

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Double portion for the first-born (cont.)

The Baraisa proves that the first born's double portion is double the portion of the other brothers.

The necessity for the Baraisa to cite numerous verses is explained.

2) Yosef becoming the first-born

R' Chelbo asked why Yaakov took the first-born status from Reuven and gave it to Yosef.

R' Shmuel bar Nachmani offered an explanation.

R' Chelbo rejected this explanation and presented an alternative explanation in the name of R' Yonason.

The Gemara begins to explore how Leah preceded Rochel in having a child first.

Two explanations of the meaning of the reference to Leah's eyes are recorded.

The modesty of Rochel is described.

3) Yaakov and his descendants

Abba Chalifa Kruya noted that the Torah states that seventy descendants of Yaakov went down to Mitzrayim and yet when one counts the names there are only sixty-nine names recorded.

R' Chiya bar Abba offers a resolution to this inconsistency.

This resolution is challenged forcing him to offer an alternative resolution.

R' Shmuel bar Nachmani offers one explanation why Yaakov returned home following the birth of Yosef.

This explanation is unsuccessfully challenged.

4) Double portion of the first-born

A Baraisa discusses from which gifts to kohanim does the first-born take a double portion.

The first ruling of the Baraisa related to the foreleg, jaw and maw is explained.

The ruling regarding consecrated offerings is explained.

The novelty of the Baraisa's ruling pertaining to the father's animal that was in the possession of others is explained. ■

Distinctive INSIGHT

The heartfelt prayers of Leah

ראה הקב"ה ששנואין מעשה עשו בפניה

Our Gemara notes that it is preposterous to say that Yaakov hated Leah. Rather, the Gemara explains the verse as saying that Hashem saw that the ways of Eisav were repugnant in the eyes of Leah, and when people used to say that she was destined to marry Eisav (see Bereshis 29:17), she cried out to Hashem to save her from this fate. Due to this prayer, she now merited to have a son. The question is: What is the connection between her entreaty to Hashem that she not marry Eisav and the fact that she now gave birth to a son?

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak from Berditshev explains that our sages teach us that our matriarchs were initially each barren and did not merit to have children because Hashem craves to hear the prayers of the righteous. Leah was different, however, because she had already developed an intimate relationship with Hashem through her prayer, as even before she was married she was faced with the crisis of possibly being set to marry Eisav. She had already spent many years in devoted prayer aimed at her avoiding having to marry Eisav, and her prayers were answered. When she later married Yaakov, there was no need for her to be challenged further with being childless for the purpose of intensifying her prayer, as her power of prayer was already fine-tuned.

This is what the Gemara means when it teaches that when Hashem saw that she despised the ways of Eisav,

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REVIEW and Remember

1. How did Yaakov take possession of the city of Shechem?

2. What does the term רכות mean when referring to Leah's eyes?

3. Why did Yaakov want to return home following the birth of Yosef?

4. What are מכירי כהונה?

HALACHAH Highlight

Using deception to retrieve stolen property

ומי שרי להו לצדיקי לסגויי ברמאותא

Is it permitted for righteous people to behave deceptively?

The Gemara relates that when Yaakov proposed to Rochel she expressed concern that her father would try to deceive him. Yaakov assured her that he could act deceptively as well. Upon inquiry of whether it is permitted for a person to behave deceptively he quoted the pasuk that teaches that one should behave honestly with those who are honest and deceptively with those who are deceptive.

Ben Bag Bag, in the Gemara Bava Kama (27b) teaches that one should not enter the courtyard of a friend to retrieve his possessions so that he should not appear as a thief. Rather, he should “break his teeth” and inform the thief that he is taking back his possessions. Sha’ar Mishpat¹ asserts that Ben Bag Bag was not merely offering good advice to avoid appearing as a thief; he was teaching that it is prohibited for a person to steal his objects back from the thief who stole them so that he should not appear as though he is stealing someone else’s property. Since a dissenting opinion is not cited, it seems as though halacha should follow Ben Bag Bag which raises the question why his ruling is not cited by Rambam or Tur. Min-

(Insight...continued from page 1)

and that she had already prayed extensively to Him because of the threat she faced, He immediately allowed her to merit to have children.

Hashem indeed craved to hear the heartfelt prayers of Leah as much as He wished to hear the precious prayers of any righteous person. However, she had already offered such heaven-piercing supplications all along. ■

chas Chinuch² suggests that the use of singular language indicates that others disagree with Ben Bag Bag and halacha will follow that majority opinion.

Ben Ish Chai³ suggests that the dispute whether halacha follows Ben Bag Bag’s statement is limited to cases where the thief is not deceptive as well. In such a case one could maintain that one should not “steal” his property from the thief since it could be retrieved using legal means. If, however, the thief practices deception and it will not be possible for a person to retrieve his property from the thief using legal means all opinions would agree that it is permitted for a person to “steal” back his property if the opportunity presents itself. This is consistent with Yaakov’s teaching to Rochel that it is permitted for a person to behave deceptively with one who is deceptive. ■

1. שער משפט סי' שמ"ח סק"א.

2. מנחת חינוך סי' רכ"ד.

3. שו"ת רב פעלים חו"מ ח"ג סי' ה'.

STORIES Off the Daf

Eisav's fall

”אין עשו נופל אלא ביד זרעה של רחל...”

The Rav of Somlai, zt”l, explains the vast importance of kibud av and why most find this mitzvah extremely challenging. “If the Jewish people would only fulfill the mitzvah of honoring parents with true and complete self-sacrifice, Eisav would have already fallen before us and the redemption would have already arrived. But the evil inclination expends special effort to cause the Jewish people to err and makes the proper observance of the

mitzvah burdensome to them. This is because, when Eisav falls, the redemption will arrive and evil will cease to exist, as we find in Tosafos on Rosh HaShanah 15b, in the name of the Yerushalmi. It is therefore very difficult to fulfill the mitzvos properly.”¹

Rav Shlomo Zalman Ehrenreich, hy”d, explains today’s daf in the light of Eisav’s kibbud av. “We find in many sources that Eisav was exceptional in his kibbud av. For example, the Midrash states that the Jews in the desert were not allowed to wage war on Eisav because his people were exceedingly careful to honor their parents.² And the Sefer Chasidim points out that Eisav honored his parents

with great self sacrifice.³

“Unfortunately, when the shevatim sold Yosef, they acted without a thought for their elderly father, and this strengthened Eisav’s merit. This is why the Gemara in Bava Basra 123 states that Eisav will fall into the hands of the children of Rachel. The other brothers misled their father and caused him intense emotional pain. Only Yosef and Binyamin, who were not a part of this debacle, will nullify the merit of Eisav and bring the ultimate redemption in the merit of the mitzvah of kibbud av!”⁴ ■

1. סי' רחמי אב, א'.

2. דברים רבה, א', סוף ט"ו.

3. ספר חסידים, סי' שכ"א.

4. אגרת לחם שלמה, רכ"ח.