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גיליון זה נערך ונכתב ע"י: הרב יוסף שמלאשוילי שליט"א

עלון זה להצלחת: שושנה תמר בת זוהרה, וכן יוסף בן שרה אמן! אריה לייב בן אידל שיחי'! דניאל בן חנה, דליה בת חנה, ור' יחזקאל בן דבורה שרה לישה, ר' אהרון בן רשאה לאה אמן!
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לע"נ: יהודה בן שלום ושמחה ז"ל, שרה בת פנחס רפאל וחנה ז"ל, לע"נ: גבריאל בן אליהו וחוה ז"ל.
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לע"נ: אביחי בן מרים ז"ל. לע"נ: מישל בן טיטה סיטבון ז"ל. ולע"נ מפרת בת טובה ז"ל.

וַיִּהְיוּ חַיֵּי שָׂרָה מֵאָה שָׁנָה וכו'... (בראשית כג, א).

And the life of Sarah was one hundred years and twenty years and seven years…

The only one of our matriarchs whose life is summarized in the Torah is Sarah. We don't know how long the other matriarchs lived. It seems that there is something special about the years of Sarah.

Why is this so? What was special about Sarah's life that her years had to be enumerated?

Additionally, why did Sarah live so much less than her husband?

Chazal tell us that Sarah was supposed to live as long as Avraham – 175 years. But because she passed her judgement to Heaven, she lost 48 years of her life. She told Avraham Avinu that she had a complaint on him, and she demanded that Hashem decide between them. When a person passes his judgement to Heaven, asking Hashem to decide his issues instead of the earthly methods of Din Torah and compromise, he is placing himself in danger. Sarah was punished for doings such a thing, and we should be careful in our own lives about this matter.

ויאמר אברהם אל עבדו זקן ביתו המושל בכל אשר לו שים נא ידך תחת ירכי ואשביעך בה אלוקי השמים ואלוקי הארץ אשר לא תיקח אשה לבני מבנות הכנעני...

"And Avraham said to his servant, the elder of his household who controlled all that was his: "Place now your hand under my thigh. And I will have you swear by Hashem, G-d of heaven and G-d of earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites."

Why was it necessary for the Torah to write that Eliezer "Was the elder of his household who controlled all that was his"? In addition, why mention that fact specifically here, in the discussion about obtaining a wife for Yitzchok?

The Torah is giving us a glimpse into the true greatness of Avraham, by showing us that when it came to financial matters and the care of his house and belongings, Eliezer was given all the keys and the ability to make all the decisions. Avraham trusted him completely, as evident from the above passuk, "Who controlled all that was his." However, this was only regarding matters of physicality. Regarding matters of ruchniyas, spirituality, Avraham did not just give Eliezer authority to do as he saw fit and made him swear that he wouldn't take a daughter of Canaan for his son.

There is a story about R' Yisroel Salanter, that he was once a guest by a wealthy man. The man saw that R' Yisroel appeared to be an esteemed rabbi, with a long beard etc., so he asked him if he can do a shechita on one of his animals. R' Yisroel agreed. After he slaughtered the animal, R' Yisroel asked the fellow if he can please lend him several thousand ruble, which he'd return after a few days. The man refused, saying he did not know R' Yisroel personally, how can he trust that he would pay it back? R' Yisroel responded, "Do you understand what you are saying? When it

comes to finding a qualified rabbi do a shechita on your animal, you weren't bothered by the fact that you don't know me personally. You were happy to trust me based on my beard and peyos, without even entertaining the thought that perhaps I was not well versed in the halachos of shechita and would cause your animal to become non-kosher. But when it comes to financial matters, all of the sudden you don't trust me to pay you back a loan!

Avraham Avinu was the opposite. When it came to financial matters, he trusted Eliezer without hesitating, without making him swear for anything. But when it came to a matter of spirituality – the prospective wife for his son - then he made Eliezer swear that he'd follow his instructions. May we all learn from the ways of Avraham Avinu, Amen.

והיה הנערה אשר אומר אליה הטי נא כדך...

"Let it be the maiden to whom I shall say, "Please tip over your jug so I may drink"

Eliezer's criteria to determine which girl was to be the wife for Yitzchok was the following:

1: She offer Eliezer to drink and 2: She offer water for the camels as well. Why did Eliezer use this specific test to find the right bride for Yitzchok? In addition, why did Eliezer require that the perspective girl actually draw all the water for the camels? After seeing her good intentions, he could have asked one of the servants to complete the physical labor!

Eliezer knew that he needed someone smart, strong, and with outstanding middos. Avraham served many, many guests every day, and Yitzchok's wife had to be very giving as well as physically strong enough to carry out the many tasks that had to be done on behalf of all the daily guests. Eliezer's test probed all of these areas.

1: A girl who offers him water to drink clearly has good middos.

2: He tested her wisdom by seeing what her reaction would be regarding the water that was left in Eliezer's bucket after he drank. If she pours it out on the floor, she's embarrassing him, as if to say, "I won't drink this water because you drank from it and maybe you have some sickness or disease." If she decides to take the water home that would be considered foolish, who takes home water that some stranger drank from? Rivka's brilliant solution to get out of this situation was to give the remaining water to the camels!

3: Eliezer tested her physical strength by allowing her to draw all the water for the camels, whereby she proved herself physically capable of handling the hard work associated with living in Avraham's home, due to his abundance of guests.

וַיַּעַן לָבָן וּבְתוּאֵל וַיֹּאמְרוּ מֵה יָצָא הַדָּבָר לֹא נוּכַל דַּבֵּר אֵלֶיךָ רַע אוֹ טוֹב, הִנֵּה רִבְקָה לְפָנֶיךָ קַח וָלֵךְ וּתְהִי אִשָּׁה לְבֶן אֲדֹנֶיךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר ה'...

"And Lavan and Besuel answered and said, "The matter stemmed from Hashem! We can say to you neither bad nor good. Here, Rivka is before you; take her and go, and let her be a wife to your master's son."

What happened here that caused Lavan and Besuel to suddenly start sounding so religious, as he said, "The matter stemmed from Hashem." Since when was Lavan such a righteous believer in G-d? Maybe we can answer in jest, that Lavan was concerned that Eliezer was going to ask for "Shadchonos money" for having been the matchmaker of Lavan's daughter. He therefore stressed that this match was truly made by Hashem, so he's off the hook for shadchon

In addition, why did Lavan refer to his daughter in such seemingly derogatory terms, "Here, Rivka is before you; take her and go." Is his daughter like a product in a store marked "grab and go?!"

The Ksav Sofer answers that Eliezer recounted to Lavan and Besuel the story of how they tested Rivka's character to determine if she'd be a proper spouse for Yitzchok. "What can I say?" said Eliezer, "You were blessed with a daughter who has a heart of gold! We wanted some water to drink, and perhaps any remaining water we'd give to our camels, but Rivka went way beyond a normal act of chessed. She didn't stop drawing water from the well until every last camel drank its fill! There is no doubt she was raised in a fine house! Lavan and Besuel heard this and became very concerned, "What?! She gave you all that for free? "Certainly," replied Eliezer, "She had a heart of gold!" Eliezer continued, "I then asked her if she has a place for us to sleep for one night. Not only did she say yes, but she assured us that we can stay for as long as we'd like and promised to supply us with hot showers and grains for our camels! What an incredible girl your daughter is, you must be exemplary parents!"

Lavan and Basuel were shocked. "This is not the upbringing we have given our daughter, to just give things away for free. The matter stemmed from Hashem! This kind of behavior is something G-d has instilled in her, not us." Lavan realized

that it was very risky to keep Rivka in their house. The next thing you know, and she'd be inviting every poor and homeless person in the city to come live with them… That is why they were hasty to marry her off and send her away, as they said, "Take her and go." (Based on the explanation of R' Shlomo Levenstien).

וַיִּהְיוּ חַיֵּי שָׂרָה... (בראשית כג, א).

And the life of Sarah was...

The name of this Parsha is **Chayei Sarah** – which means the life of Sarah. The Parsha does not discuss her life, rather her passing. Why does it have a name that is so opposed to its content?

Imagine buying a book that is entitled 'The life of Ploni'. After buying it, the purchaser sees that the first sentence is that Ploni is dead, and then it continues to discuss other matters. Would this not be strange? Our Parsha discusses everything except the life of Sarah, why does it carry such a name?

The Torah is teaching us the concept of **life**, what it means and how to approach it. As long as a person is in this world, he has not lived yet. Only after a person passes away, and he has finished his actions in this world, can he be considered alive. Then his life has been lived and it can be assessed and appreciated. The Mishna tells us **those who are born will die, and those who are dead are to live**. This world, with all it has to offer, is mere emptiness. Shlomo Hamelech had everything that his heart desired, and he declared about this world that it is all emptiness.

After a person passes away, and is already in the next world, then he can experience true pleasure. As the Mishna tells us **a short hour of pleasure in the world to come is nicer than the entire life of this world**. Even if a person could condense all of the pleasures of this world, all six thousand years of its existence, into one minute's pleasure, it will not reach the enjoyment level of one short hour of the world to come. As corporeal beings, we cannot fathom the pleasures of the spirit, and that is why we do not fully appreciate this point.

If we were to offer a four year old child the choice, either a bar of chocolate or a late model Mercedes, what would he choose? Of course the chocolate. He does not understand the purpose, benefit or pleasure of a luxury car, why would he choose that? He only understands that which he can taste, which is a chocolate.

As far as the world to come is concerned, we are like the four year old child, we have no concept at all of its benefits or pleasures, but when we get there we definitely will.

מדוע נתן עבד אברהם בגדים לרבקה?

Why did Avraham's slave give clothing to Rivkah?

The Tzadik **Reb Shalom of Belz zatzal** was very particular that his Chassidim should not change their style of clothing as was accepted amongst Jews for generations. When someone would approach for a Beracha for a Shiduch, he would exhort them that the Kallah should wear the modest clothing that a Jewish girl wears.

He explained this possuk in this vein. Why should Avraham have to send clothing to Rivkah? Could a wealthy important family like that of Besuel not supply a wardrobe for their daughter?

Avraham knew that Rivkah was coming from the home of Besuel and Lavan, and he knew that she may not have the appropriate clothing for the house of Avraham. His only option was to send his own style of clothing to her, so that she should enter Avraham's house appropriately.

ויביאה האוהלה שרה אמו...

And he brought her to the tent of his mother Sarah…

Why does the Torah suffice with one test for Rivkah? Is it enough that she will do chessed for others? Are there no other, equally valuable, qualities a person needs to join the house of Avraham?

Additionally, when Yitzchok brought Rivkah to his mother's tent, he saw that she was similar to his mother. As the Gemara tells us, while Sarah was alive, the candles stayed alight from Shabbos to Shabbos, there was a blessing in the dough, and there was a cloud tied on top of the tent. When Sarah passed away, these disappeared. When Rivka came to live with Yitzchok, they returned. Then, Yitzchok was comforted on the death of his mother. It seems that Yitzchok had another test for Rivkah, to see if she could replace his mother. He did not suffice with the chessed test.

The **Meforshim** explain that if a girl was not a baalat chessed, there was no way she could survive in the house of Avraham Avinu. That is why that was the first test that was administered.

But there are two types of Chessed that are more difficult, because he cannot hope for reward or thanks. This is the chessed a person does with

animals or with dead people, the dead person has no powers any more, and the animals have no cognitive abilities.

When Eliezer saw that Rivkah also had compassion on the camels, he knew that she was at the level of Chessed that would allow her to survive in Avraham's house.

Yitzchok continued this test in a deeper manner. The three attributes that his mother had in the home were:

1. A cloud tied on the tent. A cloud symbolizes peace, as we say in maariv **ufros aleinu sukkat shelomecha** – and spread over us the protection of your peace. Sukkot are a reminder of the cloud of glory that accompanied us on our way out of Mitzrayim. A mother needs to know how to make peace amongst the family, between siblings and between the father and the children.

2. a blessing in the dough. A lady who cooks and prepares food for guests with a happy mood, will never lack for something to give to a guest. There is a blessing in the dough that she bakes. When a person comes home with a guest, and the wife asks, with a wrinkled nose, "who is this?", she can figuratively kill the guest. As the possuk says **ki be'apam hargu ish – with their anger (literally: noses), they killed a man**. It is possible to kill someone with the wrinkling of the nose. Sarah was someone who was always prepared for guests, she placed a beracha in the dough.

3. the candles burned from Shabbat to Shabbat. After the kindling of the Shabbat candles is the calmest time of the week in most Jewish homes. There is no more work to be done and the mother can relax with her children as she awaits her husband's return from maariv. Sarah had this calm demeanor all week, she was always in the mood of post-candle lighting.

Yitzchok saw these middot of chessed in his wife, she was ready to live in his tent and indeed the possuk testifies that she returned these three middot to the home.

The possuk says **Eshet chayil mi yimtza – who can find a wife of valor?** It seems that a wife of valor is a rarity. Yet the passuk tells us later **Rabbot banot asu chayil – many daughters performed valorous acts**. This seems to be a contradiction, here we see that there are many people who can be considered **bnot chayil**?

The answer is, the second passuk is discussing a daughter in her father's home. Before she is married, she helps and works hard in her parents' home. Some girls, immediately after marriage, transform into ladies of leisure and they expect their husbands to serve them. There are many **daughters** who do many good things, but a **wife** of valor is a rarity.

Yitzchok saw that Rivkah acted after her marriage as she acted beforehand. Even after they were married, she had the middot of Sarah, bringing peace and beracha into the house, and he was comforted after his mother. She passed both tests with flying colors.

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