

And Avraham said to his servant, the elder of his household who controlled all that was his....And I said to my master, "Perhaps the woman will not follow me?" (24:2, 39)

The *Torah* tells very little about Eliezer, Avraham's trusted servant. Who was he? Who was his father? The first indication about his origins is later in the narrative, when *Rashi* explains the word "hkt"--"*ulai*," this word is normally spelled with a "vov" and is translated as "perhaps." It is now spelled without a "vov" and should really be interpreted as "*to me*." *Rashi* says that Eliezer was alluding to his own daughter whom he had hoped to marry to Yitzchak. Thus, when he asked Avraham what to do if he was not successful in finding the suitable mate for Yitzchak, he was not really asking. Rather, he was hoping that he would not find a mate and that Yitzchak would come "to me." Avraham responded, "My son is blessed, and you, as a Canaani, are accursed. The accursed cannot unite with the blessed." Apparently, Eliezer was a descendant of Canaan. *Targum Yonasan* states that Eliezer was the son of Nimrod, the son of Kush, the son of Cham.

Regardless of whether Eliezer was a Canaani or Nimrod's son, he came from a tainted lineage. The only question is the degree of imperfection. Nimrod was the great rebel who disputed Hashem's Divinity, who rallied a world to rebel against Him. He was the one who threw Avraham *Avinu* into the fiery furnace in an attempt to rid himself of any antagonists. Yet, he fathered Eliezer, who was entrusted by Avraham to find a wife for Yitzchak.

Horav Zaidal Epstein, Shlita, makes a compelling observation from here. We see that it is conceivable for one who is a *rasha m'rusha*, thoroughly evil, to have a child that who achieve remarkable spiritual heights. We find that descendants of Haman *ha'rasha* studied *Torah* in Bnei Brak. Consequently, we must keep in mind that while we must separate ourselves as much as possible from *reshaim*, a concealed spark of "decency" might be buried deep beneath all that evil. The spark in this individual might germinate and manifest itself many generations later through his descendants. Indeed, we find that before Moshe killed the Egyptian who was striking a Jew, he saw through *Ruach Hakodesh*, Divine Inspiration, that nothing positive would ever emerge from him. We should never totally dismiss anyone's possible future merit. Is that not what characterizes Judaism?