

# פרשת

## ויצא

### Parashat Vayetze

---

*Bereshit / Genesis 28:10-32:2, Hosea 12:12-14:10  
Matthew 3:13-4:11*

### Where is My Fair Share?

In this week's Torah portion, we read about the struggles of life in the lives of Jacob, Leah, and Rachel. Here we find Rachel is quite frustrated according to *Bereshit / Genesis 30:1-2* which states the following, *א ותרא רחל כי לא ילדה ליעקב ותקנא רחל באחתי ותאמר אל-יעקב הבה לי בנים ואם-אין מתה אנכי: ב ויחר-אף יעקב ברחל ויאמר: 30:1 Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she became jealous of her sister; and she said to Jacob, 'Give me children, or else I die.' 30:2 Then Jacob's anger burned against Rachel, and he said, 'Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?'* (NASB) Based upon Rachel's words here to Jacob, she appears to be quite frustrated, impatient, and worried, wondering why she is getting a raw deal. She complains to Jacob as if he is the one in control. She may have prayed through her desperation, we don't know for certain because the text does not state one way or another at this point. She may have wondered if her lack of bearing children was her fault, obviously, she thought Jacob may have been the problem. Based upon Jacob was able to have children with Leah, the problem obviously lay with Rachel and not Jacob. The Chazal (חז"ל) comment on this situation in

the following way according to Chizkuni commentary on *Bereshit / Genesis 30:1, Part 1*.

***Chizkuni, Genesis 30:1 Part 1***

וּתְקַנָּא רַחֵל בְּאַחוּתָהּ, “Rachel became jealous of her sister;” she had not become jealous until after Leah had given birth to her fourth son. The reason was that by doing so she had received more than her “fair” share of the 12 sons Yaakov was supposed to sire.

In *Bereshit / Genesis 30:2*, Jacob obviously got agitated over her comment. The reason being, she uttered a curse by declaring she would die if she could not bear children. (*Or HaChaim on Bereshit / Genesis 30:2 Part 1*) Some people may think saying these words are not or do not result in a curse on one’s own life. It is interesting as we read further in the Torah, we learn how Rachel died during child birth according to *Bereshit / Genesis 35:16-18*. Now interestingly, this appears to be an early death which the Chazal attribute to Jacob uttering a curse on the person who stole Laban’s Teraphim. (see *Midrash Rabban Parashat 74, Part 9 and Bereshit / Genesis 30:31-32*) This is a significant observation in the text and should not be discounted. We need to be careful what we say! Now based upon *Bereshit / Genesis 30:1-2* Rachel had complained she did not have children, and it appears as if she did not ask her husband to pray for her.

Jacob’s response was אֲנִי אֵלֹהִים אָנֹכִי “am I in the place of God?” The truth of the matter is that throughout the Scriptures we see the Lord God using times of waiting as ways to work His purpose in and through us. Looking at the histories recorded in the Scriptures, we see people waiting a lot more often than anything else. The greatest work that God had done for a person, Sarah, looked a lot like God was doing a whole lot of nothing. We remember how Sarai longed for a child, as it is says in the Scriptures (*Bereshit / Genesis 11:30*) “Sarai was barren; she had no child.” We also read in Parashat Vayera that she was promised she would have a child (*Bereshit / Genesis 17:4*) but she had to wait even another year. It wasn’t until she was 90 years old that “...the Lord visited Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had spoken” (*Bereshit / Genesis 21:1*). Another per-

son is Noah who according to *Bereshit / Genesis 6* was commanded to build an ark because there would be a global flood. How long did it take Noah to build the ark? First, we see Noah began to have sons in his 500th year of life (*Bereshit / Genesis 5:32*). Next, Noah's sons were already alive when the Lord appeared to Noah and gave him instructions to begin building the ark (*Bereshit / Genesis 6:18*). Finally, we are told the flood came in the 600th year of Noah's life (*Bereshit / Genesis 7:11*). Therefore, Noah must have spent a maximum of 100 years (and probably slightly less) building the Ark. We note how Noah may have at times become frustrated while obeying this command to build the huge ark when the floods delayed to come. We may also consider Mary, the mother of Yeshua, as she waited on finding out how special her baby would be as she waited on him to grow up to become the Savior of the world. Take Moshe as another example, would spend much of his life, 80 years, before he led the Israelites out of Egypt. All of these histories have a common thread, that the Lord God is not doing nothing! Moshe had moved to Midian, he married, and he had two children, and he tended the sheep, and he must have thought he would live out the remainder of his days without much happening. The Lord God was training him however to lead a nation through the wilderness by faith. Noah was telling people again and again how the flood is coming, they did not believe him, yet God was working in their lives, and the Lord gave those around Noah a chance to repent, turn from their sins, and trust in the one true God. It is in times like this, as we see in the life of Rachel, that we may wonder if it is our fault, of we trusted more, or prayed more, or did something different, then God would work. This is not necessarily the case, as in most all of the narratives in the Scriptures we find patience is an important part of our faith as we wait and trust in God to work out His Plan.

The Scriptures we are looking at for this week are from *Bereshit / Genesis 30:1-13*.

### ספר בראשית פרק ל

א ותרא רחל כי לא ילדה ליַעקב ותקנא רחל בַּאֲחֹתָהּ  
 ותאמר אֶל-יַעקב הֲבֵה-לִי בְנִים וְאִם-אֵין מִתָּה אֲנֹכִי: ב  
 ויטר-אף יַעקב בְּרַחֵל וַיֹּאמֶר הֲתַחַת אֲלֵהִים אֲנֹכִי אֲשֶׁר-  
 מְנַע מִמֶּךָּ פְרִי-בֶטֶן: ג ותאמר הִנֵּה אֲמַתִּי בְלֵהָהּ בֹּא

אֵלֶיהָ וַתֵּלֶד עַל-בְּרָכִי וְאִבְנָהּ גַם-אֶזְנִי מִמֶּנָּה: ד וַתִּתֶּן-לוֹ  
אֶת-בְּלֵהָ שִׁפְחָתָהּ לְאִשָּׁה וַיָּבֵא אֵלֶיהָ יַעֲקֹב: ה וַתֵּהָר  
בְּלֵהָ וַתֵּלֶד לַיַּעֲקֹב בֶּן: ו וַתֹּאמֶר רַחֵל דְּנַנִּי אֱלֹהִים וְגַם  
שָׁמַע בְּקֻלִּי וַיִּתֶּן-לִּי בֶן עַל-כֵּן קָרָאתָ שְׁמוֹ דָּן: ז וַתֵּהָר עוֹד  
וַתֵּלֶד בְּלֵהָ שִׁפְחַת רַחֵל בֶּן שְׁנַי לַיַּעֲקֹב: ח וַתֹּאמֶר רַחֵל  
נִפְתּוּלֵי אֱלֹהִים | נִפְתּוּלֵי עַם-אֲחֹתִי גַם-יִכְלְתִּי וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ  
נִפְתּוּלִי: ט וַתֵּרָא לְאֵה כִּי עֲמָדָה מְלָדָת וַתִּקַּח אֶת-זִלְפָּה  
שִׁפְחָתָהּ וַתִּתֶּן אֹתָהּ לַיַּעֲקֹב לְאִשָּׁה: י וַתֵּלֶד זִלְפָּה שִׁפְחַת  
לְאֵה לַיַּעֲקֹב בֶּן: יא וַתֹּאמֶר לְאֵה בְּגַד [בָּא גָד] וַתִּקְרָא  
אֶת-שְׁמוֹ גָד: יב וַתֵּלֶד זִלְפָּה שִׁפְחַת לְאֵה בֶּן שְׁנַי לַיַּעֲקֹב:  
יג וַתֹּאמֶר לְאֵה בְּאֲשָׁרֵי כִּי אֲשָׁרוּנִי בְּנוֹת וַתִּקְרָא אֶת-שְׁמוֹ  
אֲשֵׁר:

***Bereshit / Genesis 30:1-13***

*30:1 Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she became jealous of her sister; and she said to Jacob, 'Give me children, or else I die.' 30:2 Then Jacob's anger burned against Rachel, and he said, 'Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?' 30:3 She said, 'Here is my maid Bilhah, go in to her that she may bear on my knees, that through her I too may have children.' 30:4 So she gave him her maid Bilhah as a wife, and Jacob went in to her. 30:5 Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. 30:6 Then Rachel said, 'God has vindicated me, and has indeed heard my voice and has given me a son.' Therefore she named him Dan. 30:7 Rachel's maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. 30:8 So Rachel said, 'With mighty wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, and I have indeed prevailed.' And she named him Naphtali. 30:9 When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing, she took her maid Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. 30:10 Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son. 30:11 Then Leah said, 'How fortunate!' So she named him Gad. 30:12 Leah's maid*

*Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. 30:13 Then Leah said, 'Happy am I! For women will call me happy.' So she named him Asher. (NASB)*

There are many examples of the Lord God using times of waiting to grow our faith and to teach us to trust in Him. This was why the Lord God had given the Children of Israel Manna in the wilderness, so they would trust in the Lord for their provision. As we know the Lord God is not “*never doing anything,*” and there may be something here in Rachel’s life the Lord is working out? We read the following according to the commentary *Tur HaAroch on Bereshit / Genesis 30:1 Part 1.*

***Tur HaAroch on Bereshit / Genesis 30:1 Part 1***

*הבה לי בנים, “get me children!” Rachel demanded that Yaakov pray on her behalf, failing which she would die She considered any woman who had no children as “dead.” Nachmanides expresses his amazement at such an interpretation as he cannot understand why this was something that would infuriate Yaakov, as the Torah reports in the next verse when he upbraids her by asking if he was in place of the G’d Who had denied her children. One even prays on behalf of people to whom one is not married, so why should he feel offended by her demand that he pray on behalf of his wife? As to the comment by the Midrash that Yaakov rejected the comparison with Yitzchok praying for Rivkah to have children as inappropriate, seeing that Yitzchok at the time did not have children, whereas he, Yaakov did have already four children, surely that is not a reason why he should not pray on behalf of his favorite wife!? According to the plain meaning of the text, Rachel demanded children from her husband. She threatened that if he refused to pray on her behalf she would kill herself. She would not lay a hand on herself, but she explained that she would simply die from frustration and shame, and would blame her death on*

*her husband. Yaakov's anger was aroused because she so misunderstood the power of prayer that she felt that the prayer of a צדיק automatically commits G'd to fulfill it. Yaakov thought that Rachel used the threat of her death as a ploy, something not unknown when women are denied having their way. At any rate, after telling Rachel that the matter was not really in his hands, seeing that G'd had granted him children but not from her, she decided to pray on her own behalf. This is what the Torah means in verse 22 that G'd "listened to her," as a result of which she bore Joseph.*

Here Tur HaAroch reports on the interpretation of the Chazal, that Rachel asked her husband Jacob to pray for her, and Nachmanides states that it seems unusual that Jacob would become angry because of this. The text states that Rachel demanded children from her husband. Her basic claim was that she would not commit suicide or anything like that, but that she would simply die from frustration and shame and would blame her death on Jacob. The rabbis interpret that Rachel did not understand the power of prayer, the prayer of a Tzadik (צדיק). As we read further in the text, ultimately, Rachel prayed for herself to the God of Abraham, and the Lord heard her prayer according to *Bereshit / Genesis 30:22*, כב וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת-רָחֵל וַיִּשְׁמַע אֲלֶיהָ אֱלֹהִים וַיִּפְתַּח, 30:22 *Then God remembered Rachel, and God gave heed to her and opened her womb. (NASB)* Based on this text, Rachel took it upon herself to pray and seek the Lord for a child and it says that the Lord listened to her (וַיִּשְׁמַע אֲלֶיהָ). Again, God uses times of waiting to grow our faith, to teach us to trust Him, and to give us opportunities we might never have dreamed. We should not worry that God is not doing anything or that He has not heard our prayer. If we find ourselves in this situation like Rachel has found herself, this should remind us to ask ourselves "Why is God bringing me this situation?" and "What is He trying to teach me?" and "Am I really leaving my entire situation in His hands and allowing for His timing?" David wrote the following according to *Tehillim / Psalms 37:4*.

**ספר תהילים פרק לז**

א לָדוּד | אֶל-תִּתַחַר בַּמַּרְעִים אֶל-תִּקְנֵא בְעֲשֵׂי עוֹלָה: ב  
 כִּי כִחְצִיר מְהֵרָה יִמְלוּ וּכְיִרְק דָּשָׂא יִבּוֹלוּ: ג בָּטַח בִּיהוָה  
 וַעֲשֵׂה-טוֹב שָׁכֵן-אֶרֶץ וִרְעָה אַמוּנָה: ד וְהִתְעַנַּג עַל-יְהוָה  
 וַיִּתֵּן-לָהּ מִשְׂאֵלֹת לִבָּהּ: ה גּוֹל עַל-יְהוָה דַּרְכָּהּ וּבָטַח עָלֶיהָ  
 וְהוּא יַעֲשֶׂה: ו הוֹצִיא כְּאוֹר צְדָקָהּ וּמִשְׁפָּטָהּ כַּצִּהָרִים: ז  
 דוֹם לִיהוָה וְהִתְחַלֵּל לוֹ אֶל-תִּתַחַר בְּמַצְלִיחַ דַּרְכּוֹ בְּאִישׁ  
 עֹשֶׂה מְזֻמוֹת: ח הֶרְף מֵאֵף וְעִזַּב חֲמָה אֶל-תִּתַחַר אֶף-  
 לְהָרַע: ט כִּי-מַרְעִים יִפְרֹתוּן וְקוֹי יְהוָה הִמָּה יִירָשׁוּ-אֶרֶץ:

***Tehillim / Psalms 37:1-9***

*37:1 Do not fret because of evildoers, Be not envious toward wrongdoers. 37:2 For they will wither quickly like the grass And fade like the green herb. 37:3 Trust in the Lord and do good; Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. 37:4 Delight yourself in the Lord; And He will give you the desires of your heart. 37:5 Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, and He will do it. 37:6 He will bring forth your righteousness as the light And your judgment as the noonday. 37:7 Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes. 37:8 Cease from anger and forsake wrath; Do not fret; it leads only to evildoing. 37:9 For evildoers will be cut off, But those who wait for the Lord, they will inherit the land. (NASB)*

What are the ways of the wicked? They are free of care, they live their lives in disobedience, immoral, and filled with hate, and yet they go on amassing wealth. David states do not be envious of wrongdoers. (37:1) we are to keep our hearts pure and have washed and innocent hands. David says *37:4 Delight yourself in the Lord; And He will give you the desires of your heart. 37:5 Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, and He will do it. (NASB, וְהִתְעַנַּג עַל-יְהוָה וַיִּתֵּן-)* (לָהּ מִשְׂאֵלֹת לִבָּהּ: ה גּוֹל עַל-יְהוָה דַּרְכָּהּ וּבָטַח עָלֶיהָ וְהוּא יַעֲשֶׂה: Now



Rachel did not have this perspective at first due to her frustration. She thought that without children she is as a dead woman. The Chazal in the Talmud write an interpretation concerning her comments of dying in the following way.

***Talmud Bavli Avodah Zarah 5a:19***

סומא דכתיב (איכה ג, ו) במחשכים הושיבני כמתי עולם  
מצורע דכתיב (במדבר יב, יב) אל נא תהי כמת ומי שאין  
לו בנים דכתיב (בראשית ל, א) הבה לי בנים ואם אין  
מתה אנכי

*A blind person is considered as though he were dead, as it is written: "He has made me to dwell in dark places, as those that have been long dead" (Lamentations 3:6). A leper is considered as though he were dead, as it is written that Aaron said to Moses when Miriam was struck with leprosy: "Let her not, I pray, be as one dead" (Numbers 12:12). And one who has no children is considered as though he were dead, as it is written that Rachel said to Jacob: "Give me children, or else I am dead" (Genesis 30:1).*

The rabbis categorically summarize the state of the dead, saying the blind who dwell in dark places is as one who has been long dead. The leper whose flesh is diseased and rotting, is as one who was dead. And then Rachel, she considered herself as being dead not being able to give birth. Today, regardless of where we find ourselves, we have one who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords who is the source of life and resurrection from the dead! We serve the Living God, and He is able to do anything! In addition, the Lord sent us His Son Yeshua, who is the giver of life for those who believe in Him. Jacob was correct when he said to Rachel, הֲתַחַת אֱלֹהִים אָנֹכִי, "am I in the place of God?" Jacob was redirecting Rachel to direct her request to the God of Abraham, that she should not blame him or look to him for blessing. The rabbis say the Kabbalistic approach is as follows:



*The letter ה in the word התהת need not be understood as introducing a question, but that the whole word is definitive. It is similar to Samuel I 2,27 הנגלה נגליתי, “I have indeed revealed Myself, etc.” Yaakov indicated to Rachel that his likeness (אנכי) was indeed engraved under the throne of G’d and it was this which enabled him to know that G’d Himself had prevented her from having a child. Upon hearing this Rachel overcame her natural reluctance and gave her maid-servant to Yaakov to sleep with in order to benefit from Bilhah’s potential to bear children. In the end she herself addressed G’d in prayer as we know from 30,22: “G’d remembered Rachel and G’d listened to her.” (Rabbeinu Bahya in Bereshit 30:2 Part 1-2)*

It is important to note that though Jacob was given a position of high standing before God, he did not use that as a moment of pride, but directed Rachel to pray to the Lord and not to him.

The things we learn from this week’s Torah portion is how we are to carefully consider our choices and the implications of our actions when we are frustrated and feel as if we have been given a raw deal. We may be tempted to act in a way that is not pleasing to the Lord, or harmful to others and even to ourselves, as Rachel said “*I will die.*” Even if we feel justice has not been meted out, we must be careful to continue to walk in faith and not in our anger. No injustice is worth ruining our relationship with God, and it is not worth throwing away our relationship with other believers, or members of our family whether they are or are not believers. We have to consider the big picture, that the Lord is working something out in our lives for His Glory! It is interesting when we take the time to spend time with the Lord, we get into God’s Word (the Scriptures, Bible), and focus on His character, mercy, love, grace, long suffering, and remain faithful to Yeshua the Messiah, it is only then that we are able to turn the bad that has happened for good and for the glory of the God in heaven. It is in these things that we affirm our faith, we bear the testimony, and we establish our relationship with God as living out His Will in our lives by the power of His Spirit that dwells within. God’s presence in

Digging Deeper Torah Series

our lives is the source of our security, our joy, and our life. Remember how Rachel responded as we continue reading in *Bereshit / Genesis 30*, we read that the Lord God heard her prayer (30:22). This reminds us that even in her frustration, she remained faithful. There are a lot of good things that may happen to us in this life, but none have the power to be consistent day in and day out. We do not trust in things or circumstances as these may become idols in our lives which always let us down. The Lord God of Israel however is faithful, and trustworthy, and for this He is worthy to be praised!