

Maamarei Mordechai

הסבר לפי ממש פשוט

Parshas Toldos 5784

D. Mordechai Schlachter

Yitzchok got married and the Torah gives her lineage.

וַיְהִי יִצְחָק בֶּן־אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה בְּקִרְתּוֹ אֶת־רִבְקָה בַת־בְּתוּאֵל הָאֲרָמִי מִפְּדֹן אָרָם אִתּוֹ
לְבֵן הָאֲרָמִי לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה:

“And it was that Yitzchok was forty years old when he took Rivkah the daughter of Besuel the Aramean, from Padan Aram, the sister of Lavan the Aramean, for his wife.” (Bereishis 25:20).

This pasuk gives Rivka’s lineage here even though we know it already from the entire episode of Avraham’s butler going to Padan Aram to find a wife for Yitzchok. Why does the Torah repeat it here again? Why does the Torah give both lineages, that she was the son of Besuel and the sister of Lavan. Obviously, if she was one, she was the other, as the Torah previously gave the family tree of Besuel. Also, why does it insist that both Besuel and Lavan were Arameans?

The inheritance of the Land of Canaan was at stake. The Torah introduced this topic with וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת יִצְחָק בֶּן־אַבְרָהָם אֲבִירָהּם הוֹלִיד אֶת־יִצְחָק: “And this is the legacy of Yitzchok son of Avraham, Avraham fathered Yitzchok.” (Ibid 25:19). Every other place, the Torah only uses the person’s name, not their fathers. “This is the legacy of Noach” (ibid 10:1), “This is the legacy of Shem” (ibid 11:10), and “This is the legacy of Terach” (ibid 11:27). Two exceptions are with Yitzchok here (ibid 25:19) and “This is the legacy of Yishmael, son of Avraham.” (Ibid 25:12). The Torah never gives the single legacy of Avraham. Instead, his legacy is given through Yishmael and Yitzchok. Both sons are inseparable from their father.

This is because the inheritance of Eretz Yisroel is tied to Avraham. He was the rightful and unquestioned heir of the land. Yishmael begot lands from Avraham but his legacy was to be elsewhere. He is nothing without his father, Avraham, who gave him the rights to whatever lands he did get. Yitzchok’s main legacy was his coming from Avraham. He was *the heir* of Avraham – “Avraham fathered Yitzchok.” The undisputed passing of the rights to Eretz Canaan went to Yitzchok.

The rights to the Land are interwoven in this parsha. Rivkah was barren. (Ibid 25:21). Rivkah could not understand the struggle going on in her womb. To understand her bewilderment, it is important to note that she was surprised she had twins. (Ibid 25:24). If the struggles in her womb was between two growing children (nations) then she would not be surprised by twins. However, having twins surprised her. Clearly, the interpretation of the pesukim is that in Rivkah’s experience, the “children struggling” or running around in her womb was prior to her conceiving. It was during the time when she was still barren. The “children” in her womb seemed to struggle or be running from conception. In other words, children escaped her womb. She then says “Why am I?” (Ibid

25:22). She was asking *what purpose do I serve to be Yitzchok's husband if I cannot conceive*. She inquired of Hashem. (Ibid). She received the prophecy that two nations would come from her womb. (Ibid 25:23). She then conceived. (Ibid 25:21). Then, behold! (surprise) she had twins. (Ibid 25:24).

Growing up, Esav and Yaakov both believed they would share Eretz Canaan. Esav sold the birthright on his potential deathbed. (Ibid 25:32). However, while he admitted to giving up the birthright, he still felt he had the right to the firstborn brochos. (Ibid 27:36). וַאֲמַר הֲכִי קָרָא שְׁמוֹ יַעֲקֹב וַיַּעֲקֹבֵנִי יְהוָה פַּעַמַּיִם אֶת־בְּכֹרְתִי לָקַח וְהִגָּה עֲתָה לָקַח בְּרִכְתִּי׃
 “And he said, ‘Was he then named Yaakov so he can uproot me twice? He already took the birthright, and behold! Now he took my blessing.’” (Ibid). Esav, clearly, finds the progeniture separate from the birthright. He felt he was still entitled to the firstborn brochos even if he would get second choice of Eretz Canaan lands.

Hashem never promised that only Yaakov would inherit Eretz Canaan. During the famine, Hashem tells Yitzchok to stay in the Land that He would give to Yitzchok's offspring and He will uphold the oath to Avraham. (Ibid 26:3). Hashem promises to make Yitzchok's heirs as numerous as the stars and all nations would be blessed through his offspring. (Ibid 26:4). No mention of one son taking over the other.

Following his father, Esav then marries at forty. (Ibid 26:34). Unlike his father, he takes wives from the bnei Canaan. (Ibid). This was a source of bitterness to both Rivkah and Yitzchok (ibid 26:35) and where he fails. This is where Esav lost the rights to Canaan. After Esav acknowledges that Yaakov took the progeniture and the brochos (ibid 37:36) he hated Yaakov for taking the brochos (ibid 27:41). Now, he realized land was at stake.

He silently pledged to kill Yaakov after Yitzchok dies. (Ibid). “When the matter of Esav the greater son” was told to Rivkah (ibid 27:42), she told Yaakov to abscond to Lavan (ibid 27:43). “The matter” was that he cried over the blessing and revealed he no longer had the birthright. She immediately complains to Yitzchok that Yaakov may marry Chiti women, too. (Ibid 27:46). Yitzchok tells Yaakov, “Go up to Padan Aram, the house of Besuel, your mother's father, and take for you from there a wife, from the daughters of Lavan, your mother's brother.” (Ibid 28:2). Then he gives him the ultimate primogeniture, *may Kel Shakkai bless you*. (Ibid 28:3). Seeing as how Esav took wives from Canaan but Yaakov would stay in the family, now Yitzchok knew that only Yaakov would inherit the Land. Esav tries to rectify his situation by taking wives from Yishmael. (Ibid 28:8). However, Yishmael also has no rights to Canaan so it did not help.

By taking wives from Ches and Yishmael, Esav lost the completely unique ownership of Eretz Canaan. The inheritance of the land had to come from Hashem and it could not be diluted by anyone else's claim. Esav's in-laws would claim that his ownership in the Land was part in due to his wife. Therefore, his claim would be tainted. Yaakov, taking a wife from Aram, would continue to have an uncontested claim to Canaan. He took from Avraham's family (his nephew, Besuel) and his mother's (brother, Lavan). The Land rightfully belonged to Avraham, then Yitzchok, and now to Yaakov. No outside claimants could be involved. The boundary of the Land extended to Aram. (Ibid 15:18). This is why Rivkah's lineage was repeated.