תלמוד-תורה ביחד ממרחק TORAH-STUDY TOGETHER FROM AFAR



November 28, 2020

בָּרוּדְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶדְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לַעֲסוֹק בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה:

Parashah Stats

Weekly Portion vaYeitzei

Consists of Genesis 28:10-32:3

Sequence—

in annual Torah cycle: 7th of 54 in Book of Genesis: 7th of 12



- A Salient Selection from the Portion -

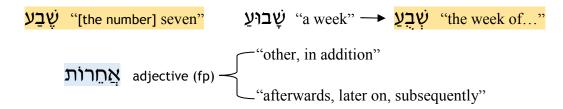
Genesis 29:27-35

<u>Context</u> 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.

<u>Content</u> 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."

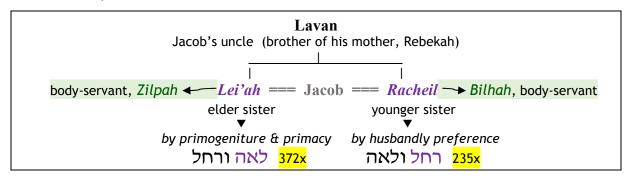
מַלֵּא שְׁבֻעַ זֹאת וְנִתְּנָה לְדְּ גַּם-אֶת-זֹאת בַּעֲבֹדָה אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲבֹד עִמְדִי **עוֹד שָׁבַע-שָׁנִים אֲחֵרוֹת**



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*.

29:28] So that is what Jacob did: he finished up the nuptial week for that one, after which [his uncle] gave him his daughter Racheil to wife. [29:29] (And Lavan furnished his maid-servant Bilhah to his daughter, Racheil, to be her attendant).

וַיַּעֵשׂ יַעֲקֹב כֵּן וַיְמֵלֵא <mark>שְׁבָּעַ זֹאת</mark> וַיִּתֶּן-לוֹ אֶת-רָחֵל בִּתּוֹ לוֹ לְאִשְּׁה וַיִּתֵּן לָבָן לְרָחֵל בִּתּוֹ אֶת-בְּלְהָה שִׁפְחָתוֹ לָהּ לְשִׁפְחָה



29:30] Whereupon [Jacob] was intimate with Racheil, as well [as with her older sister, his first-bride]— indeed, **he loved** Racheil even more than Lei'ah. Then [after the nuptial week] he began serving [his uncle] another seven years subsequently.

וַיָּבֹא גַּם אֶל-רָחֵל **וַיֶּאֶהַבּ** גַּם-אֶת-רָחֵל מִלֵּאָה וַיַּעֲבֹד עִמּוֹ עוֹד שֶׁבַע-שָׁנִים אֲחֵרוֹת

29:31] Now The Eternal One, seeing that Lei'ah was disfavored, opened her womb, while Racheil remained infertile.

וַיַּרְא יְהוָה כִּי-**שְׂנוּאָה** לֵאָה וַיִּפְתַּח אֶת-רַחְמָהּ וְרָחֵל עֲקָרָה

Antonym Verbs (that don't really mean all they say)
ב-ה-ג "love" שׁ-נ-א "hate"

246x in TaNaCh

170x in TaNaCh

וֹיְהִי הַיּוֹם וַיִּיְבַּח אֶלְקָנָה וְנָתַן לִפְנִנָּה אִשְׁתּוֹ וּלְכָל-בָּנֶיהָ וּבְנוֹתֶיהָ מָנוֹת <u>B) I Samuel 1:5-6</u> - On the festival occasions that ElQanah offered sacrifices, he would share portions of it with his wife P'ninah and her children,

וּלְחַנָּה יָתֵּן מָנָה אַחַת אַפָּיִם כִּּי אֶת-חַנָּה אָהֶב וַיהֹנָה סָגַר רַחְמָה while to Chanah— even though he favored her otherwise— he gave only one single portion, for The Eternal One had closed her womb.

וְּבְעֲסַתָּה צִּרְתָּה גַּם בּעֲבוּר הַרְעִמָּה כִּי-סָגַר יְהֹוָה בְּעֵד רַחְמָה וֹח order to distress her, her rival [P'ninah] taunted her all the time that The Eternal One had closed up her womb.

<u>C)</u> Tamara Eskanazi (1951-), *The Torah: A Women's Commentary* - Whereas Jacob has split from [his older twin] brother, Racheil must live alongside her sister as co-wife. This chapter emphasizes that Jacob "loves" Racheil by mentioning it three times. **God infers from this that Lei'ah is in contrast "disfavored," and intervenes** by making her fertile.

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!"

וַתַּהַר לֵאָה וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן **וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמֵוֹ רְאוּבֵן** כִּי אָמְרָה כִּי-<mark>רַאָּה</mark> <mark>יְהוָה</mark> בְּעָנְיִי כִּי עַתָּה יֶאֶהְבַנִי אישי

Genesis 4:1	Eve	וַתֵּלֶד אֶת- קַיִּן וַתֹּאמֶר <mark>קָנִי</mark> תִי אִישׁ אֶת-יְהוָה
Genesis 4:25	"	וַתִּקְרָא אֶת-שְׁמוֹ שֵׁת כִּי <mark>שָׁת</mark> -לִי אֱלֹהִים זֶרַע אַחֵר
Genesis 16:13	Hagar	וַתִּקְרָא שַׁם-יְהוָה הַדֹּבֵר אֵלֶיהָ אַתָּה אֵל רֲאִי
Genesis 19:37	Lot's eldest	וַתֵּלֶד הַבְּכִירָה בֵּן וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ מוֹאָב
	Lot's younger	גַם-הָוא יָלְדָה בֵּן וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ בֶּן-עַמִּי
Genesis 35:18	Racheil	וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ בֶּן-אוֹנִי וְאָבִיו קָרָא-לוֹ בִּנְיָמִין
Genesis 38:4	Bat-Shu'a	וַתַּהַר עוֹד וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן וַתִּקְרָא אֶת-שְׁמוֹ אוֹנָן
Exodus 2:10	Pharaoh's daughter	וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ מֹשֶׁה וַתֹּאמֶר כִּי מִן-הַמַּיִם <mark>מְשִׁי</mark> תִהוּ
Judges 13:24	Mrs. Mano'ach	וַתֵּלֶד הָאִשָּׁה בֵּן וַתִּקְרָא אֶת-שְׁמוֹ שִׁמְשׁוֹן
I Samuel 1:20	Chanah	וַתַּהַר 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* <u>Torah</u> - 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."

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Re'uVein = אבי "behold; look!" + אב "a child; a son"
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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.

וַתַּהַר עוֹד וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן וַתֹּאמֶר כִּי-<mark>שָׁמֵע יְהוָה</mark> כִּי-שְׁנוּאָה אָנֹכִי וַיִּתֶּן-לִי גַּם-אֶת-זֶה **וַתִּקְרָא** שְׁמוֹ שִׁמְעוֹן

Shim'on = שָׁמַע "He has heard" + אָ [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 solve called his name Leivi.

וַתַּהַר עוֹד וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן וַתּּאמֶר עַתָּה הַפַּעַם **יִלְּנֶה אִישִׁי אֵלֵי** כִּי-יָלַדְתִּי לוֹ שְׁלשָׁה בָנִים עַל-כֵּן קָרָאנ<mark>ה</mark>ן-שְׁמוֹ לֵוִי

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1) "loan, lend"
2) "accompany, escort; be joined with, adhere to"
מְלַנֶּה מֵלְכָּה
"funeral" מְלְנָיָה מִלְכָּה "escorting the dead" "ushering out the [Shabbat] Queen"
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<u>F)</u> 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.

וַתַּהַר עוֹד וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן וַתּּאמֶר הַפַּעַם <mark>אוֹדֶה אֶת-יְהֹוָה</mark> עַל-כֵּן קָרְאָה שְׁמוֹ יְהוּדָה וַתַּעְמִד מִלֶּדֶת

G) Efrayim Zalman Margolis (1762-1828), Tiv Gittin - The Talmud tells us: מיום שברא הקדוש ברוך הוא את עולמו לא היה אדם שהודה להקדוש ברוך הוא עד שבאתה לאה והודתו שנאמר הַפַּעַם אוֹדֶה אֶת-יְהֹוָה 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 הודה 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.

She therefore said, upon birth of the fourth, "this time I will give thanks to The Eternal One, acknowledging that what I had thought was evil and unjust was actually a manifestation of Divine favor!"

The Patriarchs and their families had many occasions to praise The Eternal One—but none of them ever had occasion to "acknowledge" the wisdom of God's ways, as Lei'ah did.

"stand; stand up; stand in place" ∴ "stand still"

וַתַּעֲמֹד מִלֶּדֶת - אייר אמי

<u>H) Midrash Genesis Rabbah 71:5</u> - "Then she stood from birthing" – Rabbi Ammi says:

מי מעמיד רגלה של אשה בתוך ביתה

who is it that sets up a woman's standing within her house?

בניה

[It is] her children.

- A structural view of this Parashah in the Torah scroll -

28:10, beginning of this week's portion, *vaYeitzei* 28:9, end of last week's portion, *Tol'dot* 28:non, *parashah s'tumah* (sealed-off portion)

יות את היא היא מיים להיים את היא משלה ל הייסטוס להיי העומים להייסטוס להייס

32:3, end of this week's portion, va Yeitzei –

32:4, beginning of next week's portion, vaYishlach

parashah p'tuchah (opened-up portion)

רְאוֹ בֵּן סתם דאתכליל בשמעון ולוי לאה הכי הוה דעתה דכתיב הַפַּעם יִלֶּוֶה אִישִׁי אֵלֵי כִּי-יָלַדְתִּי לוֹ שְׁלשָׁה בָנִים בגין דהוה תלתא דמתחברן כחדא Moses de León (1250?-1305), Seifer haZohar 154b-155a - [Lei'ah had said of the birth of her first-born] merely: "Look, a son"— because he was only one component of a collective cohort with Shim'on and Leivi. Lei'ah already knew this, even as it is written [upon the birth of Leivi:] "This time my husband will truly be joined to me, since I have borne him three sons!" [29:34], inasmuch as those three were to be conjoined into a single unit. ותא חזי דהכי הוא דהא רתיכא עלאה אבהן ודוד מלכא דאתחבר בהו וכלהו ארבע אינון רתיכין עלאין רזא דשמא קדישא

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 הַפַּעַם אוֹדֶה אֶת-יְהֹוָה וגוי וַתַּעֲמֹד מִלֶּדֶת 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.

הַפַּעֵם אוֹדֶה אֶת-יְהֹנָה מאי טעמא אמרה אוֹדֶה אֶת-יְהֹנָה בהאי ולאו 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־יָ**סוּר שֵׁבֶּט מִיה**וּ<mark>ד</mark>ָה וּמְחֹקֵק מִבֵּין רַגְּלָיו

The scepter shall never depart from Judah,

nor the ruler's staff from beneath his feet,

וָלוֹ יִקְהַת עַמִּים

עַד כִּי-יָבֹא שִׁילה

So that his due tribute shall come to him, and the homage of the nations shall be his!