

"And the children agitated within her." (25:22)

Chazal teach us that even prior to their birth, Yaakov and Eisav clearly exhibited their innate tendencies. They explain that the word, "ummur,hu," is derived from the word, .r, which means "to run." When Rivkah passed the *Bais Ha'Midrash* of Shem and Ever, Yaakov "ran," struggling to come forth to study *Torah*. In contrast, when she passed a house of idol-worship, Eisav "ran," trying to emerge. This *Midrash* has long been a source of discussion regarding the relative quality of *Torah* study, given the nature of the spiritual environment. This is inferred from the fact that Yaakov desired to "escape" the womb in order to enter the study hall of *Torah*. Why could he not remain where he was? After all, we are taught that an angel teaches *Torah* to the yet-unborn child. **Horav Bunim, zl, M'Peshischa**, responds that studying *Torah* -- even with an angel -- is difficult, especially when it takes place in the same womb with such a character as Eisav. It is better for an individual to reject the opportunity to participate in this unique learning experience, disregarding the remarkable teacher, if the act of study would increase contact with Eisav.

Yaakov could not leave, since Eisav was blocking his exit. Why did Eisav not depart, however, when he passed by the pagan house of worship? No one was encumbering him. **Horav Yechezkel, zl, M'Kuzmir**, offers two practical insights which aptly characterize those who would do anything to prevent Yaakov from studying *Torah*. True, Eisav could have left, but his departure would have similarly enabled Yaakov to leave. Eisav would rather have foregone his beloved idols than to permit Yaakov entry to study *Torah*. In a slightly different twist, he says that Eisav sought to make Yaakov's life miserable. Life for Eisav had no intrinsic meaning if he would be unable to persecute Yaakov. To leave, would have eliminated Eisav's opportunity to maximize his pleasure by obstructing Yaakov's *Torah* study and his overall functionings?