

Why Jacob? / Fox Translation / Rashi / Dates / Giving of Torah and Writing

Why Jacob? He is a modern hero who survives by his wit and his guile. His father was a Holocaust survivor. The *Akedah* in Ch. 22 throws its shadow over the rest of Genesis, causing Abraham's family and Isaac's family and Jacob's family to be dysfunctional. We focus on the Jacob cycle because that cycle introduces a new function of language in Torah.

Fox translation. The Bible is meant to be read aloud. His translation is meant to echo the Hebrew and to lead the reader back to the sound structure and form of the original. His precursor is the German translation of the Bible done by Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig (1925-1962). Most other translations are in modern idiomatic English. Go over page "Comparison of Translations Involving the Key Word 'Face.' "

Rashi. Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki, foremost commentator on Torah (1140-1205), lived in Troyes, France.

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| Dates (all BCE). | 21–15 century 1678–1570 1275–1250 approx 1000–200 | Patriarchal tradition descent to Egypt Exodus writing of most of Torah |
| Traditional dating | Abraham Jacob to Haran Sinai and Torah | 2000 years after creation or 1750 2185 years after creation or 1565 2448 years after creation or 1300 |
| Other events | Greek alphabet Homer Plato | 8 th century 7 th century 4 th century |

Giving of Torah and Writing.

First tablets of law given in Exodus 31:18, written by finger of God.

Second tablets of law given in Exodus 34:28, written by Moses.

The latter is the first act of writing in the Torah. No writing in Genesis. Momentous event: introduction of aleph-bet around the years 1300–1250 BCE. Memorialized by the writer(s) of the Torah in the giving of the Torah at Sinai. The giving of the Torah coincided, more or less, with introduction of the aleph-bet. This is discussed by David Abram in *The Spell of the Sensuous*.