

Pardes Yehuda

Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick

Parshas Chayei Sarah 5779

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שבת מברכין כסלו

פרשת חיי שרה תשנ"ט

Sarah was righteous on her own behalf

וַתָּמָת שָׂרָה בְּקִרְיַת אַרְבֶּעַ. וַיָּבֹא אַבְרָהָם לְסָפֵד לְשָׂרָה וּלְבָנֶיהָ: (כג:ב)

"And Sarah died in Kiryas Arba, and Avraham came to eulogize Sarah and to bewail her" (23:2). The question is: Why does the posuk have to state that וַיָּבֹא אַבְרָהָם לְסָפֵד לְשָׂרָה וּלְבָנֶיהָ and Avraham came to eulogize "Sarah" and to bewail her? It is obvious that Avraham came to eulogize Sarah. It would have been sufficient to state that Sarah died, and Avraham came to eulogize her? Perhaps the answer is: Chazal teach us, that even though Sarah was greater than Avraham in prophecy, the world viewed Avraham as being superior, and referred to Sarah as "the wife of Avraham". When Avraham came to eulogize his wife, his goal was to tell the world that his wife Sarah was a giant in her own right. She was "Sarah the righteous", and not "Sarah the wife of Avraham". (Nodah BiYehuda, HaRav Yechezkel Landau of Prague)

Avraham showed the utmost respect, even in time of distress

וַיָּקָם אַבְרָהָם וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ לְעַם הָאָרֶץ לְבְנֵי-חֶת: (כג:ג)

"And Avraham arose and prostrated himself to the people of the land, to the sons of Cheth". We find in a previous posuk "And Avraham arose from in front of his dead one, and he spoke to the sons of Cheth". Avraham was in a state of extreme mourning and under tremendous pressure to find a burial plot for his wife, and he begged the sons of Cheth to help. The Torah testifies that Avraham did not lose his sense of Derech Eretz, and when the sons of Cheth were about to leave, Avraham was a "mentsh", and even in his state of distress, showed his respect to them. (Rav Yaakov Moshe Charlap, "Mei Marom")

The different scenarios of the water rising and not rising for Rivka

"And behold, Rivka came out... and her pitcher was on her shoulder". (24:15) "and she descended to the wellspring, and she filled her pitcher and went up". (24:16) Seeing this, וַיִּרְץ הַעֲבָד לְקִרְאָתָהּ וַיֹּאמֶר הַנְּמִיטֵינִי נָא מִבִּדְּךָ מֵעַט מַיִם: And the servant ran toward her, and he said, "Please let me sip a little water from your pitcher." (24:17) Rashi quotes from the Midrash, that the reason Eliezer ran towards her,

was because he saw that the water had risen towards her. The question is: we see in Posuk 18 וַתֹּאמֶר שָׂתֵה אֲדֹנָי "And she said, 'Drink, my lord.' And she hastened and lowered her pitcher to her hand, and she gave him to drink." (24:18) At this time the water didn't rise for her. Why not? The Heilige Barditchever Rav answers: When Rivka went to draw water for her own personal needs, in order that the righteous Rivka should not have to burden herself with the task of drawing water, the water rose towards her. However, when Rivka went to draw water for Eliezer's camels, she had undertaken to perform a mitzvah. Hashem wanted Rivka to earn as much merit as possible for her act of kindness, so this time the water did not rise for her. In this way, Rivka would receive the maximum merit for performing this mitzvah, for our Sages teach us (Avos 5:26): "לְפִיּוֹם זַעֲרָא אֲנָרָא – According to the exertion is the merit or reward." (R' Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev) [A vort from the Stoliner Rebbe, Reb Yisrael Perlow זצוק"ל: The difference in price between a handmade watch and a watch made by machine is very great. The high price commanded for handmade objects is for the exertion and effort involved in doing a precise job. This reflects the merit for Mitzvos done with more exertion and effort. YZK]

Why was the miracle necessary?

וַאֲבָא הַיּוֹם אֶל-הָעֵינָן: (כד:מב)

When describing his mission to Lavan, Eliezer states: "And I came today to the well". (24:42) Rashi writes: הַיּוֹם, today, teaches that Eliezer had קְפִיצַת הָרֶדֶךְ, "shrinking of the earth" in his journey. Why was this miracle necessary? The answer is that Eliezer, as the prime student of Avraham, understood the deeper meanings of the Chiddushim of his Rebbe. Therefore, in order that Eliezer not lose even one day of learning Torah from Avraham, Hashem granted him a miraculously speedy journey, with the earth itself shrinking before him in order to shorten his trip, so that he would remain away from Avraham for the smallest amount of time. (Tiferes Shlomo, Rebbe of Radomsk) [Based on this insight, Lavan and Besuel understood that if the servant of Avraham was so great, his master must also be a giant, and that indeed is the reason that Lavan agreed to the Shidduch. YZK]

STORY OF THE WEEK (By Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

****The Belzer Rav, Rebbe Yehoshua, elevates an errant soul straight to Gan Eden****

In Hungary, there lived a wealthy innkeeper, whose whiskies were esteemed by the local chasidim, especially those who travelled to visit their rebbes. But this merchant was also an evil person, and a confirmed Sabbath desecrator, who made it his business to mock and defame the Tzaddikim whenever

he could. Once, a group of chasidim were on their way to spend time with the Holy Mittler Rebbe of Belz, Rebbe Yehoshua זצוק"ל. They stopped at the tavern and began discussing the greatness of their Tzaddik, Rebbe Yehoshua. The wicked innkeeper interrupted them with a stream of

slandorous talk against the Rebbe. The men's "ears turned red" from the slander, and they warned the innkeeper to cease and desist his defamation, but he defiantly continued on, saying he had no fear of punishment on account of any so-called "Rebbes".

But there was, indeed, a price he paid for his arrogance. The rogue merchant became paralyzed throughout most of his body. Word spread like wildfire in his town that he was finally being punished for his blasphemous speech about Tzaddikim, the holy Belzer Rebbe in particular. Doctors were unable to help. Paradoxical as it may seem, the man had a brother who was a chassidishe Yid -- and a follower of none other than Rebbe Yehoshua. He arranged to have the stricken man brought into the Rebbe's chambers. With characteristic humility and grace, the Rebbe told him that he would never want a Yid to be punished for misconduct against him, and that he completely forgave him, but that he could not be sure that Hashem would forgive him for his chutzpah.

The merchant was by now shaken to the core and broke into tears, promising the Rebbe to repent and never to speak ill of Tzaddikim ever again. The Rebbe replied that the merchant's only hope was to return to Belz with his brother for Rosh Hashanah, and resolve then to be a fully "ehrllich" Yid, and to beg Hashem Yisborach for forgiveness. The merchant came to Belz and remained through Yom Kippur. Right after the shofar blast at the end of the Holy Day, his paralysis vanished and he was restored to full health and mobility.

After Yom Kippur, the merchant returned home in accordance with the Rebbe's directive, and displayed a total transformation in his life: his mitzvah performance was done in a splendid and exacting manner and he dispensed tzedakah liberally. He acquired the finest esrog money could buy, and built a grand sukkah in which poor Jews were invited to have Yomtov meals and fulfill all the mitzvos of the day. He also hired a private tutor to help him make up for all of the years of learning he had lost in his youth. Before long, he had made up for lost time, and became a respectable man with a solid store of basic Torah learning.

The merchant undertook to travel to Belz every Rosh Chodesh, remaining for the Rebbe's Rosh Chodesh tisch. On one occasion, the Rebbe called him into his room and asked about details of his new path in life. The Rebbe was delighted with his new standard of Divine Service and, pronounced him a *bona fide ba'al teshuva*. The Rebbe applied the famous gemara to him of *בְּמָקוֹם שֶׁבִּעָלִי תְּשׁוּבָה* *בְּמָקוֹם שֶׁבִּעָלִי תְּשׁוּבָה*, *In the place in which a penitent person stands, even complete tzaddikim cannot*

stand (ברכות לר:) the Rebbe concluded that he now actually stood on a higher spiritual level than did tzaddikim.

The innkeeper hatched the idea that if he were indeed on such a high level, then the Rebbe should make it possible for him to at least get a glimpse of King Moshiach. The Rebbe took kindly to his request, and revealed to him that at the edge of a certain forest near the border, there was a small hut where Moshiach lived. Following the travel directions, the man found the hut, with a woman inside cooking potatoes. She asked him for the purpose of his visit. He said that he wished to speak to her husband about coming to work for him in order to manage his accounts. The lady tried to deflect him by revealing that her husband was both illiterate and mathematically incompetent, but the visitor persisted in wanting to meet her husband. "He'll be back after Maariv," was the reply. The husband came back (after davening Maariv), and perceived a man sitting indoors immersed in studying a sefer. The man's question to him was: "Who sent you here?" "The Rebbe of Belz." Upon uttering those words, the man and his forest house suddenly and miraculously vanished into thin air with a flash, leaving not a trace. After returning to Belz, the Rebbe matter-of-factly assured him that he had merited seeing King Moshiach. Fully believing this, the man continued his upward path in *Avodas Hashem*.

The next winter was bitterly cold and snowy. Our "hero" traveled to Belz to be with his Rebbe for Chanukah. Before the first night, the Rebbe spotted him, and told him to return home immediately. Having made such a difficult journey, he could not endure the thought of not being present at the Rebbe's Menorah lighting and hearing his exalted brochos. The Rebbe said, quite sternly, "The first night only, but you must leave immediately after the hadlakah, no questions asked!" Despite his dismay, the man obeyed the Rebbe, and upon arriving home, he became deathly ill. It was only then that he fathomed the Rebbe's purpose in sending him home.

He took pen to paper to write his will, which provided for large donations to tzedakah for his town and for the poor of Eretz Yisroel, to benefit his soul. The entire town gave him great "*kovod*" -honor- at his burial. A few days after his passing, he appeared to his son in a dream and related how he had been received in the Next World. "Make a place for the Baal Teshuva of Belz, and take him straight to Gan Eden/Paradise." "There I merited to behold the Holy Sar Sholom (the first Belzer Rebbe), wearing a golden crown, basking in the light of the Shechina." *מבעלזא תרנ"ד* (ספר פטירת רבינו הק')

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