementary Text Study

What Happened when Jacob and Esau Met?

Text 5.1

Genesis 33:4 (The New JPS)

Esau ran to greet him.
He embraced, and falling
on his neck, he kissed him
(vayeshakehu); and they wept.

בראשית לג:ד

(ד) וַיָּרֵץ עֶשָׂו לִקְרַא־
תּוֹ וַיַּחְבְּקֵהוּ וַיִּפֹּל עַל
צַוְאָרוֹ וַיִּשָּׁקֵהוּ וַיִּבְכוּ:

Bereishis 33:4 (Artscroll/Stone Edition)

Esau ran toward him, embraced
him, fell upon his neck, and
kissed him; then they wept.

Draw a picture of verse 4.



Read the following rabbinic interpretations of verse 4. How might each of the rabbis draw a different picture?

Text S.2

Genesis Rabbah 78:9

(6th Century CE, Land of Israel)

The word (vayeshakehu) is dotted. R. Simeon b. Eleazar said:...Hence it teaches that he kissed him with all his heart. ...Said R. Jannai to him: If so, why is the word dotted? It teaches, however, that he wished to bite him (but that the Patriarch Jacob's neck was turned to marble and that wicked man's teeth were blunted and loosened. Hence "and they both wept" one wept because of his neck and the other wept because of his teeth.

Midrash Rabbah Genesis II, Soncino Press, London, 1951, p.721.

בראשית רבה (וילנא) עח:ט, (לג,ד)

“וירץ עשו לקראתו וישקהו”, נקוד עליו. אמר רבי שמעון בן אלעזר: ...מלמד שנכמרו רחמיו באותה השעה ונשקו בכל לבו. אמר לו רי ינאי: אם כן למה נקוד עליו? אלא מלמד שלא בא לנשקו אלא לנשכו ונעשה צוארו של אבינו יעקב של שיש וקהו שיניו של אותו רשע ומה תלמוד לומר “ויבכו” אלא זה בוכה על צוארו וזה בוכה על שיניו.

Supplementary Source for Text Study 1

Why does the Bible say that Jacob was afraid with two different adjectives in Gen. 32:8?

Text S.3

Genesis Rabbah 76:2

(6th Century CE, Land of Israel)

Then Jacob was greatly afraid and was distressed (Gen. 32:8). Rabbi Judah b. Rabbi Ilai said: Are not ‘fear’ and ‘distress’ identical? The meaning, however, is that ‘he was afraid’ lest he should be slain (meaning killed by Esau), “and he was distressed” lest he should slay (meaning kill Esau).

Midrash Rabbah Genesis II, Soncino Press, London, 1951, p.702.

בראשית רבה עו:ב

“וַיִּירָא יַעֲקֹב מְאֹד וַיִּצָר לוֹ” (בראשית לב:ח). אר״י ברי עילאי לא היא יראה לא היא צרה? אלא וירא - שלא יהרוג. ויצר - לו שלא יהרג.