

SEDRAH SELECTIONS PARSHAS CHAYEI SOROH 5775 BS"D

Ch. 23, v. 4: "Achuzas kever imochem" – A burial heritage within you – Why didn't Avrohom immediately say that he wanted to purchase the "m'oras hamachpeiloh." Secondly, why did he say that he wanted a burial plot "within them?" Did he really want to bury his wife adjacent to defiled idol worshippers? Had he immediately asked for the "m'oras hamachpeiloh" he would have been asked an astronomical price, possibly beyond his means. He first asked for a regular burial section for his family within the general populace. It was only when the people said that Avrohom was a "n'si Elokim" in front of Efron that he asked Efron, a leader of the community to purchase some of his property. The price would then not be exorbitant.

We learn a practical lesson from Avrohom that when a person needs to purchase a specific item that he should first inquire about other similar items before asking for the item he is after. (Holy Zohar)

Ch. 23, v. 11: "Haso'deh nosati loch v'hamoroh asher bo l'cho n'satihoh" – The field I have given you and the cave that is in it to you I have given – Efron offered Avrohom the field and its cave as a present. This would remove the need to comply with the law of "bar metzra," to first offer it to the owner of the abutting property. When one gives it as a present this does not apply. However, Avrohom did not want a present. Once we have a sale the rule of "bar metzra" returns. To obviate this Avrohom offered 400 "shekel kesef" which were "kantrin" coins, coins that were the best monetary medium available. It is obvious that no one would give a competing offer of so much money, especially in "kantrin" currency, so even with a sale "bar metzra" was obviated. (Ponim Yofos)

Ch. 23, v. 16: "Va'yishma Avrohom el Efron va'yishkol Avrohom l'Efron es ha'kesef" – And Avrohom listened to Efron and Avrohom weighed the silver – Rashba's comments, "Dai lachakima birmiza," a word to the wise is sufficient. What message lies in Efron's words that is not overt? He clearly asked for 400 silver weights of coinage. Efron added on "beini uveincho mah hee." What did he mean with this? Avrohom understood that Efron covertly was telling him that he wanted the best, fullest weight coinage that would be accepted in commerce anywhere. How so? He said "beini uveincho mah hi." Between me and you, meaning if the payment will be in coins that are only good for a sale that is between the two of us, but others might not accept the coins at their full face value, then "mah hee," what is it worth to me? I do not want to sell for such coins. Avrohom understood this covert message, "Dai lachakima birmiza," and gave only "over lasocher" coins. (Rabbi Hillel Lichtenshtein of Kalamiya)

Ch. 24, v. 22: "Va'y'hi kaasher kilu hagmalim lishtos va'yikach ho'ish nezem zohov" – And it was when the camels completed drinking the man took out a golden nose ring – Why did Eliezer wait until after the camels drank to bedeck Rivkoh with jewellery? The Ramban in verse 32 cites the M.R. that says that the camels would not partake of anything that was forbidden. If so, since Rivkoh's father had rights to the well water, how did the camels drink stolen water, as Besuel might not want to give it? (It seems that Eliezer accepted water for himself and his men because they were dehydrated.) It must be that it has been decided in Heaven, "MeiHashem yotza hadovor," that this would be a marriage. It was only at this point, when the camels drank, that Eliezer was willing to bedeck her. (Chasam Sofer)

Ch. 24, v. 27: "Onochi ba'derech nochani Hashem beis achi adoni" – On THE path Hashem has led me the house of the brethren of my master – "BA'derech" means a known path. Eliezer said that he realized that he had reached the correct address by virtue of Hashem leading him miraculously through "kfitzas ha'derech." This definitely brought him to the conclusion that he came to the right destination. (Kedushas Levi)

Ch. 24, v. 29: "Va'yorotz Lovon el ho'ish" – And Lovon ran to the man – The next verse tells us that he saw the jewellery and "Va'yovo el ho'ish," seemingly slowing down. We cannot say he ran because he saw the jewellery, as that is only stated afterwards. Another issue, verse 28 ends with "ulRivkoh och ushmo Lovon." We have an axiom that when a righteous person is mentioned his name precedes the expression "his name is," and by an evil person the name precedes "his name is." If so, why does the verse say "ushmo Lovon" rather than "v'lovon shmo?"

These issues are resolved by the Ohr Hachaim Hakodosh. Although Lovon was an evil person here, at a distance he saw a man with his daughter. He thought that this man might molest her so he ran. When he came closer he saw the jewellery that bedecked her and realized that there were no evil intentions, and slowed down and "va'yovo el ho'ish." Notwithstanding that he was a bad person, here where the Torah is relating that he ran for a good reason his name precedes "ushmo." Meshech Chochmoh has a novel explanation for Lovon's first running then slowing down. He says that Lovon saw a man with a lot of jewellery. He thought that this stranger might be coming to bring offerings for a prospective "choson," namely himself, and he ran. When he got closer he saw that the jewellery was for Rochel, so he slowed down when he came closer.

Ch. 24, v. 33: "Va'yusam l'fonov le'echol" – And it was placed in front of him to eat – In the previous verse we find Lovon serving Eliezer's camels himself, and likewise giving Eliezer bathing water himself. Why here does the verse not say the same, "va'yosem" or "va'yitein" but rather in the "pual" form? Lovon was entrusted with feeding the camels and bringing bath water, but not with preparing food. The food was "placed in front of him" by his accompanying camel drivers who were trained in kashrus. (Meshech Chochmoh)

Ch. 24, v. 42: "Vo'ovo hayom el ho'oyin" – And I have come today to the wellspring – Rashi comments, "Yofeh sichoson shel avdei ovos mitoroson shel bonim." This is explained by the Degel Machaneh Efrayim as follows: How do we indeed know that the speech of our Patriarchs' servants is beautiful? The answer is "mitoroson shel bonim," as this is included in the Torah and is the study of sons and further descendants.

Ch. 24, v. 42: "Vo'ovo hayom el ho'oyin" – And I have come today to the wellspring – Rashi comments that Eliezer experienced the miracle of the land jumping for him, i.e. that he miraculously arrived quickly. When Yaakov left for Choron he did not experience this miracle. It was only when he passed Har Hamorih that he also had "kfitzas ha'derech" Why wasn't he accorded the same convenience as Eliezer? The Chasam Sofer answers that Yaakov was leaving Eretz Yisroel. For this there are no accommodations to leave quickly. To remove Eliezer, who was a Canaanite servant, accommodations were made to get him out quickly.

OROH V'SIMCHOH - MESHECH CHOCHMOH ON PARSHAS CHAYEI SOROH

Ch. 23, v. 18: "L'einei v'nei Cheis" - Translated literally, this means "to the eyes of the bnei Cheis." "LIFNEI bnei Cheis" would have been the preferred wording. This is explained by the Ohr Hachaim Hakodosh and the MESHECH CHOCHMOH. Although ownership of a field can be transacted through "kesef, shtar, o chazokoh," - financial payment, a document, or an act showing ownership, as is recorded in Ch.M. #190, nevertheless when a Jew buys from or sells property to a non-Jew, only the combination of payment and a document complete the transaction according to the opinion of Rav Hai Gaon (mentioned in the Biur haGR"A #194 on Ch.M. #190). If only a payment was made to the non-Jew an anomaly takes place. The property is no longer the non-Jew's, but it is not yet in the possession of the Jew. At the point when Avrohom had only given the payment of 400 shkolim for the field it was not yet his by Torah law. However the bnei Cheis viewed it as if he had acquired the land, thus the term "l'einei bnei Cheis," in their eyes it

belonged to Avrohom. When he afterwards buried Soroh in the M'oras Hamachpeiloh, he did an act of ownership and at that point the field truly came into his possession. This is why the Torah reiterates in verse 20 that the field and the cave came into Avrohom's possession, leaving out the words "l'einei bnei Cheis" this time.

Ch. 24, v. 3 "Asher lo sikach ishoh livni" - Avrohom gave this command to Eliezer. The Moshav Z'keinim asks, "Why did he not tell Yitzchok directly?" He answers that Yitzchok was not at hand. After the A'keidoh Avrohom sent him away, as indicated by the words "V'Yitzchok bo mibo B'eir Lachai Ro'i" (24:62). As well, on verse 65 the Moshav Z'keinim says in the name of the medrash that Yitzchok came from Gan Eden.

The MESHECH CHOCHMOH answers that this is in consonance with the opinion of the Mahari"k shoresh #167, which is brought in the Ram"o Y.D. 240:25, that a son is not required to comply with his father's command to not marry a certain woman.

The MESHECH CHOCHMOH asks that if this is so, why did Yitzchok command Yaakov to not take a wife who is a descendant of Canaan, "Lo sikach ishoh mibnose Canaan" (Breishis 28:1). He answers that Yitzchok in verse 4 blesses Yaakov saying, "V'yi'ten l'cho es birkas Avrohom l'cho ulzaracho itcho l'rish't'cho es eretz m'gu'recho asher nosan Elokim l'Avrohom." Yitzchok passed on the blessing of Avrohom to Yaakov. For Avrohom to have received this blessing in the first place required "V'nosati l'cho ulzaracho acharecho eis eretz m'gu'recho eis kol Eretz Canaan laachuzas olom v'hoyisi lohem l'Eilokim" (Breishis 17:8). Avrohom was promised permanent ownership of the land subject to his children being "acha'recho," following his status. The gemara Y'vomos 100a says that if a ben Yisroel marries a non-Jewess, the children are not Jewish. In turn, Yitzchok ADVISED Yaakov to not take a wife from the people of Canaan so that he should merit the conditional blessing of inheriting the land, but this was not a command.

This is the intention of a later verse (28:6), "Va'yar Eisov ki veirach Yitzchok es Yaakov v'sholach oso Pa'denoh Aram lokachas lo mishom isho b'voracho oso va'y'tzav olov leimore lo sikach ishoh mibnos Canaan." Eisov fully realized that Yaakov received the blessing since Yitzchok commanded him to not take a wife from the Canaanites. Since a son does not have to follow his father's wishes regarding marriage, it must be that Yaakov received the blessing of inheriting the land, which is dependent upon not marrying a Canaanite woman, and Yitzchok advised him as a condition to receive the blessing and not as a command that one must fulfill because of the mitzvoh of honouring one's parents.

Ch. 25, v. 9: "Va'yik'b'ru oso Yitzchok v'Yishmo'eil bonov" – The gemara B.B. 16b says that Yishmo'eil repented for his bad ways, as indicated by our verse, where Yitzchok is mentioned before Yishmo'eil, indicating that Yishmo'eil allowed Yitzchok to take the lead in the activities surrounding the burial of Avrohom, and did not insist that he, Yishmo'eil, be given priority by virtue of being older. How is this an act of repentance for earlier wrongdoing? Horav Yaakov Yoseif Herman of "All for the Boss" fame answers that the Ramban on Breishis 21:9 explains that "ben Hogor haMitzris m'tzacheik" means that Yishmo'eil belittled and ridiculed Yitzchok. This was more than sufficient cause for Soroh to have Hogor and Yishmo'eil sent away. Thus by Yishmo'eil's giving Yitzchok proper honour, he repented for his previous negative behaviour.

The Meshech Chochmoh answers with the words of the Sforno on 21:9. Verse 8 states that Avrohom made a festive meal upon the occasion of Yitzchok's being weaned. Yishmo'eil's scoffing in the next verse refers to the festive meal Avrohom gave. Yishmo'eil mocked, saying that Yitzchok was not the son of Avrohom, but rather, the son of Avimelech, a result of the happenings related in chapter 20. Thus when he included Yitzchok in the burial activities of Avrohom, this was an act of repentance, as he clearly rescinded his previous opinion, rather than saying that Yitzchok had no business involving himself with the burial of Avrohom, as he wasn't even his son.

CHAMISHOH MI YODEI'A – FIVE QUESTIONS ON THE WEEKLY SEDRAH – PARSHAS CHAYEI SOROH 5775 – BS"D

Ch. 23, v. 1: "Mei'oh shonoh v'esrim shonoh v'sheva shonim" – One-hundred years and twenty years and seven years – Rashi comments that Soroh at the age of twenty had the beauty of a seven year old. Usually a twenty-year old woman is more attractive than a seven-year old child.

Ch. 23, v. 2: "Lispode l'Soroh v'li'kosoh" – To eulogize Soroh and to cry over her – Why doesn't the verse mention that Avrohom came to bury her?

Ch. 23, v. 9: "M'oras hamachpeiloh" – The double cave – What is "hamachpeiloh?"

Ch. 23, v. 16: "Arba mei'os shekel kesef" – Four-hundred silver shkolim – Why doesn't the verse say "shikleil kesef" in the plural?

5) Ch. 24, v. 36: "Va'tei'led Soroh acharei ziknosoh" – And Soroh gave birth after she was already in her old age – What relevance does this have to the proposal?

ANSWERS:

#1

Some change the text in Rashi to read that Soroh at the age of one-hundred had the beauty of a twenty-year old (see Rokei'ach). Rabbi Shlomo Ashtruk explains the text as we have it. Even if a seven-year old girl is very pretty it does not arouse the baser feelings in a man who looks at her. Soroh was so very modest that she brought about no such thoughts in men, as in the main she remained out of the public eye and did not adorn herself.

#2

This is because he was not sure that he would be able to purchase the site of his choice. If that were to happen he planned to bring her body to B'eir Sheva for burial. (Tosfos Hasho'leim)

#3

- 1) The cave had a two-story house above it. (Rashi)
- 2) The cave would be the burial site for couples. (Rashi)
- 3) Avrohom paid double its worth. (Rabbeinu Menachem)
- 4) The cave was located in a valley called Machpeiloh. (Rashbam)
- 5) Hashem buried Odom in this cave and to allow Odom to fit into his burial niche it was necessary to double him over. (Rabbeinu Bachyei)
- 6) The cave had two chambers inside it. (gemara Eiruvim 53a)

#4

When one sells an item by weight or measure, to make sure that he does not short-change the purchaser he adds a tad, called "hachro'oh." Similarly, the purchaser, when paying coinage, which was once dictated by weight/content, would also add a tad. However, if one were to purchase ten litres of liquid, the seller would not add ten "hachro'os," but rather, only one. Similarly, the purchaser, when paying numerous coins, would also add only one "hachro'oh." This was common practice in commerce. Along comes Efron and not only asks for the exorbitant sum of four-hundred silver shekel weight of coinage, but also that the coins be weighed one at a time and an "hachro'oh" be added to each coin. Our verse tells us that the price was four-

hundred, but a SHEKEL at a time. The verse ends by saying “oveir lasocheir,” this contravenes the custom of commerce. (Rabbi Shlomo haLevi Karliner in Sheima Shlomo)

#5

1) To let the prospective “m’chutonim” know that Hashem deals with Avrohom in a supernatural manner (Rabbeinu Menachem)

2) Yitzchok will be the only heir, as Sorah would bear no other children. (Chizkuni)
Sorah had already died, so even if she was young when she gave birth it made no difference. Any help would be appreciated.

3) Yitzchok would soon inherit Avrohom’s possessions since his parents were old. (Rabbeinu Shmuel of Sanut)

The stress should then be on Avrohom’s old age, as Sorah was deceased. Again, any ideas?

4) The innuendo that Avimelech, and not Avrohom, sired Yitzchok was still abounding. The gemara A.Z. 54b says that when a union of sin takes place there should be no pregnancy, but Hashem allows the laws of nature to take place. However, no miracle is wrought when a sin of this sort takes place. Since Sorah gave birth at a miraculously old age it is conclusive that the conception did not take place in sin. (Adnei Poz)

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