

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON PARSHAS CHAYEI SARA - 5757

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ohr@jer1.co.il "parasha-qa@jer1.co.il" Parsha Q&A - Chayei Sarah

* PARSHA Q&A * In-Depth Questions on the Parsha and Rashi's

commentary. Parshas Chayei Sarah

Parsha Questions

1. Name the four couples buried in Kiryat Arba.
2. What did Sarah hear that caused her death?
3. What title of honor did the B'nei Ches bestow upon Avraham?
4. Where was Avraham born?
5. How were Avraham's camels distinguished?
6. What is meant by "all the good of his master in his hand"?
7. What special character trait did Eliezer seek when choosing a wife for Yitzchak?
8. Why did Avraham's servant, Eliezer, run toward Rivka?
9. Why did Lavan run to greet Eliezer?
10. When Lavan told Eliezer that the house was cleared out, what did he remove?
11. Who did Eliezer want Yitzchak to marry?
12. Aside from Eliezer, to which other people did Rivka offer to give water?
13. Lavan answered Eliezer before his father, Besuel, had a chance. What does this indicate about Lavan's character?
14. What did Rivka mean when she said "I will go?"

B'S'D' 15. What blessing did Rivka's family give her before she departed?

16. Who was Ketura?

17. What gift did Avraham give to Yitzchak?

18. How old was Avraham when he died?

19. For how many years did Yaakov attend the Yeshiva of Ever?

20. How many times is Eliezer's name mentioned in this week's Parsha?

Bonus QUESTION: By giving the camels water, Rivka demonstrated her sharp intelligence, plus her sensitivity to the feelings of others. How so?

Recommended Reading List

Ramban 22:9 The Cave of Machpela 24:1 Blessed in all Things

24:64 Rivka's Modesty 25:8 Full of Years

Sforno 24:14 Prayer or Divination 24:65 The Awe of Yitzchak

25:8 Avraham's Death

Answers to this Week's Questions All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated

1. 23:2 - Adam and Chava, Avraham and Sarah, Yitzchak and Rivka, Yaakov

and Leah. 2. 23:2 - That Yitzchak was almost slaughtered. 3. 23:6 -

Prince of G-d. 4. 24:7 - Ur Kasdim. 5. 24:10 - They were muzzled, so

they wouldn't graze in the fields of others. 6. 24:10 - Eliezer carried a

document in which Avraham gave all he owned to Yitzchak so that people

would want their daughter marry him. 7. 24:14 - He sought someone who

excelled in performing acts of kindness. 8. 24:17 - He saw that the waters

of the well rose when she approached. 9. 24:29 - Lavan coveted his money.

10. 24:31 - Idols. 11. 24:39 - His own daughter. 12. 24:44 - To the men

who accompanied Eliezer. 13. 24:50 - That he was wicked. 14. 24:58 - I

will go even if you don't want me to go. 15. 24:60 - That the blessings

given to Avraham would continue through her children. 16. 25:1 - Hagar.

17. 25:5 - The power of blessing. 18. 25:7 - One hundred and seventy five

years old. 19. 25:17 - Fourteen years. 20. None!

Bonus ANSWER: Rivka had a dilemma. She couldn't bring home a jug of

water from which Eliezer, a total stranger, drank. But if she spilled out the

water, Eliezer would be embarrassed. She solved the dilemma by giving the

water to the camels. Beis Halevi

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Shiur HaRav Soloveichik ZTL on Parshas Chayei Sarah

The Torah says that upon hearing of Sarah's death, Avraham came to eulogize her and to cry for her. The question has been asked as to why Avraham eulogized her first and then cried over her. Human psychology dictates that one would weep first at the shock of the loss and only afterwards eulogize a loved one. Why did Avraham act differently?

Rabbi Soloveichik ZTL explained this question by distinguishing between the two forms of displaying grief mentioned in the Torah. Crying over the loss of a loved one is an instinctive emotion that comes naturally at the time of the loss. The ability to eulogize a loved one requires the lucid intellectual capacities of the bereaved in order that he might collect his thoughts and present a cogent, rational interpretation of his grief. The eulogizer expresses the true measure and impact of the death on his life and the lives of those touched by the person who passed away.

Sarah was Avraham's partner in 2 aspects. First, she was his beloved wife, who shared his dreams and aspirations as well as all his challenges and hardships throughout the years. Second, she was his partner in establishing the covenantal community, bringing knowledge of the one Gd to all of humanity by bringing others to recognize His glory and blessed name. Avraham converted the men and Sarah converted the women. They were a successful team that had now been torn apart by the death of one of the

partners.

Avraham recognized the magnitude of his own personal loss and that Sarah was irreplaceable in his own personal life. He also realized that the world needed Sarah even more, that her role to make the name of Hashem known among the people, as his partner, was still necessary. Her death left a terrible void not only in his life, but in the spiritual life of mankind. Avraham recognized that before he could shed his own tears of sorrow, the world needed to be consoled and made to understand the full measure of its loss with the death of Sarah. The Torah expresses the greatness of Avraham in describing his ability to first eulogize Sarah for all the world. Only afterwards could he shed his own tears of emotional, personal grief.

This summary is Copyright 1996 by Dr. Israel Rivkin and Josh Rapps, Edison, N.J. These summaries are based on notes taken by Dr. Rivkin at the weekly Moriah Shiur

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"RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Chayei Sarah -

Behind Every (Spiritually) Successful Man, There's a Woman: His Mother

The pasukim [verses] at the beginning of the Parsha tell us that Sarah died when she was 127 years old "... and Avrohom came to eulogize her" [Bereshis 23:2]. There is a famous Medrash which asks, "From where did Avrohom come?" The Medrash responds, "From Mount Moriah" (the place of the Binding of Yitzchak).

We have to understand what the Medrash means by its questions and what it means by its answer. They both seem to be obvious.

According to the Mikdash Mordechai, Rav Mordechai Ilan, the Medrash is telling us as follows: We know that Avrohom rose to the occasion of G-d's test on Mount Moriah. But so did Yitzchak. Our Sages derive from the verse "And the two of them went together" [22:8] that Yitzchak (who was 37 years old at the time) knew full well what was about to happen, and nevertheless went willingly with his father.

It was at that time that Avrohom recognized what a person of great stature his son Yitzchak was. This in turn told Avrohom what a great person his wife was. Because if one has a child on the spiritual level of Yitzchak, who is willing to go through an 'Akeidah', that says as much about Sarah as it does about Yitzchak. Such a son does not grow up by himself. He is raised. He has to have been raised by a mother who instills in him a tremendous degree of Fear of Heaven.

When our Sages tell us that Avrohom came from the Akeidah to eulogize and to weep for Sarah from Mount Moriah, they are explaining that it was at the Akeidah that he got the insight that enabled him to properly evaluate and describe the role of Sarah and the contribution she made to the spiritual life of her descendants.

The Angel of Death Had One More Trick Up His Sleeve

I saw a different interpretation from Rav Dovid Keviat. There is a well-known Medrash, which says that the Malach haMaves [Angel of Death] came to Sarah and told her that her husband took her son Yitzchak, bound him up to the altar, lifted the knife to slaughter him, brought the knife down to the child's neck, ... and then the angel paused. When Sarah heard this part of the story, she died from the shock of what she thought was the death of her only son, Yitzchak.

Rav Dovid Keviat asks a simple question. When the Angel of Death comes to any of us, when our time is up, he does not require any scare tactics to accomplish his task. Why then, did the Malach HaMaves, scare her to death, so to speak? Was he being sadistic? Did he get gleeful pleasure from shocking Sarah, so she would die like this? Why didn't he just come, take her neshama [soul], and be finished?

Sarah, after all, lived a full 127 years. Her time was up. In no way did she die prematurely. Why does the Malach haMaves have to resort, all of a sudden, to tricks before taking her neshama?

The answer is that this is what our Sages mean when they say "Where did Avrohom come from? He came from Mt. Moriah." The Malach haMaves did not give up! He was not satisfied that Avrohom passed the test of the 'Akeidah,' the binding of Isaac. The Malach haMaves had one more trick up the sleeve.

"I'll kill Sarah as a result of the Akeidah! When Avrohom Avinu comes back, proud of having come through the test unscathed, when he feels good about himself, and good about the 'Akeidah,' he'll come back and find a dead wife, who died as a result of the 'Akeidah.' We'll see what his attitude will be then!"

Will he say "Oy, the Akeidah cost me my wife!?" Will Avrohom Avinu have regrets, perhaps, even for an instant, about the Akeidah?

This is a common phenomenon. People die. Doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists will tell you that one of the most common reactions after people die is that relatives start blaming themselves. "Had I taken them to the doctor one more time, perhaps they would have lived; had I done this and that, maybe they would have lived. Maybe if I would have been a better person, they would have lived." Guilt!

The Malach haMaves wanted to see whether he could get Avrohom, even for an instant, to regret his actions at the Akeidah. That is what our Sages mean when they say "And Avrohom came from Mount Moriah" -- i.e. with Mount Moriah fresh in his mind, knowing that he had passed the test.

"Maybe," the Angel reasoned, "I can get him to have second thoughts about his righteousness on Mount Moriah." But, the Malach HaMaves was not successful. Avrohom came from Mount Moriah -- to mourn and to eulogize Sarah -- with the same dedication and trust in G-d that he demonstrated on Mount Moriah.

The Evil Inclination Never Lets Go

I once heard an insight from Rav Aharon Kotler, z"tl: It says at the end of the Akeidah that the ram was entangled in the bush. Rav Aharon asked, "Why did that happen?" The test was completed and Avrohom was found to be righteous. What need is there for the pasuk to emphasize that the ram was caught up in the bush?

Rav Aharon says that this shows that the Yetzer Harah never gives up. "Avrohom, you think you passed the test. Fine. You won that round, now there's another round -- the ram. You think it's going to be easy from now on? You're wrong. There are always trials and tribulations, always problems and temptations. There are always tests."

This was the same ploy and the same trick with Sarah. You think, Avrohom, you came unscathed from the Akeidah? No you didn't. I'll show you that you didn't. I'll give you a dead Sarah and see how you react.

Efron and Rivkah: Opposite Ends of the Chessed Spectrum

In this week's parsha we have the incident of Avrohom purchasing the field from Efron. We all know the story -- Efron insisted Avrohom take the field for nothing, but in the final analysis, went ahead and charged an exorbitant amount. The Medrash says that Efron was a stingy man (ish rah ayin) and he did not know that because of his stinginess he "wound up lacking." This means that although the word Efron is always spelled with a 'vov', but after he took the money from Avrohom, the name is spelled without a 'vov' -- lacking, so to speak. This the Sages says was a result of his stinginess.

In Parshas Chayei Sarah, we see a contrast of personalities between that of Efron and that of Rivkah. Efron speaks in grandiose terms of what he will do, but in fact doesn't even do a little. He's a 'big talker.' "I'll give it to you for free." But in the end, he doesn't even do a little. He takes not only the normal price, but he takes a stiff price.

Immediately afterwards, the Torah shows us the other end of the

spectrum. The Torah contrasts Efron with Rivkah, who says little ("I'll give you water"), but does more than she speaks ("I'll also water your camels.")

The contrast in personalities is the difference between the house of Avrohom and an Efron. Avrohom Avinu and his house -- Yitzchak and Avrohom's future daughter-in-law, Rivkah -- have the hallmark of the house of Avrohom which is the hallmark of Chessed (the ability to give graciously and generously). Where does that stem from? What motivates a person to give generously? Such Chessed, obviously, stems from a person who has his life's priorities straight. He knows that money and physical possessions do not bring happiness. Since money is not that important to me, I can give it freely. A Rivkah can give effortlessly of her time and money because she knows the value of money. She knows that money, in and of itself, is not what life is all about.

This is exactly what our Sages tell us even about Eliezer, the servant of Avrohom. The pasuk tells us that "he ruled over all that he had" [24:2]. The Kli Yakar interprets this to mean that he ruled himself. He ruled over his money, rather than allowing his money to rule over him.

At the other end of the spectrum, we have an Efron, who lives for money. He is the example and the epitome of "One who loves money will not be satisfied with money" [Koheles 5:9]. He cannot part with his money because he needs his money; his money is all that he lives for.

Our Sages tell us that such a person will never be happy. Why? Because it is impossible to ever satiate a person's desire for physical needs. This is what the Rabbis mean when they say "Efron is written missing" -- a person like Efron is always missing something. He is intrinsically lacking.

This was not just a punishment to Efron. This is a lesson to us. If we will be like Efron, unable to part with our money, always living for our money, then we will -- like Efron -- always remain lacking.

The pasuk says, "The sound of Rejoicing and Salvation in the tents of the righteous" [Tehillim 118:15]. The lashon [language] "ohel" ["tent"] always signifies a non-permanent dwelling. A "bayis" [house] is a permanent dwelling; a tent is something you pitch to live in temporarily. The reason there is rejoicing and salvation, enjoyment and contentment, in the lives of the righteous is because their existence in this world is like that of a tent -- temporary. We have to be in this world, we have work to do here, mitzvos which must be performed. But, our physical surroundings are only temporary dwellings -- tents.

There is a famous story about the Chofetz Chaim. A visitor saw that the great sage had no furniture in his house and asked him where his furniture is. The Chofetz Chaim, in turn, asked the traveler, "Where is your furniture?"

The traveler looked surprised at the question and said "What do you mean, I'm only passing through." The Chofetz Chaim responded, "Yes. I, too, am also only passing through."

If a person's perspective of this world is that it is only in the category of a 'tent,' a place where he lives while he is 'passing through' then there will always be sounds of rejoicing and salvation in his dwelling.

Personalities & Sources: -----

Rav Dovid Keviat -- contemporary Maggid Shiur at the Mirrer Yeshiva in NY

Rav Aharon Kotler -- (1892-1962) founder of the Lakewood Yeshiva

Kli Yakar -- (1550-1619) Rav Shlomo Ephraim Lunshitz. Rosh Yesiva in Lemberg; Rabbi of Prague; popular Bible commentary.

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"ohr@jer1.co.il" "weekly@jer1.co.il" Torah Weekly - Chayei Sarah
* TORAH WEEKLY * Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion
with "Sing, My Soul!" thoughts on Shabbos Zemiroס Parshas Chayei Sarah

Overview -- The life of Sarah, mother of the Jewish People, comes to a close at the age of one hundred and twenty seven. After mourning and eulogizing her, Avraham buries her in the Cave of Machpela. As this is the burial place of Adam and Chava, Avraham is prepared to pay its owner Ephron the Hittite the exorbitant sum which he demands for the cave. Avraham places the responsibility for finding a suitable wife for his son Yitzchak on his faithful servant Eliezer, who takes an oath to choose a wife from amongst Avraham's family and not from the Canaanites. Eliezer travels to Aram Naharaim, to the city of Nahor, and prays to Hashem to show him a sign so he will know whom to choose. At evening time, as he is about to water his camels, Rivka providentially appears and Eliezer asks her for a drink of water. Not only does she give him to drink, but she draws water for all ten of his thirsty camels. (Some 140 gallons!) This extreme thoughtfulness and kindness is the sign that she is the right wife for Yitzchak, and a suitable mother of the Jewish People. Negotiations with Rivka's father and her brother Lavan finally result in her leaving with Eliezer. Yitzchak marries Rivka and brings her into the tent of his mother, Sarah. He is then consoled for the loss of his mother. Avraham remarries Hagar, who is renamed Ketura to indicate her improved ways. Six children are born to them. After giving them gifts, Avraham sends them to the East. Avraham passes away at the age of one hundred and seventy-five and is buried next to Sarah in the Cave of Machpela.

Insights

Banking On The World to Come "Place now you hand under my thigh. And I will have you swear that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites...." (24:3) A Jew from the country was once leading his cow to town for slaughter. The nearest town where there was a qualified shochet (slaughterer) was a considerable distance away, and the Jew was tired. He looked up, and he saw in the distance, coming toward him, what looked like a very distinguished rabbi. When the Jew reached the rabbi, he asked the rabbi if he would shecht his cow for him. The rabbi replied in the affirmative, pulled out a shochet's knife, and proceeded to shecht the cow. Afterward, the rabbi asked the Jew "By the way, do you think you could lend me a small sum of money for a few weeks?" The Jew replied "I'd like to help you, but I'm afraid I really don't know who you are. Don't take it personally, but how do I know I'll get my money back?" The rabbi looked into the Jew's face and said "When it comes to money, you want references, but with the cow, you're quite content to let a perfect stranger shecht your animal... Aren't you worried you'll be eating non-kosher meat?" Eliezer was Avraham Avinu's most trusted servant. He was in charge of Avraham's considerable wealth. In this, Avraham trusted Eliezer implicitly. However, when it came to spiritual matters, to the critical choice of a wife for Yitzchak -- a mother-to-be of the whole Jewish People -- then Avraham made Eliezer take an oath. If we are careful about our bank account in this world, shouldn't we, at the very least, give the same concern to our bank account in the First National Bank of Olam Habah (the World-to-Come)? Based on the Be'er Mayim Chaim as heard from Rabbi Calev Gestetner, and a story by the Dubner Maggid as heard from Rabbi Reuven Subar

Are You Dozing Off? "And it was the life of Sarah, one hundred years, twenty years, and seven years was the life of Sarah." (23:1) "I dunno Rabbi -- all that religion stuff is pretty complicated -- I'm just a simple person -- It's over my head." Rabbi Akiva was giving a drasha (lecture) to the congregation, and they started to doze off. He said "How did Esther see that she would reign over 127 states? -- She saw that she was the descendant of Sarah who lived 127 years." What was so awakening about this information, that Rabbi Akiva said it to wake his slumbering congregants? Rabbi Akiva had been talking about very lofty and exalted Torah concepts. The congregation dozed off. They thought that such elevated thoughts were way over their heads. So Rabbi Akiva wanted to awaken them to the realization that every Jew can connect to the highest Torah concepts. For just as Esther's ability to risk death by going before King Achashverosh without permission was her spiritual legacy from the righteousness of Sarah, similarly every Jew

has a legacy to reach to the highest levels of spirituality. Never to succumb to the negativity of "Who am I? What's my life worth?" You have a hot-line to the highest and the deepest Torah! Adapted from the Pri Tzadik

Light Building "And Yitzchak brought her into the tent of Sarah, his mother...." (24:66) When Sarah was alive, her Shabbos lights would stay alight from Erev Shabbos to the next Erev Shabbos. There was a blessing in her dough. And the cloud of the Divine Presence stayed connected to her tent. When she died, these manifestations ceased. But when Yitzchak brought Rivka into the tent of Sarah his mother, all three returned. The Mishkan (Tent of Meeting) was a representation of the tents of the forefathers. For the same miracles that were to be found in the tents of the forefathers were also present in the Mishkan: Like Sarah and Rivka's lamps, the Ner HaMa'aravi (Western Light in the Mishkan) burned miraculously. From it they would light the other lights. Like the dough of Sarah and Rivka, the Show-Breads in the Mishkan were blessed. They would still be warm and fresh even after a week in the Mishkan, and all who ate from them were satiated by but a small piece. And, of course, like the tent of the forefathers, a cloud would hover over the Mishkan. Why did Sarah's lamps burn from Erev Shabbos to Erev Shabbos? The weekdays could not destroy the light which they achieved on Shabbos. The lamps burned all week, fueled by that same kedusha (holiness). Thus, when the following Shabbos arrived, the light of the lamps that were lit only added to the light that had come from the previous Shabbos. Similarly, when they lit the lamps in the Mishkan from the miraculous Ner HaMa'aravi, they were building on the light that shone from the previous day. And thus the light would build and build... (Adapted from the Shem MiShmuel)

Haftorah: Melachim I 1

The need to secure the succession of the Jewish People, which is the subject of this week's Parsha, is reflected in the Haftorah: King David is coming to the end of his days (like Avraham) and his senior son, the handsome and indulgent Adonijah tries to wrest the succession from Shlomo, King David's appointed heir. But King David is alerted to Adonijah's scheme by his wife Bas-Sheva and Nasan the prophet, and the plot is foiled.

The Will To Divide The Chafetz Chaim once wrote to a rich man that he was obliged to make a clear will, dividing his property between his sons, for, as we find in this week's Haftorah, if the prophet Nasan admonished King David to leave clear instructions regarding his succession, certainly this rich man was obliged to do so. We do not find that King David was annoyed at the prophet for reminding him of his mortality; rather he took steps to rectify a difficult situation. As the Chafetz Chaim wrote: "Children are known to disobey their parents and quarrel amongst themselves even during their parents' lifetime -- how much more so after their death!" (Adapted from The Midrash Says)

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"kornfeld@netmedia.net.il" , "parasha-page@jer1.co.il" Chayei Sarah 5757 - "Hurry Hurry" The Weekly Internet

P A R A S H A - P A G E

--- by Mordecai Kornfeld of Har Nof, Jerusalem (kornfeld@virtual.co.il)

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This week's Parasha-Page is dedicated in memory of Baila bas Binyomin, A"H (who passed away 22 Cheshvan 5738 - 1978) by her son and daughter-in-law in Jerusalem.
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Parshat Chayei Sarah 5757

HURRY, HURRY!

[Eliezer the servant of

Avraham] then said, "Hashem, please bring it about today; do this kindness for my master Avraham: Behold, I am standing by a well... may it be that the

girl of which I ask to give me a drink, and she answers, "Drink, and I will give your camels to drink as well" -- she will be the one that you have chosen for your servant Yitzchak [my master's son] as a wife.

Before he even finished speaking, Rivka came by.... The servant *ran* up to her, and said, "Please give me some water!" She *hastily* took her pitcher down from her shoulder and gave him.... Then she *hastily* poured the remaining water in the pitcher into the camels' trough and *ran* back to the well to draw more water. She then continued to draw enough water for all of his camels. (Bereishit 24:12-20)

Why, asks the Brisker Rav, did the transaction between Eliezer and Rivka take place at such an accelerated pace? Everyone seems to be rushing about -- "He *ran* to her... and she *hastily*... and *ran*...." Also, why did the Torah find it necessary to accent this hurry twice: as it transpired, and again when Eliezer describes his experiences to Rivka's family (24:46). The speed, answers the Brisker Rav, was not merely a peripheral detail of the meeting between Eliezer and Rivka. It was integral to the successful fulfillment of Eliezer's prayer. Eliezer arrived in Aram Naharaim "towards the evening" (24:11). At that point, he prayed to Hashem that He should "bring about *today*" the completion of his mission (24:12). The Jewish day starts and ends at sunset, not at sunrise (Gemara B'rachot 2a). Eliezer was asking that Hashem send him the right match during the short span of time between the late evening and sunset! If a girl would have fed him and his camel after sunset, it would not have conformed to the "test" he had designed in his prayer. This meant that everything had to transpire at breakneck speed. The servant *ran* to Rivka when she arrived, so as to allow the Divine omen to run its course. Hashem caused Rivka to *run* to the well and to *hastily* bring water for Eliezer and his camels in order to fulfill the condition of "let it be today!" It is for this reason, continues the Brisker Rav, that the Torah stresses the fact that "before Eliezer finished speaking, Rivka was already coming..." (24:15,45). The action had to start immediately if Eliezer's prayer was to be answered! (Chiddushei ha'Griz, Bereishit 24:17)

II We can explain a number of other related events from the story of Eliezer with the Brisker Rav's novel approach. Rashi (24:17) tells us that before Rivka lowered her pail into the well, the well-water *rose* to greet her and she filled her pail effortlessly. Perhaps this did not happen every time Rivka approached the well but only that night, in order to hasten the evening's events. If Rivka would have had to lower and raise her pail for Eliezer and all of his camels, it would have kept her busy until long after sunset. When Eliezer saw how speedily her pail filled, he immediately suspected that she was the Divine choice and *ran* to greet her.

Even Eliezer was taken aback by the speed of the occurrences. He could only "stand back in inner turmoil" and watch what was happening (Rashi 24:21). It seems that the pace did not let up even after Rivka introduced herself as Avraham's cousin. The Torah describes how Rivka *ran* home to get permission to invite Eliezer into the house, and her brother Lavan *ran* back out to the well to relay the invitation. As soon as Eliezer enters Rivka's house a fine meal is placed before him, but he refuses to eat, insisting, "I cannot eat until I have had my say!" Only after Rivka's family announces, "Here is Rivka, take her and go!" did Eliezer prostrate himself in thanks to Hashem and eat his meal. It would seem natural to deduce that Eliezer intended in his prayer not only to be *shown* the chosen bride on that very day, but also to successfully secure her *engagement*. That was what he meant by asking Hashem to "make it happen today." Only after the engagement did he feel he could slow down and eat.

III An obvious question nags us. Why should Eliezer stipulate such a ridiculous condition, forcing the hand of Hashem to bring everything about in such a supernatural manner? Why did he insist that his mission *must* be completed before nightfall? (The Brisker Rav addresses this question but briefly, leaving room for further explanation.)

Perhaps Eliezer deduced the urgency of the situation from an event that occurred on his way to Rivka's house. Rashi tells us (24:42) that Hashem miraculously hastened Eliezer's route. A journey that ought to have taken him many days took him less than one day! Eliezer may have inferred from this that Hashem wanted the "Shidduch" to be completed that very day. He

therefore incorporated that condition into his prayer.

IV Of course, that just passes the buck. Why did Hashem want Eliezer to secure Rivka's engagement on that very day? What made the matter so pressing? Perhaps we can resolve this riddle based on what Rashi teaches us elsewhere. Rashi tells us at the end of Parashat Vayera (22:20) that Avraham was prepared to find a bride for Yitzchak immediately after the Akeidah. Hashem, told him, however, that he had no need to do so, as Rivka was Yitzchak's proper match and she was just born at the time of the Akeidah. In the beginning of Parshat Toldot, Rashi tells us that Yitzchak married Rivka when she was but three years old. At the age of three a girl is fit to be married, so Yitzchak took her. Sifsei Chachamim points out, however, that it would seem more logical for Yitzchak to wait until Rivka physically matured, at about the age of 12. Before that age, after all, she couldn't reproduce. (Gemara Yevamot 12b. Although it is known that earlier generations reproduced at younger ages -- see Sanhedrin 69b -- it obviously was very uncommon, as is evidenced by the continuation of this very gloss Rashi. Although he married her when she was 3, Yitzchak did not worry about Rivka's infertility until ten years after their marriage. See also Tosefot Yevamot 61b, who cites another Midrashic opinion that maintains Rivka married Yitzchak when she was 14 years old.) Perhaps it was *necessary* for Yitzchak to marry Rivka at the age of three. Rashi (26:12) tells us that Yitzchak, having been sanctified as a sacrifice, remained more "holy" to Hashem than the other Avot, Avraham and Yakov. Perhaps his part in the Akeidah granted him the status of a priestly Kohen (or even a Kohen Gadol). A Kohen is prohibited from marrying a proselyte (Giyoret). If, however, the proselyte converts before the age of three, she is permitted to marry a Kohen (see Yevamot 60b -- similarly, a woman that had incestuous relationships may not marry a Kohen, but if she did so before the age of three she is permitted to a Kohen). Even in Avraham's days, those who chose to join Avraham Avinu's camp and leave behind their idolatrous families were considered proselytes (Rashi 12:5, see also Ra'avad to Gemara Avodah Zarah 36b). In order for Rivka to be permitted to Yitzchak, she would have to accept the engagement, and associate herself with the laws and lifestyles of Avraham's family, before she was three years old. Since Rivka had to be *at least* three when she married Yitzchak yet *no more* than three when Eliezer consummated the engagement, we may assume that Rivka was almost exactly three years old when Eliezer went to find her. Perhaps her birthday was that very night! We can now see the urgency of Eliezer's mission. It was necessary for Rivka to agree to come along with Eliezer and marry Yitzchak before nightfall in order that she be considered a proselyte of less than three years of age, and therefore permitted to Yitzchak!

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"yhe@jer1.co.il" SICHOT - 04: Parashat Chayei Sara
YESHIVAT HAR ETZION VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH
PROJECT(VBM)
CHAYEI SARA - SICHA OF HARAV LICHTENSTEIN SHLIT"A
Summarized by Rav Eliyahu Blumenzweig
This shiur is dedicated in loving memory of sandra (shulamit) pinsky z"l.

"The Speech of the Forefathers' Servants"

Chazal teach us that "the speech of the servants of the forefathers is more beautiful than the Torah of [the forefathers'] descendants." What is responsible for this?

It would seem that this is nothing more than a single instance of Rabbi Yitzchak's general question, which Rashi uses as the opening to his commentary on the Torah: "Surely the Torah should have started only at the point where we are told, 'This month shall be for you the beginning of the months....,' for this is the first mitzva which Benei Yisrael were commanded.

Why, then, did God start with the whole story of what took place 'in the beginning?' The reason is that 'He shall tell the might of His deeds to His nation.'" This means that we have to know what to answer the nations of the world.

The Ramban holds that Rabbi Yitzchak's question is meant to achieve more than simply providing a reason for the story of Bereishit. In his opinion, the principle that "the deeds of the fathers foreshadow [those of] the children" does not mean that anything which happened to the forefathers will happen to their descendants as well. Rather, the deeds of the forefathers represent guidelines and instruction to their descendants as to what represents proper behavior.

We find two types of instruction in the Torah. One type is presented in the form of mitzvot, stipulating the various actions which a person must perform or refrain from performing. The second type is embodied in the character of those people whose actions, behavior and way of life is meant to guide us. Sometimes the practical example set by a living character directs and influences us to a much greater extent than the mere codification of that lifestyle in the form of mitzvot. This is particularly true of the mitzvot pertaining to inter-personal relationships, where it is often difficult to lay down precise and accurate guidelines. The Torah does not leave it entirely up to the individual's discretion to decide how to behave towards others, but at the same time we are also not given a complete list of specific instructions regarding every situation which might arise during the course of our lives.

The study of a real, live character, in all its detail, including all his behavior (in every situation, and in moments of crisis and change) as well as the impression and influence which he leaves on those around him, provides one with a complete picture which he can strive to emulate.

When faced with the temptation of sin, Yosef - who obviously was well-versed in the prohibitions pertaining to sexual immorality - suddenly saw before him the image of his father who appeared to him and inspired him - and therefore desisted from sin. Rav (one of the Sages of the gemara) or Rebbi (according to a different view) said of himself that he was sharper than his colleagues thanks to his continual sense Rabbi Meir standing behind him. (Eiruvin 13b)

This sensing - even only in the realm of the imagination - of personalities of high spiritual stature has the power to guide a person's lifestyle and influence his everyday actions.
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"halacha@jer1.co.il" Parshas Chayei Sara
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SELECTED HALACHOS RELATING TO PARSHAS CHAYEI SARA
By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

The Daily Mincha Service Our Sages attach special significance to Tefillas Mincha, the afternoon prayer service instituted by Yitzchak Avinu(1). The Talmud(2) notes that of the three daily prayer services, Mincha is the most readily accepted by G-d. The time period allotted for Tefillas Mincha, however, conflicts sometimes, especially during the winter months, with a person's work-day schedule. It is important, therefore, to review the Halachos which are associated with the scheduling of Mincha:

There are two time periods during the day in which one is permitted to Daven Mincha. The earliest time one can Daven Mincha is six and half hours(3) after sunrise(4). This time, which is one half hour after Chatzos(5), is known as Mincha Gedola. The second time period, known as Mincha Ketana, begins three hours (Zmanios) later(6), nine and half hours after sunrise.

There are conflicting opinions in the Rishonim as to which of these time periods is the preferred choice for Davening Mincha. Some Poskim(7) prefer Mincha Gedola, while others(8) hold that Mincha Ketana is the preferred time to Daven. As there is no decisive ruling on this question, either custom may be followed(9). The Poskim agree, however, that it is better to Daven Mincha Gedola than to Daven without a Minyan. Similarly, before embarking on a trip or sitting down to a main meal, it is better to Daven Mincha Gedola first(10).

If, B'dieved, one Davened Mincha before six hours of the day elapsed, he must repeat the Davening. If, B'dieved, he Davened after six hours but before six and half hours elapsed, he should not repeat the Davening(11).

One should be extremely careful to finish Davening Mincha by Shkiah, sunset, since many early Poskim(12) hold that it is forbidden to Daven Mincha after that time(13). It is better to Daven on time without a Minyan than to Daven after the proper time with a Minyan(14).

B'dieved, one may Daven Mincha up to 20 minutes(15) after sunset. Some Poskim suggest that when Davening Mincha this late, the following condition (Tnai) should be stated: If the present time is still "day", then my Tefillah is Mincha and my next Tefillah will be Maariv. If, however, the present time is already "night", then this Tefillah should be counted as Maariv and the next one will be Tashlumim (a makeup) for Mincha(16).

One who enters a Shul where Maariv is Davened early, and he hasn't yet Davened Mincha, should Daven Mincha Shmone Esrei while the Minyan is Davening Maariv Shmone Esrei. He should then Daven Maariv with a later Minyan(17). QUESTION: In some places, most notably in Yeshivos, it has become customary that the Chazan does not repeat the Shmone Esrei of Mincha. What, if any, is the justification for this custom? DISCUSSION: If the hour is late and the Tzibbur realizes that they will not be able to finish Mincha - including Chazoras Hashatz - on time, the correct procedure is to Daven a "short" Mincha(18). According to our custom, that means that the Chazan starts by reciting Shmonei Esrei aloud until Kedusha, and the Tzibbur follows with their own silent Shmonei Esrei after the Kedusha has been said in unison(19).

Under normal circumstances, however, there is no justification for not repeating Shmone Esrei at Mincha. The Poskim(20) are very critical of Shuls who have abandoned Chazoras Hashatz at Mincha, since it is a Takana (ordinance) of Chazal to repeat the silent Shmonei Esrei so that those who cannot Daven themselves can hear the recitation of the Shliach Tzibbur. Even though the reason may not be applicable today since there are few illiterate congregants, the Takana is still in force, as is every Takana of our Sages which remains in effect even when the circumstances that caused the Takana to be issued, have changed(21).

There is, however, a major difference if the Shmone Esrei is not repeated in a Shul or if it is not repeated in a Yeshiva. The original Takana of Chazoras Hashatz, which was made for the sake of the Amei H'aratzos, the illiterate people, was enacted only in Batei Knaisios, in synagogues, where the Amei H'aratzos congregated. In the Batei Midrashos, where only Talmidei Chachomim Davened, there was never such an ordinance. The Yeshivos, therefore, which are the continuation of the Batei Medrash of yesteryear, need not be stringent about observing this Takana which was never really intended for Torah scholars(22).

FOOTNOTES:

1 Brachos 26b.

2 Brachos 6b.

3 Halachic "hours" are not necessarily 60 minutes long but rather one twelfth of the day (Zmanios). An "hour" could be as long as 116 minutes (in June) or as short as 46 minutes (in December). See Igros Moshe OC 2:20 for a detailed explanation.

4 This is the custom in most places. There are some Poskim who count the beginning of the day from Alos Ha'shachar.

5 It is questionable if the half hour is Zmanios or exactly 30 minutes (Shaar Hatzion 233:8). The custom is to figure the half hour as Zmanios

(Luach Eretz Yisrael).

6 OC 233.

7 Rabbeinu Seadya Gaon, Rif, Ritva, Rosh, Tur.

8 Rabbeinu Chananel, Rambam, Archos Chaim, Meiri.

9 Mishnah Berurah 233:1 and Aruch Hashulchan 233:12 quote both views and do not clearly rule in accordance with either one.

10 Mishnah Berurah 233:1; Aruch Hashulchan 233:12. See Yechave Daas 4:19 that Sefardim, too, should conduct themselves in this manner.

11 Mishnah Berurah 233:2.

12 Rabbeinu Yona, Shiltei Giborim, Levush, Gra.

13 Mishnah Berurah 233:14; Aruch Hashulchan 233:9; Igros Moshe OC 1:24

14 Mishnah Berurah 233:14. Many other Poskim, however, hold that it is better to Daven with a Minyan even if the Minyan will commence after sunset, see Mor Uketzia 233; Minchas Elozer 1:23; Einayim L'Mishpat Brachos 27a.

15 Mishnah Berurah allows one to Daven Mincha B'dieved up to 15 minutes before the stars come out. Since, according to some views, the stars are out 35 minutes after sunset, the latest time Mincha may be Davened is up to 20 minutes after sunset.

16 Biur Halacha 233:1.

17 Mishnah Berura 236:11.

18 OC 232:1. See earlier Discussion for the definition of "on time" in regard to Mincha.

19 Biur Halacha 124:2; Aruch Hashulchan 232:6.

20 See Bais Yosef (OC 234) who reports that a Cherem was issued in Tzfat against those who do not repeat the Shmonei Esrei at Mincha. See also Radvaz 4:94 and Chasam Sofer 6:86.

21 The only justification we find in the Poskim for not repeating the Shmone Esrei is when there will not be 9 people listening and answering Amen to the Chazors Hashatz. When the Rambam and his son R' Avrohom resided in Egypt, they canceled Chazoras Hashatz in the entire country because of the severity of this problem.

22 Explanation heard from Harav Yaakov Kamenetsky as to why many Yeshivos do not repeat the Shmonei Esrei at Mincha.

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DRASHA PARSHAS CHAYEI SORAH -- THE RISING WATERS OF MENCHKEIT 11/08/96 Volume 3 Issue 5

Avraham sent his servant Eliezer on quite a difficult mission. Find a shidach (match) for not only the world's most eligible bachelor, but for its most spiritual. Yitzchak was designated by Hashem to be offered as a sacrifice. He never left the land that would one day become Israel. And he was raised by the founders of Judaism, Avraham and Sorah.

It isn't easy to find a match for such a special individual. Avraham made Eliezer promise that he would not bring back a Cannanite woman for his son. Instead, Eliezer was to search among Avraham's family in Charan and find a suitable maiden for the sacrosanct young man.

Laden with gifts, Eliezer left for Charan. As a selection criteria he devised a sure-fire approach. "Avraham," he thought, "is the epitome of kindness and hospitality. Surely Avraham would want those qualities prevalent in his daughter-in-law." He prayed to Hashem to guide him. "When I arrive in Charan, I will ask a maiden for water. The maiden," he thought, "who replies by saying, 'drink, and I shall even give your camels to drink,' must be the one who is designated for Yitzchak." (Genesis 24:13-14)

That scenario actually occurred. As Eliezer stood by the well in Charan, Rivka walked toward it. The posuk (verse) tells us that as soon as Eliezer watched Rivka begin to draw water, he raced toward her and asked her the pre-determined questions. The gracious response led to our destiny.

The Medrash questions why Eliezer raced forward to greet Rivka. It answers that as Rivka went to draw water, Eliezer saw a miraculous event. Before she lowered her bucket, the waters in the well rose to greet her.

Therefore Eliezer ran to greet this maiden, as this was a spiritual individual who must truly be Yitzchak's bashert (pre-ordained).

Yet, if such a miraculous event occurred, why did Eliezer continue with his pre-planned act? Why did he ask Rivka for water and wait until she responded by offering drinks to both him and his entourage? Also, when Eliezer discusses the entire scenario with Rivka's family and tells them why he decided upon Rivka, he repeats the story of Rivka's grace and hospitality. Yet Eliezer fails to mention of the miraculous incident of the rising waters.

In the Slobodka Yeshiva, nothing was as important as the study of Torah. Students who excelled in their diligence and ability were viewed in awe. But the greatest reverence was saved for the founder of the Yeshiva, Rabbi Nossou Zvi Finkel, the Alter of Slobodka (1849-1927). With his brilliance, humility and great character, he set the tone of the entire Yeshiva.

One day two students were discussing a new young man, Isaac Sher, who had just entered the Yeshiva. "Isaac is a true ilui (prodigy)," said one. "He knows the entire Shas (Talmud) and Shulchan Aruch (Code of Jewish Law), by heart."

After the other boy listened as the first extolled the intellectual virtues of Isaac Sher he then added meekly, "I had a conversation with him the other day. He is truly a geshmahkeh mentch. (man of character and charm)" "Geshmahkeh mentch?" questioned the first student in a scoffing tone. "Is that all you can say about him? We are talking about the greatest mind ever to step foot in this Yeshiva and all you can say that he is a decent and kind fellow? I see you don't appreciate a person's true value."

With that the disgusted student made a sneering face and began to walk away, but the towering presence of the Alter of Slobodka blocked his path.

"No," he said firmly as he motioned to the humiliated student. "That young man is correct. Reb Isaac's greatest quality is that he is a geshmahkeh mentch."

The Alter eventually took Reb Isaac Sher as his son-in-law.

Eliezer was emotionally impressed by the miraculous rising waters; however, he composed himself. Miracles were not the criteria needed to become Yitzchak's wife. He knew that character transcends any miracle or genius. In finding the wife of a patriarch and mother of a nation he did not look for Rivka the miracle worker. He looked, and found, the geshmahkeh mentch.

Dedicated by Pearl and Jeffery Ratz in memory of David Goldberg Reb Dovid ben HaRav Eziel Zelig -- Niftar 15 MarCheshvan 5754
Mordechai Kamenetzky - Yeshiva of South Shore

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Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum Hebrew Academy of Cleveland Chayei Sarah

...
"And she went down to the well and filled her pitcher and came up. And the servant ran to meet her and said, 'Let me, please, gulp a little water out of your pitcher.'" (24:16,17)

When one studies the narrative of the entire encounter between Eliezer and Rivkah, he assumes that the length of the text emphasizes Rivkah's kindness. Eliezer devised a system of testing this young girl to determine if she was worthy to be the wife of Yitzchak, to take her place as the second Matriarch of Klal Yisrael. Yet, one wonders why, after Eliezer saw that the water "rose up" to "greet" Rivkah, he still felt driven to test her. Does the water rise up for every individual? Did he need any greater indication that this was no ordinary young woman? How often do we find that "nature" alters its course out of respect for a unique individual?

Horav Baruch Mordechai Ezechiel, Shlita, offers a profound insight into the character of Rivkah Imeinu. At the moment when Rivkah came toward the water, she clearly exuded such moral perfection that the water rose up to greet her. The wife of Yitzchak, however, must be so refined in the spiritual/moral sphere that the water would rise up towards her at all times.

Eliezer was searching for some type of guarantee that even in the future Rivkah would exemplify chesed, kindness.

How does he obtain such a guarantee? What determines Rivkah's true essence? This, posits Horav Ezechiel, is essentially what Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai asked his disciples, "Go out and see which is the good way to which a man should cling" (Pirkei Avos 2:14). The great Tanna challenged his students to present him with the best quality for man to cultivate, one that would ensure his continued success. They responded with different virtues, each reflecting his own particular temperament and character. The answer of Rabbi Elazar ben Arach found favor: He asserted that a good heart, a lev tov, is the trait which is crucial in order to maintain consistency and continuity. All of the qualities which the other students expressed are included in a lev tov. One who has a good heart maintains a spontaneous love for the good everywhere, an intuitive grasp of the inherent good in everybody and every situation. The master plan for ensuring chesed -- and all virtue for that matter -- is to cultivate and enhance one's heart, to create a lev tov. Through a good heart, one can obtain the epitome of virtue. Thus, one sees and strives to connect only with that which is good.

Gemillus chasadim, the act of showing kindness, is a noble endeavor. Such behavior, however, will not necessarily continue. One can perform acts of kindness, one can go out of his way to assist others in all areas of need, but there is still no guarantee that this will endure. One who has a lev tov has a wellspring of good flowing from within himself. His heart overflows with goodness. It is not an external quality or action. It is an inherent part of his essence. One who has a lev tov is not merely a person who performs good deeds - he is a source from which good emanates. The one who performs chesed does so even at his own expense or inconvenience. One who possesses a lev tov, however, is never inconvenienced by doing good, for that is his life! The gomel chesed, who performs acts of kindness, does so only when the need arises. In contrast, the lev tov seeks opportunities to help others.

This is the specific quality that Eliezer sought in a mate for Yitzchak, a woman who had a lev tov. Rivkah performed her kindness with alacrity and enthusiasm. She did not tire from the strain of drawing the heavy pails of water. This was her enjoyment! Rivkah demonstrated a character trait that was innate, a virtue that was intuitive, a goodness of heart that represented her essence.

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Shabbat-B'Shabbato -- Parshat Chayei Sarah No 621: 27 Cheshvan 5757

ROOTS IN CHEVRON by Rabbi Yehudah Shaviv

Just as the sacrifice of Yitzchak gave Mount Moriah its significance to Bnei Yisrael, so was the Machpeleh Cave endowed with a special status by the burial of Sarah.

However, even before this, in last week's Torah portion of Lech Lecha, it was clear that Avraham viewed Chevron as his permanent dwelling place, more than any other site in the land. The passage, "And Avram pitched his tent, and he came and settled in Eilonei Mamrei, in Chevron" [Bereishit 13:18], is interpreted by the Ha'amek Davar as follows: "Pitched his tent -- Avram toured the land, and in every place he built a tent, as a temporary residence. And he came -- from travelling through the land ... and settled -- a permanent dwelling." And this was in Eilonei Mamrei, in Chevron.

What attracted Avraham to the rocky land of Chevron? And, what was so special to him about the field of Efron and its cave, that made him want to bury Sarah at just this site? This can be understood from the following explanation of the Zohar [79:4]: "When Shet was born, the Almighty banished Adam, to a place in Eretz Yisrael, in Chevron. It was there that he dug himself a grave, and made a cave within a cave, close to the Garden of Eden ... Rabbi Kisma said: the Machpeleh Cave is near the opening to the Garden of Eden. When Eve died, Adam came there to bury her, and he smelled the odors of the Garden ... and he was also buried there ... But

nobody knew about this until Avraham entered the cave and smelled the odors of the Garden ... He immediately wanted this site."

>From the time that Adam was banished from the Garden, he wanted to return. If he was not able to do so, he was at least able to get close. Another desire of his was to conquer the punishment of death. It was not possible to eradicate death completely, but it was possible for Adam to live a long time, and to bear children who would give him an ability to reach for eternity.

When Shet was born, and Adam thus started to overcome the curse of death, the Almighty brought him to Chevron, giving him an opportunity to fight against the curse of his banishment. And when he died, he was buried in the Machpeleh, a place suffused with the odor of the Garden of Eden.

The Machpeleh Cave is thus a bridge between the sadness of our world and the Garden of Eden, between the roots of ancient times and the wanderings of the present. This may be hinted at in the name Machpeleh, meaning "double." Mankind leads a double life: a present existence full of trials and tribulations, but at the same time a yearning for the complete life in the Garden of old times. From this duality comes the prayer, "G-d, turn us back to you, and we will return; renew our days as in the beginning" [Eichah 5:23].

ERETZ YISRAEL IN THE TORAH PORTION: The First Purchase of Land

by Amos Saffrai

The Machpelah Cave, the first purchase made by our forefathers in the Land of Canaan, has always been a source of mystery as far as its contents are concerned. This is true because until this day it has not been possible to enter the depths of the cave and study its secrets. Virtually all that we can do is to study the impressive building that marks the site. This edifice, which was built in the time of Herod, is very similar in style to the walls of the Temple Mount, including the Western Wall. It is made of large hewn stones with thin edges where the stones meet.

It is clear from the floor plan, which spans an area 34 by 59 meters, that the architects carefully took into account the positions of the six monuments that are inside. At first, there was no roof on the structure, but it was covered in the Byzantine Era (the time of the Talmud), when a church was built there. This was converted into a mosque after conquest by the Moslems, then a church during the Crusades, and once again a mosque in the thirteenth century.

Moshe Metudela, in a visit to the site in the twelfth century, described three caves one behind the other. In his book, "Living with the Tanach," Moshe Dayan tells about a young girl named Michal who was lowered into the cave from a small entrance in the floor of the mosque. Dayan kept the only transcript of her description of what she saw, a number of monuments showing that this is indeed a burial site. In these harsh times of scepticism about our rights to this holy site, let us pray that we will be able to continue to visit without interference, until the time of the final redemption.

MESSAGE FROM THE HAFTORAH PARSHAS CHAYEI SARAH

M'lochim I 1 This week's haftorah teaches us an important lesson regarding divine providence. Dovid Hamelech had suddenly aged and basically withdrew from the affairs of his kingdom. This development created a significant void in the parliament and opened the door to minority groups and conspiracy. One of the king's own sons Adoniyahu seized the moment and began grooming himself for the throne. This was in direct opposition to the king who repeatedly stated that his son Shlomo would be his successor. In fact, Dovid Hamelech had actually received prophecy regarding this matter which specifically stated that Shlomo would be his successor. Dovid even swore to Shlomo's mother, BasSheva, that her son would be the next king. Now, in Dovid's aged state this matter took a mean turn and Adoniyahu was secretly and rapidly developing a strong following. The king's closest advisors discovered the plot and, corroborating with Shlomo's mother appealed to the king to put down the uprising. Dovid Hamelech acquiesced and upon discovering the grave situation ordered the immediate coronation of Shlomo. These threatening developments created a

most unique experience and Shlomo was actually anointed king even during his father, Dovid Hamelech's lifetime.

Our Chazal (Breishis Rabba 76:2) reflect upon this situation and raise a very perplexing problem. The Scriptures reveal to us that Dovid Hamelech's immediate order to anoint his son Shlomo was met with great trepidation. B'nayahu, the presiding member of Sanhedrin responded and said, "Let it be Hashem's will that our mission is successful." (M'lochim 1:36) "Why," ask Chazal "was so much concern and doubtfulness present? Didn't Hashem promise from the outset that Shlomo would succeed his father? Now, that this prophecy was in its final stages of fulfillment what could possibly affect things?" Chazal answer that many obstructions and impediments could truly occur prior to the actual fulfillment of the prophet's words.

This insight reveals to us a significant perspective regarding divine providence. Although it was pre-ordained for Shlomo to succeed his father and a vision of prophecy assured this fact, the subject was far from being closed. Every effort had to be exerted to secure the efficient realization of this prophecy. There was no guarantee regarding the number of attempts that would be necessary before Shlomo would successfully rule over the Jewish nation. Prophecy does not preclude attempts of conspiracy and it was expected of Dovid Hamelech to thwart all such efforts. True, it was meant for Shlomo to rule but difficulty and interference could certainly present itself. Now even its final stages, moments before completion who knows what obstacles would present themselves!? B'nayahu the head of Sanhedrin was fully aware of these possibilities and therefore expressed his sincere plea to Hashem that all of their efforts be met with success.

This same lesson appears throughout this week's sedra, Chayei Sora. At the end of Parshas Vayeira we learn (see Rashi 22:20) of Avrohom Aveinu's divine revelation that Yitzchok's partner in life had just been born. Avrohom waited until the appropriate time of maturity and then proceeded immediately to secure this marriage. He called upon Eliezer, his devoted student and most trustworthy servant, to fulfill this important mission. He obligated Eliezer through an oath to carefully adhere to his master's command. Avrohom insisted that Eliezer go directly to Avrohom's family in pursuit of a proper match for Yitzchok. Avrohom warned Eliezer that under no conditions would Yitzchok be permitted to marry a Canaanite lady or leave the land of Israel. Although Avrohom already knew that Rivka was pre-ordained to marry Yitzchok he nevertheless went to great lengths to secure that this would truly happen. Our Chazal (see Rashi 24:55) reveal to us that in fact Eliezer had an eligible daughter and he had truly considered circumventing Avrohom's command for his daughter's sake. Realizing this possibility, Avrohom did everything in his power to guarantee that Rivka would be Yitzchok's partner in life. True, that in Heaven it was decreed that Rivka should marry Yitzchok however, matters were far from secure that they would materialize. Who knows what could stand in the way and interfere with Hashem's proposal?! Therefore Avrohom insisted that even his most trustworthy servant, Eliezer take a heavy oath to guarantee that this mission would be faithfully completed.

This lesson repeats itself when Eliezer encountered Yitzchok's future father in law. In response to an amazing display of clear evidence that this match was heavenly ordained, Besual, Rivka's father properly responded, "If Hashem willed it so there could certainly be no interference!" The path seemed to be clear, yet, Rashi reveals (see 24:55) that Besual subsequently attempted to poison Eliezer and put a stop to the marriage. His attempt failed only after Hashem sent an angel who exchanged cups and Besual became the victim himself. Even after the clearest revelation from Hashem, there was still room for interception and it was therefore necessary to remove Besual from the picture. Once again, we see that Heavenly ordained plans do not go on automatic pilot. There is still room for intervention and the final outcome is far from being realized. We must always do our part to secure the proper outcome and then, with the help of Hashem, the process will be completed.

by Rabbi Dovid Siegel, Rosh Kollel, Kollel Toras Chesed

Rabbi Siegel's topic-of-interest lectures are available through the Kollel's Tape of the Month Club. For a free sample, send your name and address.

----- Haftorah,

PARSHA PEARLS From Meir Tzvi Berman Parsha Chayei Soroh
"Vayihyu Chayei Soroh Me'ah Shonoh V'esrim Shonoh V'Sheva Shonim
Shnei Chayei Soroh." And the life of Soroh was a hundred years and
twenty years and seven years, the years of the life of Soroh."

DEFINITION OF AN ERA: The repetition of the phrase "the years of the life
of Soroh" indicates that these years were defined by Soroh's presence. Just
as a righteous person leaves an indelible mark on the place where he or she
lives, he/she also leaves a mark on the entire era. - S'fas Emes

"Sh'say V'gam G'malecha Ashkeh" Drink and I will give your camels to drink

OF COURSE!: Yitzchok needed a wife who excelled in the trait of kindness.

When Eliezer set forth to find a wife for Yitzchok, he set up the following
test. He would approach a maiden and ask for a drink. The worthy bride
would respond by offering a drink for both Eliezer and his camels. When
praying to Hashem that this test should work, he expected the girl to say
"Sh'say V'gam G'malecha Ashkeh" (Drink and I will give your camels to
drink). Rivka however let Eliezer finish drinking and only then offered to
draw water for the camels. Eliezer's objective would have been fulfilled if
the prospective bride would have said, "Not only will I do what you asked
for, I'll do a bigger job, one that you didn't ask for." Although this reflects a
bit of self-aggrandizement, Eliezer did not set his sights above this level.

Rivka's reaction shows that the act of kindness was perfectly natural to her
and she had no reason to boast about the great deed she was doing. - Darash
Moshe

"Vayiten Teven U'mispa Lag'malim U'mayim Lirchotz Raglav V'raglei
Hoanoshim Asher Ito: Vayisem L'fonov Le'echol Vayomer Lo Ochal Ad Im
Dibarti D'vorai" etc. And he placed straw and fodder before his camels, and
water to wash his feet and those of the men who were with him. And he put
food before him, and he said "I won't eat till I say my words."

TO FEED A CROWD: It seems from the verse that food was originally put
only in front of Eliezer, not the men who were with him. They had only
received washing water. Someone who invites guests only because he is
ashamed not to, will try to get away with the minimum. Lavan felt that only
Eliezer seemed respectable enough to warrant a meal. However, when
Eliezer insisted on immediately broaching the subject of the marriage
between Rivka and Yitzchok, Lavan realized that treating the entire party
properly would be in his best interests, because it would increase his
chances of success in closing a deal with Eliezer. Indeed we see that
following Eliezer's narration, "Vayochlu Vayishtu Hu V'haanashim Asher
Ito". (And they ate and drank, he and the men who were with him.) The other
men got to eat only when Lavan realized what was at stake. - Chasam Sofer
