Vayetze 5787

Leviticus 18:18

Do not take to wife a woman as a rival to her sister and uncover her nakedness in the other's lifetime.

Rashi on Leviticus 18:18

DURING HER LIFE-TIME — This teaches you that if he divorced her (his wife) he is not allowed to marry her sister so long as she (the former) is still living (Yevamot 8b).

Bavli Megillah 13b

When the wedding night arrived, and Laban planned to switch the sisters, Rachel said to herself: Now my sister will be embarassed, for Jacob will ask her for the signs and she will not know them. So she gave them to her. And this is as it is written: "And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah" (Genesis 29:25). Does this imply by inference that until now she was not Leah? Rather, due to the distinguishing signs that Rachel had given to Leah, he did not know until now, when it was light outside, that she was Leah. Therefore, Rachel merited that Saul should descend from her, due to her act of modesty in not revealing to Jacob that she had shown the signs to Leah.

Bavli Berachot 60a
Is a prayer in that case ineffective? Rav Yosef raises an objection based on a *baraita*: It is stated: "And afterwards she bore a daughter, and called her name Dina" (Genesis 30:21). The Gemara asks: What is meant by the addition of the word: Afterwards? What does the verse seek to convey by emphasizing that after the birth of Zebulun she gave birth to Dina? Rav said: After Leah passed judgment on herself and said: Twelve tribes are destined to descend from Jacob, six came from me and four from the maidservants, that is ten, and if this fetus is male, my sister Rachel will not even be the equivalent of one the maidservants; immediately the fetus was transformed into a daughter, as it is stated: And she called her name Dina; meaning she named her after her judgment [din]. The Gemara rejects this: One does not mention miraculous acts to teach general *halakha*.

Ramban on Genesis 26:5
The question presents itself: If it be the case [that the laws of the Torah were observed by our ancestors before the Torah was given on Sinai], how did Jacob erect a pillar and marry two sisters in their lifetime, and, in the opinion of our Rabbis, four sisters. Also, Amram [Moses'

father] married his aunt, and Moses our teacher erected twelve pillars. How then was it possible that they should be permissive in matters of Torah which Abraham their ancestor had prohibited on himself, and for which G-d appointed him reward, when he [Abraham] was wont *to command his children and his household after him* to walk in His ways? In the case of Jacob the Sages taught that he observed the Sabbath and established borders for Sabbath distances. In this matter of the Sabbath it is possible though that Jacob observed it because it is equal in importance to the entire Torah since it testifies to the act of Creation.

Ramban on Leviticus 18:25

And G-d, *by Whom* alone *actions are weighed*, [brought it about] that Rachel died on the way when they started coming into the Land, for on account of her own merit she did not die outside the Land, and for Jacob's merit, he could not dwell in the Land with two sisters [in their lifetime, since this is forbidden in the Torah, and the laws of the Torah were observed by our ancestors in the Land of Israel even before the Torah was given on Sinai], and she [Rachel] was the one by whose marriage the prohibition against two sisters took effect [since Jacob was already married to Leah].

Lamentations Rabbah, Petichta 24

At that moment, Rachel our matriarch interjected before the Holy One blessed be He and said: 'Master of the universe, it is revealed before You that Your servant Jacob loved me abundantly and worked for my father seven years for me. When those seven years were completed and the time for my marriage to my husband arrived, my father plotted to exchange me with my sister for my husband. The matter was extremely difficult for me when I became aware of that plot, and I informed my husband and gave him a signal to distinguish between my sister and me so that my father would be unable to exchange me. Afterward, I regretted what I had done and suppressed my desire. I had mercy on my sister, so that she would not be led to humiliation. In the evening they exchanged me with my sister for my husband, and I transmitted to my sister all the signals that I had given to my husband, so that he would think that she is Rachel. Moreover, I entered beneath the bed on which he was lying with my sister. He would speak with her and she would be silent, and I would respond to each and every matter that he said, so that he would not identify my sister's voice. I performed an act of kindness for her, I was not jealous of her, and I did not lead her to humiliation. If I, who is flesh and blood, was not jealous of my rival, and I did not lead her to humiliation and shame, You who are a living and eternal merciful King, why were You jealous of idol worship that has no substance, and You exiled my descendants, and they were killed by sword, and the enemies did to them as they pleased?' Immediately, the mercy of the Holy One blessed be He was aroused and He said: 'For you, Rachel, I will restore Israel to its place.'

Ruth 4:11

All the people at the gate and the elders answered, "We are. May GOD make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built up the House of Israel! Prosper in Ephrathah and perpetuate your name in Bethlehem!