

Timna was a concubine of Esau's son Eliphaz... --- Gen. 36:12

Why should the Torah mention this person? As indicated a few verses later, Timna is part of a royal family, yet she is here a mere concubine to a little-known grandson of Isaac! The Talmud suggests an explanation: Timna sought to convert and become part of the Jewish family. She came to the patriarchs, but was not accepted. So she went and became a concubine to Eliphaz, saying: better to be a maidservant among this people, than a rich lady elsewhere. Why then was Israel punished through Amalek, her son, who attacked the Jewish people? Because it had not been necessary to keep her away from us. --- Talmud, **Sanhedrin** 99b

Rabbi Eliezer said: The Holy One, Praised be He, only dispersed the people of Israel among the nations so that they might acquire proselytes, as it says, *I will sow her in the land as My own...* (Hosea 2:25) One only sows in order to reap a harvest. --- Talmud, **Pesachim** 87b

Resh Lakish said: The one who converts is more beloved to God than all Israel who stood at Mount Sinai. For had the Israelites not witnessed the thunder, the lightning, the quaking mountain and the sound of the trumpets, they would not have accepted the Torah. Yet this one, who saw none of these things, came and submitted himself to the Holy One, Praised be He, and took upon himself the (responsibility of the) kingdom of heaven. Who could be more beloved (to God) than this? --- **Midrash Tanchuma, Lekh Lekha** 6

"(Hillel taught: Be a disciple of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving one's fellow creatures) and drawing them near to the Torah." (**Pirkei Avot** 1:12) What does this mean? It teaches that one should subject others to and lead them under the wings of the **Shekhinah** the way our father Abraham used to...And not Abraham alone did this, but Sarah as well, for it is said: *And Avram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance they had gathered, and all the souls that they had made in Haran.* (Gen. 12:5) Now, not all the inhabitants of the world together can MAKE a single gnat! Why then does the verse say, *the souls they had made in Haran*? It teaches that the Holy One, praised be He, accounted it to Abraham and Sarah as though they had made them. --- **Avot d'Rabbi Natan** 12:8

Those who convert for love of a Jew, man or woman, are not accepted, nor if they do so in order to enter Israelite royal service, nor if they do so from fear...But Rav said: they are to be received. This is the halakha: they are to be considered as proselytes, they are not to be repelled, as would-be proselytes are repelled at the outset (to test their sincerity), but they accept them and welcome them kindly, in the possibility that it was for the sake of Heaven. --- Jerusalem Talmud, **Yevamot** 65b

Like the ezech (Lev. 19:34; i.e., like the one born among you.) Just as the home-born Israelite (perforce) accepts all the words of the Torah, so does the proselyte. So they say, a (would-be) proselyte who accepts all the words of the Torah except one, is not accepted. Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Yehudah said: even if it is a small matter among the minutiae of the scribes. --- **Sifra**, **Kedoshim** 8:3

A woman once came to Rabbi Eliezer to convert, and said to him: "Bring me near." He said to her, "List for me your deeds." She said: "My youngest son is born of my eldest son." He admonished her. She went to Rabbi Joshua, and he received her. His students said, "Rabbi Eliezer drove her away, and you draw her near!" He said, "When she set her mind to convert, she was no longer of this world, as it is said, *All who come to it* (to the faith) *shall not return* (to sin; Prov. 2:19)." --- **Midrash Kohelet Rabbah** 1:25

Rabbi Isaac asked: What is meant by the verse, *Harm awaits him who stands surety for a stranger* (Prov. 11:15)? Evil after evil comes upon those who receive proselytes...in accordance with Rabbi Helbo, who said: "Proselytes are hurtful to Israel as a sore on the skin." --- Talmud, **Yevamot** 109b

Turn back, my daughters... (Ruth 1:12) Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmani said in the name of Rabbi Yudan the son of Rabbi Chanina: Three times it says, *turn back*, corresponding to the three times one must rebuff one who seeks to convert. But if he persists further, we receive him. But Rabbi Yitzchak said: *The stranger (ger) did not lodge in the street.* (Job 31:32) Always push away with the left hand, and draw near with the right. --- **Midrash Ruth Rabbah** 2:16