



Ohr Yerushalayim News

י"ב כסלו תשפ"א – ויצא – 28th November 2020 - Volume 13 - Issue 20

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Adina Guttentag and parents Shloime Meir and Soro Rifka on her Bas Mitzvah.

Restarting of Minyanim

As we near the end of the current lockdown we are pleased to confirm that Minyanim will resume from this Wednesday morning 19"ח

Chaim Aruchim

We wish Chaim Aruchim to the following who have Yahrzeit this week:

Shabbos, 12th Kislev - Simcha Shadmi for his father

Sunday, 13th Kislev - Rebbetzen Cohen for her father

Thursday, 17th Kislev - Chaya Bolel for her father

A Tale Of Two Wives

Jonathan Grosskopf

In Posuk 30, Perek 29, Parshas Vayaisei, the Torah says that "... and he (Yaakov) loved Rochel more than Leah and worked (for Lavan) for another 7 years..." So one can deduce that both sisters were loved, except that Yaakov loved Rochel more than Leah. However, in the next Posuk (31), the Torah states that "Hashem saw that Leah was hated and so opened up her womb but Rochel was barren." How is it possible for Yaakov to love Leah less than Rochel whilst at the same time hating Leah?

Ohr Hachaim and Hamek Davar posit that it was only Hashem who "saw" that Leah was hated, she noticed nothing as Yaakov was fulfilling his obligation to her in an entirely commendable manner.

Hoffmann opines that it was HIS aspect of Hashem, the dispenser of Mercy, that G-d perceived that insufficient love was accorded to Leah. Ramban contends that Yaakov resented that Leah had cooperated with her father's scheme and pretended to be Rochel. She should have let Yaakov know whom she was.

Midrash, Bereishis Rabbah, teaches us that he had decided to divorce her, probably on the grounds of her misrepresenting herself to be Rochel. However, G-d perceived that Leah cooperated in her father's scheme because of her intense desire to marry the righteous Yaakov rather than her destined husband, the wicked Esav. HE had compassion on her so that Yaakov would not divorce her but there was still a residual feeling of ill will towards her as she named her first 2 sons Reuben and Shimon. By the time Leivi was born, Yaakov truly loved Leah!

Redak explains that the term "hated" in Posuk 31, is used in a relative sense as Leah noticed his intense love for Rochel and in comparison she felt hated: G-d saw her affliction.

According to Midrash Tanchumah, Yaakov was still annoyed with Leah for having pretended to be Rochel on the night of their wedding nuptials, as it says in Posuk 25 "and it was in the morning and it was Leah..." When challenged by Yaakov to explain her deception, she countered by reminding him that he deceived his father Yitzchak who in Posuk 24, Perek 27, Toldos, asked Yaakov "... are you my son Esav?" to which Yaakov replied "I am." Yaakov obviously did not take kindly to that rebuke and to some extent still had negative feelings towards her.

The Abarbanel says that Yaakov loved Rochel not only for her undoubted beauty but because of her character in giving over to her sister the secret signs that Yaakov and Rochel had devised together. He loved Rochel even more for her generosity of spirit in ensuring that Leah would not be shamed even if that meant that she, Rochel, might never marry Yaakov. In comparison

to those positive feelings towards Rochel, Yaakov had mixed feelings towards Leah.

Meor Voshemesh, quoting the Zohar, understands these Posukim to mean that of course Yaakov loved Leah since as a Tzaddik he could not possibly have hated her. But on a deeper subconscious level Hashem "saw" that Yaakov had negative feelings toward Leah as he felt that his true Beshert was Rochel, Leah had usurped that position and was not his intended!

The Transformation

Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

And Ya'akov left Beer Sheva, and he went to Charan. (Bereishis 28:10)

AND YA'AKOV LEFT Be'er Sheva, never to come back again. Never to come back? He comes back to Be'er Sheva and his family 36 years later, family, possessions, and all, in Parashas Vayishlach! Not really. By the time he returns home, he has been transformed. He comes home a different person, even with a different name: Yisroel.

And as the Ramban points out in Parashas Lech-Lecha, "the events of the fathers are signs for the children." In other words, what they went through we were destined to go through in some way or another throughout the history that followed. So, just as Ya'akov fled home in search of a higher identity, likewise the Jewish people have done so as well. When we finally come back home, as we have been doing for hundreds of years now, it won't be as "Ya'akov," but as "Yisroel."

This is not my vort. It comes from the Malbim:

For thus said G-d: Sing, O Ya'akov, with gladness, exult on the peaks of the nations; announce, laud [G-d], and say, "O G-d, save Your people, the remnant of Yisroel!" Behold, I will bring them from the land of the North and gather them from the ends of the earth. Among them will be the blind and the lame, the pregnant and birthing together; a great congregation will return here. With weeping they will come and through supplications I will bring them; I will guide them on streams of water, on a direct path in which they will not stumble; for I have been a father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn. (Yirmiyahu 31:6-8)

At the end of their exile the oppression will be removed from them, and they will be joyous because they will be at the peak of the nations. The gentiles will give them honor and they will be their leaders, instead of being disgraced and lowered amongst them as they were at first. "Ya'akov" will be the masses of the people, and the lesser amongst them. "Yisroel" are

Davening Times

פרשת ויצא

Zman Shabbos & Lighting	3.41pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	3.46pm
Shacharis - Hashkomo	7.30am
2nd Shacharis	9.30am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.57am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
2nd Mincha	3.43pm
Motzei Shabbos	4.53pm
Ovos uBonim	5.53pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am / 9.30am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha	1.15pm
Mincha & Maariv	3.40pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

the great ones. The joyousness from being at the peak of the nations will be Ya'akov's only, and not Yisroel's, because they will want to return His Presence to Tzion. However, at that time they will announce and publicly proclaim, and praise G-d when they say, "O G-d, save Your [righteous] people, the remnant of Yisroel," because they will want the true salvation of the ingathering of the exiles and return to Tzion. Then it will be like that, that G-d will return them: "Behold, I will bring them..." (Malbim)

Don't get it wrong. Ya'akov was a great person to begin with, a tremendous talmid chacham and ba'al middos. Apparently though becoming Yisroel was a step up, at least. It built on whatever it was that Ya'akov achieved until he left home, and added so much more, and it is something that we are all supposed to be aiming for as well, each on his or her personal level.

The funny thing is, if you can call it funny, is that this is also something that is barely noticed and rarely appreciated. It is especially not funny if you consider that this is the reason we are still stumbling through exile, thousands of years later, as the Malbim alludes. Being at the peak of nations is nice and has played its role in the redemption process, but it is not the endgame.

There is another thing about Ya'akov we cannot forget. He was named this because he came out into this world holding onto the heel of Eisav. It is interesting how both brothers got their names based upon how they were at birth. Eisav came out already made—asui—so he was called "Eisav." Ya'akov was named for the heel he held onto as he emerged into this world. I didn't even know babies could do that.

Then Eisav gets an additional name later on in last week's parsha. Because he gave up his birthright for a pottage of red lentils, he is called "Edom." Ya'akov doesn't get his new name "Yisroel" until much later, after he fought with the angel of Eisav and survived the episode of Dinah in Shechem. He is first called it by the angel before meeting Eisav, but it is not confirmed by G-d until after the events of Shechem.

Clearly the way of Eisav is materialism at the cost of spirituality, when necessary. Clearly the way of Ya'akov is spirituality at the cost of materialism, when necessary. But is this anything really new? Was this not the difference of agreement between the people of Noach's time, and Noach? Is this not the ongoing argument between religious people and secular people even today? We're all in this world together which is so obviously materialistic, struggling to grasp at something invisible called spirituality.

Some get it. Most have not. Even among the religious there is a struggle, especially today when there is so MUCH materialism, and it is SO accessible. Never before has it become so easy to have your material cake and eat it too. People justify excess materialism in the NAME of spirituality by infusing it with some aspect of mitzvah.

Some people, when asked why they have acted so extreme have answered, "Because I can." But when has having the means to indulge in the material world been a reason to do it, at least according to the Torah? When has accessibility been an excuse to access it? For an Eisav, perhaps. For a Ya'akov, maybe. But for a Yisroel?

There IS a line. It separates between reason and rationalization. It stands between justified and justification. And it can be the difference between one size of portion in Olam HaBa, and a lesser one, or worse, more time in Gihennom. It takes a truly self-honest person to look for it and then live by it. It's like the Corona virus. After about eight months of it, the world is now divided between those who take it seriously and those who do not. It is understandable why there are those who take the virus seriously and follow the rules, no matter how inconvenient. They believe the health officials, or, at least, not knowing who to believe, they have decided to err to the side of caution.

Those who do not take it seriously more than likely are not afraid of it. They have not been affected by it, at least not seriously. They may know those who have gotten it, but who also had a mild case and then recovered. They either do not know or have not heard about people with after effects. In short, the scary effects of the virus as touted by the media have not impacted their "camp," making it seem to them like the whole thing is just hype, especially if they have watched one of the many conspiracy theory movies out there today.

I wonder how many people once belonged to category 2, and only moved to the first category after Corona finally infected someone they knew who suffered, or perhaps even died. Most problems seem so distant when outside our circles of life, until they enter them. Then, all of a sudden, we wonder why we were so flippant before.

That's Eisav, alright. We saw that last week. When it came to selling the birthright for some food, he had no problem. Fifty years later, when the

reality caught up to him because he lost the blessings that went with it, he regretted everything. He kicked, he screamed, and he even cried, but he could not undo what he had so carelessly done 50 years earlier. So instead, he turned to revenge, blaming Ya'akov for his own lack of foresight.

This is what it meant in last week's parsha that Eisav despised the birthright. There was no real material benefit for it in this world. The Midrash comment that when he said, "Who needs the birthright?" a Bas Kol went out and answered, "Who needs the World-to-Come?" Essentially, that is what Eisav surrendered when he sold his right of the firstborn.

Ultimately, this is the journey of a Yisroel. A Ya'akov can hold onto the heel of Eisav, and copy his lifestyle, clearly. A Yisroel is on a journey that goes beyond this world, into the next one. Yes, the Torah promises all kinds of material success for fulfilling the mitzvos. But Chas v'Shalom it should be the reward for any mitzvos we have done! It is just divine help so we can continue to do more mitzvos and earn reward where it counts for more and is eternal, in the World-to-Come.

It's a sacrifice for sure. The question is, how much of one? That is the one question a person has to answer for themselves. As we see, G-d leaves room for the individual to decide for themselves. He doesn't necessarily agree with our decision as we seek our cake and eat it too. It's just His way of saying: "Okay, that's your choice? So be it. But don't come back later and say, 'If I knew that I was giving up so much of the World-to-Come, I wouldn't have indulged so much in the world we came from.' You could have checked it out while still alive, but you didn't. You could have thought it through better, but you didn't."

Let's face it, now more than ever, many Jews ignore the topic of living in Eretz Yisroel for material reasons. Even if there is a good halachic basis to remain based in the Diaspora, your heart has to be in Eretz Yisroel—always. Ya'akov's was, all the 36 years he was away from home. That's why it is called "Eretz Yisroel." It's HIS land. And as the Malbim explains, it's the land of every Jew who bears Ya'akov's namesake "Yisroel." After that, it is up to the individual to decide what they want to be, only a Ya'akov or a full-fledged Yisroel.

Yaakov's Red Line

Rabbi Yissocher Frand (Torah.org)

Yaakov works for Lavan for many years. Lavan tried to steal him blind. Finally, Yaakov is given a message from the Ribono shel Olam that it was time to leave so he told his wives, "We need to get out of here!" Yaakov leaves with his family. Lavan realizes that his terafim (idols) are missing and chases after Yaakov. Lavan catches up with him and accuses him: "Why did you steal my G-ds?"

Finally, Yaakov gets angry at his father-in-law and lets him have it: "...What is my transgression? What is my sin, that you have pursued me? When you rummaged through all my things, what did you find of all your household objects? Set it here before my brethren and your brethren, and let them decide between the two of us." [Bereshis 31:36-37] He goes on to movingly describe his own devotion and dedication to his job in the employment of Lavan, and how Lavan took every opportunity to detrimentally switch his wages and steal from him.

Think about this. Lavan has been cheating Yaakov and giving him a hard time for twenty-plus years. On the night of Yaakov's wedding, Lavan switches daughters on him. Yaakov woke up the next morning and it does not say he lost his temper. All the years that Lavan swindled his son-in-law, it never says that Yaakov got angry at him or expressed resentment. Here, at the end of the parsha, finally "Va'Yichar Yaakov" (Yaakov became angry). If it would have been you or me, we would say this is a buildup of twenty years of frustration. It was the straw that broke the camel's back, and Yaakov finally lets his father-in-law have it, like he should have done twenty years earlier.

But that is you and me—that is not Yaakov. Why, over here, does Yaakov finally get angry and let loose with a long shmooze which Lavan clearly deserved a long time prior to this incident? Why here? Why now?

Rav Yosef Salant, in his sefer Be'er Yosef, makes a beautiful observation. Until now, it was personal – between me (Yaakov) and you (Lavan). The switching of the daughters, the financial trickery—this was all personal and Yaakov was prepared to deal with it on his own. "But when you bring all of your men and you accuse me of 'Why did you take my G-ds?' you are calling me a thief in front of all of these people! This is a Chilul Hashem! The Gentiles will think – 'Yaakov is a Ganaff'. Here I draw the line. This is it!" Yaakov protests that this is an accusation which goes to the heart of his personality. "I am Mr. Emes L'Yaakov. I will not tolerate this Chilul HaShem you are falsely creating by accusing me of stealing from you." Therefore, here he explodes in anger and sets the record straight. "There is one thing I am not. I am not a thief!"