

And (Yaakov) cried out in a loud voice. (29:11)

The Torah informs us that Yaakov *Avinu* wept when he met Rachel *Imeinu* for the first time. *Rashi* gives us two reasons that the Patriarch wept. **Horav Arye Leib Heyman, zl**, addresses both reasons, seeking the Divine Providential factor in each one, and explaining how it impacted our People for generations to come. The first reason that *Rashi* gives is that Yaakov saw *b'Ruach HaKodesh*, by Divine Inspiration, that he would not be buried with Rachel. He would be buried in the *Meoras HaMachpeilah*, while Rachel would be buried on the road near Bais Lechem.

We wonder why, specifically at this point in time, our Patriarch was Divinely informed of his “burial”? Was it necessary for him to know then that Rachel would not be buried near him? Furthermore, *Chazal* teach that Rachel forfeited her burial next to Yaakov as a result of the incident with Leah *Imeinu* concerning the *dudaim*. Apparently, she demonstrated a lack of respect concerning Yaakov’s holy stature. While this may explain the reason that Rachel was denied her burial plot next to Yaakov, it does not explain why Yaakov was compelled to relinquish his place next to Rachel. The mere fact that we perceive Yaakov’s weeping as an indication that he was pained by this decision means that he must have done something inappropriate to in some way warrant this change.

Let us go back in time, to the story of Yaakov appropriating the blessings from Yitzchak *Avinu*, his father. These blessings were originally destined for Eisav, but Yaakov arrived first. After all, he had purchased the right to those blessings from Eisav. How conveniently Eisav forgot the sale that he had made. When Eisav arrived to receive his blessings and discerned that Yaakov had received them instead, he raised his voice in a loud cry. Two tears (some say three) escaped from his eyes; this was sufficient for Eisav to condemn his brother.

While Yaakov actually had done nothing wrong, the Heavenly scale, which measures right and wrong to the hairbreadth, took note that Yaakov had caused Eisav to weep. Because he had taken the *bechorah*, birthright of the firstborn, Leah, who originally had been destined for Eisav, was now transferred to Yaakov. Thus, by extension, the burial place next to Yaakov, which had previously been designated for Rachel, was passed on to Leah. Yaakov caused Eisav to weep; he lost the privilege of having Rachel’s grave next to his.

We now turn to the second reason quoted by *Rashi* that Yaakov cried. He had arrived empty handed. Although his father, Yitzchak *Avinu*, came to his mother, Rivkah *Imeinu*, with material gifts consisting of gold, silver and jewelry, Yaakov had nothing. He had lost all of his possessions to Elifaz, Eisav’s son, who was dispatched by his father to kill him. True, trading his possessions for his life was fortunate, but Yaakov was still penniless. For this, he wept.

Let us take a moment to ruminate over this reason that Yaakov wept and how it later manifested itself. Imagine if Yaakov had not met Elifaz, and instead had arrived at Lavan’s home with a full complement of gold, silver and jewelry. Seeing all of this material wealth, the crooked Lavan would

have extended himself backwards for this distinguished guest. Does one think that Lavan would have had the audacity to switch Leah for Rachel if Yaakov would have been his wealthy nephew? Never! It is only because Yaakov was penniless that Lavan took advantage of him. Yaakov wept because he knew his newly arranged poverty was the reason that he would have to slave seven years for Rachel. There is, however, a flipside. Had Eisav not sent Elifaz to impoverish Yaakov, our Patriarch would have married Rachel without any mishap. As a result, Leah would have been married to her designated – Eisav. In other words, by sending Elifaz, Eisav lost out on Leah.

Baruch Hashem!