Points to Ponder

Chayeii Sarah 5780

**שְׁנֵ֖י חַיֵּ֥י שָׂרָֽה These were the years of the life of Sarah (23:1)** - The **Shelah Hakadosh** writes that from the Zohar it is apparent that one who makes himself small in this world will be great in the world to come. However, one who makes himself big in this world will be shrunk in the world to come. He notes a hint to this in that we go from the plural Shanim when we note the small number and the larger number 100 we use the world Shana. **Rav Don Segel Shlita** wondered why it was that we learn this lesson in this Possuk? He answers that when the entire Possuk is completed we repeat the years in total to show that they were all good. How does one achieve all years being good? The answer is that when someone creates an internal locus of control, a internal sense of consistency that is not shifted by outside events, then no test can sway the person.

**יָּ֨קָם֙ אַבְרָהָ֔ם מֵעַ֖ל פְּנֵ֣י מֵת֑וֹ וAvraham got up from his departed (23:3)** - The Midrash comments that the Satan made sure to regularly blame him for Sarah’s death in order to get Avraham to regret participating in the Akaida. **Rav Dovid Povarsky ztl.** points out that we see how the Yetzer HaRa does not give a person a moment’s rest. After passing the test of the Akaida which the Satan tried to thwart, You’d think Avraham would have defeated Satan or at least earned a break from him. Rav Dovid explains that this would not be so...and the Satan keep to his regular regimen.

**שִֽׂים־נָ֥א יָֽדְךָ֖ תַּ֥חַת יְרֵכִֽי Place your hand under my thigh (24:3)** - Why does Avraham request Eliezer to do this? I thought taking something holy was unique to a Shuvas Hadayanim? Why the stress here? **Rav Schachter Shlita** suggested that the decision of who was going to be a matriarch of the Jewish people was going to be a serious decision with the ramifications of the level of a Shevuas HaDayanim that is able to be compelled. **Rav Soloveitchik ztl.** noted that Kohein Gadol’s Shevuah too, was so important, it was able to be compelled like the Shevuas HaDayanim and our Shevuah.

**אֹתָ֤הּ הֹכַ֨חְתָּ֙ This is the proof that she is the one you selected (24:14)** - Eliezer’s request that Hashem make his job easy is difficult to understand. Is this the proper way to find a Shidduch? **Rav Nosson Wachtfogel ztl** explains that Hashem built the world on Chessed. Chessed is that the other person has all of his needs taken care of, fully. Hence, Adam had it all in Gan Eden (According to the Gemara <Sanhedrin 59b> , he even had Malachim roasting meat and making wine for him). This was Eliezer’s Tefillah -- That Avraham be Zoche to the same treatment of Chessed that the world was built on.

**גַּ֤ם לִגְמַלֶּ֨יךָ֙ אֶשְׁאָ֔ב She said drink and I will also give water to your camels (24:19**) - What is the unique Chessed of giving water to a thirsty person? Many would give water to the thirsty man? **Rav Eliyahu Dushnitzer ztl** (Menahel of Lomza Yeshiva) explained that the greatness in her action is that she was willing to give the camels to drink. There were a large number of camels and camels in need of water can drink many, many gallons of water each. Despite the major undertaking of waiting for each one, Rivka told Eliezer that on her own she would give each camel his needs. That is what Chessed is about -- offering to take care of the other’s need, offering to take full responsibility for that need personally and taking care of the other’s need fully -- no matter the time cost.

**בּ֖וֹא בְּר֣וּךְ Come blessed one of Hashem (24:31) -** Elsewhere, Rashi (24:39) notes that as a Canaanite, Eliezer’s daughter could not marry Yitzchak since she was Arur and he Baruch. How does Lavan refer to Eliezer as Baruch? **Rav Menachem Genack Shlita** noted that since Eliezer was doing Shlichus for Avraham, and Avraham is the Mekor haBeracha, Eliezer takes on the status of Baruch for the duration of the mission.

**אַחַ֖ר תֵּלֵֽךְ Afterward you will go (24:55)** - The Gemara (Nedarim 37b) calls these words part of a group known as Ittur Sofrim which are Halacha L’Moshe M’Sinai. The only question is, what is the intention of this classification? **Rav Yonasan Sacks Shlita**  noted that this is really a Machlokes -- The Ran notes that when the wording in the possuk is extended and unnecessary, written in order to beautify the concept, this is Ittur Sofrim. The Rosh argues that Ittur Sofrim is actually the opposite -- when you CUT the language down to make it shorter. Meiri notes that both cannot be true because we cannot imagine the Torah being extended or cut for mere beauty. Thus, he assumes Ittur Sofrim has to do with the Trup. Radvaz cannot figure out what the role of the Sofrim versus that of Halacha L’Moshe M’Sinai really is. He explains that it is a major problem to think that the Rabbis made any change to the Torah. The writings of the Torah are L’Moshe M’Sinai and the slightly “different” style of language has been checked by the Sofrim and is indeed as the way that the original was received.

**Haftarah: וְגַם־ה֚וּא טֽוֹב־תֹּ֙אַר֙ מְאֹ֔ד He was good looking and was next in line after Avshalom (Melachim Alef: 1:6)** - Adoniyahu identifies 2 reasons why he should be the next king -- that he was chronologically appropriate and that he was good looking. Why are these important? **Rav Zvi Schvigger Shlita (Ram Bnei Akiva Netanya)** notes that good looks are an expression of externalities. If someone looks the part it might lead him and followers to believe that he IS the part. Nothing could be further from the truth. To be a Melech Yisrael one needs to have the internal criteria to properly fit the bill. Indeed Shmuel thought Yishai’s oldest -- Eliav --- was worthy of being king but Hashem was not interested. This habit continued even until Adoniyahu and it caused much of the drama of the Haftara.