



Rabbi Robinson (continued from page 1)

With this preface perhaps we could suggest that, while it is true that many great people proceeded Leah and gave thanks to Hashem, Leah was the first to thank Hashem for a seemingly everyday occurrence. Leah was able to appreciate that nothing can be taken for granted and all that happens is truly a miracle from Hashem. As the רמב"ן writes in *Parshas Bo*, the only difference between an open miracle (נס גלוי) and a hidden miracle (נס נסתר) is that one appears to be happening because of nature while one doesn't. Leah understood this point and gave her son a name that testifies forever that ה' is involved with every single aspect of this world and without ה' this world couldn't proceed.

We cannot let ourselves take for granted the little things in life. We cannot assume that things just happen because of nature or natural means. We must recognize that it is ה' who is involved in every intricate detail of our lives and therefore we must be grateful for not only the big occurrences in life but the "so to speak" small everyday occurrences as well.

With this in mind we can understand another seemingly strange statement from חז"ל brought down in רש"י in our Parsha. The פסוק tells us that when רחל gave birth to her first child she named him יוסף because "אספך אלקים את חרפתי". Rashi explains that when a couple is married without children anytime a vessel breaks or food is eaten the husband will automatically know that it was his wife's doing. But now that they have a child, the wife has someone to blame for these "crimes". Now this comment is puzzling on many levels, but perhaps the most puzzling aspect is, that after all the hardships רחל endured from being childless for all these years, THIS is what she is thanking ה' for?! This seemingly minute benefit a spouse gets when they have a child?!?! Perhaps we can suggest that רחל was thanking ה' for every benefit she got for having a son, even this minute small benefit. She was pronouncing to the whole world that one must be happy when having a child, not just for the more obvious and bigger benefits, but for the small ones as well.

May we grow in our עבודת ה' and strive to be like our אמהות and truly appreciate all the things that ה' gives us, both big and small.

Yehudah Auerbach (continued from page 1)

children. Yaakov had the *ruach hakodesh* to realize that when *klal yisrael*, his children and namesake, would travel into the long and dark *galus*, there would be many predators who would threaten the bodies of his children, but it was the foreign influences to the *haskafah*, religious thought, of *klal yisrael* which was what Yaakov was the most scared about, lest the thoughts and influences of the nations of the world and the אפיקורסים mix up and sway the ways of the Jews negatively. This is what Yaakov was thinking when he put the stones, the holy stones of the place of the *Beis Hamikdash*, around his head specifically, because this is the main source of *klal yisrael*, our holiness, devotion, and our religion; Yaakov needed to show a sign to the children that this is the most important part of our Jewish religion. The nations of the world can try to take our lives or homes or land, but as long as we still have *kedusha* and *tahara* in our heads and in our hearts, we will always be the true chosen nation. However, if we are swayed and we are influenced, then we are truly lost. That was the message that Yaakov was trying to convey to us, and this is how we must act.

## ב'דְחִילוּ ו'רְחִימוּ - WITH LOVE AND WITH AWE

Naftali Engel, 12th Grade

”ותאמר רחל נפתולי אלקים נפתלתי עם אחתי גם יכלתי ותקרא שמו נפתלי” (בראשית ל' ה')

“And Rachel said, ‘I have offered my lengthy prayers to G-d, and after my struggle my prayers were accepted as was my sister, I too have been successful’ and she named him Naftali.” (Beraishis 30:8)

Our sages taught, “Only three may be called patriarchs” (*Brachos 16b*) – Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov – because the spiritual qualities found in these three are found in every Jewish person. The twelve tribes, on the other hand, each had their own distinct qualities, but these are not found universally amongst all Jews. Thus the

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## STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

*Chezky Friedman, 12th Grade*

“*Shabbos* is not merely a day in the calendar- it is a reality of sanctification in time”

Rav Wolbe *zt”l* (*Alei shur* vol. 2), writes that there were people who had the ability to sense when *Shabbos* began without having to look at the clock. Such a person was the Alter of Kelm. Throughout the week the Alter`s face was white as a sheet. He was known to be very pale-looking, since he often felt physically weak. But on the holy *Shabbos*, his face returned to health and vibrancy. There was such a drastic difference that his *talmidim* would say that they felt as if they had a holier *Rebbe* with them every *Shabbos*. The Alter actually said about himself that he felt uplifted and a special sanctity when *Shabbos* came in at the end of a long hard week, unlike the rest of us who need to glance at our watches for the candle-lighting time. Similarly, Rav Yeruchom Levovitz`s appearance changed on *Shabbos* to the degree that a student, who had seen him for the first time earlier in the week, and then again on *Shabbos*, thought that there was a new *Mashgiach* in the *Yeshiva*.

*Hashem* has given us a great gift, the gift of *Shabbos*. There are so many ways that we can forget about it and just brush it away, go through a *Shabbos* without feeling a change, thinking to ourselves that it`s just another day. “*Hashem* blessed the seventh day and sanctified it” (*Bereishis 2: 3*) and He turned it into an entity of holiness that can be felt and experienced by certain righteous ones. We have the opportunity to uplift ourselves on *Shabbos*, let us not forsake this incredible gift, let us embrace it, cherish it, and most importantly let ourselves be uplifted by it.

*B`dchilu U`rchuimu (continued from page 2)*

forefathers represent the general source of Jewish spirituality whereas the tribes highlight more specific features. As we pass from the general to the specific, emphasis on detail becomes more important. Therefore the name of each tribe is explained in the Torah in contrast to the patriarchs whose names are never formally explained – since each tribe has its own quality, we take the time to emphasize those qualities as we should emphasize the good qualities in every Jew. This sheds light on why it was the mothers, not Yaakov, who named each child, for it is the mother who nurtures the specific features of a child, so too the more detailed spiritual features of our nation were defined by the matriarchs. (*Likutei Sichos vol.10, p.96ff*)

The letters of the name *נפתלי* contain many of the same letters as the word *תפילה*, prayer. When we consider that the name *נפתלי* comes from the same root as the word *פתיל* (cord), we understand that prayer is the main devotion that binds us to *Hashem*. *Rashi* says Naftali comes from the same root as *Niftalti* (*נפתלתי*) which means – I struggled. This even more alludes to the concept of *Tefillah*, for it is a struggle to be persistent in your prayers to G-d; when one`s prayers are not answered, one may feel no one is listening but persistence is key, one must struggle and be persistent and then his prayers will be answered, as were Rachel`s. (*Likutey Moharan II, 84*) (*Likutey Halakhos I,p.80ff*)

A *Tzaddik* causes himself to rise in holiness, for words that come from the heart enter the heart. Prayers that originate from the heart are so holy that after they enter the heavens they are returned even stronger and holier back into the heart, giving that person an added dimension of holiness. “There was a ladder set on the ground, and its top reached the heavens.” – the ladder represents the prayers that rise from the ground – from lowly places – heavenward. First the ladder is set low on the ground, meaning that we must first examine ourselves and realize we are lowly compared to the Almighty – undeserving of all the blessing He gives us – we must become humbled. Then it reaches heavenward, symbolizing how we must then contemplate the exaltedness of the Almighty. Through this, a person`s prayers, his angels, ascend to heaven on the ladder. (*Avos 4:13* tells us that prayer and *Mitzvos* create “Advocates” [Angels] for us to *Hashem*.) Once his Angels ascend they become more powerful and holier and when they return to the person praying they instill in him their added holiness, adding to his holiness. (*MiPeninei Noam Elimelech, The Ladder Reaching The Heavens*)

In this issue we will briefly discuss the issue of long hair and how it relates to a *chatzitzah* – separation – for one’s *tefillin shel rosh*. Being that the complete sugya is beyond the scope of a Halacha Corner, we will simply present the “*roshei perakim*” and relevant sources.

The *Shulchan Aruch* [O.C. 27:4] clearly states that “there should not be anything that is *chotzetz* between one’s *tefillin* and his flesh; both for his *tefillin shel yad* and for his *tefillin shel rosh*.” (The *Ram”a* there, adds that this only applies to the *batim* and not the *retzuos*).

The *Mishna Berura* [27:15] quotes a *Machtzis HaShekel* who states the following: “It is upsetting to me that I see certain individuals who grow their bangs long. Aside from the fact that it is haughty and arrogant...there is an *isur* involved when putting on *tefillin*... that they are *chotzetz*.” The *Mishna Berura* adds that even without it serving as a *chatzitzah*, one’s long hair prevents him from ensuring that the *tefillin* are placed properly.

In extenuating circumstances, there is an opinion amongst the *rishonim* [*Rashb”a* and *Ra”n*] that one’s hair does not serve as a *chatzitzah* (either because the *isur* of *chatzitzah* only applies to the *tefillin shel yad* or because hair falls into the permitted category of “*min b’mino*”). However, it seems that most contemporary *poskim* do not *paskin* like this *shitah*. [See *Shu”t Yechaveh Da’as 2:2* for a lengthy discussion on this and the “side concern” that having long hair in the first place is a violation of “*u’v’chukoseihem lo seileichu*.”]

Regardless, all *poskim* agree that one must not “fold back” his bangs and place his *tefillin* on them, as this would definitely be deemed a *chatzitzah* and would be problematic regarding fulfilling the *mitzvah* of *tefillin* and regarding reciting a *bracha l’vatalah*. [*Aruch HaShulchan 27:14; Kitzur Shulcahn Aruch 10:6; Ben Ish Chai, Parshas Chayei Sarah 5*]

Not to be relied upon for *p’sak halacha*.

## Geshmake Gemmatrios

Yehudah Auerbach, 12th Grade

- In the very beginning of the *parsha*, Yaakov leaves Be’er Shevah to Charan. *Rashi* asks why the *pasuk* had to mention Yaakov’s departure. He answers that when a *Tzaddik* leaves a town he makes an impression. *Rashi* says “יציא משם פנה הודיה, פנה זיוה, פנה הדרה”, “When he leaves, the magnificence has gone a way, the splendor has gone away, the grandeur has gone away.” The *Steipler Gaon* brings a magnificent allusion to this. The words “מבאר שבע” “פנה הודיה, פנה זיוה, פנה הדרה” are the exact same in numerical value as the words “פנה הדרה”.
- When the night came, Yaakov rested on a mountain. *Rashi* comments that this mountain was none other than *Har Hamoria*, the mountain upon which the *Beis Hamikdash* would eventually be built. The words “במקום וילך שם” “in the place and he laid there”, are the exact numerical equivalent of the words “בהר הבית”, “on *Har Habayis*.”
- After he fell asleep, Yaakov had his famous and prophetic dream about the ladder and *Malachim* going up and down it. The *Ba’al Haturim* alludes to the fact that this was through a *נבואה*. The word “חלום” is equal to the number 84. 84 is the same numerical value as the word “בנבואה”, “through prophecy.”
- Yaakov finally arrives at the house of Lavan, the brother of Rivkah. Lavan was one of the biggest swindlers of all time. In fact, the *Ba’al Haturim* points out that when Yaakov arrived Lavan ran out to greet him. The *Ba’al Haturim* mentions that the *gemmatria* of the words “ויחבק לו וינשק לו” “and he hugged him and he kissed him”, is the same as the words “חבקו לגזל מה שעליו”, He hugged him to steal what he (Yaakov) had on him.”



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