

## Talmud Sota 13

Once they reached the Cave of Machpelah, Esau came and was preventing them from burying Jacob there. He said to them: It says: “And Jacob came unto Isaac his father to Mamre, to Kiryat Arba, the same is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned” (Gen 35:27). And Rabbi Yitzhak says: It is called Kiryat Arba because there were four couples buried there: Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah. Esau said: Jacob buried Leah in his spot, and the spot that is remaining is mine.

The children of Jacob said to Esau: You sold your rights to Jacob. Esau said to them: Though I sold the birthright, did I also sell my rights to the burial site as an ordinary brother? The brothers said to him: Yes, you also sold to Jacob those rights, as it is written that Joseph stated: “My father made me swear, saying: Behold, I die; in my grave that I have dug [kariti] for me in the land of Canaan, there shall you bury me” (Gen 50:5). And Rabbi Yohanan says in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yehotzadak: The word kira in the verse is nothing other than a term of a sale [mekhira] sharing a similar root, because in the cities overseas they call a sale kira.

Esau said to them: Bring the bill of sale to me, i.e., you can't prove your claims. They said to him: The bill of sale is in the land of Egypt. They said: And who will go to bring it? Naphtali will go, for he is as fast as a doe, as it is written: “Naphtali is a doe let loose, he gives goodly words” (Gen 49:21). Rabbi Abbahu says: Do not read it as “goodly words [imrei shafer]”; rather, read it as imrei sefer, i.e., the words of the book, as he returned to Egypt to retrieve the bill of sale.

The Talmud relates: Hushim, the son of Dan, was there and his ears were heavy, i.e., he was hard of hearing. He said to them: What is this that is delaying the burial? And they said to him: This one, Esau, is preventing us from burying Jacob until Naphtali comes back from the land of Egypt with the bill of sale. He said to them: And until Naphtali comes back from the land of Egypt will our father's father lie in degradation? He took a club [kulepa] and hit Esau on the head, and Esau's eyes fell out and they fell on the legs of Jacob. Jacob opened his eyes and smiled. And this is that which is written: “The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked” (Ps 58:11).

At that moment the prophecy of Rebecca was fulfilled, as it is written that Rebecca said of Jacob and Esau: “Why should I be bereaved of you both in one day?” (Gen 27:45), as Rebecca foresaw that the future bereavement for both her sons would be on the same day. The talmud comments: And although their deaths were not on the same day, in any event their burials were on the same day, as Esau was killed and buried on the same day that Jacob was buried.

36 b : Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba says that Rabbi Yohanan says: When Pharaoh said to Joseph: “And without you no man shall lift up his hand or his foot in all the land of Egypt” (Gen 41:44), Pharaoh's astrologers said: You will appoint a slave whose master bought him for twenty silver coins to rule over us? He said to them: I perceive royal characteristics [ginnunei malkhut] in him and see that he was not initially a slave.

They said to him: If that is so and he is a child of royalty, he should know the seventy languages that all kings' children learn. The angel Gabriel then came and taught him the seventy languages, but he could not learn all of them. Gabriel then added one letter, the letter heh, to Joseph's name from the name of the Holy One, and then he was able to learn the languages, as it is stated: “He appointed it in Joseph [Yehosef] for a testimony, when he went forth against the land of Egypt, the speech of one that I did not know I heard” (Ps 81:6). And the next day, when he appeared before Pharaoh, in every language that Pharaoh spoke with him, he answered him.

Joseph then spoke in the sacred tongue, Hebrew, and Pharaoh did not know what he was saying. Pharaoh said to him: Teach me that language. He taught him, but he could not learn it. Pharaoh said to him: Take an oath for my benefit that you will not reveal that I do not know this language. He took an oath for his benefit.

Years later, when Joseph said to Pharaoh: “My father made me swear, saying” (Gen 50:5) that I would bury him in Eretz Yisrael, Pharaoh said to him: Go request the dissolution of your oath. Joseph said to him: And should I also request dissolution for the oath that I took for your benefit? And consequently, even though Pharaoh was not amenable to letting Joseph go, he worried that Joseph would then request dissolution for the oath that he had taken for his benefit, and Pharaoh therefore said to him: “Go up and bury your father according to what he made you swear” (Gen 50:6).