

Parshas Vayeitzei

This week's Parsha is Vayeitzei, which is filled with many historical narratives, such as Yaakov's journeys and his family's growth. Over the past weeks, I recounted that the Torah is not a historical book; instead, it is "Hora'ah," the lessons, a guidebook for all of us, and more so, the blueprint of the entire world.

In this parsha, specific interactions are reminiscent of the world we live in today.

In previous Parshas, I posited these stories in the Parsha must teach us specific actions and learned ideas. Rashi offers the simplest explanation of the pesukim. Previously, I explained that Lavan was considered worse than Pharaoh (as described in the Haggadah) because he wanted to mess with the fact that Yaakov was marrying Rachel and Leah and therefore continuing the Jewish people as opposed to Esav, who was the Bechor, whose offspring are at odds with us until Mashiach as Lavan said when he tricked Yaakov into marrying Leah first posuk 29:26- Lavan says in our place, we don't give the younger before the elder- a counteraction to Rivka's prophecy that the elder will serve the younger.

We know that Lavan's deception was so problematic that we see Rashi at 30:22; there was a thought in Esav's mind to take Rachel as a wife since she had no children. If this was possible, Yakov was securing his place as the "Bechor" (from the lentil transaction) by only being left with Leah, and Rachel, the younger one, would go to Esav. Lavan, therefore, by marrying Leah to Yaakov, was buying time

to increase the chances of messing with the timeline of the birthrights for the next generation.

Then, when Rachel finally has children, it is confirmed (as she says in the posuk) that her disgrace was removed and that she could no longer be Esav's. She knew this information as explained by Rashi, that she was a prophetess and that Yaakov would have 12 sons and four wives (Rashi 29: 34). Her first son, Yosef, comes from the word gathered, which also connotes ben Yosef's future role in preparing the world for Mashiach (Mashiach ben Yosef). At this point then, Yaakov was able to take leave from Lavan.

Yaakov, like his predecessors, negotiated in good faith about the fair value of payment for his time working for Lavan, so there was no claim later that there was coercion. Yet Lavan milked it for what he could, and his toxicity as a person was evident. Furthermore, he kept trying to gaslight Yaakov as some trickster or fraud, the very thing Lavan was and remained.

Yaakov finally stood his ground and pushed back, for which Lavan initiated a treaty for which he tried to boast about his participation in erecting the monument, and he didn't participate at all; it was Yaakov and his sons. Lavan was a toxic person and tried bringing Yaakov to his level through gaslighting and blame. But Yaakov stood his ground and did what was right.

In the world we live in today, some people will try to gaslight you into thinking you're wrong about something or that you did something you didn't. Furthermore, the world will try to paint the Jews and Israel

as the enemy that is equated with genuinely evil people, even though we are not even remotely the same.

We must do what's right and, first and foremost, follow the Torah to ensure our emotional sanity and have the fortitude to persist through the darkness. Eventually, our enemies will begin to lose and try to make a treaty with us, and they may even try to take credit for it, but peace will be achieved because truth prevails.

We have this happening today. Our enemies will make wild claims about Israel and Jews. When there is a peace accord, they will try to control the narrative to make it seem like they are reasonable. We must know this to be a Lavan character, one of coercion and lies. But if it gets us to peace, we take it. In the end, we have Torah and truth, and this step gets us closer to the day when Esav will be conquered, and the name of Hashem will spread in the land with Mashiach.

Good Shabbos.