

## **She conceived again, and bore a son and declared, “This time let me gratefully praise Hashem; therefore she called his name Yehudah, then she stopped giving birth. (29:35)**

In his commentary on this pasuk, *Ibn Ezra* makes a compelling statement. He interprets Leah’s “gratitude” as if she were saying, “I have had four sons. I, therefore, thank Hashem, for I want no more.” It is as if she were saying, “I have enough; Hashem has been very kind. I am now grateful for everything that He has given me.” Therefore she stopped giving birth. **Horav Baruch Mordechai Eizrachi, Shlita**, infers from *Ibn Ezra* that Leah caused her own inability to bear additional children. She claimed that she had had enough. Thus, she stopped conceiving and giving birth. Whether it is to be perceived as a punishment or reprimand -- or simply an educative lesson -- there seems to be a relationship between Leah’s expression of gratitude and her ceasing to give birth.

*Horav Eizrachi* explains that Leah’s offer of gratitude to Hashem was deficient and can, therefore, be viewed as sinful. In areas of the spirit, one never has enough. One should never be satisfied with what he has attained. Leah said she had had enough. Hashem responded: Enough. She had forgotten that it was not that long ago that she had prayed for a child. She had forgotten the elevated esteem she had experienced when she was blessed with a child. One never says to Hashem, “I have had enough of Your favors.” For, Hashem might just agree!

This explanation is not meant to denigrate Leah’s sense of *hakoras ha’tov*, appreciation. Certainly she had a remarkable sense of appreciation to the Almighty. The manner in which she expressed her gratitude, however, was lacking. Indeed, later on when she gave her maidservant, Zilpah, to Yaakov, she was blessed with more children. She realized that something was amiss, and she sought to correct it. Our overwhelming responsibility to grow spiritually demands that we are never satisfied with what we have already attained.