



## *Parshas Vayeitzei 2020, more than words*

*This week's Parsha Perspective is dedicated to Shlomo Ben Edward and Yosef Ben Zev Wolf. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.*

*This week's Parsha Perspective is also in honor of Sasson Betzalel ben Batya and Sapir Bas Ariela. May they have a quick and complete recovery.*

Our Parsha begins with Ya'akov leaving Beer Sheva and heading to Charan to run away from Esav and find a wife. On his way, he rested overnight on the future home of the Beis Hamikdash, Mt. Moriah. That night, he dreamt of a ladder reaching heaven with angels descending and ascending it.

G-d then appeared to Ya'akov and told him that He would give this very land to his descendants and guard him until he returned to Canaan. The following day, Ya'akov woke up, recognized this mountain's holiness, and named it Beis E-l ("the house of G-d").

When Ya'akov arrived in Charan, he saw Rachel, Lavan's younger daughter and cousin, by the city well with her father's sheep. However, a large rock blocked access to the well's opening, so Ya'akov single-handedly rolled off the massive rock that sat atop the well and gave water to the sheep.

Rachel ran home to her father and told him that his nephew had just come to town, and Lavan went out to greet Ya'akov and invited him to stay in his house as long as needed. Lavan also offered Ya'akov the job of tending to his cattle and asked him what he would like as payment.

Ya'akov told him that he wished to marry his youngest daughter, Rachel. Lavan replied that he must work seven years in exchange for her hand in marriage.

After completing his seven years of work, Lavan arranged a wedding but switched his daughters, giving Leah instead of Rachel. The next morning when Ya'akov realized what happened, it was already too late, so he worked another seven years to marry Rachel.

We have the births of eleven of the twelve children of Ya'akov; Leah gave birth to Reuven, Shimon, Levi, Yeudah, Yssachar, and Zevulun. Zilpah, Leah's maidservant, gave birth to Gad and Asher. Rachel gave birth to Yosef, and her maidservant Bilhah gave birth to Dan and Naftali.

However, a question comes to mind: After Ya'akov married Rachel, the Torah writes that Leah was hated by Ya'akov and therefore, G-d took pity on her and gave her children. As the Pasuk says (29:31), "*And G-d saw that Leah was hated and opened her womb, but Rachel remained barren.*" Although the Parsha details that Ya'akov only wanted to marry Rachel, her father forced him to marry Leah first. So how could Ya'akov hate Leah for something that was beyond her control?!

The Ramban on this Pasuk explains that Ya'akov despised Leah because she misled and tricked him. When Ya'akov came to Lavan's house, he knew Lavan would try to cheat him. So he made a secret sign and signal with Rachel to see if he was being deceived.

But Rachel, being the righteous and holy woman she was, told Leah the secret gestures not to be embarrassed in public. Yet, Leah did not reveal her identity to Ya'akov and let the ruse continue till the next day.

The Bereishis Rabbah goes so far as to write that when Ya'akov saw how Leah tricked him, he wanted to divorce her. But when G-d gave her children, Ya'akov dismissed that idea right away.

However, the Rabbeinu Bachaya gives a deeper and more powerful explanation. He writes that the Torah does not say that Ya'akov hated Leah, but rather, *Leah felt hated*.

She felt hated compared to Ya'akov's love for her sister, Rachel. Ya'akov did not even know that Leah was suffering. Hence, the Pasuk says that "*G-d saw that Leah was hated,*" not that G-d saw that Ya'akov hated Leah.

G-d is sensitive, compassionate, and caring towards even Leah's feelings. Because Leah perceived that her husband hated her, G-d considered it as if Ya'akov indeed despised her. So even though Ya'akov never enumerated and flat out said that he hated her, since she felt that way, in G-d's eyes, he did.

Once G-d saw the pain, misery, and anguish that Leah was feeling, He changed course and gave her many children. As we see, each of the matriarchs had difficulty having children, except for Leah, to make her feel whole once again.

In our daily life, it is imperative that we be kind and compassionate towards each other, even when it is challenging and difficult. Just like G-d, we should try to care about the feelings and emotions of another, even when we are correct or have good intentions.

Although we cannot know people's real feelings, we must be mindful of the drastic impact we may have on a person's life. This awareness enables us to create and build strong and long-lasting relationships, giving us true satisfaction and happiness.

***“Respect other people's feelings,  
even if it doesn't mean anything to you.  
Because it means everything to them.”***

*Have an inspirational Shabbos,  
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*