

**Effort versus Accomplishment**

**Genesis, Chapter 29**

1. Now Jacob lifted his feet and went to the land of the people of the East...

9. While he was still talking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess.

10. And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother and the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother, that Jacob drew near and rolled the rock off the mouth of the well, and he watered the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother.

11. And Jacob kissed Rachel, and he raised his voice *and wept*.

12. And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's kinsman and that he was Rebecca's son, and she ran and told her father.

13. Now it came to pass when Laban heard the report of Jacob, his sister's son, that he ran towards him, and he embraced him, and he kissed him, and he brought him into his house. He told Laban all these happenings.

14. And Laban said to him, "Indeed, you are my bone and my flesh." And so he stayed with him a full month.

15. And Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my kinsman, should you work for me gratis? Tell me what your wages shall be."

16. Now Laban had two daughters; *the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel*.

17. *Leah's eyes were tender, but Rachel had beautiful of form and beautiful of appearance*.

18. And Jacob loved Rachel, and he said, "I will work for you seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter."

19. And Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than I should give her to another man. Stay with me."

20. So Jacob worked for Rachel seven years, but they appeared to him like a few days because of his love for her.

**And he wept (29:11)**

**Rashi**

Jacob wept because he foresaw that Rachel would not be buried with him in the Cave of Machpelah....

**...the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel (29:16)**

**Likkutei Torah**

Like her father's sheep that she tended, Rachel's name means "ewe", an animal characterized by its bright white color and serene, loveable nature.



**פרק כט**

א. וישא יעקב רגליו  
ב. ויילך ארצה כני קדם:

ט. עורנו מדבר עמם

י. ויהי כפאשר ראה יעקב את רחל בת לכן אחי

אמו ואת צאן לכן אחי אמו ויש יעקב ויגל את  
האבן מעל פי הבאר וישק את צאן לכן אחי אמו:

יא. וישק יעקב לרחל וישא את קלו ויבך:

יב. ויגד יעקב לרחל כי אחי אביה הוא וכי בן

רבקה הוא ותרץ ותגד לאביה:

יג. ויהי כשמע לכן את שמע יעקב בן אחתו וירץ  
לקראתו ויחבק לו וינשק לו ויביאהו אל ביתו

ויספר ללכן את כל הדברים האלה:

יד. ויאמר לו לכן אף עצמי ויבשרי אתה וישב

עמו חדש ימים:

טו. ויאמר לכן ליעקב הכי אחי אתה ונעבדתני

חנם הגידה לי מה משכרתך:

טז. וילכן שתי בנות שם הגדלה לאה ושם

הקטנה רחל:

יז. ויעני לאה רבות ורחל היטה זפת תאר ויפת

מראה:

יח. ויאהב יעקב את רחל ויאמר אעבדך שבע

שנים ברחל בתך הקטנה:

יט. ויאמר לכן טוב תתי אתה לך מתתי אתה

לאיש אחר שבה עמדי:

כ. ויעבד יעקב ברחל שבע שנים ויהיו בעיניו

כימים אחרים באהבתו אתה:

### Likkutei Sichot

Rachel's name has the same numerical value as the Hebrew words, "*and there was light.*"

### Mei Hashiloach

Leah's name means "*one who is weary.*" She is described as the weak-eyed sister, weakened from her incessant tears and anxiety.

*Leah's eyes were tender (29:17)*

### Rashi

Because she wept constantly in prayer that she not have to marry Esau. People used to say that since Rebecca had two sons and Laban two daughters, the elder daughter would be married to the elder son, while the younger daughter was destined to marry the younger son.

### Midrash

Leah sat at the crossroads asking about Esav. She was informed, "He is a wicked man!" Hearing this, Leah cried bitter tears, "My sister and I were born of the same womb, yet Rachel is to marry the righteous man and I, the wicked Esav!" Leah wept and fasted until her eyes became weak.

### Bereishit Rabba

Leah would cry until her lashes fell out saying, "May it be Your will that I do not fall to the lot of that wicked man!" Rabbi Huna said, "Great is prayer that it annulled the decrees and Leah even took precedence over her sister."

### Zohar

Leah cried constantly. Spiritually this means that Leah personified the penitent who cries over past imperfections and constantly strives for greater connection to G-d. She was therefore destined to marry the wicked Esau, since it was in her power to influence him to repent. Rachel had beautiful features and was of beautiful appearance. Spiritually, Rachel's beauty indicates that she personified the perfectly righteous individual unblemished in the performance of the commandments.

## SUMMARY

- Rachel is a metaphor for the life of a Tzaddik and the life of accomplishment; Leah, for the Baal Teshuvah and a life of effort.
- There are few moments in our lives when we are at peace with our inner spiritual selves, when there is no struggle or dichotomy. Most of our experiences, however, are replete with trial and challenge.
- When we victoriously face the wearying struggles of our lives, we emerge, finally, as a greater people.
- Ultimately, Leah mothered the majority of the tribes, lived with Yaakov for a longer period of time and was buried with him.
- To G-d, each small victory, each moment of intense prayer and each act of sincere goodness is precious and priceless.

