

## Getting Your Affairs in Order: Must the Older Child Marry First?

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Parshas Vayeitzei

Highlights of a shiur by Rav Chaim Weg

Was Lavan right?

וַיֹּאמֶר לָבָן לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה כֵן בְּמִקְוֵמֵנוּ לָתֵת הַצְעִירָה לִפְנֵי הַבְּכִירָה.

Lavan said, "It is not done in our place to give the younger before the older."

(Beraishis 29:26)

Many sources suggest that the fact that the Torah records Lavan's argument for posterity indicates that it is true that an older sibling should be married first.

The Or Hachaim, for example, offers a detailed explanation for Lavan's argument—taking it seriously—and Yaakov's counterargument. However, he does not treat the principle as an actual prohibition to marry out of sequence.

Tosfos in Kidushin 52a, in a case where a father accepted *kidushin* on behalf of his unspecified daughter, similarly suggests that we assume, based on Lavan's rule, that the older daughter was intended.

Igros Moshe (E.H. 2:1) proves definitively from a Gemara in Kidushin 64 that there is no actual *issur*, only a *hanhaga tova*.

Where both siblings are engaged, writes R' Moshe, the younger sibling should wait his turn to get married. However, if the objecting older sibling is unmarried and unengaged, the younger one need not delay marriage on this account. (This is especially true of a boy, who is bound by the mitzva of *peru urevu*.)

The Maharsham (3:136) and Minchas Yitzchak (8:125) similarly write that this is a matter not of *din* but of *hanhaga tova*, and there is no need to wait when the older child isn't marrying imminently.