

From the High School

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camels finished drinking" (22), Eliezer offered jewelry to Rivkah as a sign that she would be Yitzchak's wife. Why did he wait for the camels to finish drinking? What was he wondering about until then?

Camels drink a lot of water, and feeding ten of them in the hot baking sun is no easy task. Rivkah began the *chessed* with excitement and zeal. Eliezer wondered if she would continue. Would she finish the task? Would she do so with the same exuberance and kindness with which she started? Or would she give up altogether when it became too difficult? Would she finish the task in a lackadaisical manner, perhaps regretting that she had offered in the first place? Eliezer knew that it is one thing to start a *mitzvah*; finishing one is something entirely different. Only when Rivkah finished feeding the camels did Eliezer know that Rivkah was the one for Yitzchak.

Why was this character trait of "grit" so important for the wife of Yitzchak? Avraham Avinu introduced monotheism into the world. It was new and exciting. People were drawn to the newfound inspiration. Would Yitzchak be able to continue? What would happen when the excitement died down? Would he be able to carry through with the same passion when the initial inspiration diminished? Would he give up when support for the movement waned? Yitzchak's role was to continue the legacy of Avraham and instill a new enthusiasm to the mission even after the ideas were no longer fresh and innovative. Eliezer's test confirmed that Rivkah was the perfect partner for Yitzchak in this mission. Just as she made sure every last camel drank despite how exhausted she may have been, so too would she be able to encourage Yitzchak to carry the banner of monotheism despite the difficulties they would face along the way.

Students and adults alike face times in life of newness and excitement. The key to success is to learn from Rivkah and Yitzchak to carry on even when the initial inspiration starts to die down. Those who can complete the task to the very last stage, whether it's feeding camels, completing a *mitzvah*, mastering a subject, or excelling at a project are students of Rivkah and Yitzchak, and are sure to be successful in whatever they aspire to accomplish.

- Rabbi Yaacov Feit — MS, Director of Judaic Studies

Answers to questions on page 1

- (1) Chevron/Kiryat Arba (2) Ephron HaChitti
(3) Lavan (4) She fell off her camel

Parshat Chayei Sarah

Friday, November 2, 2018

כד חשוון תשע"ט

From the Lower School

1. In what city is Sarah buried?
2. Who sold Avraham the cave where Sarah was buried?
3. What is the name of Rivkah's brother?
4. What happened to Rivkah when she first saw Yitzchak?

— Rabbi Aron Srolovitz — JKHA Assistant Principal

Answers can be found on the last page.

From the Middle School

A Truly Happy Life

The only person in the Torah who is eulogized is Avrohom. What is the eulogy? It is not the passing of the ten tests or that he was the first to recognize Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Rather, he was "zaken visaveah" He was elderly and content. What is so special about that?

Avrohom lived his life with the approach that everything that was given to him is a gift and he is undeserving. One example where we see this attitude is when Avrohom was told that he was going to have another child, Yitzchok. He says "If only Yishmael would live" Rashi explains that Avraham felt unworthy of being granted another child.

In the society that we live in, where everything is a "right" that is protected by the constitution, it can at times be challenging to have this type of approach. How many people are unhappy because they feel that he or she does not get what they feel they are "owed".

When the Chofetz Chaim finished writing his "mishna berura", he was overheard saying, "Hashem, You have been so good to me to allow me to write the mishna berura". Perhaps WE would have said, "Hashem look what I did for Your honor? I put out the mishna berura! Everyone will

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keep the daily halacha better because of me!"

The Chofetz Chaim lived his life like Avrohom with the attitude that Hashem does not owe us anything. We are the ones who owe Him our loyalty for all the kindness He gives us.

When a person goes through life with this attitude he lives a life that will end up "elderly and content". A truly happy life.

- Rabbi Dovid Selengut — MS, Dean of Students

From the High School

Making Every Moment Count

"And the life of Sarah was one hundred years, and twenty years, and seven years, the years of Sarah's life" (*Bereishit* 23:1).

In his work, *The Short Vort*, Rabbi Moshe Kormornick relates a *midrash* to this *passuk*. In this *midrash*, Rabbi Akiva was once in the middle of teaching when his student began to doze off. Rabbi Akiva wanted to wake him up, so he asked the following question, "What made Esther worthy of ruling over 127 provinces? He answered by stating that Hashem declared, "Esther, the daughter of Sarah, who lived for one hundred and twenty seven years, will come and rule over one hundred and twenty seven provinces!"

This seems odd. What message was Rabbi Akiva trying to convey to his students? And how would this help his students wake up?

The *Chiddushei HaRim* explains that since every single day of Sarah's life was used to serve Hashem in the fullest, most empowering, and most complete manner, therefore, Esther was permitted to rule over all 127 provinces of Persia. If Sarah were to have had a "bad day" even just slacking the slightest bit in her responsibilities to Hashem, then her great-great-granddaughter Esther would not have been given that great privilege. From this, Rabbi Moshe Kormornick explains that one year of Sarah's 127-year life is equal to one province in Esther's monarchy, both tallying up to 127. Based on the idea that each year of Sarah's life is worth one province, we can derive that every month is worth a country, every day is worth a city, every hour is worth a street, every minute is worth a house, and every second is worth a room. This conclusion stresses the greatness of Sarah's perfection of character.

Rashi tells us that Sarah's days were "all equally good:" From the days she

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was barren to the day that she gave birth, and from when she was taken captive by Par'oh to when she was released, all of her days were, amazingly, "all equally good" because every hour of every day of every year, she was doing what she knew Hashem wanted her to do. Whatever situation she was in, she was always doing the right thing in the eyes of Hashem.

Rabbi Moshe Kormornick therefore explains that this is exactly the message that Rabbi Akiva was trying to relay to his students. If you live every moment in your life to its fullest, how can you possibly fall asleep here? Do you realize how precious every second of your life is worth? You cannot begin to imagine the possibilities we are creating for ourselves and our future generations.

Although accomplishing a life and creating for ourselves a character like Sarah seems nearly impossible, if we keep in the mindset that Sarah always had, which was always do what Hashem would want of us, we can truly accomplish great things.

- Tommi Ratzker is a Sophomore at RYKHS

Rivkah, Feeding Camels, and Grit

The test that Eliezer used to find a wife for Yitzchak Avinu is familiar to us. He would seek the woman who, when asked for water, would feed the camels as well, thus proving that she was deserving of being the wife of Yitzchak. A simple understanding of this test is that such a response would demonstrate the *middah* of *cheded* so important in a marriage. However, a careful look at the *pesukim* reveals that Eliezer was in search of another important quality.

From the start, everything seemed like it was going according to plan, almost miraculously. The *pesukim* describe how immediately after Eliezer proposed the test, none other than Rivkah herself approached the well. Eliezer asked for water and Rivkah went directly to feed both Eliezer and the camels. One would have thought that upon seeing this, the test would have been complete. Instead, the *passuk* says, "Ve'ha'ish mishta'eh lah, macharish lada'at hahitzliach Hashem darko im lo," "The man was astonished at her, reflecting silently to know whether Hashem had made his journey successful or not" (*Bereishit* 24:21). What was he waiting for? Didn't she pass the test with flying colors?

The *passuk* continues, "vayehi ka'asher kilu hag'malim lishtot," "when the

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