



Adapted from the sefer חמין במוצאי שבת and חדוותא דזעיר אנפין collections of maamarim given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Seuda Shlishis and Melave Malka

Melave Malka Parshas Vayeitzei 5773

The *Midrash Rabbah* on this week's Parsha (ע"א:ח), elaborates on Rachel Imeinu's explanation for choosing the name Naftali.

ותאמר רחל נפתולי אלקים נפתלתי עם אחתי גם זכלתי ותקרא שמו נפתלי.

ותאמר רחל נפתולי אלהים נפתלתי וגו' (בראשית ל, ח). . אמר רבי יוחנן נינפה היה לי לעשות לפני אחותי, אלו שלחתי ואמרתי לו תן דעתך שהן מרמים בך לא היה פורש, אלא אמרתי אם אין אני כדאי שיבנה העולם ממני, יבנה מאחותי.

“R. Yochanan explained (Rachel Imeinu's words), “I was meant to be a *kallah* before my sister. Had I sent a message (to Yaakov Avinu) telling him that he was being tricked, would he not have left (the wedding)? Instead, I said, ‘if I am not worthy of having the world built from me, let it be built from my sister.’”

Everything Rachel Imeinu did was purely for the sake of her Creator. Even though as a *neviah*, she knew that by marrying Yaakov she would become the mother of Am Yisrael, when she saw that sending a message to Yaakov, would embarrass her sister Leah, she stepped aside.

Later in the *parsha*, she went even further, by giving her maidservant Bilha to Yaakov. Once again, she said, “If I am not worthy of having the world built from me, let it be built, not only from my sister, but from my maidservant Bilha”. Nothing forced her to take that step. It was a choice she made willingly and happily. As the *mefarshim* explain, when Naftali was born, she declared נפתולי אלוקים נפתלתי עם אחתי, meaning that she now felt equal to her sister in building Am Yisrael.



[1]

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It is difficult for us to understand her statement. How can Bilha giving birth to a son, while Rachel remained barren, compare to Leah who gave birth to four sons of her own? It can only be explained by realizing that Rachel didn't think about her own personal benefit at all. She viewed her sister's four sons with *ayin tovah*. She certainly wanted to have the *zechus* of participating in the process that would bring forth the twelve *shevatim* who would make up Am Yisrael. When Naftali was born from her maidservant, Rachel was overjoyed to have a part in the process, even though she still hadn't given birth to a child of her own.

Rachel's *midah* of *ayin tovah* influenced the essential nature of Naftali. We find that the Torah portrays him as someone who exemplifies *ayin tovah*. In Moshe Rabeinu's *brachos* to the *shevatim* (דברים ל"ג:כ"ג) we find: וְלִנְפֹתָלִי אָמַר נְפֹתָלִי שְׂבַע רְצוֹן וַיְמַלֵּא בְרַכְתָּהּ ה' (פיסקא שני"ה ד"ה ולנפתלי) explained as praising Naftali for being *sameach b'chelko* - happy in his lot. That *midah* can only be found in a person who has *ayin tovah* towards everyone and everything around him, constantly thanking and praising Hashem for everything he has. That is why Yaakov Avinu describes him in his *brachos* (בראשית מ"ט:כ"א) as הַנִּתֵּן אֲמָרֵי שִׁפְרָה - one who says beautiful words of thanks and praise.

Rachel Imeinu, whose *midah* of *ayin tovah* enabled her to act exclusively *l'shem shamayim*, imbued Naftali and the *shevet* that descended from him with that *midah* of *ayin tovah* and selflessness.

I heard from Rav Shlomo Atik zt"l one of *gedolei ziknei Yerushalayim*, a lesson taught by the Imrei Emes zy"l. The Gemara in Maseches Chulin (צ"א:) explains that the stones which Yaakov Avinu placed around his head, each said "I want the Tzadik to rest his head on me". Each stone's desire was so strong that a miracle occurred and all of the separate stones were merged into one stone. The Imrei Emes asked, "Once the laws of nature were going to be overturned in order for this miracle to take place, why weren't the stones transformed into a comfortable pillow, instead of simply becoming a large rock?"



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He answered that the miracle came about as a response to the deep yearning of the stones. If the stones had cared about the comfort of the *tzadik*, they would indeed have been transformed into a pillow. However, their request was self-centered. עלי יניח צדיק את ראשו - each stone simply wanted the honor of serving as the headrest of the *tzadik*, and didn't care about the comfort of the *tzadik* himself.

The *avodah* of performing actions only *l'shem shamayim*, is a long and difficult process. A person naturally wants to publicize his good deeds. He wants people to know and admire him. Even when he gives *tzedakah* anonymously, he hopes that someone will notice his generosity.

אם לא עכשיו אימתי? - If not now when? Each of us should commit to at least trying not to spend all day thinking about ourselves. Instead, we should do what we can to help others, and to consistently think about what more we can do to help people. It doesn't have to be grandiose. Even simple assistance is a form of this special *avodah*.

Anyone who was somewhat close to my grandfather zy" a, discovered that he never focused on himself. Everything he did was *l'shem shamayim*, and the *midah* of *ayin tova* was ingrained in his very being. That explains his constant state of *simchah*. His *simchah* went beyond the level of חייב אדם לברך על הרעה כשם שמברך על הטובה - A person is obligated to say a *brachah* on the negative in the same way that he says a *brachah* on the positive. He followed the footsteps of his ancestor Rav Zusha of Anipoli, who famously said that couldn't advise people how to respond to רעה, because he never experienced it. He constantly thanked Hashem for טובה, because he experienced life as an ongoing טובה with no discernable רעה.

This *middah* is also the secret of Naftali's speed. In Yaakov Avinu's *brachos* he is described as נפתלי אילה שלוחה - a swift deer. Someone who is *sameach b'chelko*, happy with his lot, is also light of foot. In our Parshah, the Torah says, וישא יעקב רגליו, (בראשית כ"ט:א) - Yaakov raised his feet. Rashi explains, that when Yaakov received the good tidings that he was



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promised protection, his heart lifted his feet and he was able to walk swiftly.

In the merit of my grandfather zy”a, the merit of David Hamelech a”h, and the merit of *koach harabim*, we will achieve the goal of performing our actions *l’shem shamayim*. ועיי”כ נזכה ל”מלא ברכת ה' ושבע רצון' אכי”ר.



[4]

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