

## SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

VAYESSE

NOVEMBER 28-29, 2014

6 KISLEV 5775

Begin saying Barech Alenu on Thursday night, December 4th in Arbit.

**DEDICATIONS: in memory of Sara Mizrahi 9 Kislev  
And Frieda Bat Sarina Azrak 10 Kislev**

Candle lighting Friday evening 4:11 p.m. Mincha at 4:11

SHABBAT: Perasha class with Rabbi Aharon at 8:30 this week and next  
David is away for Thanksgiving and will be in Florida next week

Shaharit - Hashem Melech at 9:00 AM - Please say Shema at home by 8:36AM  
**We have no sponsor for Kiddus this week – Kiddush before 11:42 Hasot**

Please sponsor a Kiddush or Seudah Shelishi or breakfast in memory or in honor of a loved one  
We want to schedule the full season in advance if possible

Early Mincha after Kiddush - Amidah after 12:06

Shabbat Morning Children's Program 10:30 - 11:30  
Ages 0-5 - in the Playroom/ Girls Ages 6-12 - In the Upstairs Library / Treats, Games, Stories, Prayers and Fun!

Children's afternoon program with the Bach at the Bach 3:30 PM  
Ladies Class at the Lembergers at 4:30

Return for Arbit at 5:30

Krav Maga SUNDAY

### WEEKDAY TEFILLA SCHEDULE

Shaharit Sunday 8:00AM, Mon and Thurs at 6:55, Tues, Weds and Fri at 7:00

WEEKDAY TORAH CLASS SCHEDULE - Thursday Nights 8:30-9:30 Virtual\* Class facilitated by Rabbi Yosef Colish.  
Practical Laws of Shabbat for Sephardim

GENERAL SYNAGOGUE MEETING For all congregants  
At the Synagogue – New Date - Sunday December 14<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 AM  
Looking forward to 2015 - Plans for the future and transitions

Saturday Night December 6<sup>th</sup> Family Movie Night @The Sephardic. Pizza Melaka Malka - Sponsored by Patti & Jack  
And for the Adults ....IS J STREET PRO-ISRAEL & PRO-PEACE? At Lido Beach Synagogue 7:30 PM  
Please join us for a screening of one of this year's most talked about, controversial and provocative films; a  
documentary about the American Jewish Community and its relationship with Israel. Free Admission. \$10 Suggested  
Donation. PANEL DISCUSSION FOLLOWING THE FILM with producer, co-writer, and co-director Ilya Feoktistov

**SAVE THE DATE: Sisterhood Annual Dinner December 9 honoring Hinda and Robert Mizrahi.  
Please sponsor an ad and make your reservations**

Saturday Night December 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:15 pm ..... Did you know there are over 700,000 amateur radio operators in the  
United States and almost 3 million world-wide! Come learn the secrets of how to operate your own radio to  
communicate with others by transmitting voice, Morse code, digital text and pictures, even live video signals by radio  
from one ham "station" to another, on land and at sea, in the air, and in space. Children and adults of all ages are  
invited. Pizza and refreshments will be served. Presentation by Bob Kraus, facilitated by Rabbi Yosef

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**Daily Minyan Mon – Thurs at 979 Third Avenue,  
 17th Floor, Artistic Frame at 4PM – Please join us!  
 212-289-2100 – Mincha and Arbit – Give us 22  
 minutes and we'll give you the World To Come!**

### Editors Notes

In the 70's writer Tom Wolfe dubbed the baby boom generation – those born between 1946 and 1964 - the "Me" generation. I guess the quality of being self-involved and somewhat narcissistic earned us the term. We stand in contrast to our parent's generation, those who were born and raised during the depression and served during and survived the Second World War. We can call them the "us" generation. They had and still have a quality of self-sacrifice and are always there for those around them. They continually push away the "I" and the "me" in favor of the "us" or the group. They rarely complain and are always uncomfortable requesting anything for themselves. I doubt that John F Kennedy was really speaking to them when he stated, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country". He was speaking to us.

It is evident that those who lived through those trying times; those in America and especially those in Europe, understood that situations change. They warned us to never get too comfortable with our place or our situation. One needed be able to conform to changes. There was little expectation. And everything that did come was appreciated and looked at as a blessing.

Even as a child, my father cautioned us to always have a passport and some money set aside. A miracle I didn't grow up paranoid. But the lesson was clear, one had to be flexible and do one's best to be prepared for what might never expect.

I was thinking of that as I reviewed a strange set of verses in this week's portion at the end of chapter 30 which details each facet and step in exactly how our forefather Jacob after making a deal with his father in law, manipulated genetics. The Midrash tells us that the agreement constantly changed and no matter the twist that Laban threw at Jacob, he was still able to cultivate an amazingly large and diverse flock. One has to wonder as to why the Torah which is typically so conservative with words allows more than a dozen

verses to detail such seemingly insignificant breeding minutiae.

Yesterday, as we sat for our morning class after prayers, I was asked why I moved from my typical place that morning in the synagogue during the morning service. I explained that normally a certain rabbi sits next to me and that morning right after I sat down a visiting rabbi took that place. I thought that when the rabbi who sits there every day would arrive, it would not be respectful if someone were in his place so I decided to move.

I was asked if it wasn't important to maintain one's makom kavua or set place when one prays. And although it is, giving ups one place is even more important. And this led us into a discussion of how one feels when one walks into a synagogue and sees that someone has taken "their" seat.

Rabbi Eli Mansour asks, "How long does it take one to recover when one arrives at the synagogue and sees someone sitting in their seat"? Some may walk over to the offending person and ask him to leave. But what if they simply say, "I got here first so I'm sitting here." Much less has started huge wars. Rabbi Mansour speaks of people who become so upset that it simply ruins the rest of their day. They become agitated and don't know where to place themselves. We have all seen people so distraught that they even walk out.

In reality, he suggests, it should take us 45 seconds to deal with the fact that someone is sitting there and to simply sit somewhere else and not worry about it. But how many of us stew and then when we get home continue by asking, "Can you imagine what happened? Someone sat in my seat. Nobody did anything and as a protest I am not going back. It's ridiculous. It's unfair. How can someone refuse to get out of my seat"?

I remember many years ago learning that in order to succeed in business one must put down on paper specific plans. One of those was a five-year plan. We were told to map out the next five years. Start with where you are today and continue to where you envision yourself at that point in the future. Plan each step along the path required to get from point A to point Z.

Now anyone who has done one of these extensive plans and looked at it five years later will tell you that the plan and the path rarely match. Life is filled with curve balls, wrenches, busted pipes and flat tires. The difference between those who succeed and those who fail lies in how one manages those unexpected forks. People who become paralyzed

when things don't go as expected and sit and cry and say that life is unfair will almost always be unsuccessful.

My mother, may Hashem bless her, is one of those "Us Generation" people. It's never about her and always about everyone else. She would always tell us, "man proposes and G-d disposes". Be ready, willing and able to deal when things don't go as planned. There is a Yiddish phrase which says, Der mentsh trakht un G-t lakht - Man plans and G-d laughs.

The Jewish people have often had to deal with a suddenly changing world. Life could go from white to black without a moment's notice. Being able to deal with that has allowed us to survive. Jacob goes from being the son of perhaps the wealthiest man in the land living a life of study and little worry one day to a homeless man running for his life and forced to live in a strange land at the mercy of the evil Laban. There are no guarantees.

Jacob succeeds in the battle of wits with Laban over the ever changing contract detailing which sheep goes to whom. The agreement changes and Jacob does not get despondent. He does not throw in the towel which is what Laban may have been hoping for. Jacob adjusts and moves forward. And the Torah to stress the points devotes so many verses to what seems to be unimportant.

When it's all about me, it becomes difficult to adjust. I become the self-inflated oak who is ripped from her roots in the storm. When I can set aside the "me" for a moment; when I can focus on the "we" or the "us", I can bend in the wind as the grass. I can survive and I can continue and grow.

Many of us are of the Me Generation, but maybe we can try trading up to the Us Generation. Our parents and grandparents certainly had a great lesson to teach. It's a lesson Jacob taught too. It's a lesson that will help us live better, longer and happier lives.

Shabbat Shalom,  
David

### Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

1st Aliya: Yakov experiences the famed prophecy of "Jacob's Ladder".

2nd Aliya: Yakov arrives in Charan, encounters Rachel, and contracts with Lavan for her hand in marriage.

3rd Aliya: Lavan switches Leah for Rachel forcing Yakov to negotiate another 7 years of service for Rachel. Leah gives birth to Reuven, Shimon, Levi, and Yehudah. Rachel marries off Bilhah to Yakov who gives birth to Dan and Naftoli. Leah marries off Zilpah to Yakov, and she gives birth to Gad and Asher.

4th Aliya: Rachel contracts with Leah for Reuven's mandrakes, after which Leah gives birth to Yisachar and Zevulun. Rachel finally gives birth to Yoseph, and Yakov approaches Lavan to negotiate a proper salary for continued service.

5th Aliya: Yakov's uses his vast knowledge of nature and husbandry to amass a fortune in sheep and cattle. After 6 years he decides with Rachel and Leah to flee from Lavan.

6th Aliya: They flee and Lavan catches them. Hashem (G-d) intervenes and Yakov, while confronting Lavan for his years of duplicity, unwittingly curses Rachel.

7th Aliya: Yakov and Lavan separate and Yakov arrives at the border of Canaan in 2205.

The Haftorah for Parshas Vayeitzei is from Hosea 12:13-14:10. Following the death of Shlomo Hamelech, the kingdom was divided between his son Rechavam, and Yiravam ben Nivat from the tribe of Ephrayim. Yiravam was a man of extraordinary potential who had it within his power to join with Rechavam, unite the two kingdoms, and bring Mashiach. Instead, he enacted legislature that earned him the title Chotay U'machate - one who sins and causes others to sin. This is why he Talmud relished him among those individuals who have lost their portion in Olam Habaah - the World To Come. His greatest sin was erecting two golden calves, one in the north of Israel and one in the south of Israel, where the people were encouraged to serve the idols rather than go to the Bais Hamikdash. The prophet cried out against this terrible defection from Hashem and prophesied the destruction and exile of the 10 Tribes that followed Yiravam and the tribe of Ephrayim.

The relationship to our Parsha is obvious from the first Pasuk (verse) of the Haftorah that describes Yakov's journey to Aram in search of a wife. However, the connection is much more profound. As free willed creations, our decisions force Hashem to adjust events so that destiny is best accomplished. The end result will always be as Hashem intended, but the events leading to that moment can be more circuitous and convoluted than necessary. In the

case of Yakov vs. Eisav and Yiravam vs. Rechavam, the actions of men forced Hashem to make accommodations. In each instance, a partnership could have been forged that would have strengthened the leadership of the nation and ushered in the Messianic era. Instead, Eisav and Yiravam refused to serve Hashem and distanced themselves and their generation from redemption.

The last Pasuk states clearly that there are many ways for destiny to be accomplished. Man's way, devoid of G-d, leads to pain, sorrow, and destruction. Hashem's way, which is righteous, proper, wise, and direct, leads to healing, love, and prosperity. The ways of Hashem are pleasant, loving, caring, and respectful. Imagine how different history would have been, and how wonderful the future should be!

### EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

"It was in the morning and behold it was Leah."  
(Beresheet 29:25)

Why did Hashem orchestrate events so that Ya'akob should end up marrying Leah in such a clandestine manner and not by Hashem giving a prophecy to Ya'akob to marry her?

The Ben Ish Hai explains that the entire future redemption of the Jewish people was contingent on the manner in which Ya'akob married Rachel. The Midrash notes that at the time of the destruction of the first Bet Hamikdash, the Abot (Abraham, Yitzhak, and Ya'akob) beseeched Hashem to have compassion on their children, but Hashem didn't listen to their prayers. Then Rachel stood before Hashem and recounted how Ya'akob had worked seven years to marry her, and on the night of their wedding when her father put Leah under the huppah instead, Rachel selflessly told Leah the signs by which Ya'akob would know that the correct bride stood under the huppah.

Rachel cried and begged, "Hashem, if I, a simple mortal of flesh and blood, was able to overcome my jealousy for my sister so that she would not be humiliated, how much more should You, the Living King, be able to forgo Your honor and spare Your children who have served idolatry!"

It was that prayer that merited the legendary response: "Withhold your eyes from crying, for there is hope...your children shall return to their boundaries (Yirmiyahu 31:15-16).

It was in the merit of Rachel's selflessness that the nation was redeemed. Hashem arranged events to occur as they did so that Rachel would have the opportunity to display the altruism that would rescue the nation in its darkest moment.

We often hear much about inexplicable tragedy and pain, and we know that the ways of Hashem are mysterious. But the Ben Ish Hai reminds us that everything that happens is for the best. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

"Behold the day is still long; it is not time to bring back the sheep." (Beresheet 29:7)

Ya'akob came to Haran to find a wife as his parents commanded him. He comes to a well which is covered by a large stone, and sees the shepherds just waiting around, wasting time. He first asks them about the welfare of Laban and his family, and then goes on to ask them, "Why are you just lolling around not doing your job? It's not time to go home." To us, it seems that Ya'akob is out of line in criticizing the shepherds. What business is it to him what they are doing? They are not his workers!

The Sforno points out that a righteous person cannot bear to see wrongdoing. When Ya'akob saw them not doing their job, it pained him to see someone stealing from his boss. Therefore, he gave them some constructive criticism. To follow this one step further, when we see something wrong and do not react, so that misdeed becomes light in our own eyes, it is easier for us to fall into that same trap. Many times, we see things which are incorrect, such as disrespectful behavior, or business practices which are less than honest or ethical. If we have the ability to say something and be heard, we should consider the right way to do it rather than just overlook it. This way we will have fulfilled the misvah of rebuking someone and we will be less prone to be influenced by that behavior. Of course, we cannot always say something; each situation must be judged separately. Ya'akob Abinu is teaching us that we should try not to get used to unacceptable practices, so that we will always remain with our proper standards of conduct. Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

### RABBI ELI MANSOUR

#### G-d's Eternal Relationship with the Jewish People

The Sages teach us that although the patriarchs – Abraham, Yishak and Yaakob – lived well before the Torah was given, they nevertheless voluntarily observed all its commandments. Surprisingly, however, we find a glaring exception to this principle in Parashat Vayeseh, which tells of Yaakob's marriage to Rachel and Leah. The Torah, of course, strictly forbids marrying two sisters (except if the first sister passed away, in which case the husband can then marry her sister). Why did Yaakob make this exception? What rendered marrying Rachel and Leah so important such that it overrode Yaakob's voluntary observance of Torah law?

Rav Haim of Volozhin (Lithuania, 1749-1821), in his *Nefesh Ha'haim*, offers an explanation based upon the teachings of Kabbala (mysticism). Although these concepts are deep and esoteric, we will try to understand them as best we can, in a manner suitable for our level.

The Kabbalists teach us that our actions here on earth have a profound effect in the upper, spiritual worlds. Although we are situated far away from God's Heavenly Throne, our performance of *Misvot* yields very significant effects in that realm. One example of this impact is marriage. The Kabbalists teach that when a couple gets married, they enhance and reinforce the marriage between God and the Jewish people. We rejoice at a wedding celebration not only because of the marriage of the bride and groom, but also because of its effects on our relationship as a nation with the Almighty. The spiritual effects of a strong marital bond between husband and wife extend to the heavens, and strengthen the bond between God and His people.

Needless to say, the more righteous the individual, the more profound and far-reaching his influence is on the upper worlds. Certainly, then, the marriages of our holy *Abot* (patriarchs) yielded an especially significant impact. Given their lofty stature of piety, there is no doubt that their actions triggered spiritual effects that last until this very day, and for eternity.

In light of this notion, we can perhaps begin to understand Yaakob's marriage to Rachel and Leah.

As a man of knowledge and prophetic insight, Yaakob understood he had to marry both Rachel and Leah, because of the significant impact these marriages would have on the relationship between God and *Am Yisrael*. In Kabbalistic thought, Rachel and Leah represent the two levels of God's love for the Jewish people. The first level, symbolized by Rachel, is the outward, external demonstration of this relationship, through the revelation of the *Shechina* (Divine Presence) in the *Bet Ha'mikdash*. This dimension of the relationship is fragile; as we know, the *Bet Ha'mikdash*, and the city of Jerusalem, was destroyed and still lay in ruins. When we are unworthy, God ends this level of the relationship and no longer expresses His love for us in an outward, overt way.

There is, however, a second level to this relationship, one which lies beneath the surface, the hidden, concealed level. As God announced through the prophet *Hoshea* (2:21), He has betrothed us "forever" ("*Ve'erastich Li Le'olam*"). Regardless of how low we fall and how far we stray, God's love for us endures,

for all eternity. Although we cannot see this love in exile, when we suffer persecution, it continues unabated all throughout. This aspect of God's relationship is represented by Leah. Indeed, the *Tikun Hasot* prayer, which many righteous people recite every night, consists of two sections – "*Tikun Leah*" and "*Tikun Rachel*." "*Tikun Leah*" contains verses that describe God's special love for *Am Yisrael*, whereas "*Tikun Rachel*" speaks of the pain and anguish of our national exile. As Rachel represents the outward demonstration of God's love for us, the "*Tikun Rachel*" is mournful, describing the loss of this aspect of the relationship. The aspect represented by Leah, by contrast, exists as much now as it did in the time of the *Mikdash*, and "*Tikun Leah*" is therefore optimistic and joyful.

Yaakob married both Leah and Rachel because he wanted to solidify both aspects of God's relationship with the Jewish people. Knowing how strongly his marriage will impact upon this relationship, he found it necessary to marry both sisters, so that God's concealed and overt love for the Jewish people will be profoundly enhanced. Yaakob was not prepared to forego on this opportunity to leave an enduring impact upon his descendants' relationship to God, and so, since the Torah had not yet been given, he married both sisters.

One practical lesson that we can perhaps learn from these otherwise esoteric concepts is the unique importance and impact of *Shalom Bayit* – peaceful relations between husband and wife. When *Shalom Bayit* prevails, the couple enhances not only their own relationship, but the relationship between God and the Jewish people. Each time a husband or wife refrains from uttering a hurtful remark, or chooses not to respond angrily to something the other said or did, he/she does his/her share to enhance the special, eternal relationship between the Almighty and *Am Yisrael*. The impact of our speech and conduct extend much further than we might expect. We must therefore ensure to maintain the *Shalom Bayit* in our homes, and thereby maintain the "*Shalom*" and special bond of love between us and our Father in heaven.

### **Rabbi Wein HALF EMPTY**

I have always attempted to be a pragmatist, a realist, if you will. The advantage of being such a realist is that one is rarely truly shocked or surprised by the events of life as they unfold. The highs of life are not really that high and the lows are not really that low. It becomes a matter of perspective, of patience, and above all, a matter of faith.

It is the high expectations that we harbor for our children, our finances, our social acceptance and success that lead to our deepest disappointments. The secret of successful psychological therapists is that they respond only to the realities of their patients and not to their fantasies or psychotic ramblings and conversations.

Yet, we are all aware that fantasies are part of our existence –perhaps even a necessary and positive part of human life. And because of this propensity to avoid true perspective and realistic judgments, it becomes very easy to view life and the world and its events as a glass that is half empty.

If this is true generally regarding world events, it certainly is doubly true regarding Jewish life, Torah and the State of Israel. On my recent trip out of Israel I visited the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada. I found the prevailing mood in Jewish communities that I visited to be slightly depressing. The Jewish world is war weary, concerned and down on its future. The glass, in their view, is truly half empty.

We are all aware that the security issue in Israel is a troubling one. We are also aware that the chances for any sort of fair and meaningful accommodation with the Arabs are quite slim. In our fantasies we all thought that such an accommodation was somehow within reach. Oslo, Wye, Annapolis, Hebron, Lebanese withdrawal, Gaza disengagement, all promised positive results and all have disappointed, to put it mildly.

People today speak of a third intifada, God forbid, and not of a rose garden here in the Middle East. For a few decades after World War II, Jews were convinced that somehow anti-Semitism seemed to finally have been checked. Today we all know better that this was a mere illusion and a wild fantasy. Jews all over the world feel threatened and treat their futures, even in the Western world, as being uncertain and possibly troubled.

So it is not surprising that Jews see their glass as being half empty. Yet in historical perspective the State of Israel is stronger now than it has ever been. And the Jewish societies the world over are more influential and affluent than they have ever been in the history of the Diaspora. We have a lot of problems that impinge upon our serenity. But we are all certainly in a better place and in better condition than the Jewish world was in a century ago.

The Land of Israel was then part of the Ottoman Empire, Eastern European Jewry was ravaged by

war, revolution and pogroms, the immigrant generation was struggling to find its way in the United States, and the Great War was just beginning. In that view of history, one can easily say that our glass is now perhaps half full.

The glass in terms of Torah study, religious observance and traditional Jewish lifestyle is subject to alternate assessments. On one hand, we have a very disturbingly high rate of intermarriage throughout the Diaspora. The Conservative movement in the United States is in dire decline and the Reform movement has become the haven of the intermarried. The secular Israeli is still opposed to halacha and representations of Jewish tradition and Torah observance in Israeli public and political life.

Most Jews in the world are not committed to halachic observance of Judaism and most Jewish children still receive a minimal Jewish education, if any at all. So, that glass can certainly be viewed as being half empty.

Yet, in truth, the Jewish world is much more Jewish today than it was a few decades ago. The amount of people involved in regular serious daily Torah study is probably at an all-time high. The number of students in Jewish schools and yeshivot is far greater than it was in the previous centuries. And the recent universal Shabat program attracted one million participants – something completely unimagined and deemed impossible only a half century ago.

So, there is legitimate reason to view that glass of our faith as being half full. It all depends on our perspective and mindset when we look at the Jewish world and its problems and accomplishments

### **Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks Love Is Not Enough**

Judaism is supremely a religion of love: three loves. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might." "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." And "You shall love the stranger, for you were once strangers in a strange land." [1]

Not only is Judaism a religion of love. It was the first civilisation to place love at the centre of the moral life. C. S. Lewis and others pointed out that all great civilisations contain something like the golden rule: Act toward others as you would wish them to act toward you, [2] or in Hillel's negative formulation: Don't do to others what you would hate them to do to you. [3] This is what games theorists call reciprocal altruism or Tit-for-tat. Some form of this (especially

the variant devised by Martin Nowak of Harvard called “generous”) has been proven by computer simulation to be the best strategy for the survival of any group.[4]

Judaism is also about justice. Albert Einstein spoke about the “almost fanatical love of justice” that made him thank his lucky stars that he was born a Jew.[5] The only place in the Torah to explain why Abraham was chosen to be the founder of a new faith states, “For I have chosen him so that he will instruct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just” (Gen. 18: 19). So why the combination of justice and love? Why is love alone not enough?

Our parsha contains a gripping passage of only a few words that gives us the answer. Recall the background. Jacob, fleeing home, is taking refuge with his uncle Laban. He falls in love with Rachel, Laban’s younger daughter. He works for seven years so that he can marry her. The wedding night comes and a deception is practised on him. When he wakes up the next morning he discovers that he has married Rachel’s elder sister Leah. Livid, he confronts Laban. Laban replies that “It is not done in our place to marry the younger before the elder.” He tells Jacob he can marry Rachel as well, in return for another seven years work.

We then read, or rather hear, a series of very poignant words. To understand their impact we have to recall that in ancient times until the invention of printing there were few books. Until then most people (other than those standing at the bimah) heard the Torah in the synagogue. They did not see it in print. The phrase *keriat ha-Torah* really means, not reading the Torah but proclaiming it, making it a public declaration.[6]

There is a fundamental difference between reading and hearing in the way we process information. Reading, we can see the entire text – the sentence, the paragraph – at one time. Hearing, we cannot. We hear only one word at a time, and we do not know in advance how a sentence or paragraph will end. Some of the most powerful literary effects in an oral culture occur when the opening words of a sentence lead us to expect one ending and instead we encounter another.

These are the words we hear: “And he [Jacob] loved also Rachel” (Gen. 29: 30). This is what we expected and hoped for. Jacob now has two wives, sisters, something that will be forbidden in later Jewish law. It is a situation fraught with tension. But our first impression is that all will be well. He loves them both.

That expectation is dashed by the next word, *mi-Leah*, “more than Leah.” This is not merely unexpected. It is also grammatically impossible. You cannot have a sentence that says, “X also loved Y more than Z.” The “also” and the “more than” contradict one another. This is one of those rare and powerful instances in which the Torah deliberately uses fractured syntax to indicate a fractured relationship.[7]

Then comes the next phrase and it is shocking. “The Lord saw that Leah was hated.” Was Leah hated? No. The previous sentence has just told us she was loved. What then does the Torah mean by “hated”? It means, that is how Leah felt. Yes she was loved, but less than her sister. Leah knew, and had known for seven years, that Jacob was passionately in love with her younger sister Rachel. The Torah says that he worked for her for seven years “but they seemed to him like a few days because he was so in love with her.”

Leah was not hated. She was less loved. But someone in that situation cannot but feel rejected. The Torah forces us to hear Leah’s pain in the names she gives her children. Her first she calls Reuben, saying “It is because the Lord has seen my misery. Surely my husband will love me now.” The second she calls Shimon, “Because the Lord heard that I am not loved.” The third she called Levi, saying, “Now at last my husband will become attached to me” (Gen. 29: 32-35). There is sustained anguish in these words.

We hear the same tone later when Reuben, Leah’s firstborn, finds mandrakes in the field. Mandrakes were thought to have aphrodisiac properties, so he gives them to his mother hoping that this will draw his father to her. Rachel, who has been experiencing a different kind of pain, childlessness, sees the mandrakes and asks Leah for them. Leah then says: “Wasn’t it enough that you took away my husband? Will you take my son’s mandrakes too?” (Gen. 30: 15). The misery is palpable.

Note what has happened. It began with love. It has been about love throughout. Jacob loved Rachel. He loved her at first sight. There is no other love story quite like it in the Torah. Abraham and Sarah are already married by the time we first meet them. Isaac had his wife chosen for him by his father’s servant. But Jacob loves. He is more emotional than the other patriarchs. That is the problem. Love unites but it also divides. It leaves the unloved, even the less-loved, feeling rejected, abandoned, forsaken, alone. That is why you cannot build a society, a community or even

a family on love alone. There must be justice-as-fairness also.

If we look at the eleven times the word "love," ahavah, is mentioned in the book of Genesis we make an extraordinary discovery. Every time love is mentioned, it generates conflict. Isaac loved Esau but Rebekah loved Jacob. Jacob loved Joseph, Rachel's firstborn, more than his other sons. From this came two of the most fateful sibling rivalries in Jewish history.

Even these pale into insignificance when we reflect on the first time the word love appears in the Torah, in the opening words of the trial of the binding of Isaac: "Take now your son, your only one, the one you love ..." (Gen. 22: 2). Rashi, following Midrash, itself inspired by the obvious comparison between the binding of Isaac and the book of Job, says that Satan, the accusing angel, said to God when Abraham made a feast to celebrate the weaning of his son: "You see, he loves his child more than you." [8] That according to the Midrash was the reason for the trial, to show that Satan's accusation was untrue.

Judaism is a religion of love. It is so for profound theological reasons. In the world of myth the gods were at worst hostile, at best indifferent to humankind. In contemporary atheism the universe and life exist for no reason whatsoever. We are accidents of matter, the result of blind chance and natural selection. Judaism's approach is the most beautiful I know. We are here because God created us in love and forgiveness asking us to love and forgive others. Love, God's love, is implicit in our very being.

So many of our texts express that love: the paragraph before the Shema with its talk of "great" and "eternal love." The Shema itself with its command of love. The priestly blessings to be uttered in love. Shir ha-Shirim, The Song of Songs, the great poem of love. Shlomo Albaketz's Lecha dodi, "Come, my Beloved," Eliezer Azikri's Yedid nefesh, "Beloved of the soul." If you want to live well, love. If you seek to be close to God, love. If you want your home to be filled with the light of the Divine presence, love. Love is where God lives.

But love is not enough. You cannot build a family, let alone a society, on love alone. For that you need justice also. Love is partial, justice is impartial. Love is particular, justice is universal. Love is for this person not that, but justice is for all. Much of the moral life is generated by this tension between love and justice. It is no accident that this is the theme of

many of the narratives of Genesis. Genesis is about people and their relationships while the rest of the Torah is predominantly about society.

Justice without love is harsh. Love without justice is unfair, or so it will seem to the less-loved. Yet to experience both at the same time is virtually impossible. As Niels Bohr, the Nobel prize winning physicist, put it when he discovered that his son had stolen an object from a local shop: he could look at him from the perspective of a judge (justice) and as his father (love), but not both simultaneously.

At the heart of the moral life is a conflict with no simple resolution. There is no general rule to tell us when love is the right reaction and when justice is. In the 1960s the Beatles sang "All you need is love." Would that it were so, but it is not. Let us love, but let us never forget those who feel unloved. They too are people. They too have feelings. They too are in the image of God.

[1] Deuteronomy 6:5, Leviticus 19: 18, and see Leviticus 19: 33-34.

[2] C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*, New York, 1947.

[3] Shabbat 31a.

[4] See for example Martin Nowak and Roger Highfield, *Super Cooperators: Altruism, Evolution and Mathematics (or, Why We Need Each Other to Succeed)*. Melbourne: Text, 2011.

[5] Albert Einstein, *The World As I See It*, New York: Philosophical Library, 1949.

[6] This has halakhic implications. Keriat ha-Torah is, according to most rishonim, a chovat ha-tibbur, a communal rather than an individual obligation (unlike the reading of the Megillah on Purim).

[7] The classic example is the untranslatable verse in Gen. 4:8, in which Cain kills Abel. The breakdown of words expresses the breakdown of relationship which leads to the breakdown of morality and the first murder.

[8] Rashi to Genesis 22: 1.

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