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PARSHA ENCOUNTERS

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Parshas Vayeitzei ✍️ Rabbi Shlomo Francis

Double Identity

“Ve’eine Leah Rakos”, And the eyes of Leah were tender. Rashi explains that Leah thought she was destined to marry Eisav, and therefore she constantly cried to Hashem. As people would say, “Yitzchok has two sons, and Lavan has two daughters. The oldest son, Eisav, is destined to marry the oldest daughter, Leah, and the younger son, Yaakov, is destined to marry Rochel”.

It seems reasonable that people would entertain such an idea. However, Rashi says that Leah herself actually thought that she would marry Eisav. Leah obviously understood that she was a tzadekes. Eisav on the other hand, was a well known rasha. Even while in his mother’s womb, he already showed evil tendencies and would get excited as his mother passed a house of avodah zora. How could Leah have thought that she was destined to marry Eisav? Furthermore, the Medrash states that Leah was actually destined to marry Eisav. It was only due to her heartfelt prayers that the decree was annulled, and she was zocheh to be Yaakov’s first wife.

The Medrash in parshas Toldos states that Eisav was destined to have six shevatim come from him, and Yaakov was destined to have the other six. Only when Eisav became a rasha did the plan change, and Yaakov would now have all twelve. Rav Gedalyah Schorr zt”l explains that the fact that Eisav tried to exit his mother’s womb as she passed a beis avoda zorah did not mean that he was destined to be a rasha. This simply meant that Eisav had a strong desire for evil, and it was his mission to overcome these strong desired by drawing on strengths from within himself. Hashem intended for the yetzer hora to be defeated from within man. Eisav, who possessed such

a strong yetzer hora, was ideal for this task. Had he fulfilled his mission of overcoming his own yetzer hora, he would have accomplished a large portion of Hashem’s purpose in the creation of the world, and would have been worthy of fathering six shevatim. It is only after Eisav failed to fight the yetzer hora and the yetzer hora actually overcame him did this original mission change. Now, Yaakov, who’s original mission was to be an “ish tam yoshev ohalim”, to serve Hashem by distancing himself from the yetzer hora, would now be directly fighting the yetzer hora that was within Eisav. It therefore became Yaakov’s second mission to resort to trickery in order to overcome Eisav and his yetzer hora by taking the bechora and brachos from Eisav.

Chazal tell us that, “one who is zoche takes his own portion as well as his friends portion in gan eden.” R’ Gedalia Schorr zt”l explains that one who has more merit than his friend, receives the opportunity to accomplish what his counterpart, the rasha, failed to accomplish and therefore receives the reward that the rasha would have received.

With this explanation we can now understand Leah’s concern. She knew that her potential strengths were actually the same as Eisav’s, and she really was destined to marry Eisav! When Eisav failed to accomplish his mission in this world, Leah was scared she was destined to become part of this failed mission as well. It is only because Yaakov succeeded in taking over Eisav’s mission that Yaakov became an appropriate match for Leah.

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HALACHA ENCOUNTERS

Lying Part 2

Rabbi Yisroel Langer

Last week we discussed the halachos pertaining to sheker. At this point, we will (IY"Y) outline some of the common scenarios involving these halachos, and how the gedolei poskim approach them. [Note: Any halacha l'maaseh questions should be brought to a rav.]

Q: Is it permitted to lie in order to save oneself from a loss?

A: It is permitted for one to lie out of court to save himself from an undeserving loss (Sma 369:10). However, if one is deserving of the loss, then it is prohibited to lie. An example of this is a driver who was pulled over by a police officer for speeding. When the officer approached the car, the passenger pretended that he was ill and was being rushed to the hospital. Hagaon R' Chaim Kanievsky shlita ruled that since speeding is not permitted, it was forbidden for the passenger to lie to save the driver from a deserving loss i.e. the speeding ticket. (Derech Sicha p.305).

Q: If one receives a phone call, and he does not wish to speak to the person, can he tell the one who picked up the phone to tell the caller that he is not home?

A: Hagaon R' Shmuel Vosner Shlita rules that this is prohibited. Instead, one should say that he is not available to speak right now. However, Hagaon R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach Zt"l and YBL"Y Hagaon R' Yosef Shalom Elyashiv rule that one may "lie" and say that he is not home. The reason they permit one to lie in this case is because by telling the truth, the caller may feel slighted. He may assume that for a more important person, you would have the time to talk. Therefore, this "lie" would qualify for the heter of "darchei shalom" (peaceful relations). (Titein Emes L'Yaakov ch. 5 siman 24) So as not to be a blatant lie, some advise him to say, "he will be home later". (ibid) (See sefer Niv Sifasayim Klal 3:25 who questions the application of darchei shalom in this situation.) However, the poskim point out that if there are children (or adults that aren't G-d fearing individuals) who are around, all agree not to tell anyone to lie and say he is not home. Otherwise, the children may learn to lie, as they will not understand why lying is permitted in this situation. One must always be extra cautious around children. (Niv Sifasayim Klal 3:25)

Q: If one wants to make a surprise party for another individual, can he invite him by telling him to come for some other reason?

A: Hagaon R' Yisroel Yaakov Fisher Zt"l ruled that this is strictly forbidden. (quoted in Titein Emes L'Yaakov p. 176)

Q: On Erev Shabbos, can one say "Hurry up, there are only 30 minutes left to light bentching!" when in fact there are 50 minutes left? Additionally, can one move the clock forward to fool those around him that it is later than it really is in order to be ready for Shabbos on time?

A: Hagaon R' Yosef Shalom Elyashiv Shlita rules that this depends on the

circumstances. If one sees that his wife is being lazy and taking her time, then one may tell her the incorrect time. However, if she is trying her best, then it is forbidden to trick her with the wrong time, as this will just cause her unnecessary anguish. (Titein Emes L'Yaakov p. 125)

Q: One is asked at the airport if anyone gave him any packages to take on board. If one is taking a package on behalf of a relative or close friend, can he answer that he is not?

A: The Sefer Titein Emes L'Yaakov (p.265) rules that since the intent of the question is to question if there are any packages that they should be concerned about, and there aren't, it is permitted for the passenger to answer that he has not received any packages. (According to Harav Dovid Zucker shlita it is preferable for one to "acquire" the bags for himself in advance from his friend, and then he can honestly say that he is not taking bags on behalf of anybody else.)

Q: Is one permitted to exaggerate if it is obvious to the listener that he is exaggerating?

A: This is permitted. (Hagaon R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach Zt"l, YBL"Y Hagaon R' Chaim Kanievsky Shlita quoted in Titein Emes L'Yaakov p. 173)

Q: Is it permitted for one to fabricate a story, and only afterwards say that the story is not true?

A: The Sefer Nachlas Eliyahu says that this is not permitted. (see also Haskama of Dayan Fisher Zt"l in the sefer Titein Emes L'Yaakov note 8 who discusses this issue.)

Q: Is it "sheker" to omit pertinent details from a story that can distort the listener's understanding of the situation?

A: This is considered sheker even though the speaker didn't utter anything untruthful. (Rambam Da'os 5:7). (See also Niv Sifasayim klal 1:5)

Q: Is it okay for one to make up a story in order to teach a child an important lesson?

A: Hagaon R' Chaim Kanievsky says that it is not appropriate. Rather, one should first tell the children that the story is not true and then proceed to tell the story. (such was the custom of the Steipler Zt"l) (Derech Sicha p. 75)

Q: If one is privy to a secret of an upcoming engagement, and is asked by others if he knows any information about the progress of the shidduch, how should he respond?

A: Since the matter is a secret and he was told not to reveal anything to anyone, it is forbidden to reveal one's secrets and he should reply "I don't know anything about the situation". (Hagaon R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach Zt"l, and YBL"Y R' Yosef Shalom Elyashiv Shlita quoted in Titein Emes L'Yaakov ch. 5:25)

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