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## More on Rachel Imenu

Did Rachel Imenu really reveal herself in the war or not? In other words, who is obligated to prove it – the one who claims that she did appear or the one who claims that she did not appear? The simple answer is based upon the halachic principle: "Ha-motzi me-chavero alav ha-ra'ayah – The burden of proof rests upon the one who demands the money," i.e. the burden of proof rests upon one who makes a claim which veers from the usual. The usual is that Rachel Imenu does not appear in war. Rachel Imenu was not in our first war when Yehoshua bin Nun waged war against Amalek. She was not in the war of Moshe Rabbenu against Sichon and Og. She was not in the war of Yehoshua bin Nun to conquer the Land of Israel. She was not in any of the wars of the Judges. She was not in the wars of King Shaul and of King David. She was not in the wars of any of the Kings of Israel. She was not in the war of the Hasmoneans. She was not in the war of Bar Kochba. She was not in the War of Independence, the Six-Day War or the Yom Kippur War. She was not in any war. The presumption is that she does not go out to war. Now, there are those claiming that she was there. It is possible, but it must be proven. How? We need to hear from the soldier who claimed that it happened. We need to question him before a Beit Din according to the Halachah. Do you really see her? Maybe it was an Arab woman? Maybe it was a Jewish woman captured by the Arabs and she was reminded that she was a Jew? Maybe you imagined it? As long as it has not been investigated, it has not been proven. Up until now, I have not heard anything.

I was therefore happy when a friend told me what he saw with his own eyes. During the war, a bunch of reservists were sitting around a fire on a freezing-cold night with warm jackets which they brought from home. A few regular soldiers arrived and they were frozen

to the bone. The reservists did not hesitate to take off their jackets which were almost more precious to them than their weapons and gave them to the other soldiers. This is Rachel Imenu! Rachel Imenu gave up Yaakov – who was the most precious thing to her – for her sister. I am not saying that a jacket and a spouse are comparable, but this act at its source comes from Rachel Imenu.

In David's lament for Yonatan, he says: "Your love was more wonderful to me than the love of women" (Shmuel 2 1:26). The Targum (the Aramaic translation) says: "the love of two women." A Chasidic Rebbe once asked: Who are these two women? His answer: Rachel and Leah. David was saying: "Yonatan, your love for me in which you were willing to forego the kingship flows from the love of two women – when Rachel was willing to forego for Leah." Giving up a jacket is obviously not like giving up the kingship, but it is still flows from Rachel Imenu.

And Rashi explains at the beginning of Parashat Va-Yechi (Bereshit 48:7): Why wasn't Rachel buried in the Cave of Machpelah or even in Beit Lechem, but by the side of the road? So that when we were on our way to Exile she would be an aid for her children, as it says: "A voice is heard in Ramah. Rachel cries for her children...there is a reward for your actions and your children will return to their border" (Yirmiyahu 31:14-16). But couldn't she be an aid from Ma'arat Ha-Machpelah – it is only a little farther away?! I heard one Rav explain that for the sake of her children Rachel gave up being buried in Ma'arat Ha-Machpelah. We see that Rachel Imenu was willing to forego and we must do the same. The Exile was on account of "Sinat Chinam – Baseless Hatred" and the Redemption will be on account of "Ahavat Chinam – Baseless Love." In this way, Rachel is an aid for her children. She teaches us "Ahavat Chinam – Baseless Love." Every soldier who entered the Gaza Strip did so with self-sacrifice to save other Jews. This is not a jacket, a spouse, the kingship or a spot in Ma'arat Ha-Machpelah, it is risking one's life. Therefore, Rachel was there. She was with every soldier who entered with self-sacrifice for the sake of his brothers. It truly was Rachel!

