

1
 "You all know that we were pressed for water,"^[263] and that when the righteous [Jacob] came here, the waters were blessed!^[264] [The people] said to [Laban], "Let us know what would help you get Jacob to stay, and we are willing to assist you in doing it."^[265] [Laban] said to them, "If you would like, I will deceive [Jacob] and give him Leah as a wife instead of Rachel, and since he loves Rachel greatly, he will then agree to work here in your midst for an additional seven years in order to marry Rachel as well." [The people of Laban's place] replied to [Laban], "Do what you think would help you get him to stay!" [Laban] said to them, "Each of you give me a security to ensure that none of you will reveal our plan to Jacob"; and they all gave him securities. [Laban] then went and in exchange for them he brought back wine, oil, and meat for Jacob's wedding feast.^[266]

שְׂרִיפָה בְּאֵשׁ מִקְדָּוָה - [הַאֲרָמִי] the name *Laban the Aramean* - for he deceived [יָמָה] the people of his own place.^[263]
 The Midrash describes what took place on the day of Jacob's marriage:
 All day long [the people of Laban's place] helped to prepare for [Jacob's] wedding, and sang continuous, joyous praises in honor of the bride and groom.^[264]
 When evening arrived and there was no letup in the praises being sung,^[264] [Jacob] said to them, "What is [the reason for all these praises]?" [The people] replied to [Jacob], "You bestowed kindness upon us, for in your merit the waters were blessed, so too we wish to bestow kindness upon you!"^[265]
 And so they continued offering praises before him, saying: "Ha laya, ha laya," by which they meant to convey to Jacob, "She is Leah, she is Leah."^[266]

גמ' א"ר
 70:19

2
 Scripture mentions that he loved Rachel "also," more than Leah.⁵⁷ The reason for mentioning this is because it is the nature of a man to love most the first woman that he knew, i.e., the first woman with whom he had intimate relations, in accordance with what the Sages mention concerning women: and she does not forge a covenant with any man other than the one who transformed her into a receptacle (*Sanhedrin 22b*).⁵⁸ Thus, when Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah, it was against the usual way of the world. And this is the explanation of the word *also*.⁵⁹

Ramban
 א"ר
 29:30

4
 (א) וירא ה' כי שונאה לאה: הוא יתברך
 101 כי התנהגותו עמה הוא מחמת
 שנאה ממשי¹⁰² אע"ג שמ"מ נוחג עמה
 דיני אישות.

Netziv
 א"ר
 29:31

3
 ויש אומרים שחוסמת אהבה
 על נמשך מלאה בעבור שמסדה סימניה ללאה, ודבר זה
 חשב לה לצדקה על כן הוסיף בה אהבה:

Al-Yakar
 א"ר
 29:3

5
 It appears that the answer to these questions is that the righteous [Leah], may she rest in peace, was unsure of her place in Yaakov's home. This insecurity arose because of the earlier pronouncement, circulated by the people around her, that not she, but Rachel, her younger sister, should marry Yaakov, the younger cousin. It was over [this matter] that she developed sickly eyes by crying profusely over the thought that she was destined for the portion of Eisav.⁶⁰ And even though she could see that she had married Yaakov, this [turn of events] did not confirm in her heart that she was Yaakov's rightful mate, because it was only by means of deception that the marriage had taken place. Therefore, when she saw that she had been granted a son, she said, *Because HASHEM has discerned my humiliation, for now my husband will love me*. Certainly, Leah reasoned, this was a result of Hashem's compassion for her over the fact that she was not loved. But she did not say she was disliked, or even think she was disliked, because the righteous fulfill the mitzvah of our Sages (*Avos 1:6*) to judge people favorably. For this reason, she always judged Yaakov favorably, despite the occasional signs of Yaakov's dislike for her.

Dr.
 Hachaim
 א"ר
 29:33

...and if never occurred to her that she was disliked, as I have explained in the verse, **HASHEM saw that Leah was disliked** (v. 31). The Torah there indicates that only Hashem saw that Leah was disliked; **וְלֹא בֶן הָיְתָה דֹּעָתָהּ** — her view, however, was not like that at all. **וְהָיָה אִשְׁרָאֵל עַל בֶּן בְּשִׁמּוֹן לֵאמֹר כִּי זֶה בָּא לְהַשְׁלִים חֶסֶד שֶׁהָיָה הָאֲהָבָה** — Such a gracious outlook is a common attribute of the righteous, the praiseworthy ones who lead an elevated life. **וְכֵן הָיָה לֵאמֹר כִּי זֶה בָּא לְהַשְׁלִים חֶסֶד שֶׁהָיָה הָאֲהָבָה** — Therefore, when [Leah] was granted her first son, she said that this gift from Above was intended to supply her with what was lacking in her marriage, which was the love of her husband. **וְכֵן הָיָה לֵאמֹר כִּי זֶה בָּא לְהַשְׁלִים חֶסֶד שֶׁהָיָה הָאֲהָבָה** — But then when she saw that Hashem went further and granted her a second son, **וְכֵן הָיָה לֵאמֹר כִּי זֶה בָּא לְהַשְׁלִים חֶסֶד שֶׁהָיָה הָאֲהָבָה** — she said, "I was mistaken from the beginning when I thought that I was merely lacking my husband's love, **וְכֵן הָיָה לֵאמֹר כִּי זֶה בָּא לְהַשְׁלִים חֶסֶד שֶׁהָיָה הָאֲהָבָה** — for now I realize that **HASHEM has heard** — meaning, He has been aware of that which I did not perceive — **that I am** (or was) **disliked**; **וְכֵן הָיָה לֵאמֹר כִּי זֶה בָּא לְהַשְׁלִים חֶסֶד שֶׁהָיָה הָאֲהָבָה** — and He therefore granted two sons to me: one to remove the dislike my husband felt toward me, and one to instill in him the love a husband should have for his wife."

ב. לא יעקב שנאה אלא רחל מתוך
הבנה בחינה

29:31 י"ג

⑦ And Hashem saw that Leah was hated, so He opened her womb... What is meant here by **hated**? — If you will say it means that she was hated, literally, this cannot be. **אֲשֶׁר בָּגְנוּ בָהּ** — Is it conceivable that Scripture does not speak explicitly of the shortcomings of an animal that is **tamei** (non-kosher) — but that Scripture speaks of the shortcomings of the righteous? — **אֲלֵא כֵן** — Rather, **hated** is to be understood this way: The Holy One, Blessed is He, saw **שֶׁהָיָה עֵשָׂו עֹדֵב בָּהֶּן** — that Esau's behavior was **hated** by her (Leah) — **וְכֵן הָיָה לֵאמֹר כִּי זֶה בָּא לְהַשְׁלִים חֶסֶד שֶׁהָיָה הָאֲהָבָה** — and as a reward He opened her womb.

Bava
Bava
123a

⑧ The phrase **that Leah was hated** means **שֶׁהָיָה בָּגְנוּ בָהּ** — that [Leah] behaved like those who hate themselves, by crying and bemoaning her fate, **וְכֵן הָיָה לֵאמֹר כִּי זֶה בָּא לְהַשְׁלִים חֶסֶד שֶׁהָיָה הָאֲהָבָה** — for she said to herself that she is destined to marry Esau, who is hated due to his sinful behavior. [An alternative reading is: for she was destined as a wife for the enemy Esau.]

⑨ Everyone would malign [Leah] for taking Rachel's place and marrying Jacob, **וְכֵן הָיָה לֵאמֹר כִּי זֶה בָּא לְהַשְׁלִים חֶסֶד שֶׁהָיָה הָאֲהָבָה** — sea travelers would malign her; **וְכֵן הָיָה לֵאמֹר כִּי זֶה בָּא לְהַשְׁלִים חֶסֶד שֶׁהָיָה הָאֲהָבָה** — wayfarers would malign her; **וְכֵן הָיָה לֵאמֹר כִּי זֶה בָּא לְהַשְׁלִים חֶסֶד שֶׁהָיָה הָאֲהָבָה** — even the women who tread in the winepress behind the beams of the press would malign her.

⑩ They would say, "This woman Leah, her behavior when she is secluded is not the same as her behavior when she is in the open; **וְכֵן הָיָה לֵאמֹר כִּי זֶה בָּא לְהַשְׁלִים חֶסֶד שֶׁהָיָה הָאֲהָבָה** — she appears to be righteous, but in actuality she is not righteous. **וְכֵן הָיָה לֵאמֹר כִּי זֶה בָּא לְהַשְׁלִים חֶסֶד שֶׁהָיָה הָאֲהָבָה** — For if she were truly a righteous woman, she would not have deceived her sister by marrying Jacob in her stead."

⑪ That entire night [Jacob] called out to her, calling her "Rachel," and she responded as if she were Rachel. **וְכֵן הָיָה לֵאמֹר כִּי זֶה בָּא לְהַשְׁלִים חֶסֶד שֶׁהָיָה הָאֲהָבָה** — Thus, it is only in the morning that Jacob realized who it was, as it states, **וְכֵן הָיָה לֵאמֹר כִּי זֶה בָּא לְהַשְׁלִים חֶסֶד שֶׁהָיָה הָאֲהָבָה** — [Jacob] then said to her, "What! A deceitful woman, the daughter of a deceitful man! **וְכֵן הָיָה לֵאמֹר כִּי זֶה בָּא לְהַשְׁלִים חֶסֶד שֶׁהָיָה הָאֲהָבָה** — For did I not call you "Rachel," and you answered me as if you were Rachel?" **וְכֵן הָיָה לֵאמֹר כִּי זֶה בָּא לְהַשְׁלִים חֶסֶד שֶׁהָיָה הָאֲהָבָה** — [Leah] responded to [Jacob], "Is there a Torah scholar **וְכֵן הָיָה לֵאמֹר כִּי זֶה בָּא לְהַשְׁלִים חֶסֶד שֶׁהָיָה הָאֲהָבָה** that does not have students? **וְכֵן הָיָה לֵאמֹר כִּי זֶה בָּא לְהַשְׁלִים חֶסֶד שֶׁהָיָה הָאֲהָבָה** — When you came to your father (Isaac) to receive his blessings, did not your father call out to you by the name 'Esau,' **וְכֵן הָיָה לֵאמֹר כִּי זֶה בָּא לְהַשְׁלִים חֶסֶד שֶׁהָיָה הָאֲהָבָה** and you answered him

Let us note that the main nucleus of the Jewish people did not come from the mother whom Ya'akov — as far as the Torah relates — had chosen primarily because of the external impression made by her great beauty. God chose precisely the one who felt slighted and disadvantaged, and made her the principal ancestress of His people. For the names that this less-loved wife gave to her sons show us that, precisely in her feeling of disadvantage, she was saturated with love for her husband; the names show us that she uplifted herself to fully appreciate the role of motherhood in the destiny of woman and the happiness of marriage, and that for both she cast her burden on God, Who sees and hears all and causes His Presence to dwell between man and woman. Her husband's love was her goal, and with every child born to her, she hoped to add another layer to the foundation of this love. In the end, her

hopes were fulfilled. What was denied to the bride and wife was granted to the mother of children.

Thus, pure love for husband and children; complete trust in Divine providence — these were the basic values underlying the conception and birth, care and education of the tribes of Israel.

11

Rav Hersch

29:30

29:30