

# CHOOSE A DIRECTION

by Rabbi Yaakov Menken

*Gen. 25:22-23, "And the two children were pushing inside her, and she said if so, why do I exist? And she went to ask H'. And H' said to her, there are two nations in your womb..."*

This passage is difficult to understand. What is so unusual if children are kicking in the womb? As *Rashi* explains, nothing is wrong with that - so it's obvious that this verse means something extraordinary. So the *Medrash* tells us that the word for pushing or crushing, "*Retzitza*", in this case is being used for "*Ritza*", running. When *Rivka* would walk by the *Yeshiva* of *Shem* and *Aver*, *Yaakov* would "run", pushing to get out. And when *Rivka* would walk by a house of idols, *Esav* his brother would push.

So *Rivka* is upset, she asks what's going on, and she's told: "not to worry, you're having twins." Excuse me, but - why is this helpful? So now instead of having one child who is interested in all sorts of gods, both real and imaginary, she has one who is interested in the One H', and one interested in idols. Why is she comforted?

I suppose in simple terms, she already knew that the line of *Avraham* had continued with *Yitzhak*, rather than with *Yishmael* or any other brother - and so she understood that even with a son dedicated to idols, she only needed to find one pure son to carry the line forward. Therefore twins - one good and one wicked - were better than a single confused child.

On a deeper level, I heard the following from a leader in today's *Mussar* movement (*Mussar* - moral exhortation): that a son moving in the wrong direction can be turned around, but it is much more difficult to "straighten out" someone who is moving every which way. The same Greek root that produced "epicurian" is also the source for "apikorus", a heretic.

*Avraham*, by rejecting polytheism, would have been branded an intolerant bigot in today's politically correct society. If Rome went to war with Venice, and Venice lost, then the citizens would offer sacrifices to the Roman gods. This was not because of a "rejection" of Venician gods, but rather simple pragmatism: obviously, the Roman gods were stronger! So all the cultures of the world accepted the essential validity of everyone else's gods. Abraham - the father of Judaism - rejected this concept.

At a certain point, we must choose a direction!

---

Text Copyright © 1994 Rabbi Yaakov Menken and Project Genesis, Inc.

The author is the Director of Project Genesis.