

Parsha Shiur by Rabbi Mayer Friedman

פרשת חיי שרה

ויהיו חיי שרה מאה שנה ועשרים שנה ושבע שנים שני חיי שרה
“The lifetime of Sarah was one hundred years, twenty years, and seven years; the years of Sarah's life” (23:1)

Why did the Torah repeat the statement that these were the number of years that Sarah lived at the end of the posuk? The midrash answers that even though Sarah died from shock after receiving news of the Akeidah, she did not die early. She lived 127 years, which is exactly how long she was supposed to live. R' Yaakov Kamenetzky adds that a person does not live longer or shorter than they are supposed to live. When the moment that was pre-destined for them to leave this world arrives, they depart to the next world, not a minute sooner or later. Therefore, a person should never question whether they could have done more for a sick person who succumbed to an illness. When Hashem passes a decree, nothing can prevent it from occurring.

ואברהם זקן בא בימים וה' ברך את אברהם בכל
“Now Avraham was old, well on in years. and Hashem blessed Avraham with everything” (24:1)

Why does the Torah point out that Avraham was old? The midrash explains that Avraham prayed that people should look old. Before him, everybody retained their youthful looks until their death without ever showing physical signs of aging. Avraham was concerned that if a father and son walk together, it would be wrong if people do not know who to honor. Hashem acquiesced to Avraham's request. The Meiam Loez adds that this is why it is notable that Avraham was old. He was the first person to look old. Similarly, Yaakov prayed that people should fall ill before they die. He said that people would not have the opportunity to do teshuva before they died if death came so suddenly. Today, if a person becomes mortally ill, he has the ability to put his affairs in order and make an accounting of his deeds so that he can repent before he faces judgment in the next world. A person should pray that he not die suddenly so that he will be able to pass into the next world with the proper mindset.

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“Now Avraham was old, well on in years. and Hashem blessed Avraham with everything” (24:1)

Rashi points out that the word בכל has the same numerical value as the word בן, son. R' Nissan Alpert asks: If that is what the posuk is referring to, then why didn't the Torah just say that Hashem blessed Avraham with a son? He answered that some people are only concerned about themselves and not others. However, Hashem blessed Avraham that he was involved with the whole world. He was involved בכל, with everything in world affairs. But at the same time that he focused on the world, he also remained focused on his son. Avraham never lost sight of both and balanced his communal and personal responsibilities. He was able to be totally involved in the concerns of the world at large

without forgetting about his son. To the outsider, he seemed like a world leader, but behind the scenes, he was an equally, if not more, dedicated father. When we ask Hashem in our bentsching to bless us like our forefather Avraham with the blessing of בכל, we are asking that we should be able to fulfill our communal responsibility while being dedicated to our own children at the same time.

**וידבר אל עפרון באזני עם הארץ לאמר אך אם אתה לו שמעני נתתי כסף השדה
קח ממני ואקברה את מתי שמה**

“He spoke to Efron in the hearing of the members of the council, saying: Rather if only you would heed me! I give the price of the field, accept it from me, that I may bury my dead there” (23:13)

From this posuk, we learn that the word קח can refer to a monetary transaction. Since the same word is used in reference to marriage, we derive from here that kiddushin can be accomplished by giving money or an item of monetary value to a woman. Why do we learn how to marry a woman from such a sad occasion? The answer is that this source for marriage provides a tremendous lesson for a young couple. When a person takes care of a relative's burial, he does not expect the deceased to repay his kindness. It is a "chesed shel emes," a good deed done for another without any expectation of receiving something in return. This is the approach that a person should have toward his spouse. It is that a marriage must be based on chesed shel emes. A person should never be keeping score with his spouse and ask what was done for him lately. Each spouse must give to the other and keep on giving constantly without ever expecting anything in return. Marriage must be based on "chesed shel emes," an unconditional love that revolves around giving freely to the other person. That is why we learn how to begin our marriages from an event surrounding the ultimate "chesed shel emes."

Kesharim Baruch College/NYU Parsha Shiur

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