

And the days of Sarah were 127 (23:1) – The Midrash tells the story of Rabbi Akiva who saw his students falling asleep in the Shiur. Intending on waking them up, he asked them to explain the merit of Esther that allowed her to reign over 127 nations. He explained that it was in the merit of Sarah who lived 127 years. What is the connection between Esther and Sarah? And why would this connection wake the students of Rabbi Akiva? **Rav Asher Weiss Shlita quoted the Chidushei HaRim** who explains that Rabbi Akiva was trying to teach them not to sleep when not necessary because each moment left to sleep costs a person an entire city. **Rav Chanoch Henoch of Sasov** adds that he wanted to raise them meaning he wanted even their mundane activities to be utilized for higher, loftier goals.

The years of Sarah (23:1) – **Rashi** explains that all her days were equally Tov. Is that really true? How can one compare the time Sarah spent in the company of her husband with the time spent in Avimelech's palace or Pharaoh's. **Rav Yitzchok Sorotzkin ztl.** explained that Sarah Imeinu set a purpose in her life—namely to popularize and publicize the name of Hashem in the world. Anything she did or experienced was part of that mission and as such, the days were all equal in goodness.

The children of Cheit responded (23:5) – **The Midrash** notes that this section mentions the children of Cheit 10 times paralleling the 10 commandments. The midrash adds that one learns the need to examine his purchases and acquisitions in the same way that one fulfills the 10 commandments. **Rav Nissan Alpert ztl.** explains that the cycle of life carries ups and downs. One needs to be able to handle that cycle and everyday life with the same grounding that one finds in the Aseres HaDibbros.

Place your hand under my thigh (24:1) – **Rashi** explains that he wanted Eliezer to hold his Bris. However, that explanation seems strange. The thigh is not a Cheftza Shel Kedusha like the Mezuzah, Tefillin or Sefer Torah. (See Shavuos 47b) What does holding it there do? **Rav Mordechai Gifter ztl.** explained that Milah is different because it is like a Sefer – the Sefer HaBris – hence one can perform it despite the fact that it causes pain and it can be done on Shabbos in the proper time – for it is an Os -- not simply something that you do. **Rabbi Dr. Sol Roth Shlita** often explained that a Bris is a unique Mitzva for it is the very mark that makes a person into a walking Sefer Torah – by making him Jewish.

And she will say “drink and I will also give your camels to drink” (24:14) – What kind of test is this? What does it prove? **Rav Wolbe ztl.** explains that the attribute of Chessed is about giving beyond -- without boundaries or limits merely because one wants to give. This is what Eliezer saw in Rivka and saw as essential in a matriarch of the Jewish people.

And they send Rivka and her Nursemaid (24:59) – Why point out that they sent her nursemaid? Why was she so important to the trip? **Rav Moshe Tzvi Neriah ztl.** explains that Devorah was no ordinary nursemaid. Her job was to be the pedagogue who would teach & guide Rivka in spiritual matters. She was the one who possessed the stories and the traditions that guide life and it was she who was to be entrusted with the ability to transmit them. It is for that reason that Rivka later sent her to Yaakov as well.

Yitzchak went out to speak in the field (24:62) – The Talmud tells us that in the Beis HaMikdash, each day they waited until the sunlight was visible over Chevron before offering the Korban HaTamid. The Chassidische commentaries explain that was the case because we want to utilize the merits of the Yesheinei Chevron. **Rav Soloveitchik ztl.** pointed out that the Talmud explained Tefillos were established

by the Avos. That is the Heter we have to daven in the first place. It is more than just utilizing a symbol – they are the basis of the practice. **Rav Schachter Shlita** added that Yitzchak had a different experience than Avraham. Avraham was an optimistic person and lived a life like his Tefillah time – at the morning when optimism reigns. Yitzchak lived in more constrained times and had his Tefillah of Mincha whose time is reminiscent of the Tefillah itself as well. It comes at a point of realizing reality, like the way Yitzchak lived. Our Tefillah merely follows their model.

Haftorah: And King David was getting old (Kings I, 1:1) – The description of the trial and challenge of the Haftorah sharply contrast the description of the same period of time in Divrei Hayamim. How do we explain the calm there in contrast to the description here? **Rav Yigal Ariel** suggests that the 2 works examine the world in two different ways. The description in Divrei HaYamim is from a nationalistic perspective. From that angle Dovid appointed Shlomo and that was the end of the story. However, Sefer Melachim highlights the involvement of Hashgacha in even the individual sections of life. Dovid made a choice – he could have left the throne to be determined naturally but like Avraham and Yitzchak who when they were Ba Bayamim – prepared for the future to make sure that there were no challenges to Hashem's will, Dovid chose the same ensuring that his Melucha remain strong forever.