

נחום לאם
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Dear Uzi:

Thank you for your piece on ויצא and the (ethical) problem of the גניבת הברכות. I think you are on target, and your analysis is basically correct (i.e., in consonance with the moral perspective of the Torah and its tendency not to be overtly judgmental but to allow the lesson to be derived from the sequence of the narrative). I liked especially your insights regarding the "name" matter--the literary juxtaposition is beautiful!

Time does not permit me to expand on this theme, and we'll have to leave it for when we next meet, אי"ה. Hence, just a few comments, mostly in the nature of תניא דמסייע ליה:

1) See Abarbanel on the beginning of ויצא, where he attributes Jacob's dream to his troubled conscience about stealing the blessings from Isaac.

2) Either Casuto or Benno Jacob has an excellent analysis of the whole incident (similar to yours). One of the things that stands out in my memory: Jacob deceived his father by substituting himself, a younger brother, for an older sibling, exploiting the darkness of his father's blindness. The punishment-- מדה כנגד מדה--comes when Laban substitutes an older daughter for her younger sibling under the cover of literal darkness.

3) See Netziv's דבר חס העמק as being a symbolic act which colored the relationship of Isaac and Rebecca--a failure in communication between husband and wife, which impeded their talking out problems in their family, which meant they worked at cross purposes even though they really had the same goals in mind--thus creating a situation where deceit became "necessary."

That's all for now. Keep them coming--especially the ones you really like. And forgive me if I don't always reply; you may be sure I read carefully what you send.

Cordially,

PK/PIN)

Norman Lamm