

## ”ותצא דינה בת לאה אשר ילדה ליעקב”

### Just Like Leah Went Out to Give Birth to Yissaschar the Pillar of Torah so Too Did Dinah Go Out to Rescue Rabbi Akiva a Gilgul of Yissaschar

In our parsha, parshas Vayishlach, we read (Bereishis 34, 1): “ותצא דינה בת לאה אשר ילדה ליעקב לראות בכנות הארץ”—**Now Dinah, the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Yaakov, went out to look over the daughters of the land.** Rashi comments based on the Midrash (B.R. 80, 1): “בת לאה, ולא בת יעקב, אלא על: שם יציאתה נקראת בת לאה, שאף היא יצאנית היתה, שנאמר (בראשית ל-טז) “**was she not the daughter of Yaakov? But because of her “going out,” she is referred to as “the daughter of Leah”; for she too had an outgoing nature, as it states: “And Leah went out to greet him.” Regarding her, they coined the saying, “Like mother like daughter.”**

Anyone scrutinizing this passuk, will be struck by a glaring incongruity. After all, Leah Imeinu merited giving birth to six of the twelve shevatim of Yisrael for Yaakov Avinu. Among them were some of Yisrael’s most important and outstanding shevatim. Her offspring included shevet Levi—comprised of the kohanim and leviim—shevet Yissaschar—the pillar of Torah—and shevet Zevulun—Yissaschar’s benefactor.

Furthermore, it is written (ibid. 29, 17): “ועיני לאה רכות”—**Leah’s eyes were tender.** Here Rashi explains: “**That she thought that she was destined to fall to the lot of Eisav; and she would cry, because everybody would say, “Rivka has two sons and Lavan has two daughters--the elder daughter for the elder son and the younger daughter for the younger son.”** Thus, her tefilos effected her salvation from Eisav and her ultimate marriage to Yaakov. This is implied by the statement (ibid. 30, 1): “ותקנא רחל באחותה”—**and Rachel became envious of her sister.** Rashi explains: “**She envied her good deeds. She said, “Were she not more righteous than me, she would not have been worthy of bearing sons.”** In light of all this, it seems preposterous that our blessed sages would speak of her

shamefully by referring to her as “יצאנית”, simply because she went out to greet her husband Yaakov.

#### HKB”H Assisted Him Resulting in the Birth of Yissaschar

Even more surprising is the fact that our blessed sages saw fit to compare Leah’s going out to Dinah’s going out. It is as if they are suggesting that they behaved improperly and immodestly. Now, we have seen that as a result of Leah’s going out, she was granted divine assistance; she was privileged to bring into the world the neshamah of Yissaschar, the pillar of Torah. The passuk states (ibid. 16): “ויבוא יעקב מן השדה בערב ותצא לאה לקראתו, —**and Yaakov came from the field in the evening, and Leah went out to greet him and said, “It is with me that you must come for I have surely hired you with my son’s ‘dudaim.’” So he lay with her on that night.** Rashi makes the following comment: “**HKB”H assisted him (her) that Yissaschar should emerge from there.**” The Sifte Chachamim provides further clarification: The passuk should have said “בלילה ההוא”, meaning “**that night**”; instead it says “בלילה הוא”, indicating that “**He,**” HKB”H intervened.

In fact, it is evident from the continuation of the passuk that HKB”H stood to Leah’s right as she gave birth to Yissaschar (ibid. 17): “וישמע אלקים אל לאה ותהר ותלד ליעקב בן חמישי, ותאמר —**G-d hearkened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Yaakov a fifth son. And Leah said, “G-d has granted me my reward, because I gave my maidservant t my husband”; and she named him Yissaschar.** So, it seems incongruous for our sages to blame Leah here for going out.

Furthermore, Leah's righteousness continues to grow and develop with the birth of Dinah. As it is written (ibid. 21): **“ואחר:”** “ילדה בת ותקרא את שמה דינה”—**subsequently, she bore a daughter, and she named her Dinah.** Regarding this passuk, we find the following elucidation in the Gemara (Berachos 60a): **“מאי ואחר, אמר רב לאחר שדנה לאה דין בעצמה ואמרה, שנים עשר שבטים עתידין לצאת מייעקב, ששה יצאו ממני, וארבע מן השפחות, הרי עשרה, אם זה זכר, לא תהא אחותי רחל כאחת השפחות, מיד נהפכה לבת, שנאמר ותקרא את שמה דינה.”** **What is the significance of the word “ואחר” (“subsequently”: after what)? Rav said: After Leah rendered a judgment concerning herself, and said, “Twelve shevatim are destined to emerge from Yaakov; six have already emerged from me and four from the maidservants; that is ten. If this one is a male, my sister Rachel will not even be like one of the maidservants.” Immediately her fetus was transformed into a female, as it says, “And she named her Dinah.”** Seeing as Dinah was born as a result of Leah's righteousness--due to her concern for her sister Rachel Imeinu--how could such a mishap ensue from her going out like her mother?

The great luminary, the Chasam Sofer, senses this incongruity and here is an excerpt of what he writes in Toras Moshe (Vayishlach):

**“ברש”י** שהיתה יצאנית כמו לאה. חלילה וחלילה שיזכיר לאה הצדקת לגנאי, ויתלה הקלקלה במקולקלת, רחמנא ליצילן מהאי דעתא, אך נהפך כי אמרו חכמינו ז”ל (עירובין ק:), ותצא לאה ותאמר אלי תבוא [כי שכר שכרתיך, שבזכות זה זכתה להוליד את יששכר], ועל זה נאמר וישמע אלקים אל לאה ותלד את יששכר, באר התורה. שמע מינה כי שמע אלקים יציאת לאה לקדושה, בלי שום כוונה של הנאת עולם הזה ח”ו, לולי כן לא שייך וישמע אלקים אל לאה... אלא על כרחך מבואר ומפורסם שהיתה יציאה קודש לד’, וככה יציאת בתה לראות בכנות הארץ הבליהם ושטותיהם, והיא נפרדה ונבדלה מהן ולא עשתה כמעשיהם... וכך יצאה לראות ב’בנות הארץ ראשי תיבות ה”ל ורעות רוח שלהם”.

Rashi comments that she had an outgoing nature like Leah. G-d forbid that the he would mention the righteous Leah in a disparaging manner, blaming Dinah's misfortune on Leah. In fact, the opposite is true. The Almighty viewed Leah's going out as an act of kedushah, devoid of any intent to derive pleasure from Olam HaZeh, chas v'shalom. Otherwise, the Torah would not say: “And G-d hearkened to Leah” . . . Thus, we must conclude that her going out was sacred to Hashem. Similarly, her daughter's going out to check out the local girls, their nonsense and frivolities, was sacred to Hashem. She separated herself and distinguished herself from them; she did not act as they did . . . Therefore, the first letters of the words **לראות ב’בנות**

spell ה”ב—alluding to the fact that she recognized their foolishness and evil spirits.

Later on in his commentary, the Chasam Sofer explains why Dinah did not suspect or fear the people of Shechem:

**“ובאמת יש להאשימה בזה [שיצאה מביתה], כי פרצה קורא לגנב כפירש רש”י בפרשת תצא בפסוק (דברים כב-כג)... אך היא בטחה על כוחו של אותו זקן יעקב, דלא גרע מאברהם שבא מלאך אל פרעה ואבימלך ולא נתנה ליגע בה, וצריך לומר הא דלא נעשה לה נס, שלא היה שכם כדאי שיעשה נס על ידו והיה גרע מפרעה ואבימלך.”**

**In truth, she is blameworthy for leaving her house . . . however, she relied on the power of the elderly Yaakov. For he was not lesser than Avraham, for whom a malach appeared to Pharaoh and Avimelech, and did not allow them to touch his wife. We must conclude that the reason a miracle was not performed on her behalf was because Shechem was not worthy of being the cause of a miracle; he was less significant than Pharaoh and Avimelech.**

### **“יששכר חמור גרם”—A Donkey Caused His Birth**

Like a loyal servant grasping onto the coattails of the Chasam Sofer, I would like to explain why the passuk sees fit to compare Dinah's going out to Leah's going out: **ותצא דינה בת** “According to our blessed sages, this passuk insinuates that she had an outgoing, adventurous nature like her mother. Additionally, why didn't HKB”H perform a miracle on Dinah's behalf, to rescue her from Shechem ben Chamor's vile act—as He did on behalf of Sarah and Rivka in their encounters with Avimelech? Now, we have already introduced Rashi's comment that HKB”H assisted and intervened with the birth of Yissachar; however, Rashi does not specify the form this divine intervention took. The Siftei Chachamim, however, provides the following clarification:

**“והיאך סייעו, יש לומר שיעקב בא מן השדה ורוכב על החמור, והיה רוצה לרכוב באהל רחל, והקב”ה נתן דעה בחמור, והיה נוער כדי שתשמע לאה ותצא לקראתו, כדי שילך באהל לאה, וכן היה והלך שם באהל לאה, ובאותה לילה יצא מביניהם יששכר, וזהו מה שכתוב (שם מט-יד) יששכר חמור גרם, רצונו לומר היאך בא שנולד יששכר, חמור גרם, רצונו לומר שהחמור היה הגורם כדפירשנו.”**

**How did He (HKB”H) help him (Yaakov or Leah)? Let us suggest that Yaakov returned from the field and was riding on his donkey. He intended to go to Rachel's tent; but HKB”H influenced the donkey. It brayed so that Leah would hear it.**



Even though it is a mitzvah to study during the day and at night, it is only at night that a person acquires most of his wisdom. Therefore, a person who desires to merit the crown of Torah should be careful with all his nights, not wasting even one with sleep, eating, drinking, idle chatter, or the like. Rather, [they should be devoted to] the study of Torah and the words of wisdom. Our Sages declared: “The song of Torah can [be heard] only at night, as it states (Eichah 2:19): ‘Arise, sing out at night...’” Whoever occupies himself with Torah study at night will have a strand of divine favor extended over him during the day.

Accordingly, we can comprehend why HKB”H chose the donkey, whose nature is to bray during the first watch of the night, to arouse Yisrael to carry the heavy burden of the Torah on their shoulders. For, it is important to cry out the words of Torah not only during the day but at night, as well. In fact, we learned from the Rambam that a person acquires most of his Torah knowledge and wisdom from his nighttime Torah-study. Hence, it is written (Yehoshua 1, 8): “לא ימוש ספר התורה—this book of the Torah shall not depart from your mouth; rather you should contemplate it day and night.

### Crouching between the Boundaries Like a Donkey that Walks by Day and by Night

It appears that we can provide definitive proof for this interpretation from that very same berachah that Yaakov bestowed upon Yissachar prior to passing away (Bereishis 49, 14): “יששכר חמור גרם רובץ בין המשפתיים, וירא מנוחה כי טוב ואת הארץ: “Yissachar is a strong-boned donkey, crouching between the boundaries. And he saw a resting place, that it was good, and the land that it was pleasant, and he bent his shoulder to bear and he became an indentured laborer. Rashi comments: “Yissachar resembles a strong-boned donkey, who bears the yoke of Torah—like a strong donkey, which they load up with a heavy burden. Crouching between the boundaries: Like a donkey that walks by day and by night and has no lodging indoors; and when it wants to rest, it lies down between the limits, in the ‘techumim’ of the cities to which it transports merchandise.”

Here we find it stated explicitly that Yaakov Avinu compared Yissachar—the pillar of Torah—to a donkey, because he carries on his shoulders the heavy burden associated with the yoke of

the Torah: “Like a donkey that walks by day and by night.” This enlightens us as to why HKB”H orchestrated Yissachar’s conception in this manner. Yaakov returned from the field in the evening, during the first watch of the night, and Leah heard the braying of his donkey. These events served as a preparation for the birth of: “Yissachar, the strong-boned donkey”—who carries the burden associated with the yoke of Torah, both day and night, like a donkey.

It is precisely for this reason that Yaakov chose to praise Yissachar in this manner: “יששכר חמור גרם”. For, the donkey was instrumental in the birth of Yissachar; it brayed when Yaakov returned from the field, thereby alerting Leah. Yissachar learned from the donkey to carry the yoke of Torah on his shoulders by day and by night. Thus, we see him “crouching between the boundaries”— “like a donkey that walks by day and by night.”

### Dinah the Daughter of Leah Went Out to Free the Neshamah of Rabbi Akiva

In this manner, we can proceed to explain the incredible connection between Leah’s going out and her daughter Dinah’s going out, as implied by the words of the passuk: “ותצא דינה בת לאה”. Recall that Rashi explained in the name of the Midrash: “Because of her ‘going out,’ she is referred to as “the daughter of Leah”; for she too had an outgoing nature.” Let us present the revelation of the divine kabbalist Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropoli, hy”d, in Likutei Shoshanim. He writes incredible things concerning the fact that the spark (“nitzotz”) of Rabbi Akiva’s neshamah was concealed and sequestered away within the klipah of Shechem ben Chamor. Due to Dinah’s actions, resulting in the death of Shechem ben Chamor, the holy “nitzotz” of Rabbi Akiva was released from the grasps of the forces of tumah.

We shall begin with a fundamental principle gleaned from the immaculate teachings of the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh in parshas Vayechi (Bereishis 49, 9). He explains that as a result of the “cheit Eitz HaDa’at” many holy neshamos fell into the domain of tumah. Since then, it has been our task to find them, refine them and retrieve them by means of Torah and mitzvot. Occasionally, HKB”H arranges for the impure soul within which the holy “nitzotz” is concealed to yearn to attach itself to a pure soul. In this manner, the holy “nitzotz” can be extracted and returned to the domain of kedushah.

The holy Rabbi Shimshon teaches us that this is precisely what transpired with Shechem ben Chamor. Concealed within him was the holy “nitzotz” of the Tanna Rabbi Akiva. Due to the presence of that holy “nitzotz,” he yearned to unite with Dinah the daughter of Yaakov, the source of kedushah. When Shimon and Levi killed him, Rabbi Akiva’s holy “nitzotz” was released, enabling Yaakov Avinu to return it to the realm of kedushah.

He adds that HKB”H hinted this fact to Yaakov Avinu. After Shimon and Levi killed the inhabitants of Shechem (ibid. 35, 1): “וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹקִים אֶל יַעֲקֹב קוּם עֲלֵה בֵּית אֵל” — **G-d said to Yaakov, “Arise, go up to Beit El.”** Note that the first letters of these words spells out the name **עקיב**. In this manner, HKB”H relayed the message to Yaakov that everything that had transpired with Dinah and the inhabitants of Shechem was for the sake of the holy “nitzotz” of Rabbi Akiva. By killing Shechem and his people, the “nitzotz” of Rabbi Akiva was set free; HKB”H entrusted Yaakov to return it to the realm of kedushah.

Based on this understanding, the holy Rabbi Shimshon provides us with an interpretation of Rabbi Akiva’s cryptic message to his students (Pesachim 49b): “תניא אמר רבי עקיבא, מי יתן לי תלמיד חכם ואנשכנו כחמור” — **we learned in a Baraita: Rabbi Akiva said: When I was an “ahm ha’aretz” I said, “Who will give me a Torah scholar so that I might bite him like a donkey?”** He wished to reveal to them that his neshamah was sequestered away within the klipah of Shechem ben Chamor. Now, Shechem ben Chamor was part of the klipah of the donkey, of whom the Gemara says (Berachos 3a): “משמורה ראשונה חמור נוער” — **the sign for the first watch is the braying of the donkey.** Therefore, the Torah refers to him as Shechem the son of חמור, spelled without the letter “vav.” Spelled this way, it is an acronym for משמורה ראשונה חמור נוער — alluding to the fact that the first watch is identified by means of the donkey. This then was Rabbi Akiva’s message to his students: “**When I was an “ahm ha’aretz”**—in other words, when I was still confined within Shechem ben Chamor, who was an “ahm ha’aretz”; **“I said, ‘Who will give me a Torah scholar so that I might bite him like a donkey?’”** --because Shechem ben Chamor was part of the klipah of the donkey.

### Rabbi Akiva Was a Gilgul of Yissachar the Pillar of Torah

Now let us luxuriate in the wonders of the Torah. In the Arizal’s Sha’ar HaPesukim (Vayishlach) he teaches us that Rabbi Akiva was one of the ten martyrs who were put to death to

atone for the sin of “mechirat Yosef” —selling Yosef into slavery; in fact, he was the gilgul of Yissachar, the pillar of Torah. In this manner, he interprets Leah’s remark to Yaakov (Bereishis 30, 16): “אלי תבוא כי שכור שכרתיך בדודאי בני” — **It is with me that you must come for I have surely hired you with my son’s “dudaim.”** The words “שכור שכרתיך” emphasize that he was hired for a dual purpose—to release the neshamah of Yissachar, the pillar of Torah and to release the neshamah of Rabbi Akiva, a gilgul of Yissachar, with the help of Dinah.

A similar explanation is provided in the commentary Ohr Yakar on the Zohar hakadosh (Part 17; page 227a), authored by the divine kabbalist the Ramak, zy”a. He adds a wonderful chiddush. It was precisely for this reason that Rabbi Akiva was privileged to begin learning Torah at the age of forty. For, the passuk states explicitly (Divrei HaYamim I 12, 33): “ומבני יושכר יודעי בינה לעתים” — **from the sons of Yissachar, those with a profound understanding of the times.** And we have learned in the Mishnah (Avos 5, 21): “בן ארבעים לבינה” — **a forty-year-old attains understanding.** Therefore, Rabbi Akiva, a gilgul of Yissachar, merited the understanding of Torah at the age of forty.

Now, the connection between Yissachar—the pillar of Torah—and Rabbi Akiva is quite clear. Rabbi Akiva arranged all of Torah she’b’al peh for Yisrael, as the Gemara explains (Megillah 2a): “זו דברי רבי עקיבא סתימתאה” — **this is the opinion of Rabbi Akiva, the anonymous one.** Rashi provides the following clarification: “כל הסתומין תלמידיו היו, כדאמר בסנהדרין (דף פו.) סתם משנה רבי מאיר, סתם תוספתא רבי נחמיה, סתם ספרא רבי יהודה, סתם משנה רבי מאיר, סתם תוספתא רבי נחמיה, סתם ספרא רבי יהודה, וכולהו סתימתאי אליבא דרבי עקיבא” — **all of the rulings stated anonymously represent the opinions of his students, as it is recorded in Sanhedrin (86a): The anonymous Mishnah is Rabbi Meir; the anonymous Tosefta is Rabbi Nechemiah; the anonymous Sifra is Rabbi Yehudah. All of the anonymous rulings accord with Rabbi Akiva.** In other words, all of Torah she’b’al peh came to us from Rabbi Akiva; he arranged it and passed it on to his students.

So, once again let us luxuriate in the wonders of the Torah. HKB”H is presenting us with an allusion in the passuk: “והצא דינה בת לאה” — **Dinah, the daughter of Leah went out.** As we learned above, our blessed sages derive from these words the aphorism: “**Like mother like daughter**”; both Leah and Dinah had outgoing natures. As per our discussion, they are alluding

to the fact that normally the honor of a Jewish woman is inside the home, as it is written (Tehillim 45, 14): **“כל כבודה בת מלך—פנימה”**—**but the king’s daughter is all glorious within.** Yet, it was orchestrated from above: **“ותצא דינה”**—that Leah should abandon her private quarters in order to release the neshamah of Yissachar, the pillar of Torah, which was concealed in the domain of Lavan HaArami.

In similar fashion, like mother like daughter, it was orchestrated from above: **“ותצא דינה בת לאה”**—that Dinah also abandoned the quarters more befitting a princess in order to extract from Shechem ben Chamor the holy **“nitzotz”** of Rabbi Akiva. When the neshamah of Rabbi Akiva was finally released from the klipah of the donkey and returned to the domain of kedushah, it followed in the footsteps of Yissachar: **“יששכר חמור גרם”**. Rabbi Akiva learned from the donkey that brays during the first watch of the night that it is critical to engage in Torah-study day and night.

Thus, we see that the goings out of Leah and Dinah were both orchestrated from above in order to extract from the klipah the neshamos of Yissachar and Rabbi Akiva—two neshamos that are intimately related to one another. Just as Yissachar is the pillar of Torah and possesses a **“profound understanding of the times”**; so, too, Rabbi Akiva, a gilgul of Yissachar, arranged all of Torah she’b’al peh.

With the utmost respect and affection, I would like to add a valuable point of my own. Why in fact did HKB”H arrange for these two precious neshamos to be rescued in this manner—**“ותצא לאה”** and **“ותצא דינה”**? From an outsider’s point-of-view their behavior appears inappropriate for a proper, Jewish woman, whose glory and splendor is usually reserved for private quarters: **“כל כבודה בת מלך פנימה”**.

Let us begin by presenting an explanation from the Siftei Kohen (Vayeishev) as to why the neshamah of David HaMelech emerged from the union of Lot and his daughters rather than from a pure and holy union. He explains that when a very important neshamah is due to descend to Olam HaZeh, it triggers a great deal of protest in the heavens. Therefore, in order to fool and mislead those protestors, HKB”H introduces such a neshamah in a roundabout manner. It emerges from an unlikely or even objectionable source, which the objectors would not even consider.

Based on this notion, it is not far-fetched to suggest that this is why HKB”H arranged for Leah and Dinah to deviate from the normal, acceptable behavior of a Jewish woman. It was a ploy to mislead the external forces of tumah. For, it would not occur to them that Leah’s going out or Dinah’s going out would ultimately effect the rescue of the holy neshamos of Yissachar—the pillar of Torah--and Rabbi Akiva—the founder of Torah she’b’al peh--from the hands of the klipah.

This then is the significance of the passuk: **“ותצא דינה בת לאה”**. Rashi explained: **Because of her “going out,” she is referred to as “the daughter of Leah”; for she too had an outgoing nature, as it states: “And Leah went out to greet him.” Regarding her, they coined the saying, “Like mother like daughter.”** HKB”H arranged for Leah to defy the constraints of kedushah in order to penetrate the klipah and extract the holy neshamah of Yissachar. Upon seeing Leah leave the confines of her home, it did not occur to the forces of tumah that such an indecent act could lead to the birth of Yissachar. Similarly, Dinah’s unbecoming act was orchestrated from above in order to rescue the neshamah of Rabbi Akiva, the gilgul of Yissachar, that was concealed within Shechem ben Chamor. May Hashem enlighten us with His Torah!



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