

“Hashem saw that Leah was unloved...but Rachel remained barren.” (29:31)

What relationship exists between the fact that Hashem saw that Leah was not loved and Rachel's infertility? The *Alter, z.l., m'Kelm* explains that it was specifically Leah's feeling of being hated that catalyzed Rachel's barrenness. Leah did so much – she should not have had to feel that her entrance into the Patriarchal home was under question. Rachel should have done everything within her power to assuage her feelings of guilt. This is enigmatic. We are referring here to Rachel *Imeinu* who relinquished her right to marry Yaakov first, just so that her sister would not be humiliated. She suffered in silence on her sister's wedding night. Was her reaction to her sister's apparent success as a wife and mother not slightly atypical in light of her previous act of courage and selflessness? How did she survive the feelings of hurt, humiliation and envy on her sister's wedding night – the night that was supposed to be hers – and nonetheless fall prey to pettiness as reflected in her inability to assuage Leah in her moment of shame?

Horav Nosson Wachtfogel, z.l., explains that it is not uncommon for a person to be able to triumph over a major challenge and still fall prey to the “little things,” the simple challenges. There are *talmidim*, students, who travel far, demonstrating great *mesiras nefesh*, self sacrifice, in order to attend a *yeshivah* which has an excellent reputation. Yet, these same students cannot withstand the simple pressures which confront them daily.

Man is by nature competitive, so that he will, therefore, excel in an area in which he must triumph over a challenge. Thus, the greater the challenge the more likely it is that he will conjure up the forces from within to overcome this challenge. *Rav Nosson* attributes man's preoccupation with the world of sports to this phenomenon. Indeed, if team sports did not involve two sides, one competing against the other, the whole “life” of the game would disappear.

In the battle to triumph over the forces of evil, Yaakov *Avinu* was selected to lead the fight. He was called *Yisrael*, denoting his ability to “have striven with the Divine and with man and have overcome.” It was for this reason that Yaakov's archrival, Eisav, initiated their struggle – even in the womb. When Yaakov passed from this world, so did Eisav, because Eisav's sole purpose in this world was to be Yaakov's combatant, his opponent. When Yaakov left this world, Eisav's purpose in life also ceased to exist.