

A TALE OF TWO WIVES

by Rabbi Yissocher Frand

Parshas Bereishis

A Tale Of Two Wives

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 828, The Baal Teshuva and Pirya Ve'Rivya. Good Shabbos!

The Torah states: "And Lemch took for himself two wives (Vayikach lo Lemech shtei nashim) the name of one was Adah and the name of the second was Tzeelah" [Bereshis 4:19]. The word "lo" (for himself) seems superfluous in this pasuk. I saw this issue raised in the Sefer Pri Dovid from Rabbi Dovid Friedman of Montreal. He suggests the following approach:

Rashi comments that the custom of the generation preceding the Flood was to have two wives -- one was designated as the wife to become pregnant and raise a family with, the other was reserved for non-procreative sexual pleasure. Rashi elaborates that the wife set aside for physical gratification would be given a potion which would make her sterile. She would be given a diet and make-up designed to keep her looking young and beautiful. The other would be neglected. This is the practice that Lemech himself adopted and this is why the pasuk writes "Lemech took FOR HIMSELF" -- emphasizing this inclination to satisfy his own needs for physical gratification.

This is akin to a similar insight on the pasuk in Ki Seitzei introducing the laws of divorce: "When a man takes a wife and has relations with her (ki Yikach ish isha u'ba-a-lah)... [Devorim 24:1]" This is a rather blunt way of talking! The lesson to be learned from the way the Torah writes this is that when a man marries a woman and his first thought is about physical relations, this does not bode well for their marriage and we can well understand why it is that such a marriage will end in divorce. When a person enters into marriage only thinking about himself and his own physical needs, such a marriage is not destined to last.

Lemech's wife for procreation, Adah, had two sons. The first one's name was Yaval. He began the profession of raising cattle. He was basically a large scale herdsman. His brother's name was Yuval. He invented musical instruments. Both children of Adah had honorable professions -- one was a shepherd and one manufactured instruments. It turns out that the second wife, Tzeelah, also had a

son. He was called Tuval Kayin. We went into the weapons business. He was basically the first gun manufacturer. His name indicates he wanted to improve on Kayin's work. Kayin was the first murderer. Tuval Kayin was going to improve on Kayin's work and manufactured weapons to make killing easier and more efficient!

Kli Yakar makes the comment that Adah's children had honorable professions because the marriage was based on noble purposes -- procreation. On the other hand, the offspring from Tzeelah, who Lemech married for more selfish, less noble, motives, went into a profession that brought further pain and suffering into the world.

The Inevitable Shock of Death

After Adam ate from the Tree of Knowledge, HaShem told him he would "return to the earth". In other words, now that he violated HaShem's commandment, he would be mortal and would eventually die. Despite the fact that we are all aware of the inevitability in life that we all die, the universal reaction when someone dies is one of shock. People age, they become infirm, they get sick. But when the moment of death happens, it is always a shock. Why is this?

The Ramban in his Toras HaAdam says a profound idea. When Adam was first created, he was created so that he should live forever. His persona encompassed all the human beings that would eventually be born in this world. Part of every human being in the world today is a remnant of that first man who was created by G-d. Therefore, part of us -- deep down within our psyche -- has the attitude "I am going to live forever." Therefore, when a person dies, as inevitable as that fact is, there is shock and surprise. This phenomenon contradicts that part of each person in humanity who thinks "I will live forever" based on the way Adam was originally created.

This write-up was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tape series on the weekly Torah portion. The complete list of halachic topics covered in this series for this Parsha are provided below:

- 026 Adoption: Problems and Solutions
- 068 Artificial Insemination
- 117 Inducing Labor: A Viable Option?
- 164 Weddings in Shuls: Is There a Problem?
- 210 Is Marriage a Mitzvah?
- 300 A Mamzer's Obligation in Mitzvos
- 254 Truth Telling and Shidduchim
- 344 Marriage and the Birchas Airusin

- 388 The "Kedushai Ketanah" Controversy
 - 432 Choices in Marriage Partners
 - 476 Melacha of Planting
 - 520 Kavod and Oneg Shabbos
 - 564 You and Your Wife - Ishto Kegufu
 - 608 The Tefilah of Modeh Ani
 - 652 The Tefilah of Asher Yatzar
 - 696 The Bracha on the Havdala Candle
 - 740 When Exactly Does Shabbos Start?
 - 784 The Beautiful Essrog - How Much More?
 - 828 The Baal Teshuva and Pirya Ve'Rivya
 - 872 Marrying Someone With The Same Name As Your Mother
 - 916 Not Having Children?
 - 959 The Case of the Mixed Up Wedding Ring
 - 1003 The Case of the Missing Shabbos Bathroom Tissue
 - 1047 Mogen Avos on Friday Night - When and Why?
 - 1090 The Bracha On The Havdalah Candle
 - 1133 The Bracha of Elokai Neshama She'Naasaata Be
-

RavFrاند, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Yissocher Frand and Torah.org.