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Parashat Vayetze 5771

Ask Rav Aviner: [mororly@bezeqint.net](mailto:mororly@bezeqint.net)

Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Tzion

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## On the Parashah... Yaakov's Love of Rachel and Leah

[Tal Chermon]

Yaakov deeply loved Rachel as is stated: "Yaakov worked seven years for Rachel. But he loved her so much, it seemed like no more than a few days" (Bereshit 29:20). It was not a carnal love but a holy and lofty one based on a profound harmony between their souls. The proof of this is that he was with Leah for an entire night, thinking that she was Rachel and yet only in the morning did he discover the switch. His attraction to Rachel was clearly not bodily since he knew nothing about it and could thus be deceived for an entire night. Their bond was idealistic and spiritual. All the same, he loved her for what she was now.

Leah, however, was "disliked." This does not mean, G-d forbid, that he really hated her. Yaakov loved everyone, he even called the shepherds "my brothers" (ibid. v. 4). Leah was simply less loved than Rachel, as it says: "But he loved Rachel more than Leah" (ibid. v. 30). She feels "disliked" because she knows that as far as her husband is concerned she is the subordinate wife. Yaakov, however, did slowly develop a deep love towards her, not as his wife but as the mother of his children (On the birth of her first son, she called him "Reuven - see a son" and said "now my husband will love me" - Bereshit 29:32. On the birth of her third son, she said "Now my husband will be attached ["Levi"] to me because I have already given him three sons" - ibid. 29:34. And this pattern continues).

Yaakov's love for Rachel, despite all its sublimity, was not the ultimate in love. His love of Leah ended up deeper and more elevated. His love of Rachel, although it was a love in the depth of his soul, was a personal love of her. His love for Leah, however, centered on the creation of future generations and on the desire for continuance. By marrying and having children, one becomes "eternal" in this world since he is continued by his offspring. The heart of romantic love is, deep down, the love of and desire for continued existence. The Torah, by determining that the mitzvah is not marriage but procreation, makes abundantly clear that the purpose of marriage is not mutual pleasure and convenience but the bearing of children to ensure future generations. There is even an opinion that this command can be fulfilled with a concubine (The Rosh on Ketubot 1:12). G-d forbid that a person should act in such a shameful way, but the letter of the law indicates what is at the heart of the matter. A husband and wife must naturally love and respect each other on a personal level, but all of

this stems from a deeper purpose. Maran (our revered teacher) Ha-Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook expressed this idea as: "Sexual impulses have been given to us in order to ensure the future of the world and of mankind (Orot Ha-Kodesh Part 3, p. 299).

Since Yaakov's love of Rachel was personal and unrelated to the propagation of future generations, their bond was infertile. Yaakov's spiritual romance had to give way to a love which bore with it the responsibility of maintaining the continuity of mankind. Rachel demanded in painful exasperation: "Give me children or let me die" (Bereshit 30:1). She implored G-d to be fertile like her sister (See Rashi's second explanation and Onkelos on Bereshit 30:8), and Hashem finally opened her womb (Bereshit 30:22). Her troubles, however, were not yet over. She died in childbirth when Binyamin was born (Bereshit 35:17-18). Rachel's temporary kingdom had to vacate its place for Leah's permanent kingdom to take over. The essential, romantic love was a preparation for the supreme state for them to "become one flesh" (Bereshit 2:24). This occurs when children are born, "for the child is created by both parents and in it their flesh becomes one and united" (Rashi *ibid.*). Both Rachel and Leah built the complete House of Israel.

## Rav Aviner on... And Jonathan remains in the pit...

[Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah – Toldot 5771 – translated by R. Blumberg]

Jonathan cries in the pit, tearlessly, silently and without words. He is not crying over himself but over Joseph who was thrown into the pit, and over all sorts of Josephs thrown into all sorts of pits. He is the present Joseph, crying for the unrectified sin of the original Joseph's being sold.

Jonathan Pollard ruminates in the pit. He has been there for twenty-five years. He has a lot of time to think, and he already knows all his thoughts by heart. He knows that he never betrayed the United States. Quite the contrary, he served it faithfully for many years. And anyway, he did a lot of good for the United States by passing on to Israel information which the United States was obligated to pass on to Israel according to their memorandum. If not for Jonathan, what a terrible calamity might have occurred! What shame and calumny for America! The fact is that he was never accused of being a traitor. So why is he being so badly mistreated? Why is such a terrible injustice being perpetrated against him? Why?

Jonathan is suffering in the pit for his brothers who threw him into it. He remembers that they said to him, "You are our brother. Don't worry! If you get into trouble, come to the Israeli Embassy, you and your wife, and we will transfer you to Israel." "Yet when I came there," he recalls vividly, "they threw me outside, straight into the arms of the police."

Jonathan trembles in the pit. He still recalls how they took off all his clothes and threw him into a psychiatric prison, totally naked in a cold and empty cell with just a single metal cot. To paraphrase Genesis 34:23, "the pit was empty but it contained water." Occasionally he would be chained to a shower of freezing cold water until he lost all his senses. Even now he is in a terrible pit, a pit of life imprisonment. Prisoners come and go, but Jonathan sits in his pit forever... no leaves, no children, no kosher food. His only ray of light is his good wife who visits him regularly, with enormous devotion.

Jonathan asks himself questions in the pit: My brothers, why have you betrayed me? It is through me that you knew that Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Iran were preparing atomic, chemical, and biological weapons against Israel's citizens, as well as terror attacks. I toiled so hard for you, my brothers! I literally sacrificed myself and endangered myself for you, and I don't even have a bit of freedom. Have you forgotten me? You talk, you make declarations, you have photo-ops, and I am still in the pit. Sometimes you make promises. But you are lying. You don't really worry about me. Even with me in the pit, you continue to take advantage of me for all sorts of purposes. I'm hurting in the pit, and it hurts me all the more that you are betraying me.

Jonathan suffers insult in the pit: Why do they write about me that I was working for profit? I didn't get a red cent! I am an idealist. Why do they write about me that I am insane? Is this a way of getting rid of me? Why was the suggestion made of exchanging me for 750 terrorists with blood on their hands? Is that what I am worth in your eyes? Do I have blood on my hands? Me?

Jonathan suffers disappointment in the pit: In 1985 he was arrested. He was officially recognized as a citizen of Israel, and only in 1995 was he recognized as an official agent of Israel -- as if this were some sort of gesture. Yet it was no gesture! All of his missions were signed by the head of Israeli Intelligence. Why doesn't the State of Israel turn over mountains and hills to free him? Why has it missed so many opportunities? Could there be a greater injustice?

Jonathan remembers in the pit. His brothers forgot him, but he did not forget them. He breathes Israel, lives Israel, worries about Israel. He is a very bright man, a man of rare genius. He thinks about the future of the State of Israel all the time, and about how to solve its problems, the problems of electricity, economics and security. From his scant resources, he contributes to charitable organizations in Israel, prays for those wounded in terrorist attacks and sends his wife to comfort the mourners of terror victims.

My brothers! I do not forget you. Please do not forget me...

For twenty-five years Jonathan has been in the pit. He touches the cold walls, touches the darkness, touches his aching head and his diseased sinuses. He thinks: When will I get out of here? He no longer believes in salvation coming from the Chief Butler or the Chief Baker, this minister from America or that one from Israel -- but only in the Master of the Universe. Jonathan sits in the pit and he weeps, he weeps tears of blood.

Yet he is not alone in the pit. G-d is with him. G-d is his Rock and Fortress, shining His countenance upon him and satisfying his needs. Even in the pit, Jonathan remains a tzaddik [saint] like Joseph the tzaddik. They are trying to corrupt his soul. They show him obscene photographs, yet he always remains a tzaddik. G-d is always with him in the pit.

Jonathan is a national hero and a saint. He has one prayer: Master of the Universe! I have but one small request. Get me out of here and bring me to the Western Wall so that I can kiss it.

"As for our brethren, the whole house of Israel, suffering distress and captivity, on sea or on land, may G-d have mercy on them and grant them relief, bringing them from darkness to light, from servitude to liberty, speedily and very soon" (morning prayers). May He who brought Joseph out of the pit bring Jonathan out as well, and may there soon be fulfilled through the saintly, heroic Jonathan, the words, "Hashem, You have brought up my soul from She'ol. You have kept me alive, that I should not go down in the pit" (Tehilim 30:4).

### *Kitzur Tefilat Amecha - #17*

[adapted for middle-schoolers by Rabbi Shmuel Jablon from Rav Aviner's three-volume commentary on the siddur "Tefilat Amecha"]

At the end of the morning Berachot and the recitation of the korbanot, we ask Hashem to rebuild the Beit Ha-Mikdash where we will offer Him our korbanot again. And we ask Him to do this quickly and in our days. This is our highest hope, because having the Beit Ha-Mikdash will mean we have the Mashiach, and we will be able to get as close to Hashem as anyone can get in this world. So we ask for this to be done in our days as we want to have this wonderful experience in our lives. We don't want this to be just a theory. We want this to be a fact in our lives. So today we have to live our lives in a way that will bring us closer to having Mashiach and the Beit Ha-Mikdash.

### Bircat Ha-Mazon while Getting Divorced

Q: Should a man continue saying in Bircat Ha-Mazon: "Ha-Rachaman Hu Yevarech et Ishti" (May the Merciful One bless my wife) if they are in the process of getting divorced?

A: One can say "Plonit" (her name) or "Gerushati" (my divorcee). One is not obligated to recite all of the additions after the fourth blessings, although there is a custom to do so (Ha-Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach in Ve-Ten Beracha, p. 304). Therefore, one may say what he wants.

### Text Message Responsa

Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a week. Some appear in the parashah sheets "Ma'ayanei Ha-Yeshu'ah" and "Olam Ha-Katan." Here's a sample:

Ha-Rav Meir Kahane

Q: I saw that there was a comparison between the views of Kahane and the Nazi abomination. Is this true?

A: Not all severe errors or lack of morality is Nazism, G-d forbidden. And you should call him: Ha-Rav Kahane.

Q: Why does Ha-Rav hold that Ha-Rav Kahane severely erred and had a lack of morality?

A: I did not write that Rav Kahane had a lack of morality but that part of his view contained a lack of morality. It is permissible to argue with the view of a Torah scholar but this does not permit one to say that the Torah scholar himself is immoral. Rav Kahane was a righteous man, who displayed self-sacrifice for the Nation of Israel and was murdered for the sanctification of Hashem's Name. But there are a few difficulties with his view. A big difficulty is relating to secular Jews as Hellenists, and thus removing the Mitzvah of "Love your fellow as yourself." This is a severe error and lack of morality, i.e. in relation to how to treat another Jew. Obviously, this in no way lessens his positive attributes and the positive parts of outlook.

Calling a Jew: "Nazi"

Q: What is the difference between a soldier who expelled Jews from Gush Katif and a Nazi?

A: Someone asked this a week ago about Ha-Rav Kahane. And someone once called Tzahal: "Judeo-Nazis." And someone once referred to Ashkenazic Jews "AshkeNAZIS," We therefore want to make it clear once and for all that it is forbidden to call a Jew a "Nazi." Someone who calls his fellow "wicked" will have his livelihood negatively affected (Kiddushim 28a. Rashi, Tosafit and Ri Ha-Zaken ibid.). Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, harshly scorned people who called a Jew "wicked," but he never even imagined that they would call him a "Nazi" (see Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah – Shemot, p. 45).

Pregnant Woman in Cemetery

Q: Is it permissible for a pregnant woman to attend a memorial in a cemetery?

A: There is no prohibition according to the basic Halachah, unless you have a custom not to do so (Nita'ei Gavriel – Avelut 84:4. See Shut Minchat Yitzchak 10:42 #2).

Modesty

Q: Why do women have to dress modestly just because men can't control themselves?

A: A person must be modest when he is home alone, in the dark, even if he is a man, because of the honor of Hashem. Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 3:1.

#### Cohain in Ma'arat Ha-Machpelah

Q: Is it permissible for a Cohain to enter Ma'arat Ha-Machpelah?

A: It is a dispute. Maran Ha-Rav Kook (who was a Cohain) did not enter (Shut She'eilat Shlomo 3:328).

#### Dairy Equipment

Q: If pareve food was cooked in a dairy pan, it is permissible to eat if after a fleishchig meal?

A: Yes (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 95:3).

#### Red Light

Q: Is it permissible for a pedestrian to cross the street against a red light?

A: It is forbidden, and it is also life-threatening (Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 379:6. See Shut Chatam Sofer vol. 5 Choshen Mishpat #44).

#### Studying Religions

Q: I am a teacher and the curriculum calls for me to teach about Christianity and Islam. Is it permissible?

A: Teach what Judaism says about Christianity and Islam.

#### Nursery School

Q: How does one choose a nursery school?

A: Three criteria in this order: 1. A teacher who is motherly. 2. G-d-fearing. 3. Can help the child develop different skills.

#### Washing Dishes on Shabbat

Q: Is it permissible to washing dishes on Shabbat if there are other clean ones?

A: It is permissible if a person wants to eat off of those particular dishes (Shut Shevet Ha-Levi 5:39. Ha-Rav Yaakov Kaminetzky in Emet Le-Yaakov 323:6).

#### Tattoo

Q: Is a person obligated to remove a tattoo?

A: One is not obligated. It is appropriate to cover it with a piece of clothing (Shut Le-Horot Natab 8:72. Shut Revivot Ephraim 8:306. Shut Minchat Yitzchak 3:11).

#### Fish and Chesse

Q: It is permissible for a Sefardi to eat fish and cheese together?

A: Some are strict to refrain, but it is permissible according to the basic Halachah. Shut Yechaveh Da'at (6:48).

#### Davening with a Minyan

Q: Is it preferable to daven with a Minyan even though I am tired and do not have proper Kavana or to daven on my own with proper Kavana?

A: With a Minyan, because the advantages of davening with a Minyan are greater than the personal advantages of proper Kavana (end of the book "Chafetz Chaim").

### Redemption

A: Does Ha-Rav hold that there cannot be another Exile, and the State of Israel will last forever?

A: It will certainly last forever. But it is possible that there will be complications and withdrawals. Maran Ha-Rav Kook wrote about this.

### Satmar Shul

Q: If I cannot find another minyan, is it permissible to daven in a Satmar shul, who are against the State of Israel?

A: Yes. Do not excommunicate people.

### Bottle with Torah

Q: Is it permissible to throw out in the garbage a bottle which says; "Do not open on Shabbat"?

A: Some are strict, but it is permissible, since it is not for Torah learning but rather an instruction without reasons, and it is also designed to last for only one use (Shut Zekan Aharon 2:70 and Halichot Shlomo – Tefillah chap. 20 note 72. Ha-Rav Avigdor Neventzal, however, wrote in Be-Yitzchak Yikarei on the Shulchan Aruch 154:3 that the instructions printed on a bottle, such as do not open on Shabbat, should be placed in a Geniza).

### Shaking a Woman's Hand

Q: If a woman puts out her hand to shake mine, is it permissible to shake it so as not to embarrass her?

A: No. We should not embarrass anyone, but here she is causing herself embarrassment. Ha-Rav Ovadia Yosef declined to shake hands with Prime Minister Golda Meir. And Rav Mordechai Eliyahu did not shake hands with the Queen of England. In both cases, apologies were issued to the Rabbis that very night. In fact, one should take into consideration the feelings of the one who observes the Torah (Shut She'eilat Shlomo 4:298. See Blog Maaleh of 25 Marcheshvan).

### Burning Disks

Q: Is it permissible to burn a disk with songs that I got from different places?

A: Yes, but you have to pay for each of the songs. There is a way to do this (Shut She'eilat Shlomo 3:463).

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Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim P.O.B. 1076 Jerusalem 91009 Tel.02-6284101 Fax.02-6261528

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