

And she (Rivkah) said, “If so, why is it that I am?” (25:22)

Rashi explains Rivkah *Imeinu's* question to be: Why am I desiring and praying for pregnancy? *Ibn Ezra* explains that Rivkah questioned other women who had given birth to determine whether this experience that she was undergoing was usual. They replied that it was certainly out of the ordinary. Rivkah now wondered, “Why is my pregnancy so strange?” *Ramban* does not agree with *Rashi* or *Ibn Ezra*. He posits that Rivkah was saying, “If this is the way it will be for me, why am I in this world? I would rather not be alive. What purpose is there in such a life?” *Ramban* does not agree that the word *anochi*, “I,” is a reference to the pregnancy. He views it as a reference to Rivkah's being alive: “What is life if I cannot fulfill my G-d-given purpose?”

Horav Nissan Alpert, zl, suggests a deeper understanding of our Matriarch's statement, especially in light of a parent's inner-conflict when he or she witnesses his or her child's anxiety. The Torah is teaching us that the agitation, anxiety, ambiguity and inner-torment which we notice in our children have a much deeper source in ourselves. A child that appears torn between two worlds is often reflecting a problem that his or her parents have manifested.

Perhaps the parents are themselves conflicted, torn between two value systems. The parents want to be like the Joneses, but they are unable to cope with the reality that they are not the Joneses. This is obvious to their child who plays out this conflict in his or her own life. After all, the child muses, “What is good for Mom and Dad must be good for me.”

This might be what Rivkah *Imeinu* felt during her strange pregnancy. She sensed conflict. Her first thoughts might have been, “Why am I thus? Is there something about my life that is conflicted? Is there something about my soul that is out of balance? What is the discord that is taking place in my womb telling me? Is there something about the *anochi*, I/me, that must be corrected, reexamined, reconciled and resolved, so that I can be a better servant to Hashem?”