

CHILDREN'S PRAYER

By Ozer Bergman

"Leah conceived and bore a son ... and bore a son ... and bore a son ... and bore a son; Bilhah conceived and bore Yaakov a son ... a second son; Zilpah ... bore Yaakov a son ... bore Yaakov a second son; Leah bore Yaakov a fifth son ... a sixth son to Yaakov; God remembered Rachel ... she conceived and bore a son" (Genesis 29:32–30:22).

With the exception of Binyamin, the birth of each of Yaakov's sons, the Tribes, is recorded in this week's *parashah*. Thus, the chart on the next page. God willing, it will enhance your *Shemoneh Esrei*. First, I want to point out that the *Avot* (Patriarchs) were each named by God (Genesis 17:5, 19; 25:26 [see Rashi], and 35:10). The Tribes, however, were named by the Matriarchs (who "happened" to be their mothers!), Leah *Imeinu* and Rachel *Imeinu*. (Again, Binyamin excepted.)

Each of us has to "pray with the *Avot*." This means we have to pray with rapture, a la Avraham *Avinu*; with discipline, a la Yitzchak *Avinu*; and we should pray in order to unite the Holy Blessed One and the *Shekhinah*, a la Yaakov *Avinu*.

The central part of our daily prayers is the *Shemoneh Esrei*, and the central part of the *Shemoneh Esrei* is the twelve middle blessings. These blessings are inclusive of all prayers and requests. Our Sages formulated the twelve blessings to parallel the twelve sons of Yaakov. Why? Of the *Avot*, Yaakov *Avinu* achieved the highest level of prayer. This is indicated by the fact that each of his children maintained faith in God and did not revert to idolatry (which was not the case with the children of Avraham *Avinu* and Yitzchak *Avinu*). This was due to the Divine union that he made with his prayers.

A gutn Shabbos!
Shabbat Shalom!

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SIDEPATH

Why is there depression, sadness and suffering? Our Sages teach: Whoever mourns Jerusalem will yet share in its rejoicing (*Ta'anit* 30b). Without experiencing sorrow and mourning, there is no way for us to appreciate its opposite. We have nothing with which to compare our happiness. Therefore we must experience suffering. Only then can we know the true taste of joy. And because some sadness and suffering are necessary, Rebbe Nachman urges us to strive for joy. We have to use all our strength to attain happiness, since only by being happy will we have the necessary faith, courage and strength to face our sorrows and burdens and overcome them.

Reb Noson once wrote to Reb Ozer of Uman: I heard that you are very, very religious. I heard from Rebbe Nachman that the main thing is joy ... and [being] religious, too! (*Aveneha Barzel*, p.63).

PARASHAH PEARLS

By Chaim Kramer

28:12 A ladder was standing on earth with its top reaching the heavens

The Three Points

The ladder in Jacob's dream alludes to three concepts. The lower point is the student, who must be firmly grounded in order to receive his master's teachings. The upper point is the master, whose lofty teachings can inspire even those who are mired in earthly, materialistic pursuits. The ladder itself, stretching between the two, reflects the teachings of the master and the channel through which the student can draw down those teachings (LH III, p. 56).

30:8 She named him Naphtali

We Must Be Persistent In Our Prayers

NaFTaLi (נפתלי) comes from the same root as *NiFTaLti* (נפתלתי, I wrestled or I struggled) (Rashi).

This concept is similar to *TeFiLah* (תפילה, prayer), for one must struggle and be persistent in praying to God when he has not yet received the answers to his petition. Eventually, his prayers will be answered, as were Rachel's (LH I, p. 80a-160-81a).

30:24 She named him Joseph, saying, "May God add to me another son"

The Tzaddik Always Serves God Anew

Joseph (יוסף, *YoSeF*) earns the title of "tzaddik" because he constantly adds (יוסיף, *mOSiF*) freshness to his devotions. Every day he wants God to see him as a "new" son. This verse also implies that the tzaddik continually works to bring new souls back to God (LH II, p. 77a-154).

30:32 I will go through all your flocks today

A Person Falls Due To Avarice

Jacob represents the tzaddik who transmits the Torah in its pure form for the benefit of others. Laban represents the charlatan who studies Torah in order to gain honor, wealth and other material benefits for himself. The battle between Jacob and Laban is the prototype for all future battles between the true tzaddikim and false leaders who present themselves as paradigms of Torah, yet are lacking in all the necessary qualities. This explains why Jacob's main battle with Laban was over the sheep. The sheep—Laban's wealth—were taken away from him and given over to Jacob, for a person's lust for wealth and personal gain cause him to fall in stature (LH V, p. 269a).

THE 12 MIDDLE BLESSINGS OF THE SHEMONEH ESREI

Blessing #	Blessing Name	Blessing Topic	Tribe	Connection
4	<i>Atah Chonen</i>	Da'at/Awareness	Reuven	Reuven's name is based on the Hebrew word for seeing. In the Torah, the word "seeing" often refers to having wisdom and spiritual awareness.
5	<i>Hashiveinu</i>	Return to God	Shimon	Shimon's name is based on the Hebrew word for "hearing." When she named him, Leah <i>Imeinu</i> explained that God "heard" she was despised. Before a person returns to God, his willful sins make him despised to God and himself. He asks God to hear that he is despised and "assist me to return to You."
6	<i>Selach Lanu</i>	Forgiveness	Levi	The descendants of Levi, the Levites and <i>Kohanim</i> , were involved in the offering of the Temple sacrifices. The sacrifices brought forgiveness to their owners.
7	<i>Re'eh Na</i>	Redemption	Yehudah	Mashiach, Israel's righteous redeemer, is Yehudah's descendant.
8	<i>Refa'einu</i>	Healing	Yissakhar	The Tribe of Yissakhar was outstanding in its dedication to Torah study (<i>Yoma</i> 26a). Torah study is a panacea (<i>Proverbs</i> 3:8).
9	<i>Bareikh Aleinu</i>	Livelihood	Zevulun	The mission of the Tribe of Zevulun was to provide material support so that the Tribe of Yissakhar could study Torah (<i>Bereishit Rabbah</i> 99:9). Therefore they needed this blessing.
10	<i>Teka b'Shofar</i>	Ingathering of Exiles	Dan	The Danites brought up the rear when the Israelites traveled across the desert. Their mission was to gather all that had been lost, especially all the spiritual potential that had been lost due to immorality as a result of Amalek's influence.
11	<i>Hashivah</i>	Peaceful Justice	Naftali	Members of the Tribe of Naftali were excellent arbitrators and mediators (<i>Bereishit Rabbah</i> 98:17). Conflict resolution was their specialty.
12	<i>V'I'Malshinim</i>	Purging Atheism	All	The common thread of all the other blessings is to conquer atheism and the control evil has over people. This includes a person's own attitude of haughtiness, which is akin to idolatry.
13	<i>Al HaTzaddikim</i>	Welfare of Sages and Elders	Yosef	Yosef is known as Yosef <i>HaTzaddik</i> . (Sorry, but that's all Reb Noson says!)
14	<i>V'I'Yerushalayim</i>	God's Return to Jerusalem	Binyamin	In the Land of Israel, the city of Jerusalem is located in the province of the Tribe of Binyamin.
15	<i>Et Tzemach David</i>	Bringing Redemption	Gad	Elijah the Prophet is a member of the Tribe of Gad. Not only will he announce the coming of the Mashiach, he will also perform many of the actions needed for Mashiach to arrive and begin his reign. (May it be soon, in our lifetime! Amen!)
16	<i>Shema Koleinu</i>	Hear Our Prayers	Asher	When she named Asher, Leah <i>Imeinu</i> said, "Women will deem me <i>asher</i> , fortunate" (<i>Genesis</i> 30:13). When God answers Jewish prayers, the world deems us fortunate: " <i>Ashrei</i> , fortunate is the people for whom this is so, <i>ashrei</i> the people that God is their God" (<i>Psalms</i> 144:15).

Based on *Likutey Halakhot, Tefilah* 5:2-3

THIS WAY UP

By Yossi Katz

Rebbe Nachman used to say, “If God wanted to serve Himself, He wouldn’t have needed us!”

God created this world specifically in order for us human beings to arouse ourselves and serve Him. But try as we may, our evil inclinations constantly get the better of us. Were it not for the Divine assistance that we receive, it would be completely impossible for us to prevail. This is the ultimate paradox and something that we can never truly understand. Nevertheless, God calls out to each and every one of us: “Make Me a tiny opening and I will open up wide to you!” It is our job to take that first baby step, but each step will directly trigger a powerful dose of Heavenly assistance.

Jacob was told by his parents to journey and search for a wife. Since Isaac had viewed the local Canaanite population as being unfit for marriage purposes, Jacob traveled from his father’s house in Beersheba in the south of Israel to Charan in Turkey, where his mother’s relatives lived.

After arriving in Charan, Jacob thought to himself, “Maybe I passed by the place my forefather prayed at and I didn’t stop there?” He turned back and God said, “I will bring Mount Moriah (the place of the Temple) directly to him” (Rashi on Genesis 28:17). Jacob had already passed this place on the way to Charan, but only now, when he initiated an interest in praying there, did God transplant Mount Moriah to him. Jacob now begun to fathom how powerful our efforts down here truly are. Even if we are on the way to distant places like Turkey, if we turn back towards God, God will turn over Heaven and earth to reach us.

“He encountered the place (Mount Moriah) and spent the night there because *the sun had set*”—Jacob saw the place of the eternal Third Temple, but went to sleep because of the length of

the long and bitter exile that we must endure before it is built. Remembering that even when things are bleak, our efforts are extremely powerful, Jacob used that opportunity to establish the Evening Prayer service (*Chullin* 91b).

“He took from the stones of that place and put them around his head”—these are the downtrodden sparks and souls. Jacob connected them to his thought process. “And he lay down in that place”—Jacob lowered himself to their place and to all the distant places, in order to pick up and elevate them. “He

God returns our interest, with interest

dreamed, and behold! A ladder was standing on earth and its top reached the heavens”—Jacob saw that we must try to reach all the way to the heavens in order to perfect even the heavenly worlds. “Angels of God ascended and descended on it”—the angels going up represent us doing our part and trying to come close to God. This effort creates new angels in Heaven, and then these new angels descend to help us.

“Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, ‘Surely God is in this place, and I did not know.’” Jacob’s vision had now come full circle. As great as Jacob was, even he hadn’t realized in the beginning how great Mount Moriah was. It wasn’t until he turned back that he came to understand this. Truly, there is no place distant from God; even if we think we are far, we are mistaken. God showed Jacob that if we do what we can, He will come to us. So many times we think that we have fallen away when, in actuality, we are being tested in order to elevate us to a new level of closeness. God is always here waiting for us. It’s up to us to take the first step.

Based on *Likutey Halakhot*,
Hilkhos Matanah 5

KITZUR L”M WEEKLY

17 — “It happened as they emptied their sacks” (Genesis 42:35) (*continued*)

15. The revelation of the light of the tzaddik—by which a person merits to know about him and to understand, to taste and to see his great light—[all] depends on the level of perfection of a person’s deeds and the purification of his intellect. The main factors responsible for a clouded mind and intellect are only the instruments of action, since improper deeds debilitate and ruin the intellect, God forbid. The primary way to rectify the instruments of action is [to give] charity, which depends on “action,” as alluded to in the verse, “And the action of charity brings peace” (Isaiah 32:17). Through giving charity, the light of the intellect is perfected, too, and then a person merits to see the light of the tzaddik and to receive fear and love of God from him.

16. Blemishes in the altar are corrected through converts. For all the power that idolatry possesses comes from blemishes in parts of the altar—[namely,] from the holy sparks of the altar that fell to that [idolatrous] place. When each convert casts off his own faith and follows the Jewish faith, he thereby subjugates idolatry which derives from blemishes in parts of the altar, and the sparks from parts of the altar return to their place. Then the altar—which is likened to a person’s table (*Berakhot* 55a)—is once again without defect; in other words, a person merits to eat with the proper holiness.



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