Themes in Chumash*:* a *Tanach* based approach to the life of Mitzvot

**Case study #5**: Yitzchak & Yaakov – Maintaining the Movement

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In our last class, we appreciated the revolutionary character of Avraham Avinu [our father]. He forged a new paradigm concerning G-d and the Universe. This was met with extreme hatred and opposition.

Tonight, we will analyze a key event in the life of Yitzchak – the next patriarch.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ft3oPgsCFbA>

1. When Steve Jobs died, what challenges did Apple [potentially] face?
2. In your mind, what did Tim Cook [his successor] have to do?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f5iyULLIPg0>

1. What did Tim Cook do since taking over the company?

*Isaac and the Philistines*

26:1 There was a famine in the land, aside from the [first famine in the time of Abraham](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=26#C508). Isaac went to [Abimelekh](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=26#C509) king of the Philistines in [Gerar](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=26#C510). 26:2 God appeared to [Isaac] and said, 'Do not go down to Egypt. Remain undisturbed in the land that I shall designate to you. 26:3 Remain an immigrant in this land. I will be with you and bless you, since it will be to you and your offspring that I will give all these lands. I will thus keep the oath that I made to your father Abraham. 26:4 I will make your descendants as numerous as the [stars of the sky](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=26#C511), and grant them all these lands. All the nations on earth [shall be blessed through your descendants](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=26#C512). 26:5 All this is because Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My decrees, and My laws.'

**Questions:**

**1) Why does G-d relate to Yitzchok/Isaac in terms of Abraham?**

**2) Does Yitzchok have inherent greatness**?

26:6 Isaac thus settled in Gerar. 26:7 When the local men asked about his wife, he told them that she was his sister. He was afraid to say that she was his wife. Rebecca was so good-looking that the local men could have killed him because of her. 26:8 Once, after [Isaac] had been there for some time, Abimelekh, king of the Philistines, was looking out the window, and he saw Isaac enjoying himself with his wife Rebecca. 26:9 Abimelekh summoned Isaac. 'But she is your wife!' he said. 'How could you have said that she is your sister?' 'I was afraid that I would die because of her,' replied Isaac.

26:10 'What have you done to us?' demanded Abimelekh. 'One of the people could easily have slept with your wife! You would have made us commit a terrible crime!' 26:11 Abimelekh issued an order to all the people: 'Whoever touches this man or his wife shall die.

**Questions:**

**1) What does the fact that Yitzchok had to lie about his relationship with Rivka/Rebecca tell you about the people of Gerar?**

' 26:12 Isaac farmed in the area. That year, he reaped a hundred times [as much as he sowed], for God had blessed him. 26:13 This was the beginning of his prosperity. He then continued to prosper until he became extremely wealthy. 26:14 He had flocks of sheep, herds of cattle, and a large retinue of slaves. The Philistines became jealous of him 26:15 They plugged up all the wells that his father's servants had dug while Abraham was still alive, and they filled them with earth. 26:16 Abimelekh said to Isaac, 'Go away from us. You have become much more powerful than we are.' 26:17 Isaac left the area and camped in the [Gerar Valley](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=26#C513), intending to settle there.

**2) Why did they plug up the Avraham’s wells now – he had died many years earlier?!?**

**3) Why did they kick out Yitzchok of Gerar?**

26:18 He redug the wells that had been dug in the days of his father Abraham, which had been plugged up by the Philistines after Abraham's death. He gave them the same names that his father had given them.

**4) Why did Yitzchok both re-dig the wells and as well as re-name the wells with the names that Avraham had named them?**

26:19 Isaac's servants then dug in the valley, and found a new well, brimming over with fresh water.

26:20 The shepherds of Gerar disputed with Isaac's shepherds, claiming that the water was theirs. [Isaac] named the well Challenge (*Esek*), because they had challenged him. 26:21 They dug another well, and it was also disputed. [Isaac] named it Accusation (*[Sitnah](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=26" \l "C514)*). 26:22 He then moved away from there and dug another well. This time it was not disputed, so he named it Wide Spaces (*[Rechovoth](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=26" \l "C515)*). 'Now God will grant us wide open spaces,' he said. 'We can be fruitful in the land.'

**5) Why did the Shepherds contest the ownership of Yitzchok’s first two wells?**

**6) Why did they stop contesting the ownership of the third well?**

26:23 From there, [Isaac] went up to Beer-sheba. 26:24 God appeared to him that night and said, 'I am God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you. I will bless you and grant you very many descendants because of My servant Abraham.' 26:25 [Isaac] built an altar there and called in God's name. He set up his tents there, and his servants dug a well in the area.

26:26 Abimelekh came to [Isaac] from Gerar, along with a group of friends and his general [Pikhol](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=26#C516). 26:27 'Why have you come to me?' asked Isaac. 'You hate me; you drove me away from you!' 26:28 'We have indeed seen that God is with you,' they replied. 'We propose that there now be a covenant between you and us. Let us make a treaty with you, 26:29 that just as we did not touch you, you will do no harm to us. We did only good to you and let you leave in peace. Now you are the one who is blessed by God.' 26:30 [Isaac] prepared a feast for them, and they ate and drank. 26:31 They got up early in the morning, and made a mutual oath. Isaac then bid them farewell, and they left in peace. 26:32 On that very day, Isaac's servants came and told him about the well they had been digging. 'We have found water!' they announced. 26:33 [Isaac] named the well [Shibah](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=26#C517). The city is therefore called [Beer-sheba](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=26#C518) to this very day.

**7) Why did Avimelech want to make a covenant with Yitzchok?**

**8) The Rabbis state, *“Maaseh Avot - Siman L’banim*” – The events of the Patriarchs is a [sign to the children] foreshadowing of Jewish History. What events does this story foreshadow in your mind?**