



Vayetze – He Went Out 28:10-32:3

Haftorah – Hosea 12:13-14:10

B'rit Hadashah- John 1:43-51

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Birth Wars – 12 Tribes Born

Overview:

Jacob leaves his hometown of Beersheba and journeys to Charan. On the way, he encounters “the place” and sleeps there, dreaming of a ladder connecting heaven and earth, with angels climbing and descending on it; G-d appears and promises that the land upon which he lies will be given to his descendants. In the morning, Jacob raises the stone on which he laid his head as an altar and monument, pledging that it will be made the house of G-d.

In Haran, Jacob stays with and works for his uncle Laban, tending Laban’s sheep. Laban agrees to give him his younger daughter, Rachel—whom Jacob loves—in marriage, in return for seven years’ labor. But on the wedding night, Laban gives him his elder daughter, Leah, instead—a deception Jacob discovers only in the morning. Jacob marries Rachel, too, a week later, after agreeing to work another seven years for Laban.

Leah gives birth to six sons—Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun—and a daughter, Dinah, while Rachel remains barren. Rachel gives Jacob her handmaid, Bilhah, as a wife to bear children in her stead, and two more sons, Dan and Naphtali, are born. Leah does the same with her handmaid, Zilpah, who gives birth to Gad and Asher. Finally, Rachel’s prayers are answered and she gives birth to Joseph.

Jacob has now been in Charan for fourteen years, and wishes to return home. But Laban persuades him to remain, now offering him sheep in return for his labor. Jacob prospers, despite Laban’s repeated attempts to swindle him. After six years, Jacob leaves Charan in stealth, fearing that Laban would prevent him from leaving with the family and property for which he labored. Laban pursues Jacob, but is warned by G-d in a dream not to harm him. Laban and Jacob make a pact on Mount Gal-Ed, attested to by a pile of stones, and Jacob proceeds to the Holy Land, where he is met by angels.¹

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Leah and Rachel and the Birthing of the 12 Tribes

A Tale of 2 Sisters – Genesis 28:1-30:25

Rachel –Beautiful, Loved, Barren (for a season), Birthed Joseph, Died giving birth to Benjamin

Rachel (Hebrew: רָחֵל, Modern Rakhél) (The name "Rachel "is from an unused root meaning: "to journey as a ewe that is a good traveler."^{[2][3]})

Leah-Plain, Not Loved, Fruitful, Birthed Judah

Leah (Hebrew: לֵאָה, Modern Le'a, Akkadian for cow^{[1][2][3]}) probably in reference to her eyes.

We see from Scriptures that Jacob loved Rachel and wanted her in the first place. However, her brother Laban tricked Jacob and at the wedding made a switch giving him Leah instead. I always felt bad for Leah, she was given to a man who she knew didn't love her and I am sure felt rejection knowing that he was truly in love with his sister. Jacob loved Leah, but not in the way he loved and desired Rachel.

Gen 29:18 And Jacob loved Rachel; and he said: 'I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter.'

Gen 29:19 And Laban said: 'It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man; abide with me.'

Gen 29:20 And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her.

Gen 29:21 And Jacob said unto Laban: 'Give me my wife, for my days are filled, that I may go in unto her.'

Gen 29:22 And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast.

Gen 29:23 And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her.

Gen 29:24 And Laban gave Zilpah his handmaid unto his daughter Leah for a handmaid.

Gen 29:25 And it came to pass in the morning that, behold, it was Leah; and he said to Laban: 'What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?'

Gen 29:26 And Laban said: 'It is not so done in our place, to give the younger before the first-born.

Gen 29:27 Fulfil the week of this one, and we will give thee the other also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years.'

Gen 29:28 And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week; and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife.

Gen 29:29 And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his handmaid to be her handmaid.

Gen 29:30 And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years

It also must have been heartbreaking for Rachel as well that on the day she was suppose to be wed to Jacob, her sister is the bride instead! Not a good situation for either of the sisters and I am sure there was a lot of tension as well between them as we see in the following verses.

Also this situation does not help to promote sisterly love! We see the sisters competing for Jacobs attention and love via child birth.

Chaya Shuchat makes this observaton “They were sisters but also rivals—married to the same man, competing for his affection and for the privilege of bearing his children.

At first **At first glance, Leah seems like the underdog** glance, Leah seems like the underdog in this scenario. Leah is described in the Torah as having “weak eyes”¹—eyes weakened by weeping. Throughout her youth, people would say, “Laban has two daughters and his sister Rebecca has two sons. The older daughter, Leah, will marry the older son, Esau, and Rachel, the younger one, will marry Jacob.”² Leah does not want to marry the wicked Esau, and she prays endlessly to be spared this fate. But although she merits to marry Jacob, it is Rachel whom Jacob loves and desires. Leah is the unwanted wife, thrust upon Jacob against his will. And, apparently, she never ceases to feel this way. With the birth of each of her children, she expresses the hope that finally, this time, her husband will love her.

But Rachel is no less deserving of sympathy. While Leah is giving birth to child after child, Rachel remains childless. When she finally expresses her bitterness to Jacob, saying, “Give me children! If not, I am dead, his response is less than sympathetic. He gets angry and says, “Am I instead of G-d, Who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?”²

Gen 29:31 And the LORD saw that Leah was hated, and he opened her womb; but Rachel was barren.

Gen 29:32 And Leah conceived, and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben; for she said: 'Because the LORD hath looked upon my affliction; for now my husband will love me.'

Gen 29:33 And she conceived again, and bore a son; and said: 'Because the LORD hath heard that I am hated, He hath therefore given me this son also.' And she called his name Simeon.

² Chaya Shuchat is the author of *A Diamond a Day*, an adaptation of the chassidic classic *Hayom Yom* for children, as well as many articles on the interface between Chassidism and contemporary life.

Gen 29:34 And she conceived again, and bore a son; and said: 'Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have borne him three sons.' Therefore was his name called Levi.

Gen 29:35 And she conceived again, and bore a son; and she said: 'This time will I praise the LORD.' Therefore she called his name Judah; and she left off bearing.

Gen 30:1 And when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and she said unto Jacob: 'Give me children, or else I die.'

Gen 30:2 And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel; and he said: 'Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?'

Gen 30:3 And she said: 'Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; that she may bear upon my knees, and I also may be builded up through her.'

Gen 30:4 And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid to wife; and Jacob went in unto her.

Gen 30:5 And Bilhah conceived, and bore Jacob a son.

Gen 30:6 And Rachel said: 'God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son.' Therefore called she his name Dan.

Gen 30:7 And Bilhah Rachel's handmaid conceived again, and bore Jacob a second son.

Gen 30:8 And Rachel said: 'With mighty wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and have prevailed.' And she called his name Naphtali.

Gen 30:9 When Leah saw that she had left off bearing, she took Zilpah her handmaid, and gave her to Jacob to wife.

Gen 30:10 And Zilpah Leah's handmaid bore Jacob a son.

Gen 30:11 And Leah said: 'Fortune is come!' And she called his name Gad.

Gen 30:12 And Zilpah Leah's handmaid bore Jacob a second son.

Gen 30:13 And Leah said: 'Happy am I! for the daughters will call me happy.' And she called his name Asher.

Gen 30:14 And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them unto his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah: 'Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes.'

Gen 30:15 And she said unto her: 'Is it a small matter that thou hast taken away my husband? and wouldest thou take away my son's mandrakes also?' And Rachel said: 'Therefore he shall lie with thee to-night for thy son's mandrakes.'

Gen 30:16 And Jacob came from the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said: 'Thou must come in unto me; for I have surely hired thee with my son's mandrakes.' And he lay with her that night.

Gen 30:17 And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bore Jacob a fifth son.

Gen 30:18 And Leah said: 'God hath given me my hire, because I gave my handmaid to my husband. And she called his name Issachar.

Gen 30:19 And Leah conceived again, and bore a sixth son to Jacob.

Gen 30:20 And Leah said: 'God hath endowed me with a good dowry; now will my husband dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons.' And she called his name Zebulun.

Gen 30:21 And afterwards she bore a daughter, and called her name Dinah.

Gen 30:22 And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb.

Gen 30:23 And she conceived, and bore a son, and said: 'God hath taken away my reproach.'

Gen 30:24 And she called his name Joseph, saying: 'The LORD add to me another son.'

Gen 35:17 And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the mid-wife said unto her: 'Fear not; for this also is a son for thee.'

Gen 35:18 And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing - for she died - that she called his name Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin.

Gen 35:19 And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath - the same is Bethlehem. (JPS Translation)

Leah is the mother of six of Jacob's sons, including his first four (Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah), and later two more (Issachar and Zebulun), and a daughter (Dinah). According to the scriptures, God saw that Leah was "unloved" and opened her womb as consolation.

Seeing that she is unable to conceive, Rachel offers her handmaid Bilhah to Jacob, and names and raises the two sons (Dan and Naphtali) that Bilhah bears. Leah responds by offering her handmaid Zilpah to Jacob, and names and raises the two sons (Gad and Asher) that Zilpah bears. According to some commentaries, Bilhah and Zilpah are actually half-sisters of Leah and Rachel.^[6]

One day, Leah's firstborn son Reuben returns from the field with mandrakes for his mother. Leah has not conceived for a while, and this plant, whose roots resemble the human body, is thought to be an aid to fertility.^[7] Frustrated that she is not able to conceive at all, Rachel offers to trade her night with their husband in return for the mandrakes. Leah agrees, and that night she sleeps with Jacob and conceives Issachar. Afterwards she gives birth to Zebulun and to a daughter, Dinah. After that, God remembers Rachel and gives her two sons, Joseph and Benjamin.³

Rabbi Tvi Freedman puts it this way “Rachel is the embodiment of the *Shechinah* as She descends to care for Her children, even to travel their journey of exile with them. And so she ensures they will return.

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leah#cite_note-7

Her sister, Leah, is also our mother, the *Shechinah*. Yet she is the transcendent, concealed world; those hidden things of the divine mind too deep for men to fathom. She is the sphere of royalty, as She rises above to receive in silent meditation.

Rachel is the world of revealed words and deeds. She held beauty that Jacob could perceive and desire. But Leah was too lofty, too far beyond all things, and so Jacob could not attach himself to her in the same way. Yet it is from Leah that almost all of the Jewish nation descends.⁴

Chana Weisberg⁵ sums it up this way regarding the rivalry of the sisters and their descendants as well “The vast gulf dividing their respective worlds not only affected their own lives, but continued as a rift in the lives of their descendants.

Beginning with the rivalry between Joseph (Rachel’s child) and his brothers (primarily Leah’s children), who sought to kill him but instead were placated by selling him as a slave to a passing caravan—the schism keeps resurfacing.

It was Moses, Leah’s descendant, who redeemed our people from their slavery in Egypt, but only Joshua—Moses’ disciple and Rachel’s descendant—who was able to lead the nation into the Holy Land.

The rulership of our first national king, King Saul (descendant of Rachel) was cut short by King David (Leah’s descendant), through whom a dynasty would be established. But the schism again resurfaced with the constant strife and divisiveness between *malchut Yisrael* (the kingship of Israel) and *malchut David* (the Davidic dynasty).”

In the end both sisters are destined to become the mothers of Israel. Out of the 12 Tribes, 2 were destined to become dominate in God’s plan. Through Leah would come the tribe from which Messiah Yeshua would come, Judah (Messiah Ben David, Yeshua as the triumphant King of Kings and Lord of Lords) and through Rachel would come forth the Tribe of Joseph i.e. Ephraim (a type of Messiah Ben Yosef, Yeshua the suffering Messiah). Both lives impacted the destiny of the people of Israel in a great way!

Even though there would be much fighting between the 2 main tribes and eventually separation due to God’s judgement in the end the 2 shall come together again and restored via Messiah Yeshua.

Hos 5:5 And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face: therefore shall Israel and **Ephraim** fall in their iniquity; **Judah** also shall fall with them.

Hos 5:12 Therefore *will* I *be* unto **Ephraim** as a moth, and to the house of **Judah** as rottenness.

⁴ Rabbi [Tzvi Freeman](#), a senior editor at Chabad.org, also heads our Ask The Rabbi team. He is the author of [Bringing Heaven Down to Earth](#).

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Hos 5:13 When **Ephraim** saw his sickness, and **Judah** saw his wound, then went **Ephraim** to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound.

Hos 5:14 For I *will be* unto **Ephraim** as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of **Judah**: I, *even* I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue *him*.

Hos 6:4 O **Ephraim**, what shall I do unto thee? O **Judah**, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness *is* as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.

Hos 10:11 And **Ephraim** *is as* an heifer *that is* taught, *and* loveth to tread out *the* corn; but I passed over upon her fair neck: I will make **Ephraim** to ride; **Judah** shall plow, *and* Jacob shall break his clods.

Hos 11:12 **Ephraim** compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit: but **Judah** yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints.

Zec 9:13 When I have bent **Judah** for me, filled the bow with **Ephraim**, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man.

Psa 108:8 Gilead *is* mine; Manasseh *is* mine; **Ephraim** also *is* the strength of mine head; **Judah** *is* my lawgiver;

Isa 11:13 The envy also of **Ephraim** shall depart, and the adversaries of **Judah** shall be cut off: **Ephraim** shall not envy **Judah**, and **Judah** shall not vex **Ephraim**.

Eze 37:16 Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For **Judah**, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of **Ephraim**, and *for* all the house of Israel his companions:

Eze 37:19 Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which *is* in the hand of **Ephraim**, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, *even* with the stick of **Judah**, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand.

Rom 11:7 What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened,

Rom 11:8 as it is written, "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day."

Rom 11:9 And David says, "Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them;

Rom 11:10 let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and bend their backs forever."

Rom 11:11 So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous.

Rom 11:12 Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!

Rom 11:13 Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry

Rom 11:14 in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them.

Rom 11:15 For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?

Rom 11:16 If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches.

Rom 11:17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree,

Rom 11:18 do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you.

Rom 11:19 Then you will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in."

Rom 11:20 That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear.

Rom 11:21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you.

Rom 11:22 Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.

Rom 11:23 And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again.

Rom 11:24 For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.

Rom 11:25 Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

Rom 11:26 And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob";

Rom 11:27 "and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins."

Rom 11:28 As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers.

Rom 11:29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

Rom 11:30 For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience,

Rom 11:31 so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy.

(Emphasis mine)