

"And he (Yaakov) also loved Rachel, more than Leah." (29:30)

Horav S.R. Hirsch, zl, notes the significance of the fact that *Klal Yisrael* was uniquely formed from two mothers who differed as much in character as in appearance. Leah was the one who felt herself placed somewhat in the background. Yet, she was chosen by Hashem to be the principal ancestress of His people. Her hope was to succeed in receiving mutual love from her husband, by virtue of being the requiem wife and mother. Always happy, she calmly accepted the vicissitudes of life's challenges. With every child, she hoped to add to the foundation of love, admiration and respect essential to a marriage. To paraphrase *Horav Hirsch*, "That which was denied to the bride and wife was fully given to the mother of his children." The tribes of the Jewish nation were conceived, born and raised in a home replete with warmth, love and happiness. Leah, who had been the sad one, was to experience the joy and happiness of a marriage and home, while Rachel, who had always been the cheerful one, was destined to a more serious life filled with anxiety. She appeared irritable and impatient in demanding "children" from Yaakov. She seems to have been destined to live a life of intensity and zeal. Her existence is regrettably brief - but abundant. These two personalities equally nourished a nation and inspired its character. The disparate natures of our Matriarchs are still reflected throughout the spectrum of the Jewish people.