

LEAH'S CHIDDUSH

Leah was originally destined to marry the wicked Esav, but she cried so much in her *tefillos* to Hashem about this until she broke the decree. Not only did she avoid falling into marriage with Esav, but she was *zocheh* to marry the *tzaddik* Yaakov Avinu instead.

This was not simply a *tefillah* for a good *zivug*. Leah was originally not even supposed to become part of *Klal Yisrael!* Leah's "soul-mate" was supposed to be Esav! When she *davened*, she was essentially trying to change her entire course of what she would become. Thus, when her *tefillos* were answered, she had essentially changed everything for herself. She changed her very reality, and she became an entirely new being, one that would now marry Yaakov Avinu and to become one of the *Imahos*.

From Leah's *davening*, we learn an awesome lesson, a very great revelation to us about what the power of *tefillah* can do. By all means, Leah was supposed to marry Esav, because in those days everyone said "The older one [Leah] will go to the older one [Esav], and the younger one [Rochel] will go to the younger one [Yaakov]." That was the way of the world then, and logically speaking, it should have turned out that way. But because Leah *davened* so much, she broke the natural system that had been planned out for her, and she altered her very destiny, through her *tefillos*. Leah revealed how ***tefillah* has the power to alter and entirely change one's very reality.**

In the first blessing of *Shemoneh Esrei*, we mention two different ways of how to recognize Hashem: **ואלוקינו & ואלוקי** **אבותינו** (Our G-d, and the G-d of our fathers). Avraham Avinu could not say **ואלוקי אבותינו**, because he did not come from any of the forefathers. He had a wicked father Terach, and he achieved a recognition of Hashem even without having any one to father him for this. All of us as well have a power of "Avraham Avinu" within, which can recognize Hashem even without having a father to teach us. There is also another kind of recognition of Hashem, though, which is expressed through **ואלוקי אבותינו** – when we express how Hashem is the G-d of our forefathers Avraham, Yitzchok, and Yaakov. Yitzchok Avinu was the first to be able to say **ואלוקי אבותינו**, because he had Avraham Avinu as his father, and thus his recognition of Hashem came due to his father's upbringing, the *mesorah* (tradition) that he received from his father.

So there are two forms of recognizing Hashem – we know about Hashem through *mesorah* from our fathers, and also because we can recognize Him on our own, from within ourselves. One kind of person recognizes Hashem because he already has the resources by which he can recognize Hashem,

and this is like the recognition of Yitzchok Avinu, who was able to recognize Hashem because he was raised by Avraham, who recognized Hashem. And when a person learns Torah in-depth, he can come to deepen his recognition of Hashem from his learning, and this is the recognition we express in **ואלוקי אבותינו**. But there is also another kind of recognition of Hashem: even when a person has no previous source by which he can recognize Hashem - even when he is surrounded in a world that darkens and blocks this recognition - he can still find the inner strength to recognize Him. This is the kind of recognition which Avraham revealed. He had no father to show it to him, and He recognized Hashem even though he came from unsavory beginnings. This is the kind of recognition which is expressed in **אלוקינו** – that even through Avraham didn't have any forefathers of his own to guide him, he was still able to recognize Hashem.

In actuality, we need both forms of recognition – we need both the understandings of **אלוקינו** and **אלוקי אבותינו**. Esav had a great father Yitzchok, and he was able to say **ואלוקי אבותינו**, which means that he had the recognition of Hashem based on his upbringing - but he was missing the recognition of **אלוקינו**, for he didn't try to recognize Hashem from within him. He was trained to recognize Hashem from having a good upbringing, but he never learned how to recognize Hashem amidst darkness.

Our *emunah*, our recognition of Hashem, was implanted in us through the *mesorah* that was passed down to us through the generations starting from our *Avos*. But from Leah Imeinu, we received a different kind of inheritance. Leah was the one who truly revealed the power of *tefillah* - that through *tefillah*, one can change their very reality. There were supposed to be only three *Imahos* (matriarchs): Sarah, Rivkah, and Rochel. There weren't supposed to be four *Imahos*. But through *tefillah*, Leah added herself on to become the fourth Matriarch. In this way, Leah resembled Avraham Avinu, who came to recognize Hashem entirely from within himself, as Chazal say, "Avraham Avinu learned Torah from himself." Leah introduced a novel concept to the world: Even if we have a certain reality, we can alter it and change it entirely. We can gain a new reality.

When we left Egypt, the "*Erev Rav*" (Mixed Multitude) came up with us, and they have been affecting us ever since then, latching onto us and preventing the complete *Geulah* because of their presence amongst us. This also affects us on a personal, internal level. While we all have a part in us which was inherited from our *Avos*, we also have a part in us which contains *Erev Rav's* influences. In order to repair this evil that lurks within us, we need to reveal a sense of *Elokus* (G-dliness), a recognition of Hashem's Presence, and to let

it fill our entire being, so that it can penetrate the unrefined parts of our soul and vanquish it. How can we do this? It is through *revealing a recognition of Hashem from within ourselves*, just like Avraham Avinu did. This is the power we have that can dispel all of our internal traces of evil.

The *Erev Rav* clings to all of our souls. How can we see it? All of us have times in which we have doubts in our *emunah*. That is all coming from the traces of *Erev Rav* that cling to us. Sometimes we try to answer our doubts by reminding ourselves of *emunah*, yet our soul doesn't want to accept *emunah* as an answer. Why does that happen? It is coming from the traces of *Erev Rav's* influence on the soul. Our soul deep down knows the truth and has *emunah*, but the traces of *Erev Rav* embedded onto the soul blocks the soul from being aware of truths.

How do we get rid of the doubts within us that are created by the effects of *Erev Rav* on us? It is through revealing our **power of "Avraham Avinu" within**. Avraham Avinu revealed *Elokus* onto the world, by converting those who did not believe. So too, we can "convert" our own, personal "non-Jew" within us, by revealing a sense of G-dliness in ourselves. In the future, all will know of Hashem's Presence, but as of now, each person has a personal *avodah* to rid himself his personal traces of "*Erev Rav*", and that is when a person lets the light of *emunah* shine within him.

Leah Imeinu is also within our souls. Leah avoided marrying Esav, and when one uses the power of "Leah" within the soul – the power to change our very reality - he avoids the "Esav", the traces of "non-Jew" that seek to negatively affect our pure soul.

Through our windpipe we breathe, and through our esophagus we consume food and nourish our body. These are our two sources of how we get vitality – one is an outside source, the other an internal source. This applies to us on an inner level. Our outer vitality comes from the *mesorah* (tradition) of *emunah* which we received from our forefathers, passed down from generation to generation, whereas our inner vitality comes from the *emunah* that we can reach from within ourselves.

All of our knowledge and beliefs of *emunah* has been passed down to us through *mesorah* tradition, going back to our *Avos*. But the *emunah* in Hashem that has been passed down to us from our *Avos* isn't enough. If one only has *emunah* because that's the *mesorah* of our *Avos*, then he has *emunah* only because he knows about it from tradition and because that is what he was taught, but he is still missing the other kind of *emunah*, the *emunah* that comes from within - the ability to recognize truths on our own. This kind of *emunah* is represented by our *Imahos*. Our *Imahos* represent the kind of *emunah* which we uncover from within ourselves, because all of our *Imahos* did not come from good homes [Sarah grew up as an Egyptian princess, Rivkah came from the impure home of Besuel and Lavan, and Rochel and Leah came from Lavan], yet they reached *emunah* from within

themselves. And, from all our *Imahos*, it was especially Leah who reached *emunah* from within herself.

The inner kind of *emunah* is that even if you were to have been raised in a non-Jewish home, or in a very bad environment that is the antithesis to the will of Hashem, you would still be able to arrive at *emunah* from within yourself. A person can truly work on his *emunah*, through deep reflection, by having times of quiet (as the Chazon Ish says to do), by pondering simple facts of *emunah* and concluding them on his own, and not simply because he knows that he must believe in these facts intellectually. He should reflect on *emunah* privately, and come to feel these truths from within him.

Of course, we don't mean that *mesorah* isn't good enough for us. We definitely need to believe in our *mesorah*, but it is just that if we don't seek to ingrain in ourselves the *emunah* that we have been taught, then we don't feel our *emunah*, and then our *emunah* isn't real to us. For that reason, it is not enough for us to believe in the truths we received from our *mesorah* simply because it's our *mesorah*. We need to come to realize the truth from within ourselves, so that all the *emunah* we know about can become ingrained in us and palpable to us, so that we really feeling what we know and believe. There are many mistakes and misconceptions today, things that are not in line with the *mesorah* we received from our *Avos*. But a person on his own can realize how many of these mistakes are not in line with our *mesorah*, not just because he knows that these things are against the *mesorah*. These days, if someone doesn't realize it from within himself and he is not able to conclude on his own how all that we know from our *mesorah* is true, it's highly doubtful if he will be able to keep anything from our *mesorah* at all! When we have both the *mesorah* of *emunah* from our *Avos*, as well as the ability to realize within ourselves what the truth is, the concept here becomes clearer.

Of course, if someone only acts from his individual understanding that he has come to and he doesn't believe in *mesorah* unless he can understand it, then he is not going in the way of *Klal Yisrael*. But at the other extreme, if someone only believes in *mesorah* yet he doesn't try to ingrain it deeply in himself to realize how our *mesorah* is true, he is missing the power of Avraham Avinu and he isn't making his *emunah* real. So we have to balance two opposite abilities. On one hand, we need to nullify our understanding to the *mesorah* of our fathers, yet at the same time, we also have a power to understand truths *from within* ourselves.

When we combine these two powers that we inherited – our ability to nullify ourselves to the *mesorah* of *emunah* [which comes from our *Avos*], as well as our ability to recognize the truths from within [the ability of Avraham Avinu, which was also reflected by our *Imahos*, and especially Leah], then we can reach the perfected level of *emunah*.

(תפילה. 010 גאלוקי. אבותינו)

ROCHEL & LEAH, THE TWO MASHIACHS & TZADDIKIM

Q *Why was it fine for Leah to go along with Lavan's plan to trick Yaakov into marrying her? Why was she allowed to cause pain to Yaakov Avinu?*

A See *Daas Zekainim (Beraishis 29:25)* that Leah said to Yaakov the next morning, "I learned from you how to resort to trickery, since you tricked your father Yitzchok to get the blessings." Especially because she knew through *ruach hakodesh* that she would marry him in the future, and therefore she permitted herself to do this. Even more so, it was because Yehudah, the root of Mashiach, would come from her, and there is a rule that Mashiach's ancestry always comes about in a roundabout, crooked way.

Q *When Leah davened that she shouldn't marry Esav, was this because she knew that it was the ratzon Hashem from her to daven (to break the decree) and she had bitachon that Hashem would answer her tefillos? Or did she daven to Hashem to break the decree in spite of the fact that the ratzon Hashem was that she should marry Esav?*

A She davened because she knew that it was the *ratzon Hashem* [for her to daven].

Q Our *Avos* did everything with tremendous thought and precision. What is the meaning then of **וישק לרחל**, when Yaakov met Rachel at the well? What was the purpose of this? Making the question stronger, Chazal said that when the shepherds saw Yaakov's behavior, they spoke negatively about Yaakov Avinu that he is not being careful with *arayos* (illicit behavior) when even *bnei noach* are careful to stay away from *arayos*. Why wasn't this a *chilul Hashem*?

A There are those who explained that Yaakov only kissed the hand of Rachel, but from a distance it did look like he was doing more than that. Refer to *Sefer Toldosav shel baal Maadanei HaMelech*. The *Netziv (H'emek*

Dovor Beraishis 29:10) explained that he did this to show anyone standing nearby that he was a relative of Lavan and Rachel. This is rooted in the statement of Chazal that Yaakov did this in order show everyone nearby that he was Lavan's relative. The *Maharal Diskin (Shemos 4:22)* says that since Yaakov was 70 years of age at that time and Rochel was a minor, it was not disgraceful for Yaakov to do this. (See also *sefer Ohev Yisrael* and *sefer Ohev Chessed, parshas Vayeitzei* for more on this.) The root of the matter lays in the words of the *Ramban (Beraishis 29:9)* that this was not a kiss on her mouth, but either on her hand or on her shoulder. This is also explained by *Rabbeinu Bachye (Beraishis 29:11)*, and *sefer HaKesav V'HaKabalas* says something similar. The *Gra (Tikkunim 11)* explains that the "kiss" is referring to speech, because speech is called *zivug neshikin*, "the connection of kissing", and this is the secret of Yaakov's "kiss" to Rochel whereupon he immediately "told" something to her afterwards. The *Mekubalim* refer to this figurative "kiss" as *yichud elyon*, a unification on High (*Sefer haPeliyah, Igros Remaz 26, Ramchal "derush V'nasatah Kesef"*, and in many other places of *Raboseinu*).

Q *Who was more prominent, Rochel or Leah?*

A On This World, Rochel is more important [and Leah was secondary to Rochel]. In the Next World, though, Leah is more important [*Michtav M'Elياهو*].

Q *Do Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben Dovid need to be well-known Gedolim or can they be hidden tzaddikim?*

A Either is a possibility. On a subtler level, Mashiach ben Yosef is in the category of a revealed *tzaddik* whereas Mashiach ben Dovid is in the category of a hidden *tzaddik*. Mashiach ben Yosef descends from **Rochel**, who was "known" for her righteousness, whereas Mashiach ben Yehudah descends from **Leah**, whose

righteousness was more hidden. The word "*Leah*" is equal in *gematria* to the number 36, corresponding to the concept of the 36 hidden *tzaddikim* [hence Mashiach ben Yehudah who descends from Leah is in the category of a hidden *tzaddik*, just like his ancestor Leah].

Q *What are the roles of Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben Dovid?*

A Mashiach ben Yosef's role is to gather all of the creations together and unify them into one. He descends from Yosef, upon whom Rachel said, "*Hashem has gathered my disgrace*", a hint that Mashiach ben Yosef will "gather" everyone together. Mashiach ben Yosef [who descends from Yosef], represents the *yesod* (foundational trait), a trait which is all-inclusive of every single quality, which can hold everything together. For this reason, Mashiach ben Yosef will accomplish what is called the *yichud seifa* (the end or final stage of unifying the name of Hashem with the world). In contrast, Mashiach ben Dovid's *avodah* is to reveal the very root of everything, to reveal *havayah* - the Existence of Hashem upon the world, by connecting everything together back to its root. This is called the *yichud reisha*, "the head of the unification of Hashem's Name". Mashiach ben Dovid also represents the complete form of *tefillah*, the very root of *tefillah*: Realizing that one is completely lacking without Hashem, and that one lacks the infinite completion which only Hashem has.

Q *Mashiach ben Yosef's role is to gather everyone together while Mashiach ben Dovid's role is to connect everyone to their root - this sounds like the same thing. What are their different roles? And which of them is more important?*

A Mashiach ben Yosef will gather all the "branches" of Creation together. Mashiach ben Dovid's role is to reveal *havayah* (the true reality) and thereby reveal the "root" of everything. They each have a unique role that the other one will not have.

Q Will the Internet be destroyed already before Mashiach comes, or will Mashiach destroy it? Or will Hashem destroy it? If Mashiach will destroy it, will it be Mashiach ben Yosef or Mashiach ben Dovid?

A It will be destroyed through the “light” of Mashiach – through both of them [both Mashiachs] together.

Q *Sefer Nesivos Shalom* and also *sefer Shem M'Shmuel* elaborate how Mashiach ben Yosef will repair problems with *kedushah* and *shemiras habris*, and afterwards Mashiach ben Dovid will come to repair problems with *emunah*. If so, why then does everyone need to do *teshuvah*, if the two Mashiachs will come fix the world anyhow?

A Because doing *teshuvah* draws the *Geulah* closer. To the extent that a person fixes himself with *teshuvah*, he will be *zocheh* accordingly to the spiritual benefits that will come from the two Mashiachs, on his own level and to the degree that he does *teshuvah*. Because even when Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben Dovid will arrive, not everyone will merit to equally partake of the spiritual benefits that they will bring.

Q *Different sects of Klal Yisrael always emphasized one particular area of avodas Hashem another. By some, Torah is everything, and by others, emunah is everything. By others, tefillah is the main thing, and others focus on being b'simchah. Some paths focus a lot on guarding Bris Kodesh, whereas others did not make that much of a deal of it, and some don't speak about it at all. I've heard that the ways of avodas Hashem that emphasize guarding and fixing Bris Kodesh are all the way of “Mashiach ben Yosef”, whose role is to fight for kedushah, whereas those who focus more on tefillah, emunah, and other areas are part of the way of “Mashiach ben Dovid”, whose role is to reveal emunah.*

Does this mean that not everyone holds that a person should be that concerned about being careful with Shemiras HaBris? Or does everyone hold that a person should be careful when it comes to Shemiras HaBris?

A Everyone always held that a person should be very careful with guarding one's *Bris Kodesh*. The entire argument between the different ways in Klal Yisrael is only if a person needs to add on “extra” care or not when it comes to guarding *Bris Kodesh*.

Q *There were Gedolim who are great in nigleh (the revealed dimension of Torah) and those who are great in nistar (the hidden dimension of Torah). Do the Gedolim in nigleh come from the souls of the revealed dimension (alma d'isgalya) and do the Gedolim in nistar come from the souls of the hidden dimension (alma d'iskasya)?*

A Usually, yes.

Q *With regards to the “revealed” and “concealed” dimensions, where do the Leah-souls come from and where do the Rachel-souls come from?*

A The *neshamos* that come from Leah are from *alma d'iskasya*, the hidden dimension, while the *neshamos* that come from Rochel are from *alma d'isgalya*, the revealed dimension.

Q How can a person become more connected with a *tzaddik*? And when should a person go see a *tzaddik*?

A By learning his *divrei Torah* at least once a week. One should go see a *tzaddik* also, either on Yom Tov, Shabbos, or Rosh Chodesh.

Q Is there a way to know which *Gedolim* and *tzaddikim* are greater than others in their generation?

A It is not upon us to think whom is greater. Rather, we must become clear about what each *tzaddik* contributed to the world and what his unique role was. Then one should clarify “What specific area do I need to receive from the *tzaddik*? Which *tzaddik* is the ap-

propriate one to go to, in order to fill that need?”

Q The more I become in touch with *pnimiyus* and with having a deeper perspective on things, and the more I seek *emes*, I am seeing how the conversations around me are empty and superficial, and how they often contain *lashon hora* and nonsense, even in very prominent people. It's hard to get into all the details but this is the outline of the painful reality I am seeing. What is the proper attitude to have about this?

A There is a statement from a wise person, brought in the writings of the Alter of Kelm, that “The entire world is comprised of fools, and the wise ones are like strangers among them.” **HaGaon Rav Shmuel Auerbach zt”l already said to me close to 20 years ago that we should view the entire world as a giant playgroup full of children, who are all playing with their toys, and that you are the mature adult who needs to worry for all of them. That is how he guided me** in how to act in the practical sense. But certainly a person also has to make sure that he is working on his humility [so that he doesn't become haughty].

Q I *daven* in a *shul* where everyone has internet on their smartphones. *Even the Rav there got a smartphone now!* I don't really have a choice of *davening* in a different *shul*. How can I remain joyous during *davening*, when it makes me so sad that everyone in *shul* is connected to the “50th level of *tumah*” via their unfiltered or filtered smartphones?

A Enter into a state of inner solitude in your *nefesh* during that time. The *Chovos HaLevovos* says that even when you are around people, you can feel that you are alone with Hashem and that there is just you and Hashem.