



# Likkutei Sichos

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## Brother's Departure

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Translated by Mendel Greenbaum

**General Editor:** Rabbi Eliezer Robbins | **Editor:** Rabbi Y. Eliezer Danzinger

**Content Editor:** Rabbi Zalmy Avtzon

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Considerable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the translation while maintaining readability. As in all translations, however, the possibility of inadvertent errors exists.

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## 1.

### WHAT EISAV SAW

On the verse,<sup>1</sup> “Yaakov obeyed... and he went to Padan Aram,” Rashi comments on the words, “Yaakov obeyed”:<sup>2</sup>

It is connected to the above topic, “Eisav saw that Yitzchak had blessed...,”<sup>3</sup> and that “he sent him to Padan Aram,” and that Yaakov obeyed his father and went to Padan Aram, and that the daughters of Canaan were evil, so he also went to Yishmael {to find a wife from among his daughters}.

Rashi’s remarks, simply understood, mean the following: We cannot learn that by stating, “Yaakov obeyed...,” the Torah means to recount that Yaakov had obeyed his father and gone to Padan Aram because this was stated **earlier** in the *parshah*<sup>4</sup> (“Yitzchak sent Yaakov, and **he went**”).<sup>5</sup> The verses immediately before and after “Yaakov heard...” are actually a discussion regarding **Eisav**. Rashi, therefore, explains that the clause, “Yaakov obeyed...” comes as a continuation of “Eisav saw,” stated in the previous verse. This verse lists an additional detail that Eisav saw.

However, we need to clarify:

- a) This insight that the clause “Yaakov obeyed” is “connected” to “Eisav saw” would have still been understood if Rashi had said **briefly**, “*Yaakov heard* — It is connected to the above topic, ‘Eisav saw.’”<sup>6</sup> Why does Rashi record all of the details Eisav saw explicitly stated in the verses?

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<sup>1</sup> *Bereishis* 28:7.

<sup>2</sup> See fn. 18 in the original.

<sup>3</sup> {*Bereishis* 28:6.}

<sup>4</sup> *Bereishis* 28:5.

<sup>5</sup> *Maskil LeDavid*, ad loc.

<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the explanation that “Yaakov heard” is connected to “Eisav saw” and is not simply a repetition of the discussion regarding Yaakov; seemingly is self-understood [according to *pshat*. Unlike according to its homiletic interpretation — see *Bereishis Rabbah* sec. 67, par. 12; *Tanchuma*, Bauber ed., “*Vayeitzei*,” ch. 1], and it would be unnecessary for Rashi to explain it.

- b) The verse recounts an additional detail. Namely, Eisav saw that “Yitzchak commanded him {Yaakov}, saying, ‘You shall not take a wife from among the daughters of Canaan.’” Why does Rashi exclude **this** detail?
- c) The only scripturally related details included as part of the “**above** topic” to which the clause “Yaakov obeyed” **refers** are those stated **before** it says, “Yaakov obeyed.” However, the clause “Yaakov obeyed” {is not reflexive, and} does not refer to **itself** that “Yaakov obeyed.” {Yet, Rashi oddly refers to this very same clause as a detail when he lists those details included in the scope of the term “the above topic.”} And certainly {the scope of “the above topic”} does not include the detail “that the daughters of Canaan were evil,” which is stated **after** “Yaakov obeyed.”
- d) What is more baffling is Rashi’s conclusion, “he also went to Yishmael” — this does not belong among the details that Eisav had **seen**. Instead, this is the practical outcome of that which “Eisav saw”: When he had seen that “the daughters of Canaan were evil,” he went to Yishmael.

We cannot say that by Rashi concluding with “he also went to Yishmael,” Rashi intends to clarify<sup>7</sup> that these details that “Eisav saw” all led to “Eisav went to Yishmael”<sup>8</sup> (and Rashi, therefore, lists all the details stated in the verses, including “that {Yaakov} obeyed... and went... and that {the daughters of Canaan} were evil... and... went...” —

For this idea — that “Eisav saw” is the precursor and cause for “Eisav went...” — is understood on its own. Even without Rashi’s comment that “Yaakov obeyed” is “connected to the above topic,” we still would have understood that all the details stated in the verse (aside from “Yaakov heard...”) introduce the consequence that “Eisav went....”

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<sup>7</sup> Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrachi interprets Rashi’s intention as clarifying that the prefix ׀ of the word וילך {“he went”} does not act as a conjunction {the ׀ meaning “and”}, but transforms the verb from future tense to past. However, this interpretation does not concern the words “Yaakov heard,” which Rashi cites, nor Rashi’s explanation that “this is connected to the above topic.”

<sup>8</sup> {Bereishis 28:9.}

From Rashi including this in his comment, “this is connected to the above topic,” it is understood that this remark is related to this explanation: Only with Rashi’s insight — that “Yaakov obeyed” is “connected to the above topic” (as well as to all the details which Rashi lists) — can the verse “Eisav went to Yishmael” be understood. For this reason, Rashi concludes, “and he also went to Yishmael.”

## 2.

### EISAV SAW, AND EISAV SAW

This will be understood by prefacing with the following: The verse, after having already stated once, “**Eisav saw** [that Yitzchak had blessed Yaakov and sent him... he commanded him...],” repeats once again, “**Eisav saw** [that the daughters of Canaan were evil in the eyes of Yitzchak, his father. And Eisav went...].”<sup>9</sup> From this {repetition}, we can surmise that Eisav saw two types of things, each of which he “saw” **differently** (in a different manner). Therefore, “Eisav saw” is stated twice.

The difference between the two times Eisav “saw” is akin to Rashi’s **earlier** explanation (at the beginning of *parshas Vayeira*):<sup>10</sup> “What is {the implication of} ‘he saw’ {appearing} twice? The first is to be understood literally, and the second is a term connoting ‘understanding,’ {the verse intimating} that he observed... and understood...” {So too here,} the first time the verse states “Eisav saw,” it means that he saw (“literally”) things that occurred to others — between Yitzchak and Yaakov ({Yitzchak} “blessed... **Yaakov** and sent **him**... he commanded **him**...”); in contrast, the second “he saw” is a “term connoting ‘understanding’” — he noticed (“observed... and understood”)<sup>11</sup> that “the daughters of Canaan were evil **in the eyes of Yitzchak, his father.**” This time

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<sup>9</sup> {*Bereishis* 28:8.}

<sup>10</sup> *Bereishis* 18:2. See also *Bereishis* 3:7 and Rashi’s commentary ad. loc.; *Bereishis* 40:16; *Bereishis* 42:1 and Rashi’s commentary, ad loc; et al.

<sup>11</sup> As for a (literal) view of the character of the daughters of Canaan — he would have **already** been aware (as his wives were from the daughters of Canaan), but only now did he understand that in the eyes of Yitzchak, they were evil.

“he saw” something that pertained to **him** and obliged **him** (as the verses continue, this seeing led him) to go to Yishmael.

However, we need to clarify: The purpose of the whole account of what “Eisav saw” is to elucidate the cause that led to “Eisav went to Yishmael and took...,” and for this, it would have been sufficient for the Torah to record only the second appearance of the phrase “he saw” — “Eisav saw that the daughters of Canaan were evil in the eyes of Yitzchak, his father (and thus), Eisav went....” Why does the Torah give such a lengthy description of what Eisav saw in conjunction with the **first** appearance of “he saw”?<sup>12</sup>

[It would have been sufficient, at most, for the Torah to have recorded the detail that “He commanded him, saying, ‘you should not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan,’” from which he “saw” — understood — that “the daughters of Canaan were evil..., and thus “Eisav went...”

— and it is precisely this detail that Rashi excludes, as mentioned above!]

### 3.

WHICH DIRECTIVES DID EISAV FOLLOW?

The explanation of the preceding: The Torah records this at such length to resolve something perplexing concerning the account that “Eisav went to Yishmael”:

Eisav went to marry Yishmael’s daughter instead of marrying one of the neighboring daughters of Canaan to flaunt how he (was no different from Yaakov, and that he, too,) fulfilled his father’s wishes.<sup>13</sup>

This is unclear: Yitzchak not only told Yaakov, “You should not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan,” but Yitzchak also “sent him to Padan Aram, to

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<sup>12</sup> See also *Alshich* on *Bereishis* 28:10; *Or HaChaim* on *Bereishis* 28:6.

<sup>13</sup> See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 5, p. 165 (and fn. 13 ad. loc.).

take himself a wife **from there.**” Yaakov then heeded both the injunction and the directive; he did **not** marry any of the daughters of Canaan, and he *did* travel to Padan Aram.

As such, why did Eisav {only heed part of Yitzchak’s instruction to Yaakov — why did Eisav} only refrain from taking a wife from the daughters of Canaan? Why didn’t he also travel to Padan Aram<sup>14</sup> to take a wife from **there**?<sup>15</sup>

To resolve Eisav’s perplexing conduct,<sup>16</sup> the Torah tells us that “Eisav saw” twice:<sup>17</sup> The things that Eisav saw, as mentioned above, comprise two categories, and each explains a different dimension in the Torah’s account that “Eisav went to Yishmael”: The first “he saw” explains why Eisav assumed that he was **not** required to go to Padan Aram; while the second “he saw” — pertains to what Eisav did do — he went to take a wife from {among the daughters of} Yishmael.

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<sup>14</sup> True, Yishmael’s daughters were from Avraham’s family (see *Rashbam, Abarbanel, Or HaChaim*, et al., ad loc). Nevertheless, since Yitzchak had commanded Yaakov to take a wife exclusively from the daughters of Lavan (and **not** from the daughters of Yishmael), Eisav should have done so as well. Note Rashi’s commentary (on *Bereishis* 29:17): “They were all saying... the older {daughter of Lavan’s} will marry the older {son of Rivkah’s}...”

<sup>15</sup> See *Alshich*, *ibid.* (that this was something miraculous, that “he only paid attention to half of his father’s words...,” examine there. See also fn. 17 below {fn. 13 in the original}).

<sup>16</sup> Note Rashi’s commentary on *Bereishis* 26:34 {where Eisav’s choices to follow in his father’s footsteps are described as being based on his personal interests} (however, that is incomparable to our discussion where the two commands — “you should not take... and take a wife from there...” — were given concurrently, and there would seemingly be no leeway to differentiate between them).

<sup>17</sup> Since the verses before “Eisav saw” (*Bereishis* 28:1-2) discuss both matters: “He commanded him... you should not... arise, go to Padan Aram” — Eisav had probably not only seen the command, “you should not take... from the daughters of Canaan,” but Yaakov being sent to Padan Aram as well (for there is no reason to differentiate). Therefore, the verse must explain why Eisav did not attempt to travel to Padan Aram.

## 4.

### EISAV'S PERSPECTIVE

The explanation: Eisav believed<sup>18</sup> that Yitzchak had sent Yaakov to Padan Aram “to take himself a wife from there” (not because Yitzchak thought that only there could Yaakov find a suitable match, but) as a conduit and receptacle with which to receive the blessings that Yitzchak had given him,<sup>19</sup> as the verse emphasizes here once again: “(Eisav saw that {Yitzchak} blessed...) and sent him to Padan Aram... **when he blessed him.**” Eisav, therefore, regarded that “(Yaakov obeyed...), and he went **to Padan Aram,**” was pertinent only to Yaakov.<sup>20</sup> To Eisav, however, Yitzchak’s instruction to Yaakov to go to Padan Aram was irrelevant. Thus, Eisav did **not** travel there.

This was, however, quite different from Yitzchak’s command, “You should not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan.” Here, “Eisav saw” (understood) that since “the daughters of Canaan were evil in the eyes of Yitzchak, his father,” this instruction would pertain to him as well; therefore, “Eisav went to Yishmael...”

## 5.

### WHY LIST ALL THE DETAILS

On this basis, the reason why Rashi’s commentary is so lengthy is understood:

After Rashi states that the clause “Yaakov obeyed” is (not incidental, but is) **connected** to and a detail of what “Eisav saw,” Rashi then anticipates {the question that arises from} what the Torah states in connection with the **first**

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<sup>18</sup> Unlike in Yaakov’s point of view — and therefore, this was an additional **cause** for Yaakov to go to Padan Aram. Meaning, that {for Yaakov,} even contextually — not just chronologically — this comes before “and he went to Padan Aram.”

<sup>19</sup> See *Ramban*, ad loc (verse. 5); *Alshich*, ibid.

<sup>20</sup> On this basis, it is better understood why the verse prefaces the account of what Eisav saw, with “Yaakov obeyed...,” for this is also part of the explanation as to why Eisav did not travel to Padan Aram. Since “Yaakov obeyed...” the blessings had **already** come into Yaakov’s possession. (Not so, had Yaakov not “obeyed...,” Eisav may have gone to Padan Aram, thinking that he would receive the blessings through his travels.)

instance of “Eisav saw” (before the words “Yaakov obeyed...”): “He commanded him, saying, ‘you should not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan.’”

— Seemingly: According to the above explanation, that the first “Eisav saw” explains why Eisav did **not** go to Padan Aram (as he had seen that **these** details did not pertain to him), it emerges that {the detail that} “he commanded him, saying, ‘you should not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan’” is relevant to the **second** “Eisav saw” that explains why Eisav did not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan {and therefore should be stated in connection with the second “Eisav saw”}. —

Rashi, therefore, when explaining that “Yaakov obeyed” is “connected to the above topic,”<sup>21</sup> lists the specific details to which it is connected (“that Yitzchak had blessed..., and that he sent him to Padan Aram”), and then bypasses and **omits** the detail, “he commanded... ‘you should not take’”: Rashi thereby emphasizes that “he commanded...” is (in Eisav’s view) not pertinent to “Yaakov obeyed... and he went to Padan Aram” (the outcome of the first thing that “he saw”), but pertains the second<sup>22</sup> thing “Eisav saw” — “that the daughters of Canaan were evil; (therefore,) he also went to Yishmael.”

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<sup>21</sup> Based on what is explained here — that Rashi’s intention is not (only) to inform us that “Yaakov obeyed...” is a detail in what “Eisav saw” — it is better understood the nuance of Rashi’s wording, “connected to the above **topic**” (and not “to the above **verse**” — which is the phrase used by Rashi on *Bereishis* 6:28; *Devarim* 4:10; et al).

<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, Rashi does not write again, “and he saw.” Rashi relies on what is written in the verse as evidenced by the fact that Rashi does not cite {that that which the daughters of Canaan were evil was} “in the eyes of his father Yitzchak” despite this being part of what he only “saw” now (as mentioned above in fn. 11 {fn. \*7 in the original}).



## 6.

### THE ORDER OF THE VERSES

We thus understand Rashi's nuanced wording in relating the detail "that the daughters of Canaan were evil" only after "and went to Padan Aram":

The verse, "he commanded..." is stated in connection with the first "Eisav saw" because (chronologically, it transpired before "he went to Padan Aram" — and) for **Yaakov**, it prompted him so that he "obeyed... and he went to Padan Aram." However, as the verse relates to Eisav — the verse's objective (according to Rashi) is to explain the two aspects of Eisav's behavior (as explained above, in Sections 3 and 4) — this detail {"he commanded"} is connected to the second "Eisav saw."

## 7.

### INCLUSION OF "YAAKOV OBEYED..."

Accordingly, it is also clear why Rashi cites (not only those details to which "Yaakov obeyed" is connected, but also) {how Eisav saw} "that Yaakov obeyed his father and went to Padan Aram and that the daughters of Canaan were evil...":

In doing so, Rashi intends to clarify why the clause "Yaakov obeyed" is only related to {the details} "he blessed... and he sent..." However, according to Rashi, the clause is **not** connected to {the detail that} "he commanded..." since the proper sequence of that detail (from Eisav's point of view) is only **after** the entire progression of "Yaakov obeyed... and he went to Padan Aram." (Rashi alludes to Yitzchak's command [when Rashi explains the reason for Yitzchak's command to Yaacov] by the words, "and that the daughters of Canaan were evil"). This detail is related to the word "{Eisav} saw," which explains Eisav's motive to go to Yishmael.

Rashi, therefore, also cites the outcome — “he also went to Yishmael<sup>23</sup> — in order to make it clear that “he commanded...” (alluded to} by {Rashi’s mention of} its import — “the daughters of Canaan were evil”) is **not** something connected to “Yaakov obeyed... and he went to Padan Aram,” but rather, part of the second “{Eisav} saw,” which led Eisav to go to Yishmael, as discussed above.

## 8.

### OMISSION OF “HE COMMANDED”

Rashi omits the detail, “he commanded...” when enumerating the details connected with the clause “Yaakov obeyed” not only because that which Eisav had understood” from “he commanded” was something unrelated to the other **details**. (As discussed previously, from what Yitzchak had “commanded” to Yaakov, Eisav **also** discerned something relevant to him.) Rather, it was also because the clause “Yaakov obeyed” (as understood by Eisav) was unrelated to “**he commanded**”: According to Eisav’s way of thinking, Yaakov traveled to Padan Aram (in fulfillment of Yitzchak’s directive) only to {be able to} receive the blessings. But Yaakov did not do so in fulfillment of the **command**, “You should not take....”

**This** detail is also a precursor to “Eisav went to Yishmael,” cited by Rashi after his comment — “and he also went to Yishmael.” By going to Yishmael, Eisav intended to show that (not only did he fulfill Yitzchak’s wishes but also that) in comparison to Yaakov,<sup>24</sup> Eisav fell short in nothing. On the contrary, Eisav was superior to Yaakov since Eisav also strove to fulfill Yitzchak’s wishes even when those wishes were not explicitly stated.<sup>25</sup>

— From the talk delivered on Shabbos *parshas Toldos*, 5727 (1967)

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<sup>23</sup> In addition, according to Rashi’s explanation, the verses can be categorized into two groups, and therefore, the verse, “Eisav went to Yishmael,” is understandable, as explained above in Section 2-3.

<sup>24</sup> As emphasized by Rashi: “he **also** went to Yishmael.”

<sup>25</sup> On this basis, there is understood an additional reason for Eisav having gone specifically to Yishmael instead of to Padan Aram, For concerning the matter of marriage, Eisav, by specifically marrying a granddaughter of Avraham, wished to prove his superiority over Yaakov. See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 5, p. 165, fn. 14.