

Parashat Vayetzei
THE TIKKUN RACHEL
Rabbi Eli Mansour

Our tradition tells us that our forefathers kept the Torah before it was given. Yaakov says “im Lavan garti- ve'taryag mitzvot shamarti”. I lived with Lavan and kept all the 613 mitzvot. If that is true, then how did he marry Rachel and Le'ah – 2 sisters. The Ramban says that in Eretz Yisrael they kept the Torah, but out of Eretz Yisrael they didn't. We see that once Yaakov goes back into Eretz Yisrael, Rachel dies and that's also why she wasn't buried in the Ma'arat Hamachpelah. Yaakov kept Rachel outside of Eretz Yisrael.

Rav Eliyahu Mizrachi and the Maharal say that the observance of the Avot were like the status of converts, they accepted upon themselves the Torah like a convert. And a person who converts, it is like he is newly born, he has no relatives whatsoever. So Rachel and Leah were considered like converts and weren't considered sisters halachically.

The Chatam Sofer says we see at the end of the Parasha that Yaakov tells Rachel and Leah that he wants to leave Lavan's house and flee. Rachel and Leah answer him saying: 'Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? Are we not accounted by him **as strangers**? They agree to leave. The question is, if Yaakov felt he had to leave why did he ask his wives? Because they could only remain married once they were outside of Israel, and now that he wanted to return to Israel he is telling them that he can't be married to both of them. They claim that they are strangers and like converts and thus they are like children who are newly born.

There are two holy cities in the world: Jerusalem and Chevron. Yerushalayim is where we had the Beit Hakidash, many miracles occurred there. If you wanted to see Hashem, you went there three times a year. Outwardly, it was the holiest city but it was all destroyed many times. It represents the outward relationship we have with Hashem, but it is also subject to destruction. Jerusalem is the city of revelation but the city that can be destroyed. Chevron is also a holy city. The avot are buried there deep in the ground. It makes the city so holy that when Yerushalayim is destroyed, the holiness of Chevron never goes away. Hashem's relationship with the Jewish people is eternal, it is unconditional. No matter what we do, His love for us is forever. But, sometimes he doesn't show it to us explicitly, this symbolizes Chevron.

Our parasha looks at Yaakov's marriage with his wives. The Zohar views marriages in the

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following manner. We have a physical marriage, man and wife, and there is a spiritual marriage, us and Hashem. This is represented in Shir Hashirim. Every time a couple gets married and they are going through the physical motions of marriage, we enhance the marriage that Bnei Yisrael has with Hashem. The Gemara says in Sotah that at the time of conception, Hashem ordains who will marry whom. At the time of the wedding, all we are doing is making the marriage public knowledge to the world. We are not creating anything, the wedding was a done deal already. The wedding is the consummation of the physical part of marriage.

The first marriage was of Adam and Chava. Originally, they were one body and Hashem separated them and they got married. The chachamim say that every couple goes through that, they are connected in Heaven and separated and sent all the way down through the upper worlds until they live in the physical world and after some time they will meet again. This is why we say G-d is involved in shidduchim because only he can work out all the details. Even after death the couple stays married, that's why we say it is a "binyan adei ad". The Zohar writes that man's actions on Earth affect the upper worlds. Yaakov has a dream of the angels on the ladder, the bottom of the ladder was rooted on earth and the top of it reached the Heavens. The Baal Shem Tov says that this refers to the neshama of a human being. It is grounded on this earth, but its head reaches the shamayim (whatever it does on earth has a certain reaction or response in the upper worlds.) The Mishna in Pirkei Avot says remember what is on top of you "dah ma le'maala mimach". The Baal Shem Tov reads it as follows: "dah mah lemala?" "mimach". Everything that happens in the upper worlds is coming from your actions. He goes on to say that when the passuk says "Hashem silecha al yad yeminecha" that Hashem is your shadow, your shadow reacts to you. Through our deeds, we create a reaction from Hashem. Half of our neshama is sent to this world but half is still in heaven, whatever the neshama does down below affects the neshama in the upper world.

Rav Chaim Voluzhn says that the actions of the Avot reached all the way up to the kisei hakavod. From where do we learn that we use money to betroth a woman? The Gemara in Kiddushin learns it out from Avraham when he bought Maarat Hamachpelah from Efron. But why do we get an example from such a morbid episode? Before Avraham bought the Maarat Hamachpelah, that was a novelty. Who bought a plot of land those days? Who got buried next to their wives? They didn't believe in after life in those times, when someone died they just buried him anywhere. Here comes Avraham to purchase a piece of land to bury his wife. Avraham knew that even after their deaths, he and Sarah's neshama will still be connected. Therefore, he wanted to be buried in Chevron with his wife, in the

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eternal city. The holiness of Chevron is never destroyed. He wanted to solidify his marriage forever which in effect solidified Hashem's marriage to Klal Yisrael. Therefore, Hashem would never abandon us.

This is why its called "Maarat Hamachpela", which means a double cave. We always thought it was called that way because all the pairs were buried there, all the avot and their wives were buried there. But there is another significance, that just as the marriages of the Avot are eternal, Hashem's marriage with Klal Yisrael is also eternal. That is why they weren't buried in Jerusalem because Jerusalem could be destroyed and the kedusha can leave. But the kedusha of Chevron never leaves. Therefore, there is no greater happiness than Avraham buying the Maarat Hamachpela being used as the example for marriage. Because this symbolizes that you will be married forever. When the man gives the money to the woman, he is eternalizing their marriage. It is just like Avraham buying the Maarat Hamachpela from Efron. There is no better source to learn it from than this. Thats why when we look at Parashat Chayei Sarah we see Avraham buying Maarat Hamachpela and right away we see Yitzchak getting married.

Rachel and Leah are two matriarchs but they are much more than that. Their names represent two different concepts. The Tikkun Chatzot is made up of Tikkun Rachel and Tikkun Leah. Tikkun Leah we can say all the time. Tikkun Rachel we cannot say on Shabbat and Yom Tov. Why? Because it speaks in detail of the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash. Tikkun Leah speaks of all the praises of G-d and how Hashem loves Klal Yisrael. Whenever we speak of Rachel, we compare her to Yerushalayim- an open manifestation of G-d's glory, but Yerushalayim could be destroyed. Leah represents Chevron, there is always holiness, Hashem is there, but we don't see him clearly. These are the times we are living in, the times of Leah. Rav Chaim Voluzhn says that Yaakov understood that although both Avraham and Yitzchak married one wife, he needed to marry these two women in order to make a tikkun in the world. He understood what Rachel represents and Leah represents and how this affects Hashem's relationship with us. Who works for a lady for 7 years, each lady? Obviously it wasn't passion, because the time flew by for him.

Yaakov understood that by marrying them he will be able to make the ultimate tikkun and its the only way. But there was one problem, he knew it was forbidden. Therefore, he could not marry them simultaneously. He thought, first he will marry Rachel and after she dies he will marry Leah. How did he know Rachel would die first? When Yaakov sees Rachel at the well the first time that they meet, he starts crying. Why? Because he saw that she was going to die young. So he figured, I could marry them

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both legally. One will die and I will marry the other. If it really turned out this way, then Rachel would have been allowed to be buried in the Maarat Hamachpela. What would that mean? That Jerusalem would never be destroyed. Rachel represents the open manifestation of Hashem, if you could get that into the eternal city of Chevron, we would have an open manifestation of Hashem always. This was Yaakov's plan. I will work for 7 years, because it is worth it for this tikkun. It wasn't easy work, it was very hard. The Zohar says that in the sheep that Yaakov herded, were the gilgulim of the neshamot from the mabul and dor haflaga. Yaakov was reciting tikkunim for the sheep. Yaakov also knew that he wouldn't be able to bury Rachel in Maarat Hamachpela so he started to cry. If Rachel isn't going to be buried there, Klal Yisrael is in big trouble. That is the real reason why Yaakov cried, but he didn't give up hope and that's why he worked so hard for her.

Yaakov gave over the signs to Rachel before the wedding night. What were these signs? These were spiritual names of Hashem in order to prepare them both for the tikkun they were about to make, everyone knew if Yaakov could have married Rachel first, Klal Yisrael would be fine. One person stopped this operation, Lavan. We don't think it's such a big deal how Lavan tricked Yaakov. But in reality, by putting Leah before Rachel, Yaakov was forced to marry them both at the same time and Rachel became a 2nd wife. As a result, she couldn't be buried in the Maarat Hamachpela because it is a very sensitive place, it is like Hashem's name and to be buried there you have to be perfect. Once Rachel was taken as a 2nd wife she couldn't enter the Maarat Hamachpela and now there is no open manifestation of Hashem for eternity and Jerusalem could be destroyed. That's why we say at the Seder that Lavan tried to uproot Klal Yisrael, and it says we went to Egypt. As a result of switching the wives, it brought darkness to the world and the tikkun was unable to be made. Lavan knew about this tikkun, and that was his motivation to trick Yaakov. But Yaakov knew he had to marry both of them and he was willing to work another 7 years!

A Jew must always know that his neshama will never be expired or extinguishing. No matter his past or what sins he's done, he is eternal and Hashem never abandons a Jewish soul. Even though we can never compare to generations before us, we should realize that we are married to Hashem forever. Even though we don't have an open relationship of Yerushalayim, we still have a hidden one with Chevron. Yaakov had to weigh between keeping the Torah voluntarily, or to complete the biggest tikkun in the world. A couple who is married and has a strong marriage, they should realize that as strong as their marriage is, that is how strong the relationship of Klal Yisrael is with Hashem.

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This is what the Lord says:
“A voice is heard in Ramah,
Mourning and great weeping,
Rachel weeping for her children
And refusing to be comforted,
Because her children are no more.”

This is what the Lord says:
“Restrain your voice from weeping,
And your eyes from tears,
For your work will be rewarded,” says the Lord.
“They will return from the land of the enemy.
So there is hope for your future,” declares the Lord,
“Your children will return to their own land.” (Jeremiah 31: 15-17)