

תלמוד-תורה ביחד ממרחק  
TORAH-STUDY TOGETHER FROM AFAR



November 28, 2020

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלֶכֶד הָעוֹלָם,  
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְעֶסוֹק בְּדַבְּרֵי תוֹרָה:

Parashah Stats

Weekly Portion	vaYeitzei
Consists of	Genesis 28:10-32:3
Sequence—	
<u>in annual Torah cycle:</u>	7 <sup>th</sup> of 54
<u>in Book of Genesis:</u>	7 <sup>th</sup> of 12



**- A Salient Selection from the Portion -**

Genesis 29:27-35

**Context** *Genesis, first of the Five Books of the Torah, is an outline of the Creation of the physical universe; a description of the origin of the human family by their respective nations; and an account of Abraham's and Sarah's lineage through their grandson Jacob as the founder of the Israelite people.*

**Content** *This week's portion finds Abraham's and Sarah's grandson, Jacob— having fled the vengeance of the older twin brother whose primogeniture he has usurped, and taken refuge at his uncle's house in The Old County— finds himself married to the wrong cousin.*

29:27 [His Uncle Lavan told him:] “Fulfill **the nuptial week for this one**, and then the other one will be given to you— in consideration of your undertaking thereafter to serve me **an additional seven years more**.”

מֵלֵא שִׁבְעַת זֹאת וְנִתְּנָה לְךָ גַם-  
אֶת-זֹאת בְּעֶבְדָּה אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲבֹד  
עַמְדֵי עוֹד שִׁבְעַת-שָׁנִים אַחֲרוֹת

שִׁבְעַת “[the number] seven”      שִׁבְעַת “a week” → שִׁבְעַת “the week of...”

אַחֲרוֹת adjective (fp) { “other, in addition”  
“afterwards, later on, subsequently”

A) Yosef Shalom Elyashiv (1910-2012), *Piskei Maran* - Someone who weds a woman **must rejoice with her for seven days**, devoting himself solely to eating and drinking and rejoicing with her. A groom is forbidden to engage in occupational work the entire Seven Days of Feasting, even when his bride gives her permission. For the entire Seven Days of Feasting the groom is exempt from worshipping with a *minyan*. When worshipping alone, he does not recite *Tachanun*; when he joins the congregation in worship— with the permission of his bride— that assemblage praying with him is exempt from reciting *Tachanun*.

- continued



29:32] So Lei'ah conceived, and birthed, a son. **She named him Re'uVein**— for she had said: “**The Eternal One has seen**, for now my husband **will favor me!**”

וַתֵּהָרָה לֵאָה וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן וַתִּקְרָא  
שְׁמוֹ רְאוּבֵן כִּי אָמְרָה כִּי-רָאָה  
יְהוָה בְּעֵינָי כִּי עָתָה יִפְאַהֲבֵנִי  
אִישִׁי

Genesis 4:1	Eve	וַתֵּלֶד אֶת-קַיִן וַתֹּאמֶר קָנִיתִי אִישׁ אֶת-יְהוָה
Genesis 4:25	“	וַתִּקְרָא אֶת-שְׁמוֹ שֵׁת כִּי שֵׁת-לִי אֱלֹהִים זָרַע אַחֲרַי
Genesis 16:13	Hagar	וַתִּקְרָא שֵׁם-יְהוָה הַדֹּבֵר אֵלַיהָ אֶתְּהָ אֵל רָאִי
Genesis 19:37	Lot's eldest	וַתֵּלֶד הַבְּכִירָה בֵּן וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ מוֹאֵב
“ “ “	Lot's younger	גַּם-הוּא יָלְדָה בֵּן וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ בֶן-עַמִּי
Genesis 35:18	Racheil	וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ בֶן-אוֹנִי וְאָבִיו קָרָא-לוֹ בְּנֵימִין
Genesis 38:4	Bat-Shu'a	וַתֵּהָרָה עוֹד וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן וַתִּקְרָא אֶת-שְׁמוֹ אוֹנָן
Exodus 2:10	Pharaoh's daughter	וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ מֹשֶׁה וַתֹּאמֶר כִּי מִן-הַמַּיִם מָשִׁיתָהוּ
Judges 13:24	Mrs. Mano'ach	וַתֵּלֶד הָאִשָּׁה בֵּן וַתִּקְרָא אֶת-שְׁמוֹ שִׁמְשׁוֹן
I Samuel 1:20	Chanah	וַתֵּהָרָה חַנָּה וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן וַתִּקְרָא אֶת-שְׁמוֹ שְׁמוּאֵל
II Samuel 12:24	Bat-Sheva	וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן וַיִּקְרָא [וַתִּקְרָא] אֶת-שְׁמוֹ שְׁלֹמֹה

D) Ellen Frankel (1951- ), *The Five Books of Miriam: A Woman's Commentary on the Torah* - Hagar the Stranger comments: “Watching the two sisters **vie with each other for a place in their husband's heart**, we understand how difficult is the burden of dependence in a relationship. They both wait upon Jacob's favor and God's grace, and **then the heartache begins all over again with their children.**”

The Sages in our own day teach: “In the ancient Near East, one vital measure of a wife's worth was her ability to bear sons— to tend the fields, herd the flocks, defend land and honor, and carry on the family name. For the woman herself, unable to inherit on her own, sons represented security in her old age. And **in a loveless marriage** such as Lei'ah's, **sons might also capture a husband's heart.**”

Re'uVein = רָאִי “behold; look!” + בֵּן “a child; a son”

E) Georges Roux, *Ancient Iraq* - Based on their inscriptions, as well as their personal names, **the Arameans worshipped Mesopotamian gods**— such as [the rain god] Haddad or Adad, [the moon god] Sin, [the fertility goddess] Ishtar (whom they called Astarte), [the sun god] Shamash, [the Spring rebirth god] Tammuz, [the thunder god] Bel, and [the warrior god] Nergal— **as well as Canaanite-Phoenician deities** such as the storm-god El, who was the supreme deity of Canaan, in addition to [the warrior goddess] Anat and others.

29:33] Then she conceived again, and birthed a son, at which she declared: “**The Eternal One has truly heard** how **disliked** I am, and has now given me **this** one!” So **she named him Shim'on**.

וַתֵּהָרָה עוֹד וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן וַתֹּאמֶר כִּי-  
שָׁמַע יְהוָה כִּי-שָׁנֹאָה אָנֹכִי  
וַיִּתֵּן-לִי גַם-אֶת-זֶה וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ  
שִׁמְעוֹן

Shim'on = שָׁמַע “He has heard” + וֶן [instrument or document; diminutive]

29:34] Then she conceived again, and birthed a son, at which she declared: “This time **my husband will truly be joined to me**, since I have borne him three sons!” That is why [s]he called his name **Leivi**.

וַתֵּהָרָה עוֹד וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן וַתֹּאמֶר עֵתָה  
הַפֶּעַם **יָלוּהָ אִישִׁי אֵלַי כִּי-יִלְדָתִי**  
לוֹ שְׁלֹשָׁה בָּנִים עַל-כֵּן קָרָאתִיהוּ-  
שְׁמוֹ **לֵוִי**

**ל-ו-ה** 1) “loan, lend”

2) “accompany, escort; **be joined with, adhere to**”

**הַלְוִיָּהּ** “funeral”

**הַלְוִיָּת הַמֵּת** “escorting the dead”

**מְלוּיָהּ מַלְכָּה**

“ushering out the [Shabbat] Queen”

F) Asher ben-Y’chiEil (1250-1327), *Seifer Hadar Zekeinim* – When a woman births a child, she carries it in both her arms. Upon birthing a second infant, she holds one in her right arm, and one in her left. But when a third child arrives, she requires her husband’s assistance to help her hold them.

Thus, when Lei’ah birthed her third son, she said “**This time** my husband will truly be joined to me, since I have borne him three sons”— and with only two arms **I cannot hold all three of them by myself!**”

29:35] Then she conceived again, and birthed a son, at which she declared: “This time **I will give thanks to The Eternal One!**” That is why she called his name **Yehudah**— after which, she **left off** birthing.

וַתֵּהָרָה עוֹד וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן וַתֹּאמֶר  
הַפֶּעַם **אוֹדָה אֶת-יְהוָה עַל-כֵּן**  
קָרָאתִיהוּ שְׁמוֹ **יְהוּדָה** וַתַּעֲמֵד  
מִלְדֹת

G) Efrayim Zalman Margolis (1762-1828), *Tiv Gittin* - The Talmud tells us:

מֵיוֹם שֶׁבְּרָא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶת עוֹלָמוֹ לֹא הָיָה אָדָם שֶׁהוֹדָה לַהַקְדוּשׁ

בְּרוּךְ הוּא עַד שֶׁבָּאתָה לָאָה וְהוֹדָתוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר הַפֶּעַם **אוֹדָה אֶת-יְהוָה**

from the day that The Holy And Blessed One created this world, no person ever acknowledged The Holy And Blessed One with gratitude, **until Lei’ah arrived and thanked God**— even as it is said: “**this time I will give thanks to The Eternal One**” [B’rachot 7b].

But how can this be, when the rabbis teach elsewhere that the Three Patriarchs had already instituted the three daily worship services, long before Lei’ah appears in the Torah?

**The prayer of thanks-giving Lei’ah recites upon the birth of Judah is not the same as the prayers associated with the Three Patriarchs.** That is because the verb הודָה *hodah* signifies “to acknowledge with gratitude.” The term implies a situation in which a person acknowledges that another party— previously thought to have been wrong or unjust— was right and just all along. That was the situation for Lei’ah, **who had initially seen only unhappiness in her life. Feeling unwanted and unloved**, she was convinced that The Eternal One had wronged her.

But when she had three sons, one after another, she came to realize that **her initial unhappiness had made her worthy** of becoming ancestress of most of the Tribes of the Israelites.



Come see how this is: the Heavenly Throne consists of the Three Patriarchs of Israel, to whom David— King of Israel!— was conjoined, all four of whom together form a Celestial Tetrad as an intimation of The Holy Four-Lettered Name of God.

ועל דא ראובן שמעון לוי לבתר יהודה דירית מלכו ועל דא כלהו באתר דא  
וכתיב הפעם אודה את-יהוה וגוי ותעמד מלדת בגין דהכא אשתכללו ארבע  
סמכין

The same holds true [here below] for Re'uvein, Shim'on, and Leivi— **after whom comes Yehudah, the repository of the monarchy.** And that is why all of them are brought together in this one [narrative block in 29:32-35 which concludes— upon the birth of Judah— by saying:] “**This time** I must give thanks to The Eternal One!” *etc.* “after which, she left off birthing,” **since the four corner-posts of The Throne was now assembled.**

**הפעם** אודה את-יהוה מאי טעמא אמרה אודה את-יהוה בהאי ולא בכלהו  
“**This time** I must give thanks to The Eternal One!” - what is the reason she said “I must give thanks to The Eternal One” for this one [= Judah], and not for all four of them?

אלא מהכא כל זמנא דכנסת ישראל בגלותא שמא קדישא לאו שלים הוא  
From this we learn that, so long as the Household of Israel is in Exile, The Holy Name remains incomplete.

J) Genesis 49:10 -

לא-יסור שבט מיהודה ומחקה מבין רגליו  
**The scepter shall never depart from Judah,**  
nor the ruler's staff from beneath his feet,  
ולו יקחת עמים עד כּי-יבא שילה  
So that his due tribute shall come to him,  
and the homage of the nations shall be his!