

THE HARRY H. BEREN TORAH WEEKLY

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Parshas Chayei Sara

November 22, 2019

A Taste of Torah Double Talk

by Rabbi Shmuel Halpern

The bulk of this week's parsha focuses on the match between Yitzchak and Rivka. The Torah relates in detail how Eliezer the servant of Avraham traveled to find a wife for his master's son.

What seems puzzling is the fact that the Torah deemed it fit to repeat the entire story. The entire tale is initially recorded in narrative form, and then repeated all over again as Eliezer tells the story to Rivka's family. Addressing the apparent redundancy, Rashi cites the Talmud (Sanhedrin 95a) which addresses this question with the following words: "Rabbi Acha said, the words of the servants of the Patriarchs are more beloved than the Torah (i.e., mitzvos) later taught to their children. While many mitzvos are merely alluded to or taught in vague terms in the Torah, the words of Eliezer are repeated in their entirety." The Talmud's answer seems to address our issue, but it is more of a statement of fact, affirming that these words are important, without any further explanation of why they're important.

The Sfas Emes (Rabbi Yehuda Aryeh Leib Alter; 1847-1905) cites a beautiful interpretation of this Talmudic passage from the Kotzker Rebbe (Rabbi Menachem Mendel Morgenstern; 1787-1859).

He begins with a Medrash that states that Eliezer told Rivka's family how he had questioned Avraham about the possibility of failing in his mission to bring a wife back for Yitzchak.

"Perhaps the girl will refuse to return with me?" (Bereishis 24:5) asks Eliezer. The word for perhaps, *ulai*, is written missing the letter *vav*, and can thus be read as *ailai*, to me. The Medrash comments that Eliezer's words were a

Freudian slip of sorts that hinted to a secret, subconscious hope that he would, in fact, fail; this was because Eliezer had a daughter of his own, and he was hoping that she would marry Yitzchak. The Kotzker Rebbe explains that initially, Eliezer himself was unaware of this subconscious hope that he would fail, as it was hidden deep within his psyche. The reason he went out of his way to repeat the entire story to Rivka's family was in order to dig deeper into his own motivations and ensure that they were pure. It was then that he discovered his misgiving and realized that he indeed wasn't really bought into the success of the mission. At this point, Eliezer immediately set out to subjugate his personal desires before the will of Hashem. Eliezer knew that Hashem would bring Avraham's will to fruition. He only worried that he wouldn't merit being a proper conduit for the fulfillment of that Divine will. When he did, indeed, purify his heart, he merited to speedily bring his mission to its completion. Eliezer was able to accomplish this incredible purity of heart by completely dedicating himself to his master's instructions.

We, too, are messengers. Hashem sent us into this world to accomplish a specific mission. What is the tried and true path to achieving success? It is the lesson of Eliezer, staying completely focused on the will of our Master, the Creator of Heaven and Earth. Eliezer was aware that, as a human being, he was prone to deep-seated, selfish motives, and searched to find and eliminate them. Let us endeavor to always remember that we are here to reach a specific destination, and that

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Because Torah Is for Every Jew

Stories for the Soul

A Match Made in the Cemetery

Rabbi Ari Spiegel would arrange an annual trip to the grave of Rabbi Yaakov Yosef (1840-1902) on the latter's *yahrtzeit*, which falls during the summer months. Rabbi Spiegel had seven empty seats in his van, which he would offer on a first-come-first-served basis, and he would drive the van to the gravesite, where all would pray to Hashem in the merit of the great man buried there. Over the years, numerous people saw their prayers answered. In particular, those having a difficult time finding a spouse merited salvation.

One year, a man called and asked if he could come and pray on behalf of his daughter, who had been unsuccessful in finding a husband for some time. The man asked if his brother could also come along. Rabbi Spiegel regretfully replied that he only had one seat left; the man declined to take it, saying he would not go without his brother. Rabbi Spiegel promised to let him know if another seat opened up.

A few days before the trip, one passenger, a single young man studying in yeshiva, called with a dilemma. It was late in the semester, and he had assumed his *chavrusa* (study partner) would not mind if he took a day off to travel to the gravesite, where he hoped to pray to merit finding a wife. However, the *chavrusa* had informed him that he would prefer if he would be available in yeshiva for the regular Torah learning session. The young man asked Rabbi Spiegel what he felt he ought to do. Rabbi Spiegel advised the man to remain in the yeshiva,

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Kollel Happenings

T4T CLE CONFERENCE ON 12.6

The Kollel's first ever T4T CLE Credit Conference will take place on Friday, Dec. 6 at the Wells Fargo Center, 1700 Lincoln St., from 8:15 am-12:30 pm. Three classes running from 9-12, all with CLE credits, will be presented by AG Phil Weiser, Mr. Ted Gelt, and the Honorable Daniel M. Taubman, along with Kollel presenters. Breakfast & light refreshments will be served. \$50 for entire event if registered by 12/1; \$72 entire event/\$25 per class thereafter. To register, visit www.denverkollel.org, email info@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855.

REB SHALOM SOMMERS SEFER TORAH CAMPAIGN

A Sefer Torah is being dedicated in memory of Reb Shalom Sommers, father of Kollel Dean Rabbi Shachne Sommers. Dedication opportunities for the Sefer Torah at all price levels are available. Proceeds from the campaign will fund the continued growth and expansion of the Southeast Kollel Torah Center/Ohel Yissachar. For dedication opportunities or more info, visit www.denverkollel.org, email info@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855.

THE POWER OF SPEECH THIS TUESDAY WITH RABBI SOMMERS

As part of Clean Speech Colorado, Kollel Dean Rabbi Shachne Sommers will discuss *Truth Be Told: Lashon Hara, the Power of Speech, and Arriving at the Whole Truth*. This Tues., November 26th, 8-9 pm for men & women @the Southeast Kollel Torah Center/Ohel Yissachar, 4902 S. Xenia St.

Parsha Quizzers

The six items below can be found in Rashi's commentary to this week's parsha. Can you figure out where they are? (Answers on bottom)

- 1) Two good friends
- 2) Muzzled
- 3) First things first, last things last
- 4) Maybe to me
- 5) Whether you like it or not
- 6) Incense

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Eliezer Silver Part XXIX

Rabbi Wahrman, who passed away in 2013, wrote the following about the man he considered to be his *rebbe muvhak* (main teacher):

I remember at times he screamed at me for lack of understanding - however, even then, I sensed his great love and concern for me and not the slightest hint of hatred. Rabbi Silver was a man whose very essence was giving to others - his ahavas yisroel (love for his fellow Jew) knew no bounds...he saw every Jew as

an extension of himself.

Rabbi Silver also authored a work titled *Anfei Erez*.

Rabbi Silver passed away in 1968 and is buried at Washington Cemetery in Cincinnati. Rabbi Silver's legacy lives and grows daily. His efforts and achievements laid the groundwork for the post-World War II blossoming of Torah Jewry in America.

A Taste of Torah

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we face many challenges along the way. Some of those challenges are obvious, others are hidden. If we truly desire to

fulfill the will of Hashem, we will purify our hearts and, G-d willing, merit to live our lives for the sake of heaven.

Stories for the Soul

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assuring him that he himself would pray at the gravesite for him. Rabbi Spiegel then called the first man and informed him that he had another spot for his brother. The visit to the grave went as planned, with the two brothers in attendance, and Rabbi Spiegel praying for the young man who had chosen to remain studying in yeshiva.

Not long afterwards, Rabbi Spiegel received a phone call from the man who had come along to the cemetery to pray for his daughter. The fellow joyfully told Rabbi Spiegel that his daughter had

just become engaged to a fine young man! Rabbi Spiegel asked him who the *chassan* (groom) was, and the father gave the name of the very young man who had decided to remain in yeshiva, thus enabling the two brothers to pray at the gravesite!

In this week's parsha, Eliezer prays to Hashem for success on his mission to find a suitable wife for Yitzchak. While one must put in the due effort to find a spouse, prayer is an integral part of the process, as well.

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| <p>6) Incense 25:1 s.v. <i>keturah</i>
5) Whether you like it or not 24:58 s.v. <i>vatomer</i>
4) Maybe to me 24:39 s.v. <i>aylah</i>
has Bessel</p> | <p>3) First things first, last things last 24:24 s.v. <i>va'yiflach</i>
2) Muzzled 24:10 s.v. <i>mignatalay</i> (also 24:31 s.v. <i>Two good friends 23:15 s.v. bami</i>)</p> |
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Parsha Quizzers - Answers