

## Lavan had two daughters. The name of the older one was Leah, and the name of the younger one was Rachel. (29:16)

When Boaz married Rus, the elders and the assemblage conferred upon them the following blessing: “May Hashem make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and like Leah, both of whom built up the house of *Yisrael*” (*Rus* 4:11). The word *shteihem*, “both of them,” seems redundant, since, if we are mentioning only Rachel and Leah, obviously there are two/both of them. *Horav Aryeh Leib Heyman, zl*, cites a number of places in *Tanach* which have a similar redundancy, whereby names and a total number are mentioned. We find this especially significant concerning the two he-goats used for the *Yom Kippur* service (see *Vayikra* 16:2 *ff.*). This prompts *Chazal* to derive that the “two” should be equal. Since the redundancy is mentioned three times, they learn that this equality must extend to value, appearance and height. Accordingly, *Rav Heyman* posits that our two Matriarchs – Rachel and Leah – had an equal share in building *Klal Yisrael*. Although Leah had more sons/tribes than Rachel, the concept of equality does not mean that each has a fifty/fifty share of the total. Equality is not quantitative, but qualitative. Without Rachel’s participation, there could be no *Klal Yisrael*; her progeny played a crucial role in the established nation.

*Chazal* teach us that there are three crowns of achievement: *Kesser Torah*, *Kesser Kehunah*, and *Kesser Malchus* (*Avos* 4:13), translated as: The crown of Torah; the crown of Priesthood; and the crown of Monarchy. Let us face it, Leah has them all. Her descendant, Moshe *Rabbeinu*, brought the Torah down from Heaven and presented it to *Klal Yisrael*. The crown of the Priesthood was merited by Aharon *HaKohen*, another member of the “family.” The crown of Monarchy went to David *Ha’melech*, a descendant of Leah’s son, Yehudah. How are we to suggest that there is a semblance of equality here? Leah has it all!

*Rav Heyman* cites the *pasuk* in *Bereishis* 30:1, “Rachel saw that she had not borne children to Yaakov, so Rachel became envious of her sister.” *Rashi* explains that ordinarily, envy is a deplorable character trait. This circumstance, however, presents an exception. *Chazal* teach that *kinaas sofrim* – literally, the envy of scribes – which means the envy one has of another’s Torah achievements, leads one to greater Torah knowledge. In other words, there is such a thing as “good” jealousy. Here, too, Rachel was certain that Leah had warranted having children in the merit of her superior righteousness. Such envy is wholesome, for it catalyzes greater growth, greater achievement.

Hashem did not want Rachel to be envious of her sister – even if it was for a noble cause. Hashem wants *shleimus*, perfection, wholesomeness, in the world. When someone is obsessed with envy it creates a blemish, therefore it must be ameliorated. Consequently, Hashem saw to it that Rachel was placated, and that her descendants were going to participate “equally” in establishing the three crowns which underscore *Klal Yisrael*’s uniqueness. How are we to understand this? The “numbers” seem to imply something far from equal. *Rav Heyman* takes us through these three

crowns and demonstrates that, in fact, Rachel participated quite significantly in each of these crowns.

Let us begin with the *Kesser Torah*, which apparently goes to Moshe. There is, however, an aspect of the Giving of the Torah which we often forget. Originally, Hashem raised *Har Sinai* over the heads of *Klal Yisrael* and issued an ultimatum: "If you keep the Torah – good. If not, there will be your burial!" This does not appear to be a very positive manner in which to accept the Torah.

*Chazal* teach us that the Torah was accepted once again during the reign of Achashveirosh. Following the miracle of *Purim*, *ki'yemu v'kiblu*, they ratified and accepted, *mah sheh'kiblu kvar*, what they had originally accepted. In other words, while the Torah that was given through Moshe might have been accepted under what could possibly be viewed as coercion, the Jewish People reaccepted it **willingly** in Shushan. The hero of the *Purim* miracle, and the enabler of the Torah's willful acceptance, was none other than Mordechai *HaTzaddik*, of the tribe of Binyamin – Rachel's son. Thus, Rachel played her vital role in catalyzing *Kesser Torah*.

Concerning *Kesser Kehunah*, Rachel's descendants also played a critical function in its realization. When Aharon *HaKohen* and his sons ascended to the Priesthood, one individual was not included – Pinchas, the son of Elazar *HaKohen*. It was not until after his pivotal act of zealotry in slaying Zimri *ben Salu* that Hashem conferred this eminent position on him as well. Forty years after the "rest of the family" became *Kohanim*, Pinchas finally was inducted by Hashem. The Almighty wanted it this way. Pinchas symbolized peace, a quality endemic to *Kehunah*. In detailing Pinchas's lineage, the Torah writes that his mother was from the daughters of Putiel (*Shemos* 6:25), a name attributed to both Yosef and Yisro (*Ramban*). Therefore, Pinchas was Yosef's grandson, that makes Rachel the vital link in *Kesser Kehunah*.

*Kesser Malchus* seems to belong to David *Ha'melech*, the progenitor of *Moshiach Tzidkeinu*, but we must not ignore *Moshiach ben Yosef*. Why was it necessary to have the role of Redeemer divided between two *Meshichim*, one from David and one from Yosef? This was done in order to placate Rachel *Imeinu*, so that she, too, would share in the monarchy of the Jewish nation.

Rav Heyman adds that, quite possibly, this is why Moshe added half of the tribe of Menasheh to *Bnei Gad* and *Bnei Reuven's* inheritance of *Eiver HaYarden*. We do not find Menasheh asking to remain there. Perhaps it is because of Rachel, who is to be included in every aspect of *Klal Yisrael's* development.

What an important lesson for us. How important it is to be inclusive – rather than exclusive. The more of *Klal Yisrael* that is involved, the greater the dissemination of each one's individual character traits, and the stronger and more balanced the foundation becomes.