

**Reuven went out in the days of the wheat harvest, and he found dudaim in the field...Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's dudaim." But, she said to her, "Is it a small thing that you have taken my husband? And to take my son's dudaim as well?" And Rachel said, "Therefore he shall be with you tonight in exchange for your son's dudaim."
(30:14, 15)**

There is a reason that one must learn Torah from a *rebbe* and that without the interpretation of the commentators, the Torah remains a closed book. We often come across instances, attitudes and actions that seem strange, atypical and questionable. We are struck by glaring reactions, which are obvious to one who is seeking a way to question the Torah. There is no shortage of bona fide commentators who elucidate and not only make sense of the circumstances, but also illuminate for us a perspective which indicates that this was specifically the only approach to ameliorate a potentially volatile situation. The above *pesukim*, detailing Rachel *Imeinu's* encounter with Leah *Imeinu* and their dialogue concerning the *dudaim*, present a prime example of a passage in the Torah that begs explanation.

Throughout her short conversation with Rachel, Leah seems to have forgotten exactly how it transpired that she became Yaakov *Avinu's* wife in the first place. She apparently ignored the fact that Rachel helped her in Lavan's ruse. Rachel gave her the predetermined *simanim*, signs, so that she would not be humiliated when she was wed to the great *tzadik*. It is one thing to ignore the past, but, she added insult to injury when she said, "Is it a small thing that you have taken my husband?" What is most difficult to understand is that Leah is viewed as the paradigm of those who properly express gratitude. After all, it was Leah who named her fourth son Yehudah, which is derived from *Odeh l'Hashem*, "I thank Hashem."

Clearly, undercurrents of tension exist between Rachel and Leah. Indeed, *Rabbeinu Saadya Gaon* views Leah's retort as a condemnation of Rachel. "Is it not enough that you have taken my husband?" *Chizkuni* goes further when he adds that Leah was qualifying her status as Yaakov's first wife. Indeed, Rachel was the rival wife. *Sforno* even wonders how Rachel could have married Yaakov, once he was married to Leah. The various commentators all point out that Leah was acting in a manner atypical of her nature and reputation. Did she suddenly forget that her present position as Matriarch was due only to Rachel's kindheartedness? How are we to understand this?

In his *sefer*, *Livyas Chein*, *Horav Reuven Cohen*, *Shlita*, cites the *sefer*, *Galia Razia* (which is quoted by *Midrash Talpios*), that offers an esoteric explanation of the course of events. Satan saw that Yosef *HaTzadik's* birth was imminent and that the entire world would be beholden to him. This is taught in the *pasuk*, *V'Yosef hu ha'shalit*, "And Yosef is the ruler" (*Bereishis* 42:6). This

concerned *Satan*, since he feared that Yosef, the son of his archenemy, Yaakov, would surely starve his legions. Thus, when Rachel said, *Havah li banim*, "Give me children," *Satan* said, *Havah*, "Come, let us be cunning," as in, *Havah nischakmah lo*, "Come, let us outsmart it" (*Shemos* 1:10). *Satan* felt that he must do something to prevent Yaakov from producing *havah*, "Give me children" – *havah* whose *gematria*, numerical equivalent, is twelve, which is the number of tribes Yaakov was destined to father. This is why *Satan* was bent on pursuing Yosef, even before he had been born. He had to prevent his birth.

When *Satan* saw Rachel asking Yaakov to help her conceive, he saw an opportunity to take her down. A woman of her spiritual caliber should have relied totally on Hashem.

Asking her husband to intercede was a slight taint on her *middas bitachon*, attribute of trust in Hashem. *Satan* immediately went to work aligning himself to participate in Yosef's birth. If he could somehow become a partner in Yaakov and Rachel's efforts to give birth to Yosef, *Satan* would be in. Yosef would now have to sustain his legions. After all, they were family.

How did he do this? First, he attempted to divest Rachel of all *bitachon*, trust, in Hashem. To do this, he "allowed" Reuven to discover the *dudaim*. He then convinced Rachel to ask Leah for her son's *dudaim*, which resulted in an argument between the two sisters. During the course of the argument, harsh words were spoken. As a result, Rachel was punished and she gave birth to only two of Yaakov's twelve sons.

From the *Galia Razia*, we gain a deeper insight into the conversation that took place between Rachel and Leah. It was fed by the fires of strife stoked by *Satan*. Otherwise, it never would have occurred. It was a *maasei Satan*, action of the *Satan*, to assure that his legions would be fed when Yosef became the sovereign in Egypt. And *Satan* was able to meddle in Yaakov's affairs due to a slight taint in Rachel's trust in Hashem.

This *parshah* is not about what we might view as a compelling argument between two sisters. It went far deeper. It represents an important chapter in the story of good and evil and the eternity of the Jewish People.

I believe that this is an important lesson to take with us on the journey called life. Often, occurrences take place that seem nonsensical, and, at times, frightening. There does not appear to be rhyme or reason for these occurrences. A Jew must believe that there is a powerful reason for **everything**. Hashem does not have to share His reason with us. I am reminded of the saying of the *Kotzker Rebbe, zl*, which puts this all into perspective: "I would not want to believe in a G-d Whose actions always made sense to me." After all, that is why He is our G-d, and we are His subjects.