



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

מזל טוב

Mazel tov to Mr & Mrs Mark Duman on the occasion of Yonah's Bar Mitzvah this Shabbos. The Kehilla is invited to a Kiddush after Davening in Stenecourt.

Mr & Mrs Michael Issler invite men to a Kiddush in their home, 18 Brezemount from 11.30am, to celebrate the recent birth of their daughter, Zehava Brocho.

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Leo Stern on the birth of a grandson to Mr & Mrs Mychiel Balshine. The Sholom Zochor takes place at 30 Hawkstone Avenue, Whitefield and the Bris will take place at 11.30am on Sunday morning at Whitefield Shul.

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Bernard Markovic on the Bar Mitzvah of their grandson this Shabbos in London.

Save The Date

Ohr Yerushalayim will be celebrating our 16th anniversary with a Melava d'Malka on Motzei Shabbos Parshas VaYishlach. Invitations will be sent out shortly with further detail.

T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

Mannerliness

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

Avraham sent his servant Eliezer on quite a difficult mission. Find a shidduch 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 Sarah.

It isn't easy to find a match for such a special individual. Avraham made Eliezer promise that he would not bring back a Canaanite 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, [and drawing water for camels who had just completed a long desert journey is no simple task]' must be the one who is designated for Yitzchak." (Genesis 24:13-14)

The exact scenario that had been prayed for actually occurred. As Eliezer stood by the well in Charan, Rivka walked toward it. The posuk 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. As 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.

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 Nosson Zvi Finkel, the Alter of Slobodka. 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," said one. "He knows the entire Shas and Shulchan Aruch, by heart."

After the other boy listened as the first extolled the intellectual virtues of Isaac Sher he 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 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.

The Week Ahead

פרשת חיי שרה

Candle Lighting	3.58pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	4.03pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.43am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
Rov's Hilchos Shabbos Shiur	3.16pm
2nd Mincha	3.46pm
Seuda Shlishis	following
Motzei Shabbos	5.06pm
Ovos uBonim	6.21pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
Monday / Thursday	6.45am / 7.10am
Tuesday / Wednesday / Friday	6.45am / 7.20am
Mincha & Maariv	3.55pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

Sarah's Last Moments - A Deadly Trick

Rabbi Eliyahu Hoffmann (Torah.org)

Our forefather Avraham was tested with ten trials - and he withstood them all. (Avos 5:4)

Mefarshim disagree as to exactly which ten events comprise the "ten trials" (asara nisayonos). Almost all commentators are in agreement that the final and greatest test was the Akeidas Yitzchak, Hashem's command to offer his son Yitzchak as a sacrifice. Rabbeinu Yona, however, explains (ibid.) that Avraham's final test was the difficulties Avraham underwent in securing a burial plot for his wife Sarah, an episode described in detail at the beginning of this week's sidrah.

One might ask: After undergoing what was ostensibly the most demanding experience imaginable - the Akeidah - what more could be left to test?

Rashi points out the proximity of Sarah's death to the Akeidah. Quoting a Midrash, he explains that Sarah's death was a result of the Akeidah. According to this Midrash, the Satan was exceedingly perturbed that Avraham was willing to go through with the sacrifice of his son, an act which stands as a merit for his decedents to this day. After repeated attempts at discouraging Avraham failed, the Satan took a different tack. If he couldn't deter Avraham, at least he could scare Sarah - as they say - to death; literally. He appeared to Sarah and showed her how in the distance, her beloved and only son Yitzchak lay bound upon the Altar. The hand of her husband Avraham, clenching a sharp knife, stretched towards his neck to perform the ritual slaughter. In the moment just before the sacrifice (Avraham was halted at the very last moment), Sarah was overwhelmed by the vision of her son's slaughter, and in a state of intense shock her soul departed.

It seems like the ultimate irony. Avraham returns home having navigated the most profound test of his life, to find his life-long partner has passed away; he has been left alone. Not only that, but her death was a direct result of his having obeyed Hashem's command to sacrifice Yitzchak.

One of the other nine tests is that after leaving his homeland and arriving in Canaan at Hashem's behest, Avraham encounters a famine, and is forced to abandon Canaan for Egypt, where food was more plentiful (the famine was restricted to Canaan). The test was not to question Hashem - that even after having done what he had been told, things didn't work out the way he might have wished or expected.

Compared to what transpires here, that test seems like child's play. In Canaan, the famine was "coincidental" to Avraham's coming; here Sarah's death is a direct result of the Akeidah. There, Avraham suffers the temporary inconvenience of prolonged exile; here he loses his spouse forever. Putting oneself in Avraham shoes, were it possible, it is almost unimaginable to not feel even the slightest touch of doubt or misgivings. "How could it be? Where have I sinned, in doing what You told me, that I should lose Sarah as a result?" If there were any test that could top the Akeidah, this was it.

What was the truth? Sarah's time had come. In a Divine irony, Hashem arranged things so that the (aborted) Akeidah take place at the precise moment that Sarah was meant to pass away. Satan knew this, and grabbed a hold of the opportunity. In a ruse second to none, he played things just-so in order that it should seem to the observer that Sarah's death was an outcome of the Akeidah, when in truth things were occurring according to the Heavenly plan. Each person is given a certain number of years upon the Earth; Sarah's were up. No force, not even the Angel of Death, could take from her even the smallest moment of life. Rashi says that the reason the verse repeats, "... these were the years of Sarah," at the beginning of the sidrah is because her years were perfect and complete - there was nothing missing.

The only thing that could nullify and revoke the merit of the Akeidah, even after it had been performed, would be if Avraham would, G-d forbid, regret have done it. This is what the Angel of Death, in bringing about Avraham's final test, and his own last hurrah, hoped to accomplish.

Avraham, inimitably, took the incident completely in stride. His calmness as he patiently deals with Efron and the B'nei Cheis over Sarah's burial plot is obvious. "And Avraham came to eulogize Sarah, and to cry over her (23:2)." The letter kaf in "ve-livkosa - and to cry over her," is diminutive, to note that although he cried, he did not obsess over her death as one might under such circumstances, inconsolably sobbing over the irony of the loss and his possible role in it. He cried as one must,

and he went on in complete faith that such was the Heavenly decree. He pointed no fingers and voiced no concerns. He saw the Satan's ruse for what it was; a distortion of the truth accomplished by "slight-of-hand" and advanced knowledge of what the future holds.

A young girl once wrote into an "advice" column: "Dear..., You know how you always tell us to be honest and say the truth... Well, yesterday at school three friends and I played a nasty trick on our teacher. She was really upset. She confronted the whole class and told the guilty girls to come forward and admit what they had done. That if they didn't, she'd find out anyway, and then they'd be in even more trouble. Well, I went over to her quietly and told her that I was one of the girls. I was the only one. Later, she did find out who the other girls were, and they were suspended from school for a week. But because I told the truth, I only received a minor punishment. So you're right - it always pays to tell the truth!"

The response, which contains a fair bit of wisdom, went something like: "Dear..., It sure does always pay to tell the truth. But I don't want you to think that if you're going to be honest, things will always go your way. You could just as easily have told the truth, and been the only one punished. We can't control how things turn out. Sometimes we do what we know is right, and we still suffer because of it. I'm glad you weren't punished severely, but remember, even if you had been, it still would have paid to tell the truth."

To be able to deal with a spouse's death with equanimity under such circumstances is exceptional and unique. But the lesson learned - to do what we know in our hearts is right and not be swayed by seemingly negative repercussions - is one that we need to internalize every day of our lives.

Tefillah Nuggets

Dani Epstein

שמונה עשרה - גבורות: אתה גבור

You are mighty

The word **גבור** refers to might. It begs a question then, as to why the second **ברכה** opens with this aspect of Hashem, when the entire paragraph consists of His mercies? Surely this paragraph should have started with something along the lines of - **אתה מלך רחמן** - You are a merciful King.

What makes this all the more difficult to understand is the Abudarham, who writes that the **גבורה** referred to has its source in the following **פסוק** from Yeshaya (42:13):

ה' כְּגֹבֵר יֵצֵא, כְּאִישׁ מִלְחָמוֹת יַעִיר קִנְאָה; יְרִיעֵ, אִף יִצְרִים; עַל אֲיָבָיו יִתְגַּבֵּר

Hashem will go forth like a mighty man, like a warrior he will arouse jealousy. He will shout a battle cry and He will shout mightily. His enemies He will overcome.

This verse refers to His invincible strength, raising a pandemonium and quite literally putting the fear of G-d into His enemies. In what way is this relevant to the **תּוֹחַ** of this paragraph?

The answer lies in the association between **גבורה** and **תּוֹחַ**

On this phrase - **ה' כְּגֹבֵר יֵצֵא** Hashem will go forth like a mighty man - the Radak comments that this represents Hashem going forth to save Yisroel from its enemies in the same way a fearless warrior will go out to battle, feeling invincible.

In a way, this is a bridge between the **עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ מִמֶּנּוּ** of the previous paragraph, in that by going mightily going forth - **גבורה** Hashem performs a **תּוֹחַ**

There is, however, a more direct relationship between **gevuroh** and **chessed**.

In Brochos 7a there is a braiso that has latterly gained fame through a popular song.

א"ר ישמעאל בן אלישע פעם אחת נכנסתי להקטיר קטורת לפני ולפנים... ואמר לי ישמעאל בני ברכני אמרתי לו י"ר מלפניך שיכבשו רחמיך את כעסך

Rabi Yishmoel ben Elisha said: "On one occasion when I entered to offer ketores [in the Dvir - the Holy of Holies]... [Hashem] said to me: "Yishmoel my son, bless me." I said to Him: "May it find favour before You that Your mercy should vanquish your anger..."

One hardly needs to quote Ben Zoma (Ovos 4:1): **"אִיזָה הוּא גִיבּוֹר-הַנוֹבֵשׁ אֶת יִצְרוֹ.**" Who is mighty? He who conquers his inclination." By combining the statement of Ben Zoma to the beraiso in Brochos, we see that **גבורה** can be applied to **דִּין** in order to vanquish it, in order to manifest **תּוֹחַ**

Now we see how **גבורה** is related to **תּוֹחַ** that Hashem can apply **גבורה** in order to manifest **תּוֹחַ**

The whole paragraph of **גבורות** discusses various activities that Hashem undertakes purely out of **תּוֹחַ** Previously we have discussed the phrase **וּמְבִיא גּוֹאֵל לְבְנֵי בְנֵיהֶם** And He brings a redeemer to their descendants for His Name's sake with love) in that the **גאולה**, the redemption, will come about through His love for us, as opposed to any merit we might want to rely upon.

So too, these activities in this paragraph come about through love as well, but in this instance His **גבורה** overcomes the aspect of **יִשְׁפֹּט**, judgement, in order to facilitate this.