

And Eisav was forty years old and he took a wife...and they were a source of bitterness for Yitzchak and Rivkah. (26:35)

Rivkah *Imeinu* is compared to a rose among thorns. She remained righteous despite the thorn of evil which surrounded her: her father, her brother; indeed, her entire environment was replete with evil. She rose above her environment, above the negative influences that permeated her background. *Chazal* describe her exemplary virtue. When Yitzchak married Rivkah and brought her home to his mother's tent, the three blessings which had been present during Sarah's lifetime returned: a lamp burning from one *Shabbos* eve to the next; her dough was blessed; a cloud signifying the Divine Presence hung over her tent. All of these had ceased with Sarah's death.

When Rivkah married Yitzchak she was three years old. Certainly, whatever evil she had been exposed to would have been eradicated by the time she stood with Yitzchak praying for guidance. They were married for twenty years before Rivkah gave birth to Yaakov and Eisav. She had experienced forty more years of living in an environment of total *kedushah* and *taharah*, holiness and purity, married to the *olah temimah*, perfect elevation offering, Yitzchak *Avinu*, when Yaakov and Eisav received the blessings from their father.

Yet, when addressing Yitzchak and Rivkah's displeasure with Eisav's pagan wives, the *Torah* mentions Yitzchak's name first. This leads *Chazal* to comment that, indeed, Yitzchak was provoked first and Rivkah only later. Having grown up in an element that was suffused with idolatry, Rivkah was not as acutely outraged as her husband, who had grown up in Avraham *Avinu*'s home.

What are *Chazal* telling us with this statement? *Hegryonei Mussar* infers a profound lesson from here. Rivkah *Imeinu*, despite her aversion to idol-worship, was not as disturbed by its presence in her son's home as was Yitzchak. The difference between the two was their relative level of exposure. Rivkah was exposed to pagan worship, an evil for which she never lost complete repugnance, even sixty years later! Once we are exposed to evil we lose our contempt for it.

It is not necessary to delineate the apparent lesson this has for us today. We and our children come in contact with the revulsion that has become the symbol of contemporary society through various medias. While we think they have no effect on us, the *Torah* seems to disagree. Are we willing to take the chance and risk our children's spiritual development?