

## So Lavan gathered all the people of the place and made a feast. (29:22)

This wedding reception of Yaakov *Avinu* and what should have been Rachel *Imeinu* included all the people in the city. Lavan spared no expense in marrying off his daughter. Little did Yaakov know that his future father-in-law, Lavan the swindler, had substituted Leah *Imeinu* for Rachel. Lavan knew the marriage was based upon a fraud; so did Rachel and Leah. *Daas Zekeinim m'Baalei Tosfos* (29:25) comment that, indeed, everyone in the community, all of the invited guests, was aware of the ruse. In fact, they did not conceal their knowledge of the deception. They sang all night, *Ha Leah*, "This is (really) Leah; this is Leah!" The obvious question is glaring: Where was Yaakov during all this? What was he thinking? He knew that Lavan was a deceiving scoundrel. Indeed, Yaakov reiterated, *Rachel bitcha ha'ketanah*, "Rachel, your younger daughter." He knew that Lavan was capable of lying, cheating and pulling the rug out from under him. So, when he heard the people singing, "It is Leah! It is Leah!" why did he not check before the marriage to confirm that indeed it was Rachel not Leah – as they were singing?

*Horav Shmuel David Walkin, zl*, offers a powerful insight into Yaakov's character and outlook on people. Of course, Yaakov heard them singing, and he understood the message. Yet, he refused to believe it. He could not accept that people would attend a wedding reception, eat their host's food and betray him by exposing his subterfuge. How could they be such ingrates? As a result, Yaakov did not believe what they were singing.

Ingratitude is a contemptible character deficiency, which is often influenced by upbringing, life experiences, personality traits and even psychological factors. In short, most people, unless they have personal issues are, by and large, appreciative and grateful. Gratefulness is a complex emotion which some of us feel, but are unable to express. Thus, Yaakov found it hard to accept that these people could be so nasty.

Perhaps we may suggest that Yaakov understood the implications of their singing. Yet, he would do nothing about it because it would publicly humiliate Leah and devastate her. He would rather marry her knowing that she was substituted for Rachel than disgrace her in front of her community. Why should she suffer because her father was a loathsome swindler? No one should be subjected to suffering due to a parent's less-than-savory actions. Parents are responsible for their behavior, not their innocent children. Sadly, children suffer because of a parent's destructive behavior. It is unfortunate that instead of reaching out and attempting to understand the children's personal suffering, we blame them and make them pay for the sins of their parents.