

העמק דבר בראשית כד:סה

ממנו שהוא אישה, ותקח הצעיר ותתכנס.
מרוצ פחד ובושה כמו שמנייה שאינה ראויה להיות
לו לאשה, ומאז והלאה נקבע בלבה פחד ממנו,
ולא היתה עם יצחק כמו שרה עם אברהם,

ורחל עם יעקב, אשר נהיות להם איזה קפידא
עליהם או שינוי דעה לא נשאו לדבר רחם לפנייהם,
משא"כ רבקה.

AND REBECCA AROSE WITH
HER MAIDENS, ETC. THEY RODE UPON THE CAMELS . . .

Midrash explains why Rebecca was riding a camel.^[190]

R' Levi said: Rebecca
שכן דרך הגמלים גדלים

traveled by camelback because it is the way of camels to be
bred in the east.^[191] רבנן אמרי: מה זמל זה יש בו סימן טובא וסימן
And the Sages said: Just as the camel has a nonkosher
sign and a kosher sign,^[192] כך העמידה רבקה צדיק ורשע
so did Rebecca give rise to a righteous person (Jacob) and a wicked
one (Esau).^[193]

קמל ע"י רבקה

60:14

We have already seen the sharp contrast between Rivkah and her environment. Nevertheless, Scripture reminds us again of her Aramean origin and family. Yitzchak was the son of Avraham, and thus it was Avraham, and Avraham alone, who had influenced him. As a result Yitzchak had matured to become a true son of Avraham. But Rivkah, despite her excellent qualities, was the daughter of an Aramean, was born and raised in Aram, and was the sister of Lavan, an Aramean in every way. If, as our Sages say, "Most sons take after their maternal uncles" (see *Bava Basra* 110a), what sort of offspring could be expected from this marriage? By means of this reminder, the narrative prepares us for the conflict that arises later on. We will then not be surprised to find an Esav among the sons; rather, we will be surprised to also find among them one like Ya'akov.

ג' (ל"ט) ר' ר' 25:20

AND THEY WERE A PROVOCATION OF
THE SPIRIT TO ISAAC AND TO REBECCA.

The Midrash comments on the order of Isaac and Rebecca's names in this verse:

Why does the verse mention *to Isaac* first?^[34] למה ליצחק תחלה
אקלא על ידי שהיתה רבקה בת בומרים לא היתה מקפדת על
Because since Rebecca was the daughter
of idolatrous priests,^[35] she was not particular about the
filth of idolatry.^[36] וזה על ידי שהיה בן קדושים היה מקפיד על
But this one (Isaac), since he was the son
of holy people, he was indeed particular about the filth of
idolatry.^[37] לפיכך ליצחק תחלה
Therefore *to Isaac* appears
first.^[38] An alternative explanation:
Why does the verse mention *to Isaac* first?
אקלא לפי שהדבר תלוי
Because since the mat-
ter derived from her,^[39] as it is written, *And HASHEM said to*
[Rebecca], "Two nations are in your womb" (above, 25:23),^[40]

ג' (ל"ט) ר' ר' 25:20

65:4

§6 The Midrash relates a verse in *Proverbs* to the events of our passages:

"מִצְדִּיק רָשָׁע וּמְרַשֵּׁי צְדִיק הוֹעֵבֶת ה' גַּם שְׁנֵיהֶם" — A verse states, *Acquitting a wicked person and condemning a righteous person, both are abominations of HASHEM* (Proverbs 17:15).

לֹא מִמָּה — R' Yehoshua ben Levi said: שֶׁהָיְתָה רִבְקָה אוֹהֶבֶת אֶת יַעֲקֹב יְתִיר מֵעֵשָׂו עֲשָׂתָהּ אֶת הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה — It was not because Rebecca loved Jacob more than Esau that she did this thing,^[51]

בָּלָא אֶמְרָהּ: לֹא יֵעוֹל וְיִטְעִי לְהוֹזִיא קָבֵא — but rather because she said, "Let him (Esau) not go in and deceive this old man (Isaac)."^[52]

עַל שֵׁם "הוֹעֵבֶת ה' גַּם שְׁנֵיהֶם" — Rebecca's conviction was based on the statement of the above-cited verse, *both are abominations of HASHEM*.^[53]

וְעַל יְדֵי שֶׁהִצְדִּיק אֶת הָרָשָׁע — And since he (Isaac) acquitted the wicked person (Esau), his eyes dimmed,^[54]

(5)

ב' ע' ל' כ' ק' ד'

65:6

(6)

The mother explained to Jacob that the field does not have to be a place of impurity. Judaism believes that the field in all of its forms and transformations, with its speedy expansion and captivating glint, can be beautiful and glorious—provided that Esau the agnostic, the materialist, the coarse, the cynical denier, does not remain in sole control. Jacob, you can bring refinement to the field; you are able to hallow it. Through you the field will be exalted.

You should know that Esau finds no peace of mind in the field. The work there does not satisfy him. He is tired and dispirited. *And Esau came in from the field, and he was faint* (25:29). On the one hand, Esau is the victorious conqueror of worlds; he is proud and brazen; he dreams of conquering the entire field. But this hunter is beaten by his own conquests. He is faint, spiritually worn out and cut off from his existential, metaphysical roots.

Isaac, who had feared Jacob's leaving his tents and becoming entangled in the field, finally agreed with Rebecca and admitted that Jacob was able not only to become expert in the affairs of the field, but that the field itself under Jacob's tutelage would receive something special: the blessing of God. Jacob's field would sparkle with the reflection of the light of the Divine Presence. There he would find meaning and purpose. Only Jacob possessed the qualities needed to transform the brutal, mechanical field into a Garden of God, into a place where the soul could find joy and repose. "

in Rav's Chumash

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(7)

Only in the midst of Egypt were the descendants of Abraham able to develop into a great nation. In another context that change would not have taken place. To develop the qualities that characterize our nation—mercy, modesty and loving kindness—we had to be thrust into the vortex of power, might and brutal force, and experience the antithesis of our ethos. Only through exposure to these adverse character traits could we achieve our true essence as a people. In the same way, Joseph had to be sold to an executioner, for otherwise he would not have been able to appreciate Jacob's greatness.

The verse in *Songs of Songs* notes, *As a rose among the thorns, so is my beloved among the young women*. The rose, a soft-petaled flower, flourishes specifically among thorns. The nation's greatness was due to its suffering among the Egyptians and the recognition that its moral heritage was entirely different. For the same reason, the Torah emphasized Rebecca's genealogical background. Only by growing up in such an adverse environment could she truly appreciate the greatness of the world of Abraham. (Darash Darush Yosef, pp. 67-68)

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