

THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



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RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
TAL



PARASHA INSIGHTS

After seven years of working hard for Lavan in order to marry his daughter Rachel, and eager to build the next block in Am Yisrael, Yaakov awakens in the morning and is stunned to find out that he has been tricked and instead married Leah!

Our Sages (Midrash Rabah, Bereishit) bring an interesting dialogue that ensued shortly after Yaakov realised what had really happened.

Understandingly upset, he reproached Leah. How could she do such a thing?

Leah's response was so sound it seems that Yaakov accepted it never going back on this marriage.

Leah cleverly replied that she was put in a very awkward situation. Her father had asked her to marry Yaakov and surely she had to obey her father.

Even though the circumstances were not correct or just, she told Yaakov that she looked to none other than Yaakov himself as an example.

As if to say, "I said what would Yaakov do if his father told him to go to the Chupa?"

I heard that you were put in a similar dilemma! Your mother told you to go and get the Beracha (before Eisav) from your father.

You entered your father's presence and announced that you were Eisav.

If that is what you did given the circumstances, then I justified my actions through yours. Surely what I did was correct!?"

From then on, Yaakov accepted her as his wife and proceeded with the wedding celebrations for seven days, only after which he married his second wife Rachel (for a further seven years work).

These two wives of Yaakov became the forbearers of our nation.

Rather than cast aside, Leah is there together with Rachel and we merited to have four great women as builders of Am Yisrael, all Imahot – Sarah, Rivka, Rachel and Leah.

But why did we end up with three Avot and four Imahot? Normally we would expect it all to equal out?

Let us explain.

When the Torah introduces Rachel and Leah to us (29:16) we are told, "And Lavan had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel.

Our sages are perplexed as to why the Torah needs to tell us that Lavan had two daughters and then proceed to name the two daughters. The Torah could have merely stated that Lavan's daughters were called Leah and Rachel and we would have known that he had two. Why mention the number two?

There are similar occurrences where the Torah mentions the number two, and where we would have known there were two from the pursuing Pesukim (e.g. in relation to the two Seirim (goats) on Yom Kippur and the two Chatotrot (trumpets) in the temple). There, our Sages explain that the reason is to teach us that they were exactly the same. Similar in height, look and value.

This would imply that here too, Rachel and Leah were similar. ►

11th Kislev

SHABBAT BEGINS: 3:43 PM

SHABBAT ENDS: 4:50 PM



THE WEEKLY QUOTE

"Don't wait! The time will never be just right."

> UPCOMING EVENTS LIVE

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Parasha Insights
RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

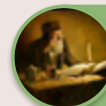
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How were they similar?

When Avraham was in doubt as to who would continue his legacy, he put forth his son Yishmael as a good candidate. Hashem informed him otherwise. Yishmael would not be the one to continue the legacy; rather it would be through Yitzchak that the great future nation would be established. (21.12) Ki B'Yitzchak Yikareh Lecha Zara – because through Yitzchak will your seed be called.

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 59b) learns out – B'Yitzchak – from some of Yitzchak, "but not all of Yitzchak". Yitzchak had two children, Yakov and Eisav.

Only part of Yitzchak, i.e. Yaakov would continue the legacy. Eisav, like Yishmael, is not considered a descendent and heir of Avraham.

On closer inspection, destiny could have taken a different turn.

Eisav was the first born, he was blessed with great physical strength, and could have been a wonderful partner to Yaakov. What could have transpired could

have been – B'Yitzchak – Bet Yitzchak – through the two children of Yitzchak – will your seed continue.

However Eisav forgave his rights, choosing instead to use his strength and power for the pursuit of worldly matters.

Yaakov on the other hand concentrated on the Torah, eventually masterminding even worldly matters. He took on the spiritual and physical role of his brother.

Rashi (29:17) teaches that Leah was originally destined to marry Eisav, and Rachel, Yaakov.

That's right there could have been four Avot! However that prestige was forgone.

Yaakov listened to his mother, dressed as Eisav and entered towards his father to receive the eternal blessing.

Of all the Avot only Yaakov had two eternal names – Yaakov and Yisrael.

The Michtav Me'Eliyahu (Parshat Vayeishev) explains that Yaakov connects to Rachel and Yisrael to Leah. Yaakov filled the void created by Eisav, functioning as two Avot. He was therefore given a second name, Yisrael.

Originally Leah was destined to marry Eisav. When Leah saw that Yaakov took over the mantle of Eisav, Leah realized that Yaakov became her soul mate. This is what she alluded to when she told Yaakov, "It is from you I learned"; since you substituted for Eisav, taking his blessings and birth right, you have become my soul mate.

Everything is written from above, but there are many different ways of interpreting life's challenges.

Leah learnt from the best, and proactively yearned to be a founding mother of our nation.

What seemed like a simple story has now taken on a completely new meaning.

■ Shabbat Shalom

RABBI YEHOATAM SALEM - SHALOM LAAM DIASPORA



EXPLAIN YOURSELF

Yaakov Avinu was instructed by his parents to go to the house of Lavan to find himself a spouse. He ended up marrying Lavan's daughters, Rachel and Leah, for whom he worked tirelessly for fourteen years, to be able to establish the twelve tribes. After having been there for twenty years and becoming wealthy, G-d appeared to Yaakov and told him to leave and return to the Land of Canaan. Yaakov summoned Rachel and Leah to the fields for an important meeting. He explained to them a whole rationale why it would be a good idea for them to leave their father's home, and then, at the end, he mentioned that G-d had instructed him to do so. Their reaction was that there was no reason for them to stay there, and thus, if Hashem had told Yaakov to go, he should do that.

The Shelah makes note of the fact that although G-d had commanded Yaakov explicitly to leave, when he broached the subject with Rachel and Leah (Vayetze 31:4-

16), he nevertheless began by explaining the reasons why it would be advisable for them to move to Eretz Canaan. Yaakov Avinu chose not to enforce the matter by saying that they must go, even though he was divinely commanded to do so. Additionally, he did not exploit his position as "leader of the house" to force them to listen to him. He merely reasoned with them, until they understood by themselves what was needed to be done, and were willing to do so.

From this the Shelah derives, that when a decision needs to be made or an action needs to be taken that affects the household. One should do so with mutual understanding and agreement, rather than by forcing one's opinion on others. Even if the husband has decided that a certain course of action is the correct thing to do, he should present and explain his opinion to his spouse, to see how she feels about it, and get her agreement before he proceeds.

For a husband to enforce his opinion is not healthy for a marriage. One should try, as much as possible, to ensure that one's spouse understands one's reasoning, so that they will be on the same wavelength. This promotes the harmony and unity in the marriage, and enables their relationship to be one of mutual

understanding and love, due to a common opinion being shared.

Furthermore, when children see that their parents share the same opinion and have a common understanding. This gives them a sense of stability and strength, as well as discipline and guidelines for life. This enables them to develop healthily, have a strong backbone and eventually, when they get married, to emulate the harmony that they witnessed with their parents.

Another lesson that we can learn from Yaakov Avinu, is the pleasant and personable way in which he presented his argument. Even a reprimand, when delivered in a pleasant manner, will be listened to. Conversely, instilling fear in one's household only backfires and can be the cause of terrible tragedies.

If we put in effort to make ourselves understood in a pleasant manner, we will enjoy a stronger and healthier relationship with our families.

■ Shabbat Shalom

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OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI EPHRAIM ENKAOUA

To this day the Jews of Morocco evoke with awe and veneration the name of the holy Tzaddik, Rabbi Ephraim Enkaoua, may his merit protect us. Rabbi Ephraim was born in 5114 (1354) in Toledo, Spain. From his youth he distinguished himself by his exceptional abilities, intelligence, and extraordinary memory. All those who knew him felt respect and admiration for him. During his early years, he studied Torah with his father, who was a great Tzaddik. Thanks to his great intelligence and lively mind, he quickly acquired a broad knowledge of Shas and the Poskim. At the age of 13, his father sent him to Girondi, where he attended the famous yeshiva of the venerated Gaon Rabbeinu Nissim, one of the great Sages of Spain.

During this time the Jews of Spain experienced a period a peace and tranquility that lasted until 5150 (1390), when King Alfonso died. At that point the inquisition began, and the Jewish communities of Seville, then of Cordova and Toledo, experienced the worst of tragedies. Some were forced to convert to Christianity, but the great majority of Jews, confronted by the cruel choice of dying or converting, chose death. It was with courage and pride that they went to their deaths in sanctifying the Name of G-d, among them being the grandson of Rosh, Rabbeinu Asher.

With his own eyes Rabbi Ephraim Enkaoua saw his father die as a martyr, yet he himself, 37 years old at the time, managed to escape death. In the middle of the night he fled to the city of Malaga in the south of Spain, and two weeks later he arrived in Morocco.

During this time, Jewry in North Africa was in a very poor state, both religiously and economically. Jewish communities lived in great ignorance and even ended up adopting certain irrational Berber customs.

Rabbi Ephraim Enkaoua settled in the town of Marrakech and immediately began to organize community life there. He founded schools for young children, as well as a yeshiva for adolescents, and taught them Torah and Mussar. In but a short time the Jewish community was transformed; in the synagogues, merchants and craftsmen came

to hear Torah discourses, and once again the voice of Torah resounded.

Rabbi Ephraim Enkaoua had the reputation of being a "master of miracles." He traveled to the villages of Morocco with the goal of strengthening Torah study and the observance of mitzvot. During this time the city of Tlemcen was forbidden to Jews. Following a series of events, however, the king of Morocco gave the authorization for Jews to once again live in Tlemcen, and he named Rabbi Ephraim Enkaoua as Rabbi of the city. The king gladly agreed and honored all his requests.

Rabbi Ephraim Enkaoua founded a yeshiva in Tlemcen that quickly became one of the main centers of Judaism in Morocco. He was known not only for his knowledge of Torah, but also for the miracles that he performed. One of the most spectacular involved a lion and a snake.

To the south of Tlemcen lay an immense forest populated with wild beasts. One day, a fearsome lion ventured out of the forest and killed several inhabitants of the city. This event occurred several times, and everyone in the city was panic stricken. As soon as Rabbi Ephraim Enkaoua learned of what had happened, he enveloped himself in his Tallit, donned his Tefillin, and majestically went into the forest unarmed. After a brief moment, a raging lion leaped in front of the Tzaddik. Without losing his composure, Rabbi Ephraim Enkaoua recited a verse of Psalms: "Upon the lion and the viper you will tread; you will trample the young lion and the serpent" (Psalms 91:13). Suddenly changed, the lion approached the Tzaddik, crouched down before him, and lay at his feet. All of a sudden, a long snake came closer to them and coiled itself near the Tzaddik. Rabbi Ephraim grabbed it, climbed onto the back of the lion, and then wrapped the serpent around the lion's head like a bridle and headed for the city. The Rabbi rode throughout Tlemcen on the back of the lion while using the serpent as a bridle. All the inhabitants of the city were shocked – their eyes wide open at what they saw. When he arrived at the Jewish quarter he assembled everyone around and said the following: "Look and you will understand. It is not the lion, nor the serpent that kills, but rather it is sin that gives wild beasts the power to harm." ■



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

APPLYING OIL TO ONE'S SKIN ON SHABBAT

The Sages enacted a prohibition against medical procedures on Shabbat, due to the concern that people might grind herbs to produce medicine, which would constitute an act of Shabbat desecration. People in ancient times would commonly grind various herbs in order to produce medicine, which is why, incidentally, the common pharmaceutical symbol to this very day is a mortar and pestle. The Sages therefore forbade taking medication on Shabbat, except under certain conditions, to avoid the risk of people desecrating Shabbat by producing medicine.

In light of this prohibition, it is forbidden to apply oil to chapped skin – such as on the hands or lips – on Shabbat. Applying creams and lotions is forbidden even irrespective of this prohibition, due to the separate prohibition of Memare'ah (smoothing out a thick substance). But even liquids, such as oils, may not be applied to skin if this is done for medicinal purposes. This is the ruling of Hacham Bension Abba Shaul (Israel, 1924-1998), in his work Or Le'sion (vol. 2, 35:7), and of Rabbi Moshe Halevi (Israel, 1961-2000), in his Menuhat Ahaba.

Hacham Ovadia Yosef makes an exception in the case of infants, noting that oil is often applied to babies' skin for the sake of cleanliness when they are changed. But for everybody else, since people do not normally apply oil for purposes other than healing chapped skin, this would be forbidden on Shabbat.

Summary: It is forbidden to apply oil to chapped skin – such as chapped hands or lips – on Shabbat. It is permissible, however, to apply oil to an infant's skin for the purpose of cleaning the skin. ■

KidsTime



TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- ❶ On the night of his dream, Yaakov did something he hadn't done in 14 years. What?
- ❷ Hashem compressed the entire Land of Israel underneath the sleeping Yaakov. What did this symbolize?
- ❸ Yaakov said "I will return with shalom." What did he mean by "shalom"?
- ❹ Why did Yaakov rebuke the shepherds?
- ❺ Why did Rachel, and not her brothers, tend her father's sheep?

stopping work early in the day. ❸ 30:27 - Her brothers weren't born yet.
conquer. ❹ 28:21 - Completely without sin. ❺ 29:7 - He thought they were loafing.
❶ 28:13 - That the Land would be easy for his descendants to
❷ 28:11 - Sleep at night lying down.

Answer

Yossi & Co.

YOSSI WOULDN'T LET ME PUT PEANUT BUTTER ON HIS SANDWICH TODAY. HE WANTED ONLY BREAD, LIKE YAACOV.

WELL, IT'S A GOOD THING YAACOV ALSO ASKED HASHEM FOR CLOTHES.



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WEEKLY 7.45PM ON FACEBOOK LIVE



PARSHA PEARLS

INSIGHTS INTO THE WEEKLY TORAH PORTION

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS 9.15PM



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