

HILCHOS NIDDAH SESSION #1

AN ACT THAT BONDS

Background

The Ramban is explaining to us that when the *posuk* says that “Yaakov loved Rochel more than Leah,” there is a *chiddush* in that statement. By nature, he should have loved Leah more because he lived with her first, and “it is the nature of a man to love the woman that he lived with first.” Yet because Leah tricked him, he felt she was deceptive, and that thought overcame the natural effect of having lived with her first. Therefore, he didn’t love Leah and wanted to divorce her.

Seven years prior to this night, Yaakov and Rochel agreed to get married. They carefully laid their plans and waited. We know from the Torah’s description that Yaakov at that time had very strong feelings for Rochel. The *Siforno* explains that not only did Yaakov love Rochel, that love was so strong that it actually blinded him. When he was negotiating with Lavan about the dowry to be paid for Rochel, Yaakov agreed to seven years of work. The *Siforno* points out that that amount was far in excess of the normal dowry for such a girl in those times. However, to Yaakov it was a short time because of his great love for her. In other words, his love for her blinded his vision and caused him to miscalculate.

Questions

Yaakov was introduced to Leah the evening that he married her. But in truth, he wasn’t introduced to her at all; the entire time, he believed that it was Rochel that he was marrying. Up until then, he thought it was his beloved Rochel that he was with.

If so, what does the Ramban mean that “by nature Yaakov should have loved Leah more because he lived with her first?” Why should he love Leah at all? In his mind, it was Rochel who he wanted. In his mind, it was Rochel who he got. During the entire night, he thought it was Rochel who he was with. Yet the Ramban is saying that because he woke up in the morning and found out it was Leah, he should by nature have loved her more. The question is: why?

ספר בראשית פרק כט

ל וַיָּבֵא גַם אֶל רָחֵל וַיֹּאמֶר גַּם אֶת רָחֵל מְלָאָה וַיַּעֲבֹד עִמּוֹ עוֹד שִׁבְעַ שָׁנִים אַחֲרֹת

And he also lived with Rochel, and he loved Rochel more than Leah, and he worked another seven years.

רמב"ן על בראשית פרק כט פסוק ל

ל וַיֹּאמֶר גַּם אֶת רָחֵל וַיֹּאמֶר גַּם אֶת רָחֵל מְלָאָה, וְהַטַּעַם, בַּעֲבוּר כִּי הַטַּבַּע לְאֹהֲבֵי יוֹתֵר הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר יָדַע הָאָדָם בְּרֵאשׁוֹנָה, כַּעֲנִין שֶׁהִזְכִּירוּ חֲכָמִים בְּנִשְׁמֵי (סְנֵהדְרִין כֵּב:) וְאִינָה כּוֹרֶתֶת בְּרִית אֶלָּא לְמִי שֶׁעֲשָׂאָה כְּלִי וְהִנֵּה יַעֲקֹב אֹהֵב רָחֵל מְלָאָה שֶׁלֹּא כְּדֶרֶךְ הָאָרֶץ, וְזֶה טַעַם גַּם

The Torah mentions that he loved Rochel more than he loved Leah, and the reason for this is that the nature of a man is to love the woman he “knew” first. As Chazal teach us, a woman creates a bond to the one who makes her into a vessel.