בס"ד
Fill Your Own Cup – Year Four
Midrash – Session Seven
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Fill Your Own Cup – Fall Series – Reading the Parsha Through the Eyes of the Midrash

Session Seven – The Rabbis Imagine Sisterhood

1) DNA O Sister – Girls in Trouble, Alicia Jo Rabins

https://www.girlsintroublemusic.com/dna-o-sister

DNA O sister I am half you half me
in between the molecules I feel it when you breathe
late at night when all the house goes silent in their sleep
I will give you everything I promised him I'd keep

Older and younger and hunter and thief
which one is you, and which one is me
silver and water and petal and leaf

Some sisters stay home and some sisters leave
some sisters get what the other ones need
some sisters blossom and some sisters bleed

Both of us are braided through with candles blood and bread
both of us were born with all these visions in our head
you would always promise me that one day we'd be free
late at night I'm leaving and I'm taking you with me

2) Rabbi Dr. Amy Kalmanofsky, Dangerous Sisters of the Hebrew Bible pp. 31

Most importantly, Rachel and Leah's detailed sister story helps illuminate the representation and narrative function of sisters in the Bible. Like other sister stories, their story is concerned with supporting the natal household and reveals the anxieties sisters induce by being marginal figures in those homes, particularly the anxiety of finding appropriate husbands that will enrich and not rival their father's house. At first glance, Jacob seems to be an appropriate suitor, and Rachel and Leah appear to function as ideal sisters who support and strengthen their natal home. Yet as the narrative unfolds, Jacob proves to be a rival patriarch to Laban, and Rachel and Leah function as dangerous sisters, who assert agency and desire and ally against their father. These dangerous sisters damage their father's household.

Their relationship to one another is a pivotal and defining force in their narrative. Although they are rivals, Rachel and Leah display an emotional range in their relationship that transcends their jealousy. Sororal strife and sororal solidarity play significant roles within their story, which demonstrates the benefits to their husband of their rivalry and the dangers to their husband and their father of cooperation. God initiates and sustains the rivalry that builds and fills the house of Jacob, while it weakens and drains the house of Laban. Yet, as the mandrakes episode shows, the sisters are able to capitalize on their jealousy and conspire when necessary to get what they want. When the sisters align, as they do over the mandrakes or when they consent to leave Laban's house, they threaten patriarchal authority.

I. Sister vs. Sister

3) Genesis Chapter 29:9-31

9) While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's flock; for she was a shepherdess. 10) **And when Jacob saw Rachel**, the daughter of his uncle Laban, and the flock of his uncle Laban, Jacob went up and rolled the stone off the mouth of the well and watered the flock of his uncle Laban. 11) **Then Jacob kissed Rachel and broke into tears.** 12) Jacob told Rachel that he was **her father's kinsman**, **that he was Rebekah's son**; and she ran and told her father. 13) On hearing the news of **his sister's son** Jacob, Laban ran to greet him; he embraced him and kissed him and took him into his house. He told Laban all that had happened, 14) and Laban said to him, **"You are truly my bone and flesh."** And he sat with him for a month.
15) Laban said to Jacob, "Just because you are a kinsman, should you serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?"
16) Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older one was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. **17) Leah had soft eyes; Rachel was shapely and beautiful.**
18) **Jacob loved Rachel; so he answered,** "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel." 19) Laban said, "Better that I give her to you than that I should give her to an outsider. Stay with me." 20) So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her. 21) Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my time is fulfilled, that I may cohabit with her." 22) And Laban gathered all the people of the place and made a feast. 23) When evening came, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to him; and he cohabited with her. 24) Laban had given his maidservant Zilpah to his daughter Leah as her maid. **25) When morning came, there was Leah!** So he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? I was in your service for Rachel! Why did you deceive me?" 26) Laban said, "It is not the practice in our place to marry off the younger before the older. 27) Wait until the bridal week of this one is over, and we will give you that one too, provided you serve me another seven years." 28) Jacob did so; he waited out the bridal week of the one, and then he gave him his daughter Rachel as wife. 29) Laban had given his maidservant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her maid. 30) And Jacob cohabited with Rachel also; **indeed, he loved Rachel more than Leah.** And he served him another seven years.

בראשית כט:ט - לא

ט עוֹדֶנּוּ, מְדַבֵּר עִמָּם; וְרָחֵל בָּאָה, עִם-הַצֹּאן אֲשֶׁר
לְאָבִיהָ--כִּי רֹעָה, הִוא. י וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר רָאָה יַעֲקֹב
אֶת-רָחֵל, בַּת-לָבָן אֲחִי אִמּוֹ, וְאֶת-צֹאן לָבָן, אֲחִי
אִמּוֹ; וַיִּגַּשׁ יַעֲקֹב, וַיָּגֶל אֶת-הָאֶבֶן מֵעַל פִּי הַבְּאֵר,
וַיַּשְׁקְ, אֶת-צֹאן לָבָן אֲחִי אִמּוֹ. **יא וַיִּשַּׁק יַעֲקֹב,**
לְרָחֵל; וַיִּשָּׂא אֶת-קֹלוֹ, וַיֵּבְךְ. יב וַיַּגֶּד יַעֲקֹב
לְרָחֵל, כִּי אֲחִי אָבִיהָ הוּא, וְכִי בֶן-רִבְקָה, הוּא;
וַתָּרָץ, וַתַּגֶּד לְאָבִיהָ. יג וַיְהִי כִּשְׁמֹעַ לָבָן אֶת-שְׁמַע
יַעֲקֹב בֶּן-אֲחֹתוֹ, וַיָּרָץ לִקְרָאתוֹ וַיְחַבֶּק-לוֹ וַיְנַשֵּׁק-
לוֹ, וַיְבִיאֵהוּ, אֶל-בֵּיתוֹ; וַיְסַפֵּר לְלָבָן, אֵת כָּל-
הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה. יד וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ לָבָן, אַךְ עַצְמִי
וּבְשָׂרִי אָתָּה; וַיֵּשֶׁב עִמּוֹ, חֹדֶשׁ יָמִים.
טו וַיֹּאמֶר לָבָן לְיַעֲקֹב הֲכִי-אָחִי אַתָּה וַעֲבַדְתַּנִי חִנָּם
הַגִּידָה לִּי מַה-מַּשְׂכֻּרְתֶּךָ: טז וּלְלָבָן, שְׁתֵּי בָנוֹת:
שֵׁם הַגְּדֹלָה לֵאָה, וְשֵׁם הַקְּטַנָּה רָחֵל. יז וְעֵינֵי
לֵאָה, רַכּוֹת; וְרָחֵל, הָיְתָה, יְפַת-תֹּאַר וִיפַת מַרְאֶה.
יח וַיֶּאֱהַב יַעֲקֹב, אֶת-רָחֵל; וַיֹּאמֶר, אֶעֱבָדְךָ שֶׁבַע
שָׁנִים, בְּרָחֵל בִּתְּךָ, הַקְּטַנָּה. יט וַיֹּאמֶר לָבָן, טוֹב
תִּתִּי אֹתָהּ לָךְ, מִתִּתִּי אֹתָהּ, לְאִישׁ אַחֵר; שְׁבָה,
עִמָּדִי. כ וַיַּעֲבֹד יַעֲקֹב בְּרָחֵל, שֶׁבַע שָׁנִים; וַיִּהְיוּ
בְעֵינָיו כְּיָמִים אֲחָדִים, בְּאַהֲבָתוֹ אֹתָהּ. כא וַיֹּאמֶר
יַעֲקֹב אֶל-לָבָן הָבָה אֶת-אִשְׁתִּי, כִּי מָלְאוּ יָמָי;
וְאָבוֹאָה, אֵלֶיהָ. כב וַיֶּאֱסֹף לָבָן אֶת-כָּל-אַנְשֵׁי
הַמָּקוֹם, וַיַּעַשׂ מִשְׁתֶּה. כג וַיְהִי בָעֶרֶב--וַיִּקַּח אֶת-
לֵאָה בִתּוֹ, וַיָּבֵא אֹתָהּ אֵלָיו; וַיָּבֹא, אֵלֶיהָ. כד וַיִּתֵּן
לָבָן לָהּ, אֶת-זִלְפָּה שִׁפְחָתוֹ--לְלֵאָה בִתּוֹ, שִׁפְחָה.
כה וַיְהִי בַבֹּקֶר, וְהִנֵּה-הִוא לֵאָה; וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-לָבָן,
מַה-זֹּאת עָשִׂיתָ לִּי--הֲלֹא בְרָחֵל עָבַדְתִּי עִמָּךְ, וְלָמָּה
רִמִּיתָנִי. כו וַיֹּאמֶר לָבָן, לֹא-יֵעָשֶׂה כֵן בִּמְקוֹמֵנוּ--
לָתֵת הַצְּעִירָה, לִפְנֵי הַבְּכִירָה. כז מַלֵּא, שְׁבֻעַ זֹאת;
וְנִתְּנָה לְךָ גַּם-אֶת-זֹאת, בַּעֲבֹדָה אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲבֹד עִמָּדִי,
עוֹד, שֶׁבַע-שָׁנִים אֲחֵרוֹת. כח וַיַּעַשׂ יַעֲקֹב כֵּן,
וַיְמַלֵּא שְׁבֻעַ זֹאת; וַיִּתֶּן-לוֹ אֶת-רָחֵל בִּתּוֹ, לוֹ
לְאִשָּׁה. כט וַיִּתֵּן לָבָן לְרָחֵל בִּתּוֹ, אֶת-בִּלְהָה
שִׁפְחָתוֹ--לָהּ, לְשִׁפְחָה. **ל וַיָּבֹא גַּם אֶל-רָחֵל,**
וַיֶּאֱהַב גַּם-אֶת-רָחֵל מִלֵּאָה; וַיַּעֲבֹד עִמּוֹ, עוֹד
שֶׁבַע-שָׁנִים אֲחֵרוֹת.

II. Rabbinic Interlude: Sisterly Compassion!

4) Babylonian Talmud Tractate Megillah 13b	**תלמוד בבלי מסכת מגילה יג:**
What was the modesty displayed by Rachel? — As it is written: "And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother" (Genesis 29:12). Now was he her father's brother? Was he not the son of her father's sister? Rather he said to her, Will you marry me? She replied, Yes, but my father is a trickster, and you cannot outwit him. He replied: **I am his brother** in trickery. She said to him: Is it permitted to the righteous to engage in trickery? He replied: Yes; "With the pure, act in purity and with the perverse, act wily" (II Samuel 22:27). He said to her: What is his trickery? She replied: I have a sister older than me, and he will not let me marry before her. So he gave her certain signs. When night came, she said to herself: "Now my sister will be put to shame." So she handed over the signs to her. So it is written, "And it came to pass in the morning that, behold, it was Leah." Up to now she was not Leah? Rather, what it means is that on account of the signs which Rachel gave to Leah he did not know until then. Therefore, Rachel merited that Saul should descend from her.	ומאי צניעות היתה בה ברחל דכתיב (בראשית כט, יב) ויגד יעקב לרחל כי אחי אביה הוא וכי אחי אביה הוא והלא בן אחות אביה הוא אלא אמר לה מינסבא לי אמרה ליה אין מיהו אבא רמאה הוא ולא יכלת ליה אמר לה אחיו אנא ברמאות אמרה ליה ומי שרי לצדיקי לסגויי ברמיותא אמר לה אין (שמואל ב כב, כז) עם נבר תתבר ועם עקש תתפל אמר לה ומאי רמיותא אמרה ליה אית לי אחתא דקשישא מינאי ולא מנסיב לי מקמה מסר לה סימנים כי מטא ליליא אמרה השתא מיכספא אחתאי מסרתינהו ניהלה והיינו דכתיב (בראשית כט, כה) ויהי בבקר והנה היא לאה מכלל דעד השתא לאו לאה היא אלא מתוך סימנין שמסרה רחל ללאה לא הוה ידע עד השתא לפיכך זכתה ויצא ממנה שאול

III. Children, but not Love

5) Genesis 29:31-35	**בראשית כט**
31) The Lord saw that Leah was hated and God opened her womb; but Rachel was barren. 32) Leah conceived and bore a son, and named him Reuben; for she declared, "It means: 'The Lord has seen my affliction'; it also means: 'Now my husband will love me.'" 33) She conceived again and bore a son, and declared, "This is because the Lord heard that I was unloved and has given me this one also"; so she named him Simeon. 34) Again she conceived and bore a son and declared, "This time my husband will become attached to me, for I have borne him three sons." Therefore he was named Levi. 35) She conceived again and bore a son, and declared, "This time I will praise the Lord." Therefore she named him Judah. Then she stopped bearing.	**לא) וַיַּ֤רְא יְהוָה֙ כִּֽי-שְׂנוּאָ֣ה לֵאָ֔ה, וַיִּפְתַּ֖ח אֶת-רַחְמָ֑הּ; וְרָחֵ֖ל, עֲקָרָֽה.** לב) וַתַּהַר לֵאָה֙ וַתֵּ֣לֶד בֵּ֔ן, וַתִּקְרָ֥א שְׁמ֖וֹ רְאוּבֵ֑ן: כִּ֣י אָמְרָ֗ה, כִּֽי-רָ֤אָה יְהוָה֙ בְּעָנְיִ֔י--כִּ֥י עַתָּ֖ה, יֶאֱהָבַ֥נִי אִישִֽׁי. לג) וַתַּהַר עוֹד֙, וַתֵּ֣לֶד בֵּ֔ן, וַתֹּ֕אמֶר כִּֽי-שָׁמַ֥ע יְהוָ֖ה כִּֽי-שְׂנוּאָ֣ה אָנֹכִ֑י, וַיִּתֶּן-לִ֥י גַּם-אֶת-זֶ֖ה; וַתִּקְרָ֥א שְׁמ֖וֹ, שִׁמְעֽוֹן. לד) וַתַּהַר עוֹד֙, וַתֵּ֣לֶד בֵּ֔ן, וַתֹּ֕אמֶר עַתָּ֥ה הַפַּ֖עַם יִלָּוֶ֣ה אִישִׁ֣י אֵלַ֑י, כִּֽי-יָלַ֥דְתִּי לוֹ֙ שְׁלֹשָׁ֣ה בָנִ֔ים; עַל-כֵּ֥ן קָרָ֖א-שְׁמ֥וֹ, לֵוִֽי. לה) וַתַּהַר עוֹד֙ וַתֵּ֣לֶד בֵּ֔ן, וַתֹּ֕אמֶר הַפַּ֥עַם אוֹדֶ֖ה אֶת-יְהוָ֑ה עַל-כֵּ֣ן קָרְאָ֔ה שְׁמ֖וֹ, יְהוּדָ֑ה; וַתַּעֲמֹ֖ד, מִלֶּֽדֶת.

IV. Love, but not Children

6) Genesis 30:1-8	**בראשית ל:א-ח**
When Rachel saw that she had borne Jacob no children, she became envious of her sister; and Rachel said to Jacob, "Give me children, or I shall die." Jacob was incensed at Rachel, and said, "Can I take the place of God, who has denied you fruit of the womb?" She said, "Here is my maid Bilhah. Consort with her, that she may bear on my knees and that through her I too may have children." So she gave him her maid Bilhah as concubine, and Jacob cohabited with her. Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. And Rachel said, "God has vindicated me; indeed, [God] has heeded my plea and given me a son." Therefore she named him Dan. Rachel's maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. And Rachel said, "A fateful contest I waged with my sister; yes, and I have prevailed." So she named him Naphtali.	וַתֵּ֤רֶא רָחֵל֙ כִּ֣י לֹ֣א יָלְדָ֔ה לְיַעֲקֹ֖ב וַתְּקַנֵּ֣א רָחֵ֔ל בַּאֲחֹתָ֑הּ וַתֹּ֤אמֶר אֶל־יַעֲקֹב֙ הָ֣בָה־לִּ֔י בָּנִ֖ים וְאִם־אַ֣יִן מֵתָ֔ה אָנֹכִֽי׃ וַיִּֽחַר־אַ֤ף יַעֲקֹב֙ בְּרָחֵ֔ל וַיֹּ֖אמֶר הֲתַ֣חַת אֱלֹקִ֑ים אָנֹכִ֕י אֲשֶׁר־מָנַ֥ע מִמֵּ֖ךְ פְּרִי־בָֽטֶן׃ וַתֹּ֗אמֶר הִנֵּ֤ה אָמָתִי֙ בִלְהָ֔ה בֹּ֥א אֵלֶ֖יהָ וְתֵלֵ֣ד עַל־בִּרְכַּ֑י וְאִבָּנֶ֥ה גַם־אָ֖נֹכִי מִמֶּֽנָּה׃ וַתִּתֶּן־לוֹ֙ אֶת־בִּלְהָ֣ה שִׁפְחָתָ֔הּ לְאִשָּׁ֖ה וַיָּבֹ֥א אֵלֶ֖יהָ יַעֲקֹֽב׃ וַתַּ֥הַר בִּלְהָ֖ה וַתֵּ֣לֶד לְיַעֲקֹ֔ב בֵּֽן׃ וַתֹּ֤אמֶר רָחֵל֙ דָּנַ֣נִי אֱלֹקִ֔ים וְגַם֙ שָׁמַ֣ע בְּקֹלִ֔י וַיִּתֶּן־לִ֖י בֵּ֑ן עַל־כֵּ֥ן קָרְאָ֖ה שְׁמ֥וֹ דָֽן׃ וַתַּ֥הַר עוֹד֙ וַתֵּ֣לֶד בִּלְהָ֔ה שִׁפְחַ֥ת רָחֵ֖ל בֵּ֥ן שֵׁנִ֖י לְיַעֲקֹֽב׃ וַתֹּ֤אמֶר רָחֵל֙ נַפְתּוּלֵ֣י אֱלֹקִ֔ים נִפְתַּ֖לְתִּי עִם־אֲחֹתִ֑י גַּם־ יָכֹ֖לְתִּי וַתִּקְרָ֥א שְׁמ֖וֹ נַפְתָּלִֽי׃

V. The Sisters Join Forces

7) Genesis 30:14-21	בראשית ל׳:י״ד-כ״א
14) Once, at the time of the wheat harvest, Reuben came upon some mandrakes in the field and brought them to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes." 15) But she said to her, "Was it not enough for you to take away my husband, that you would also take my son's mandrakes?" Rachel replied, "I promise, he shall lie with you tonight, in return for your son's mandrakes." 16) When Jacob came home from the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, "You are to sleep with me, for I have hired you with my son's mandrakes." And he lay with her that night. 17) God heeded Leah, and she conceived and bore him a fifth son. 18) And Leah said, "God has given me my reward [Hebrew sekhari, connected with "Issachar."] for having given my maid to my husband." So she named him Issachar. 19) When Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son, 20) Leah said, "God has given me a choice gift; [Hebrew zebadani … zebed]. this time my husband will exalt me, [Hebrew yizbeleni; others "will dwell with me."] for I have borne him six sons." So she named him Zebulun 21) Last, she bore him a daughter, and named her Dinah. 22) Now God remembered Rachel; God heeded her and opened her womb	(יד) וַיֵּ֤לֶךְ רְאוּבֵן֙ בִּימֵ֣י קְצִיר־חִטִּ֔ים וַיִּמְצָ֥א דוּדָאִ֖ים בַּשָּׂדֶ֑ה וַיָּבֵ֣א אֹתָ֔ם אֶל־לֵאָ֖ה אִמּ֑וֹ וַתֹּ֤אמֶר רָחֵל֙ אֶל־לֵאָ֔ה תְּנִי־נָ֥א לִ֖י מִדּוּדָאֵ֥י בְנֵֽךְ׃ (טו) וַתֹּ֣אמֶר לָ֔הּ הַמְעַ֥ט קַחְתֵּ֖ךְ אֶת־אִישִׁ֑י וְלָקַ֣חַת גַּם֙ אֶת־דּוּדָאֵ֣י בְנִ֔י וַתֹּ֥אמֶר רָחֵ֖ל לָכֵ֣ן יִשְׁכַּ֥ב עִמָּ֛הּ הַלַּ֥יְלָה תַּ֖חַת דּוּדָאֵ֥י בְנֵֽךְ׃ (טז) וַיָּבֹ֥א יַעֲקֹ֛ב מִן־הַשָּׂדֶ֖ה בָּעֶ֣רֶב וַתֵּצֵ֤א לֵאָה֙ לִקְרָאתֹ֔ו וַתֹּ֣אמֶר אֵלַ֔י תָּבֹ֖וא כִּ֣י שָׂכֹ֣ר שְׂכַרְתִּ֔יךָ בְּדוּדָאֵ֥י בְנִ֖י וַיִּשְׁכַּ֥ב עִמָּ֛הּ בַּלַּ֥יְלָה הֽוּא׃ (יז) וַיִּשְׁמַ֥ע אֱלֹקִ֖ים אֶל־לֵאָ֑ה וַתַּ֣הַר וַתֵּ֤לֶד לְיַעֲקֹב֙ בֵּ֣ן חֲמִישִׁ֔י׃ (יח) וַתֹּ֣אמֶר לֵאָ֔ה נָתַ֥ן אֱלֹקִ֖ים שְׂכָרִ֑י אֲשֶׁר־ נָתַ֥תִּי שִׁפְחָתִ֖י לְאִישִׁ֑י וַתִּקְרָ֥א שְׁמ֖וֹ יִשָּׂשכָֽר׃ (יט) וַתַּ֥הַר עוֹד֙ לֵאָ֔ה וַתֵּ֥לֶד בֵּ֖ן־שִׁשִּׁ֑י לְיַעֲקֹֽב׃ (כ) וַתֹּ֣אמֶר לֵאָ֔ה זְבָדַ֥נִי אֱלֹקִ֖ים ו אֹתִ֣י זֵבֶד֮ טֹוב֒ הַפַּ֨עַם֙ יִזְבְּלֵ֣נִי אִישִׁ֔י כִּֽי־יָלַ֥דְתִּי לֹ֖ו שִׁשָּׁ֣ה בָנִ֑ים וַתִּקְרָ֥א אֶת־שְׁמֹ֖ו זְבֻלֽוּן׃(כא) וְאַחַ֖ר יָלְדָ֣ה בַּ֑ת וַתִּקְרָ֥א אֶת־שְׁמָ֖הּ דִּינָֽה׃ (כא) וְאַחַ֖ר יָלְדָ֣ה בַּ֑ת וַתִּקְרָ֥א אֶת־שְׁמָ֖הּ דִּינָֽה׃ (כב) וַיִּזְכֹּ֥ר אֱלֹקִ֖ים אֶת־רָחֵ֑ל וַיִּשְׁמַ֤ע אֵלֶ֙יהָ֙ אֱלֹקִ֔ים וַיִּפְתַּ֖ח אֶת־רַחְמָֽהּ׃

בס"ד
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VI. Rabbinic Interlude: Sisterly Compassion!

8) Babylonian Talmud Tractate Brachot 60b	**תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות ס:**
It is stated: "And afterwards she bore a daughter, and called her name Dina" (Genesis 30:21). The Gemara asks: What is meant by the addition of the word: Afterwards? What does the verse seek to convey by emphasizing that after the birth of Zebulun she gave birth to Dina? Rav said: After Leah passed judgment on herself and said: Twelve tribes are destined to descend from Jacob, six came from me and four from the maidservants, that is ten, and if this fetus is male, my sister Rachel will not even be the equivalent of one the maidservants; immediately the fetus was transformed into a daughter, as it is stated: And she called her name Dina; meaning she named her after her judgment [din].	"וְאַחַר יָלְדָה בַּת וַתִּקְרָא אֶת שְׁמָהּ דִּינָה": מַאי "וְאַחַר"? אָמַר רַב: לְאַחַר שֶׁדָּנָה לֵאָה דִּין בְּעַצְמָהּ וְאָמְרָה: שְׁנֵים עָשָׂר שְׁבָטִים עֲתִידִין לָצֵאת מִיַּעֲקֹב, שִׁשָּׁה יָצְאוּ מִמֶּנִּי וְאַרְבָּעָה מִן הַשְּׁפָחוֹת, הֲרֵי עֲשָׂרָה. אִם זֶה זָכָר, לֹא תְּהֵא אֲחוֹתִי רָחֵל כְּאַחַת הַשְּׁפָחוֹת, מִיָּד נֶהֶפְכָה לְבַת, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "וַתִּקְרָא אֶת שְׁמָהּ דִּינָה".

VII. Rabbinic Interlude: Rachel Cries for Her's AND Leah's Children

9) Jeremiah 31:15-17	**ירמיהו לא:טו-יז**
14) Thus says God: A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping, Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are not. 15) Thus says God: Refrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears, for you work shall be rewarded, says God: they shall come back from the land of the enemy. 16) And there is hope for your future, says God: And your children shall return to their own borders.	(טו) כֹּה ו אָמַר ה' קוֹל בָּרָמָה נִשְׁמָע נְהִי בְּכִי תַמְרוּרִים רָחֵל מְבַכָּה עַל־בָּנֶיהָ מֵאֲנָה לְהִנָּחֵם עַל־בָּנֶיהָ כִּי אֵינֶנּוּ: (ס) (טז) כֹּה ו אָמַר ה' מִנְעִי קוֹלֵךְ מִבֶּכִי וְעֵינַיִךְ מִדְּמָעָה כִּי יֶשׁ שָׂכָר לִפְעֻלָּתֵךְ נְאֻם־ה' וְשָׁבוּ מֵאֶרֶץ אוֹיֵב: (יז) וְיֵשׁ־תִּקְוָה לְאַחֲרִיתֵךְ נְאֻם־ה' וְשָׁבוּ בָנִים לִגְבוּלָם: (ס)

10) Midrash Lamentations Rabba - Proem 24	**איכה רבה (וילנא) פתיחתות**
Translation by Rabbanit Bracha Jaffee At that moment, Rachel our mother jumped up before Hashem and said: Master of the Universe, you know that Jacob your servant loved me a great love and worked for me for my father for 7 years. And when the seven years were up and the time came for me to be married to my husband, my father devised a plan to have my sister switch places with me for my husband. And this was exceedingly difficult for me as I heard about the plan and I swallowed my suffering and had mercy on my sister so that she should not be shamed in public. And that evening [of my marriage], my sister took my place for my husband instead of me and I gave her all the signs that I gave my husband so that he would think that she was Rachel. And not only that, but I laid under the bed where he laid with my sister and when he spoke with her - she was silent, and I answered each time so that he would not recognize her voice and I acted with loving-kindness towards her and I was not jealous of her and I did not put her to shame. And you, the everlasting God – why are you jealous of those who worship Idols who have no substance, and you exiled my children, and they were killed, and their enemies did with them what they wished. Immediately, God had mercy, and he said, for you Rachel, I will return Israel to their place. As it says in Jeremiah 31, *Thus says God: A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping, Rachel is weeping for her children;*	באותה שעה קפצה רחל אמנו לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא ואמרה רבש"ע גלוי לפניך שיעקב עבדך אהבני אהבה יתירה ועבד בשבילי לאבא שבע שנים וכשהשלימו אותן שבע שנים והגיע זמן נשואי לבעלי יעץ אבי להחליפני לבעלי בשביל אחותי והוקשה עלי הדבר עד מאד כי נודעה לי העצה והודעתי לבעלי ומסרתי לו סימן שיכיר ביני ובין אחותי כדי שלא יוכל אבי להחליפני, ולאחר כן נחמתי בעצמי וסבלתי את תאותי ורחמתי על אחותי שלא תצא לחרפה, ולערב חלפו אחותי לבעלי בשבילי ומסרתי לאחותי כל הסימנין שמסרתי לבעלי כדי שיהא סבור שהיא רחל, ולא עוד אלא שנכנסתי תחת המטה שהיה שוכב עם אחותי והיה מדבר עמה והיא שותקת ואני משיבתו על כל דבר ודבר כדי שלא יכיר לקול אחותי וגמלתי חסד עמה, ולא קנאתי בה ולא הוצאתיה לחרפה, ואתה מלך חי וקיים רחמן מפני מה קנאת לעבודת כוכבים שאין בה ממש והגלית בני ונהרגו בחרב ועשו אויבים בם כרצונם, מיד נתגלגלו רחמיו של הקדוש ברוך הוא ואמר בשבילך רחל אני מחזיר את ישראל למקומן הדא הוא דכתיב

she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are not. (15) Thus says God: Refrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears, for you work shall be rewarded, says God: they shall come back from the land of the enemy. (16) And there is hope for your future, says God: And your children shall return to their own borders.	*(ירמיה ל"א) כה אמר ה' קול ברמה נשמע נהי בכי תמרורים רחל מבכה על בניה מאנה להנחם על בניה כי איננו, וכתיב (שם) כה אמר ה' מנעי קולך מבכי ועיניך מדמעה כי יש שכר לפעולתך וגו' וכתיב (שם) ויש תקוה לאחריתך נאם ה' ושבו בנים לגבולם.*

11) Rabbi David Fohrman, The Power of Rachel's Tears
http://youtube.com/watch?v=NoWyVl8Xu_8

The night the dudaim story took place — Rachel was supposed to be with Yaakov, but Rachel engineered it so that Leah was with him instead. In so doing, she was replaying an earlier night when Rachel was supposed to be with Yaakov, but Leah was with him instead. And what night was that? It was their wedding night.
Rachel is re-engineering that night. The first time around, Rachel was victimized. She didn't have a choice. Her father had engineered it. But this time she's not the victim of her father. She's proactively giving Leah that night. This is what I want to give you, she's saying. The right thing to do is to give you this night. I'm choosing that for both of us…

But do you know what Jeremiah is really telling us? He's really telling us that it wasn't Rachel's mourning that saved us — that made God say that the exile is going to be over, all of your children are going to come back. It wasn't because she cried. It's because she fixed something that she could fix. It's because when she was at her rawest, when things were hardest and most painful for her, she reached out and saw the perspective of her sister — who she'd seen as a rival — and somehow made peace with her.

What then is Jeremiah really telling us? He's saying: beyond reading Lamentations, beyond mourning — if you really want to emulate the heroine of tears, then pay attention to the real reason why God listened to her. Reach out empathetically to your sister and brother with whom you may be in conflict.

If we follow Jeremiah's advice, the highest thing we can do on Tisha B'Av is not just be sad. Rachel's sadness didn't move God as much as her heroism did. Can we be heroes? Would that be even greater than sitting on the floor and being sad?

What would it even mean to be heroes? We all get into conflict with others — it's part of life. We even get into conflict with people that we should be getting along with: family members, co-workers, neighbors. Being a hero doesn't mean never getting into a fight. It means having the strength to get out of one once you're in it. And the key to that is to do what Rachel did. **At your greatest moment of pain — can you step back and ask yourself: what does this situation look like from my opponent's point of view? Do I really have the only perspective here? What does it look like from his point of view, her point of view?**

That kind of curiosity is heroism. It's the way out of vicious conflict. If we can emulate her heroism — feel their pain too, and respond — then maybe, like Rachel, God will be unable to deny us our deepest wishes. Just like her.