

And Dinah, the daughter of Leah whom she had borne to Yaakov, went out to see/look over the daughters of the land. (34:1)

Rashi notes that Dinah is called the “daughter of Leah,” as opposed to the “daughter of Yaakov.” He explains that her maternal pedigree is underscored due to her “going out,” which mimicked the “going out” of Leah, as it is written, “And Leah went out to greet him (Yaakov)” (Ibid. 30:16). *Rashi* suggests that Leah’s “going out” to greet Yaakov *Avinu* was also not fitting for her. As a result, her daughter Dinah had her own “going out” that ended in tragedy. When we peruse the *pesukim* and the various commentators, we find nothing inappropriate about Leah’s informing Yaakov that he would be spending the evening with her, rather than with Rachel.

Indeed, *Rashi* points out (Ibid.) citing the *Midrash*, that the phrase *ba’laila hu*, translated as, “that night,” does not simply mean, “that night.” Had that been the *pasuk’s* intent, it would have written, *ba’laila ha’hu*. Instead, the word *hu* stands alone, with the phrase now reading, *ba’laila – at night; hu – He*, alluding to Hashem. The *pasuk* is intimating that on “that night” when Yaakov was with Leah, Hashem Himself was also present and helped to bring forth Yissachar, who was conceived from that union.

This wonderful child, Yissachar, who was granted to Leah for her yearning to increase her share of the *Shevatim*, Tribes, became the symbol of the ultimate *ben Torah*. Her “going out” that evening could not have been inappropriate if “that night” brought about the son who was destined to be the pillar of Torah. The heads of the *Sanhedrin*, Supreme Judicial Court, were descendants of Yissachar. The responsibility of calibrating the Jewish calendar and deciding leap years was placed in their erudite, capable hands. That “going out” was a pure and holy act. Yet, in Dinah, her daughter, it expressed itself in a manner smacking of impropriety.

Let us take this further. The *Arizal* teaches that the *Asarah Harugei Malchus*, Ten Martyrs, were killed to atone for the sale of Yosef *HaTzaddik* by his ten brothers. Each one of the martyrs possessed the *neshamah* of one of the *Shevatim*, with each of these *neshamos* considered to be offshoots of Yaakov *Avinu’s* *neshamah*. Since Yissachar was the personification of Torah study, he was linked most with the *neshamah* of Yaakov. Rabbi Akiva was granted Yissachar’s *neshamah*. This is why he achieved such an unprecedented plateau of Torah knowledge. This is hinted by their names – Akiva and Yaakov – whose Hebrew letters coincide. All this took place as a result of “that night.” Is there still room for debate concerning the purity of Leah’s “going out”?

Last, *Radak* goes so far as to say that Leah’s “going out” was proper. Since Yaakov was unaware of Rachel’s agreement with Leah, he would have naturally gone to Rachel’s quarters. Once there, it would have been entirely inappropriate for Leah to take him away from Rachel. So by “going out” to greet Yaakov, she was circumventing any later issues. Leah wanted so much to increase and build *Klal Yisrael*. Should she be condemned for this?

I think the answer is basic. Leah meant well and acted properly – from an esoteric, spiritual perspective. To the eyes of a young spectator, however, the message that she was sending was quite different from her intentions. It happens all of the time. Our intentions are noble. Our actions do not necessarily scream propriety, but we must do it this way. The problem is that innocent spectators – most often our own children and those closest to us – neither understand our intentions, nor are they aware of all of the circumstances involved in a given situation. Suddenly, they think that what we are doing is right; in fact, it is **the** way to act, when actually, it is something we were compelled to do. Whenever we act publicly, regardless of our noble intentions and the pressing circumstances, we must take into consideration that someone is watching and that they will one day do the same – stripped of the noble intentions.