



Bet Horaah

בית הוראה

Shaare Ezra

שערי עזרא

Parshat Vayetzei
Zmanim for New York:
Candle Lighting: 4:11pm
Shabbat ends: 5:14pm
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RESPECTING OUR WIVES: HONORING OURSELVES
 WRITTEN BY **RABBI SHAY TAHAN**
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One of the most well-known examples of deception in the Torah is Lavan's betrayal of Yaakov during his marriage arrangements. After Yaakov worked for seven years to marry Rachel, the woman he loved, Lavan tricked him by substituting Leah for Rachel on the wedding night. Yaakov, unaware of the switch until the next morning, was shocked and confronted Lavan about this betrayal. In response, Lavan claimed it was customary in their region not to marry off the younger daughter before the elder. This forced Yaakov into an agreement to work an additional seven years to marry Rachel.



Rachel was given to Yaakov immediately after the seven-day *sheva brachot* period for Leah, under a new agreement that Yaakov would work for Lavan for another seven years. During this time, Yaakov had every justification to work less diligently or to reduce the quality of his efforts, as he had been cheated into this arrangement. However, Rashi (29; 30) explains that Yaakov worked the additional seven years with the same integrity and dedication as he had during the first seven years.

Why did he do this? One might argue it was due to Yaakov's inherent honesty. However, another comment by Rashi (29; 12) suggests that from the moment Yaakov met Lavan, he hinted that he was well aware of Lavan's deceitful nature and capable of being equally tricky if necessary. Yaakov essentially warned Lavan that any attempt to cheat him would be met with equal cunning. Despite this, Yaakov chose to maintain his integrity, showing his commitment to his values even in the face of Lavan's treachery, why did he do this?

Before attempting to answer this question, let us first examine how Yaakov's grandfather, Avraham Avinu, dealt with Efron when purchasing a burial place for his wife, Sarah.

Avraham approached Efron to purchase the Cave of Machpelah as a burial place for Sarah. Although Efron initially offered the land for free, he subtly insisted on

an exorbitant price of 400 silver shekels. Avraham had the opportunity to accept the land for free or negotiate a fairer price, as is customary in real estate transactions. However, he chose not to bargain and allowed Efron to take advantage of him, paying the inflated price without objection.

We can suggest that although Avraham Avinu could have negotiated a better price, he insisted on paying the high price to honor his wife, Sarah. Even though she was no longer alive, Avraham wanted to show her the utmost respect. The honor of one's wife is not only for her but also reflects on the husband, their children, and the entire family. Avraham understood this deeply and refused to compromise Sarah's dignity by bargaining. Through this act, Avraham taught us the importance of our matriarch Sarah and reminded us to always hold her in the highest regard. He also demonstrated the value of respecting one's wife, as doing so elevates not only her but also oneself and one's entire family.

The same reasoning applies to Yaakov. He could have worked less diligently and produced less, as Lavan's deceit might have justified such behavior. However, Yaakov chose to work with all his might and deliver the highest quality of work. Why did he do this? The answer lies in the fact that this labor was part of the payment for his marriage to his wife. Yaakov refused to compromise, as doing so would diminish the respect and honor he held for his wife. One does not bargain when it comes to the dignity and respect of his wife. Bargaining is for the flea market, not for matters of such profound significance.

But this attitude was not only how Yaakov felt about his wives; it was a mutual feeling that worked both ways. Leah and Rachel also held their husband in high regard. We see this in many clear instances, such as the names they gave their children. For example, Leah named her firstborn Reuven, saying, "Since Hashem has seen my affliction, now my husband

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will love me." This shows that her main concern was how her husband felt, highlighting her deep respect and longing for his affection. Another example is when Rachel asks for the *dudaim* that Reuven brought to his mother, Leah. These *dudaim* were clearly not ordinary plants; they were believed to have significant spiritual power. Some suggest that they had the ability to cure infertility, which Rachel desperately needed. Leah, understanding this, was willing to surrender them to Rachel in exchange for more time with Yaakov. This shows how much Leah valued the time spent with her husband,

willing to make a sacrifice for it.

This highlights an important lesson in a generation where men are often ridiculed, such as in media that depicts them in degrading ways, or advertisements showing them as clumsy, bumping into walls, or speaking nonsense. These portrayals are part of the larger, troubling movements emerging worldwide. In contrast, the Torah's outlook emphasizes that men should be highly respected. The same lesson applies here: just as a wife respects her husband, that respect will return to her, much like a boomerang.

UNDERSTANDING THE HUDNA: TEMPORARY TRUCE OR STRATEGIC MANIPULATION?

As the cease-fire between Israel and Hezbollah begins, it is an opportune moment to reflect on how the Jewish people understand the concept of a cease-fire and, more broadly, a peace treaty, in contrast to how it is viewed in Islamic thought. While both sides may appear to use similar terminology, their underlying interpretations and intentions often differ significantly.

Jewish law obligates us to honor treaties as long as the other party does not violate their terms. This principle is rooted in the Torah's ethical framework, emphasizing the sanctity of agreements, especially when they involve oaths or promises made in Hashem's name.

The covenant between Yaakov and Lavan is described at the end of our parasha (Vayetze), where they agree to maintain a peaceful boundary between their descendants as a symbol of mutual peace. This pact included erecting a mound (gal) and a pillar (matzeivah) as witnesses to their agreement. Lavan invokes the name of his gods, while Yaakov calls upon Hashem.



Bilaam violated the oath

However, the covenant was not upheld. Several events in later Jewish history can be seen as Lavan breaking it:

Midrash Tanchuma (Vayetze, Siman 13) tells us that Bilaam was a descendant of Lavan and crossed the mound that Yaakov and Lavan had erected in order to harm the Jewish people. Bilaam's foot was pressed against the wall. The wall referred to here is the mound of Yaakov and Lavan, as Bilaam violated the oath he swore to Yaakov, which stated, "If you pass over this mound and this pillar for evil" (Bereishit 31:52). He was punished by the wall because it was a witness to the oath, as it says, "The hand of the witnesses shall be first upon him" (Devarim 17).

The Example of the Gibeonites

One notable instance is the treaty made with the Gibeonites during the time of Yehoshua. The Gibeonites, part of the Canaanite nations, deceived the Israelites by pretending to be distant travelers seeking peace. Despite their deception, Yehoshua and the leaders of Israel swore an oath by Hashem to protect them (**Yehoshua 9**). When the truth of their origins was revealed, the Israelites honored the treaty but placed the Gibeonites in servitude as woodcutters and water carriers for the altar. This event demonstrates the binding nature of a treaty, even under less-than-ideal circumstances.

The Principle in Jewish Law

Numerous instances in the Tanach illustrate how peace treaties were approached and upheld, reflecting the importance of integrity and justice in such agreements:

- Violating a treaty unilaterally is seen as a *chilul Hashem* (desecration of God's name), as it undermines trust and reflects poorly on the Jewish people's commitment to divine ethics. A reflection to this concept occurred during the time of Moshe Rabbeinu when the Kenites deceived him (Rashi Devarim 29, 10), presenting themselves as a people from a distant land seeking to convert and align themselves with Israel.

Although Moshe was initially misled and had the opportunity to dismiss the Kenites, he chose not to do so and respected the treaty. Despite the deception, Moshe upheld the agreement, demonstrating the importance of honoring covenants even when the terms were based on a false premise.

In Shmuel (II 21:1-14), a famine struck Israel during the reign of King David, lasting for three years. David sought guidance from Hashem, who revealed that the famine was a punishment for Shaul's actions against the Gibeonites, which violated the sacred oath made by Yehoshua and the leaders of Israel.

To atone for this sin, David asked the Gibeonites how they could be appeased. They requested the execution of seven of Shaul's male descendants. David agreed, sparing Mephibosheth, the son of Yonatan, due to his covenant with Yonatan, but delivering other descendants to the Gibeonites. This act restored justice and ended the famine.

These examples from the Tanach and Jewish tradition emphasize the enduring value of integrity, justice, and faithfulness in maintaining treaties. They also highlight the profound difference between agreements based purely on pragmatism and those rooted in divine ethical standards.

Now, let's reflect on how Hezbollah would view a cease-fire and understand why it often fails to hold.

Treaty of Hodaybiyyah

In Islam the concept of a **hudna** (cease-fire) refers to a temporary truce or cessation of hostilities between warring parties.

The term **hudna** is rooted in early Islamic history. A notable example is the **Treaty of Hodaybiyyah** (628 CE), a 10-year truce negotiated between Muhammad and the Jewish people in the town of Quraysh in Mecca. Although the treaty was meant to be non-

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ored for ten years, it was violated two years later by Muhammad, who took advantage of the Jewish men leaving town for business, believing they were safe from attack due to the hudna treaty. As they traveled, they passed by the area where Muhammad was dwelling and exchanged greetings with him in passing, unaware of his intentions to conquer Mecca.

As soon as the opportunity arose, Muhammad's army stormed the city, slaughtered the children, and took the women as slaves. Muslims learn from this that as long as the enemy is strong, they should maintain "peace" with them. However, when an opportunity arises and the merciful Allah grants them the ability to defeat the enemy, they are permitted to break the cease-fire. This historical event underscores the provisional and tactical nature of a **hudna** in Islamic thought.

A similar example can be found in the story of Egyptian President

Anwar Sadat. It is said that he asked Muslim clergy scholars whether he was allowed to enter into a peace treaty with the Jews, who are considered "kāfir" (infidels). They answered that just as Muhammad made the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah, so too he was permitted to do so. This implies that a peace treaty holds until the enemy weakens, at which point it should be broken.

One may ask about the story of Dinah, which we will read in next week's parasha: how could the brothers make a treaty with the city of Shechem and then proceed to kill all its inhabitants? Were they not obligated to keep their word? The answer is clear: in the case of Dinah, she had been kidnapped and violated. The brothers were compelled to do whatever was necessary to save her and bring her back home. Deception, in the face of the grave danger their sister was in, was justified to ensure her rescue.

CEASEFIRE AFTERTHOUGHTS

Throughout the wars with the Arab neighbors, it almost always ended with an agreement for a ceasefire where both parties agreed to certain terms. Nonetheless, the ceasefire has always been broken by the Arab neighbors. For example, there have been so many instances where Israel and the Islamic Jihad militant group in the Gaza Strip agreed to an Egyptian-brokered ceasefire, seeking to the intense fighting. The text usually reads as follows: In light of the agreement of the Palestinian and the Israeli side, Egypt announces a ceasefire between the Palestinian and the Israeli sides. The two sides will abide by the ceasefire which will include an end to targeting civilians, house demolitions, and an end to targeting individuals immediately, when the ceasefire goes into effect.

A question arises here of whether when a treaty is signed between two parties, there is a Halachic obligation to keep your side of the agreement, or is it just a temporary agreement meant to give us quiet until we see it fit to break for any interest which we might have?

Let's dwell into some of the treaties found in Tanach between the Jewish Nation and the gentiles to learn about this topic. There are several treaties that can teach us the extent of how far we need to go in order to keep our words, and on the other hand when may we break the treaty.

Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer (פרקי לז) brings few treaties of the Avot: Avraham Avinu made a treaty with the Yevusites when he needed them. In return they asked for a treaty that when the Nation of Israel would concur the land of Canaan they would not take possession of the cities of Yevus. What did the men of Yevus do? They made images of copper, and set them up in the street of the city, and wrote upon them the covenant of the oath of Avraham. When the Israelites came to the land of Canaan, they wished to enter the city of the Yevusites, but they were not able to enter, because of the sign of the covenant of Abraham's oath.

Later when King David reigned he wished to enter the city of Yevus, but they didn't allow him because of the covenant.

At the time of Yehoshua, the people of Givon heard that which Yehoshua did to Yericho and Aiy, and they decided to enter a treaty with the Jewish people under false representations and circumstances. They made themselves appear like messengers that had traveled from a far land taking with them worn-out saddles for their donkeys and tattered leather canteens for their wine, with

cracks and patches over them. They wore ragged shoes containing different color, worn-out garments.

The Jewish people believed the Givonites and the leaders of the congregation swore to them.

Three days after the peace treaty was made the Jewish people discovered the true origin of their "peace partners", and that they were not from a distant land at all, but from very close—from within Israel! This posed a problem as the Jewish nation at the time were not supposed to accept anyone from the nearby neighboring nations. The Gemara (גיטין מו, א) explains that the Jewish people had the right to kill the Givonites because they misled them, which means that the treaty is invalid. Still, the Jews kept their word for the sake of Kiddush Hashem.

Another treaty was after Yaakov left his father in-law Lavan's house and Lavan chased after him.

After an exchange of words between them, they proposed a treaty, and raised a stone monument as witness to the treaty. The treaty between them was that Yaakov's children would not take possession of the land of Edom, while Lavan's children will not cross the monument towards the land of Yaakov.

From those examples and many more, we learn that whenever the Jewish people make a treaty with other nations it must be kept. Therefore a ceasefire should be respected once agreed upon.

The reason for protecting the treaty is either because of the obligation to keep our word as the pasuk says: (והיין צדק יהיה) ויקרא יט, לו "והיין צדק יהיה" (בבא מציעא מט, א: הן שלך צדק) and the gemara learned (ל"לכם) because of Chilul Hashem, as we learn from this last incident. But we also find that whenever an agreement is broken by others, we aren't obligated to keep it anymore. We mentioned above the treaty between Yaakov and Lavan. Chazal say that Bilam violated the treaty when he went passing that monument in order to curse our nation.

The Midrash (תנחומא דברים ג) tells us that in King David's time, our nation wanted to fight a war against Aram, but the people of Aram reminded them of Lavan and Yaakov's treaty. They also mentioned that they are the

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descendants of Lavan. Then King David rose before the Sanhedrin and explained that Bilaam (who was also from Aram) had already violated and broke the treaty, and therefore they didn't have an obligation to keep it. Immediately, the Sanhedrin declared a war and the army of David conquered Aram's land.

From the above we learn that whenever we agree to ceasefire we must keep our words and promises; but as soon as the other side violates it, we aren't obligated to keep it any more.

This idea is also well based in Halacha (שולחן ערוך יו"ד סימן רלו ס"ו), which states that if two people have made an agreement with an oath to do something and one of the two violated his side, then the other is also exempt.

Another treaty which is very famous and a source of bitter argument between different sects in the Jewish nation is what are known as the "3 Oaths" (כתובות קיא, א).

Two of these oaths concern the Jewish people, while the remaining oath concerns the other nations. The Jews were bound by oath not to forcefully repossess the Land of Israel or rebel against other nations. In contrast, the other nations were sworn not to oppress the Jews excessively.

It is well known that the Satmar Rav, Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum, held that the three oaths stand in their original place and must be kept. Thus, he was very opposed to the creation of the Jewish state as it violates the first two oaths: not to rebel against the nations and not

to forcefully reclaim the Land of Israel. He wrote a book explaining his views, which became the guide for his followers.

On the other hand, many others held that the creation of the Jewish state is permitted. Some argued (אבני נזר סימן תנו) that they received permission from the UN, so it is not considered rebelling against the nations (which the Satmar Rav disagreed with, believing that the UN has no right, but rather those who inhabit the Land of Israel, such as the Arabs). Others permitted it by claiming that the oath lasts only a thousand years, and since it has been longer than that, it has expired (רבינו חיים ויטאל בהקדמה לעץ חיים).

There are those who said that the Gemara mentioning the oaths is not Halacha but merely Aggadah (אבני נזר סימן תנד).

However, there is also another opinion which held that the oaths are like a treaty that each side must fulfill. Since the third oath obligated the nations not to oppress the Jews excessively, but they didn't keep it, as we know from the horrific and devastating exile, therefore the Jewish nation is exempt from fulfilling it.

We once again see that although we must keep to our side of the treaty, once the other side violates it, it is canceled for us as well. Needless to say, the terrorists have a long history of breaking promises, and the ceasefire that was agreed upon is usually not binding in any way or form. Thus, if the Jewish people see fit to continue the fight in any way or start a new war, they have the right to do so.

כיוור הנמצא בבתי הארחה שנועד בעיקרו לשטיפת כלים המלוכלים

מותר לשטוף כלים בכיוור בית הארחה, אך לא ירחץ במים בחום של יד סולדת. לפגום באופן שהכלים נוגעים בכיוור, וכן לא ישאיר את הכלים במים בכיוור למשך זמן של 24 שעות.

זה כשמו כן הוא גורם ליד לסלוד מחומו ואי אפשר להשאיר את הידים במים אלו לזמן ממושך, ולכן השופף כלים אינו שוטף בחום של יד סולדת, ומים שחומם פחות מיד סולדת אין בכוחם לאסור, ולכן הכיוור לא נאסר. זאת ועוד שאף אם השתמשו בכיוור בחום של יד סולדת לשטוף כלים אסורים, אף על פי כן אין לאסור מכיוון שסתם כלי העובדי כוכבים אינם בני יומן, ואף שאסרו חז"ל להשתמש בכלים שאינם בני יומן אטו בני יומן, זהו אם מבשלים בהם מאכלים ולא אם רק שוטפים כלים בכיוור על מנת לנקותם.

אמנם עדיין ישנו חשש שמא השאירו בכיוור נזולים שאינם כשרים במשך זמן של מעת לעת שאז הכיוור נאסר מחמת כבוש (יו"ד סימן קה ס"א), ולכן לכתחילה לא ישטוף כליו במים חמים בחום של יד סולדת באופן שהכלים נוגעים בכיוור, וכן לא ישאיר כלים בכיוור בתוך מים לאורך זמן ואף שהכיוור ודאי אינו בני יומן, אף על פי כן יזהר לכתחילה.



כיוור הנמצא בבתי הארחה שנועד בעיקרו לשטיפת כלים המלוכלים, והאחרים ששהו בבית זה בודאי שטפו בכיוור כלים המלוכלים במאכלות אסורות אינו נאסר, וזאת מכיוון שהדרך להשתמש לשטיפת כלים עם סבון, וכבר פסק השולחן ערוך (יו"ד סי' צה ס"ד) שאם נתנו אפר במים החמין שביוורה קודם שהניחו הקדירות בתוכה אע"פ שהשומן דבוק בהם מותר, והטעם הוא שאותו האפר פוגם את טעם האיסור. וכתב הט"ז (סי"ק טו) שכן הוא בבורית, ואף שלמעשה הט"ז וכן הש"ך (סי"ק כא) פסקו בעיקר דינו של השולחן ערוך וסברו דאין האפר פוגם, והניחו דבריו בצ"ע, אולם כבר כתבו הרבה פוסקים להקל בזה פסק הש"ע, ובכללם בתשובת חכם צבי (סי' קא) ובחכמת אדם ובערוך השלחן. ובכה"ח (סי"ק נו) הביא פוסקים המקילים ליתן עפר במים לכתחילה על מנת

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