

# Parsha Ponders

Ki Seitzei | Sep 13, 2024 | 10 Elul 5784

## Surprising restrictions<sup>1</sup>

לא-תתעב אדמי כי אחיך הוא לא-תתעב מצרי כי-גר היית בארצו: בנים אשר-וילדו להם דור שלישי יבא להם  
בקהל יקוק

Do not abhor the Edomite, for he is your brother. Do not abhor the Egyptian, for you were a sojourner in his land. Children that are born to them, [only] the third generation will enter into the congregation of Hashem<sup>2</sup>

The prohibition to marry an Edomite and an Egyptian convert is unique. Usually, someone of improper lineage which the Torah precludes from marriage cannot remove that blemish. They are forever forbidden, like a Moabite and an Ammonite<sup>3</sup>. This is not so for an Edomite and Egyptian convert. While they themselves cannot marry a regular Jew, nor their children, their grandchildren are permitted.

We find an interesting inconsistency when it comes to the Torah's way of expressing something versus the way the Sages express it. When introducing the restrictions on marriage with an Edomite and Egyptian convert, the Torah says do not abhor them. It first lists the Edomite, then the Egyptian. However, when our Sages discuss the restrictions on marriage them, they always list the Egyptian first, and then the Edomite<sup>4</sup>. Why would they do this? Why not simply follow the format of the Torah?

A method of pedagogy is to slowly build up the novelty of an idea. Don't jump to introducing the biggest innovation first<sup>5</sup>. We find it throughout the Talmud that this is a preferred<sup>6</sup> way of teaching something<sup>7</sup>. It's not surprising then that the Torah also teaches things in such a manner<sup>8</sup>. If we have this in mind, our problem becomes a non-issue.

When the Torah tells us not to abhor these two nations, it's more obvious to not abhor the Edomite. For as the verse states, he's our brother. However, not only the Edomite, but even the Egyptian, despite their brutal enslavement of our ancestors, we aren't to abhor them. We sojourned in their land. As such, the verse first states the Edomite, then the Egyptian. However, when our Sages discuss the restrictions on marrying them, the order is reversed. It's more obvious we are limited in our marriage with an Egyptian convert. However, not only them. We are taught that even with an Edomite convert, who is our brother, marriage is limited<sup>9</sup>.

Good Shabbos

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<sup>1</sup> Based on [Emes L'Yaakov](#) to [Deuteronomy](#) 23:8-9

<sup>2</sup> [Deuteronomy](#) *loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> [Ibid](#) v. 4

<sup>4</sup> [Yevamos](#) 8:3. Other examples include [Yevamos](#) 68a, [Kesubos](#) 30a, [Kiddushin](#) 74b

<sup>5</sup> To be honest I didn't find any source which gives this explanation

<sup>6</sup> [Halichos Olam](#) 3:2:4 writes that זו ואין צריך לומר זו, where the biggest novelty is taught first, is a very last resort way of understanding a teaching, unlike gradually building up. Although, he doesn't say it's for pedagogical reasons. See there for the explanation of [Sefer Kerisus](#) 5:2:90, who writes that this is simply the order the Tanna heard his teachings from his teachers. See also [Kelalei HaGemarra](#) *ad. loc.* Cf. [Darkei HaTalmud](#) § 4, who suggests it's an undesirable way of teaching and only a last resort

<sup>7</sup> Known as זו אף זו ([Gittin](#) 15b; [Sanhedrin](#) 61b; [Horayos](#) 2a)

<sup>8</sup> The explanation of [Sefer HaKerisus](#) *loc. cit.* only works with Mishnaic teachings. For examples of this teaching method in the *poskim*, see [Yad Malachi](#) [Klalei HaPoskim](#) § 8. For a discussion if the Torah really does write in such a way, see [Sedei Chemed](#) [Ma'areches Zayin](#) § 11 and [Lamed](#) § 2

<sup>9</sup> [Rav Yaakov](#) shares that he subsequently discovered that the [Tosafos Yom Tov](#) to [Yevamos](#) 8:3 writes the same