

א ביסל תורה!

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ויצא

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The Importance of Having Children

By Ariel Jeselsohn

In **יעקב** marries **רחל** after working for fourteen years to marry her, and her sister **לאה** loved **רחל** much more than **לאה**, so in order to make her feel better, Hashem opened **לאה**'s womb, and she gave birth to four children. However, **רחל** remained barren, and could not give birth.

When **רחל** saw that **לאה** was giving birth to so many children, but she could not, she became jealous of **לאה**. **לאה** on this passuk says that **רחל** was not jealous of the fact that **לאה** was able to have children, and she was not. Rather, **רחל** was jealous of **לאה**'s righteousness. When **רחל** saw that **לאה** had children, she realized that it was because **לאה** was more righteous than her. According to the **בראשית רבה**, she said to herself: if **לאה** is having children and I am not, it must be because she is more worthy than I am. **רש"י**'s reasoning behind this is that **רחל** was too much of a **צדקת** to be jealous of **לאה**'s good fortune. Rather, she had to have been jealous of **לאה**'s righteousness.

In that same **פסוק**, **רחל** tells **יעקב** to pray for her to have children, "**הִבְהִילֵי בָנִים וְאִם-אֵין מִתֵּה אָנֹכִי**" give me children or I will die. A question we have on this **פסוק** is: what does **רחל** mean when she says that she will die? **רש"י** says that from this **פסוק**, we learn that someone who has no children is considered like one who is dead. The **ארבעה חשובין כמת עני ומצורע וסומא ומי שאין לו בנים** - There are four people who are considered dead: A poor person, a person with **צרעת**, a blind person, and someone with no children. The **גמרא** proves this by quoting **רחל** from our **פרשה**. As **רחל** said that unless she was given children she would die, rather than saying I will die.

The **גור אריה** says that life is like a "**באר מים חיים**" - a well of living water. Life is called this, for it is always flowing, and springing forth just like water. Just as a well of living water has no end, and continuously springs forth water, so too life has no end, as more people keep being brought forth into the world with every birth. However, death is the opposite of this idea. When someone has no children it is the end of their family line, and they are considered dead. Whereas on the other hand, someone who has children, and is like a "**באר מים חיים**", which is always flowing, is called alive. When **רחל** said that she was dead, she was referring to the fact that she was unlike a "**באר מים חיים**", as she was not springing forth any children. **רחל** saw that by not being able to give birth she would have no legacy.

רש"י and the **גור אריה** both stress the importance of having children, and continuing one's family line. So much so, that you are even considered dead as long as you have no children. **ה'** commanded all of us in the **מצוה** of **פריה ורביה**. We are all commanded to get married, and have children. May we all be like a "**באר מים חיים**", and be **זוכה** in having many children and great offspring who will continue our legacy.

Editors: Binyamin Orkaby and Ephraim Fischer

Faculty Advisor: Rabbi Jaffe



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Arץ ישראל's Blessing to Receive The Hidden Meaning behind יעקב's

By Ephraim Fischer

In the beginning of this week's פרשה, the תורה describes יעקב's dream in which ה' comes to him. ה' tells him that "אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֶיךָ וְאֶלְכִי יִצְחָק הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה שֹׁכֵב עָלֶיהָ לִּי אֶתְנֶנָּה וְלִזְרַעְךָ", that I am ה', the God of your father, אברהם, and the God of יצחק, the land which you are laying upon I will give to you and your ancestors. There is one problem that immediately jumps out of the פסוק: Why is only אברהם described as יעקב's father? Shouldn't יצחק, the real father of יעקב be described as his father rather than אברהם? It should at least say "אֲלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֶיךָ אֲבֹתֶיךָ אֲבֹתֶיךָ וְאֶלְכִי יִצְחָק", the God of your fathers, אברהם and יצחק!

In the העמק דבר, the נצי"ב brings up that in שמות, it is explained that "אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֶיךָ" represents the jurisdiction of protecting the Jews from enemies, and "אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק" represents the jurisdiction of giving the Jews success. The reason that it says "אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֶיךָ אֲבֹתֶיךָ" and only "אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק" is because now that יעקב is going into exile, he needs protection more than ever. While he was in ישראל, he had significant protection from the other nations, but now that he is going into exile, into ארם, his greatest need is protection, which is why אברהם is the one emphasized as יעקב's father. The נצי"ב continues on and says that nowadays, when we are in גלות, we are in danger from all the other nations. In גלות, we need protection more than ever, just like יעקב needed protection from all of the other nations.

What's even more interesting is the next part of this פסוק. ה' tells יעקב that "הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה שֹׁכֵב עָלֶיהָ" that the land which you are laying on, I will give to you and your ancestors. This blessing is far deeper than it seems. One can ask on this that יעקב was only laying on a small portion of land! Is ה' really only offering יעקב this small plot for his descendants? The גמרא (חולין צא:) derives from this that the greatness of this ברכה is that ה' "folded up the entire land of ישראל and placed it under יעקב" so that it would be easy for his children to conquer. This is telling us that this ברכה is saying that not only will ה' give us ארץ ישראל, but He will also make it easy for us to conquer. This is opposed to the previous ברכות that were given to our forefathers, as by אברהם, ה' only says "לִזְרַעְךָ אֶתֵּן אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת", to your descendants I will give this land, and to יצחק, ה' only says "כִּי־לָךְ וְלִזְרַעְךָ אֶתֵּן אֶת־כָּל־הָאֶרֶץ הַזֹּאת", to you and your descendants I will give this land. The מהר"ל noticed this difference, as he wrote (שם, חידושי אגדות) that ארץ ישראל was folded under יעקב for his blessing, but not for any of the other forefathers, because had it been folded for any of our previous forefathers, they would have had control over the full land of Israel. This would mean that either ישמעאל or עשו would have partial control over the land of Israel, which isn't what ה' wanted. יעקב's descendants were all pure, therefore he was fit to conquer the whole of ארץ ישראל. This מהר"ל brings us back to the beginning of the פסוק, where יעקב was given protection. אברהם and יצחק were not going to conquer ארץ ישראל, so they were blessed normally. As יעקב's descendants were the generation that would conquer ארץ ישראל, him and his descendants needed protection more than ever. With all of the other nations of ארץ כנען residing there, יעקב would need to be protected from them. As a final thought on this גמרא, the protection that ה' gave יעקב could be what was referenced in the גמרא as having made יעקב's conquering of ארץ ישראל easier. With protection, defeating all of the other nations would be far easier.

As the descendants of יעקב, we are the generation that will eventually rebuild ארץ ישראל and come out of גלות. However, if we want to have the same ease given to יעקב, we must uphold our end of the promise: To keep the תורה and מצוות. As a holy nation, we have a responsibility to keep ה' among us, and if we do, we will eventually be redeemed back into ארץ ישראל. Right now, we are in a great exile, scattered across all corners of the earth, but if we keep the Torah and Mitzvot, our exile will lessen, as רב יצחק מקאליב used to say, "וואלט דער גלות נישט גרויס געווען, וואלט דאך די שכינה נענטער געווען", our exile wouldn't be so great if only the שכינה were closer. May we all be זוכה to see משיח come soon, and to fulfill יעקב's promise of settling ארץ ישראל, במהרה בימינו.