

CHAYUS

A Shabbos Stimulus

THE EDA AND DAVID SCHOTTENSTEIN EDITION

In honor of our parents, Tuvia and Lea Schottenstein and Rabbi Yisroel and Chana Sirota

Erev Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah 5781, November 13, 2020

ערב שבת פרשת חיי שרה, כ"ו חשוון, תשפ"א

כתר שם טוב

PORTIONS OF LIGHT

Keter Shem Tov

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Philanthropy of the Soul

“There are three kinds of generosity: financial, physical, and intellectual. Our patriarch Abraham excelled in all three.”

Indeed, Abraham was generous with his money, his body, and his soul: He used his wealth to provide food and drink to all passersby. He exerted himself physically, personally serving food to those who entered his abode. He sacrificed his soul, his spiritual and intellectual pursuits. For as stated in *Sefer Yetzirah*, Abraham was astoundingly knowledgeable in the fields of theology, and he deeply

cherished each moment that he could devote to his own studies and contemplations. Nevertheless, he set aside his soul's spiritual desires for the sake of feeding spirituality to the souls of others, teaching plain folk who were not in his league at all. The defining quality of one who is generous with his soul is to ignore his own spiritual interests for the sake of his fellows.

Focus: If you wish to be close to G-d, reach out to others.

פרשת השבוע

PARSHA INSIGHT

By: **Rabbi Moshe Wisniefsky**

From: **Daily Wisdom #3**

Quantity and Quality

These were Ishmael's sons, and these names were given to their open towns and their strongholds. There were twelve chieftains for their nations. (Genesis 25:16)

Twelve is the defining number of reality. There are 12 months of the year, 12 signs of the zodiac, and it takes 12 lines to draw a cube, the representation of the three dimensions of space.

Accordingly, the Midrash tells us that G-d intended Adam to have 12 sons (*Bereishit Rabbah* 24:5) who would be charged with the goal of manifesting G-d's presence in the world. When Adam failed to live up to his Divine mission, forfeiting the right to father this family, other major figures of early history aspired to realize this goal: After Nachor, Abraham's brother, had eight sons by his wife Milkah, he took a concubine and had another four sons by

her (Genesis 22:20-24). Ishmael had 12 sons (Genesis 17:20, 25:13-16).

It was Jacob, however, who succeeded in fathering the 12 sons who became the progenitors of the Jewish people, and inherited the Divine mission of transforming reality into G-d's home. Jacob merited to establish the nuclear family of the Jewish nation because—in contrast to those before him who aspired to this goal—he embodied the attribute of selflessness, and was able to instill selflessness in his children.

Likutei Torah 3:94a-b; *Or HaTorah, Bereishit*, p. 15a ff; *ibid., Shemot*, vol. 1, pp. 254-255; *Derech Mitzvotcha* 125b.

STUDY CYCLE FOR SHABBOS DAY

Chumash

Chayei Sarah, 7th reading: After chronicling Avraham's death, the Torah lists the descendants of Yishmael before continuing with the chronicle of Yitzchak in the next section.

Tanya

Kuntres Acharon #1: A Kabbalistic exploration of the mystical effects of one's Torah study with the mind alone, versus when articulated in speech. The former, while achieving tremendous heights in spiritual realms, does little to impact our physical world, which is the ultimate purpose. Hence, the advantage of the latter.

Takeaway: A story in the Torah is not just history, it contains towers and towers of meaning.

Rambam

Zmanim, Hilchos Shabbos Ch. 20 – Animals on Shabbos: A person's animals, too, ought to rest on Shabbos. Therefore we may not loan them to a non-Jew. Selling animals to a non-Jew. What to do if one is on the way on Shabbos and has possessions (which he may not carry). How one is or is not allowed to lead animals on Shabbos. Slaves and maidservants on Shabbos. Laws of the resident alien.

GATE OF TRUST**Financially Worry Free**

Among the spiritual benefits of having *bitachon*: A person who trusts in G-d will find that his trust will bring him to turn his heart away from being occupied with worldly matters, and instead to dedicate himself to matters of service of G-d.

In terms of the tranquility of his soul, peace of mind, and lack of worry regarding worldly matters, he can be compared to an alchemist, which is a person who knows how to transform silver to gold, and copper and iron to silver, through his talents and efforts.

Moreover, a person who has *bitachon* is superior [in ten ways]: The alleged alchemist needs specific materials for his work and cannot complete it without them. These tools are not accessible at all times and in all places. Whereas the person who trusts in G-d has his sustenance guaranteed from any means available in the world.

Commentary: A primary disturbance of Divine service is material worry—how will he provide for his family? How will he attain his needs? A person who trusts that G-d will provide will not have to battle these concerns, and this peace of mind will allow him to dedicate himself to Divine service (*Marpei Lanefesh*).

A person who has *bitachon* can be compared to someone whose livelihood is "secure" because he

knows how to transform cheap materials into gold and silver and therefore has little to worry about. In fact, the author explains, a person who has *bitachon* is superior to the alchemist.

[In medieval times, when the *Chovot Halevavot* was written, the idea of alchemy was very attractive, because if anyone could find success they would instantly become very wealthy (*Pat Lechem*)].

Bottom line: G-d can provide one with livelihood from any source in the world. Therefore, a person who has *bitachon* can be even more relaxed and free from worry than the alchemist, because his livelihood is much more secure.

The Message of the Missing Vav

Introduction: *Parshas Chayei Sarah is primarily dedicated to the engagement and subsequent marriage of Yitzchak and Rivkah.*

The Torah goes into great detail describing how the events unfolded, beginning with Eliezer's miraculous journey, his encounter with Rivkah at the well and the meeting with her family that followed.

Besuel and Lavan were (initially¹) swayed by Eliezer's words and they declared,² "The matter has emanated from the Lord. We cannot speak to you either bad or good. Behold Rivkah is before you, take [her] and go, and let her be a wife for your master's son, as the Lord has spoken." They ended the evening with eating, drinking and celebrating the upcoming Shidduch.

The next morning Eliezer awakens and is ready to set out on his journey back, not wanting to waste a single moment. The Torah describes the conversation that took place:

וַיֵּאָכְלוּ וַיִּשְׁתּוּ הוּא וְהָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר עִמּוֹ וַיְלִינּוּ וַיִּקְוּמוּ בַבֶּקֶר וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁלַחֲנִי לְאֲדֹנָי. וַיֹּאמֶר אָחִיָּה וְאִמָּהּ תֵּשֶׁב הַנֶּעֱרָר אֲתַנּוּ יָמִים אוֹ עֶשְׂוֹר אַחַר תֵּלֶד. וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם אֵל תִּתְּחַרְרוּ אֵתִי וְהִ' הַצְּלִיחַ דְּרָכֵי שְׁלַחֲנִי וְאַלֶּכָּה לְאֲדֹנָי.

And they ate and drank, he and the men who were with him, and they lodged, and they arose in the morning, and he said, "Send me away to my master." But her brother and her mother said, "Let the maiden remain with us some ten days; then you may go." But he said to them, "Do not delay me, since the Lord has made my way prosper. Send me away, and I will go to my master." (Chayei Sarah, 24:54-56)

Driving Question: Why does the word *שלחני* Shalchuni ("send me") initially appear **without** the letter 'vav', and shortly thereafter *שלחוני* Shalchuni appears **with** a 'vav'? What is the significance of this change in spelling?

Central Point: The Midrash teaches, that Besu'el intended to stop Rivkah from going with Eliezer and that a Malach ended his life. The subtle change of spelling with the letter 'vav' hints to this incident.

The Midrash, quoted by Rashi here, points out a glaring difficulty with the description of these events:³

The evening before, the conversation was held by Besuel and Lavan, with no mention of Rivkah's mother. However, when the Torah describes the

events that took place the next morning, we are introduced to her mother, whom together with Lavan — with no mention of Besuel — attempts to dissuade Eliezer from taking Rivkah so hurriedly.

Rashi, quoting the Midrash, explains what had taken place. "And where was Besuel? He wanted to stop [Rivkah's marriage]; so an angel came and killed him."

It is for this reason that he is missing in the conversation the next morning, although he was very much present the evening before.

Upon closer scrutiny of Eliezer's words, one can find a hint of this Midrash in the verses themselves.

By way of introduction:

There are words in Hebrew that can be written with or without the letter 'vav', and it is the vowels and pronunciation alone which allows the reader to discern its meaning. Additionally, the change of pronunciation can also change the meaning of the word, from past tense to future, from plural to singular etc.

In our context this occurs with the word *שלחני* Shalchuni — "send me", when Eliezer implores Rivkah's family to send him off with her. The word

1. As we will see, they later changed their minds.

2. Chayei Sarah, 24:50

3. See Rashi on Chayei Sarah, 24:55.

appears twice in Eliezer's statements. The first time it is spelled שלחני without a 'vav' and the second time, a few verses later, it is spelled שלחוני with a 'vav'.

Reading the story at face value, they both mean the exact same thing. However, every letter in Torah is precise, and this subtle change is surely significant.

Why is there no 'vav' in the word שלחני *Shalchuni* the first time Eliezer says it?

The word שלחני (without the *vav*) can also be pronounced שלחני *Shalcheini*, if there are no vowels directing you how to read it (as is the case in a Sefer Torah).

The grammatical form of the word שלחני *Shalcheini* is second-person singular, i.e. one person talking to one other individual — not two or more. The word שלחוני with the 'vav', pronounced as *Shalchuni*, is second-person plural, the grammatical form used when one person is speaking to two or more people.

This fits neatly with the explanation of the Mishnah.

When Eliezer wakes up the next morning, he only encounters Lavan, so he first says שלחני, which can also be read שלחני 'Shalcheini,' in the singular form, because he is only talking to Lavan now that Besuel had died.

A couple verses later he says שלחוני because Rivkah's mother is now included in the conversation, hence the plural form is used.

We thus see the precision in the spelling of the same word differently, and how it carries a subtle but valuable allusion⁴.

(Adapted from Likkutei Levi Yitzchak, Likkutim Al Pesukei Tanach, page 31⁵.)

4. This idea is part of a much broader, in-depth analysis of the story by Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, spanning over 14 pages (!) with a Kabbalistic discourse on the many subtleties and nuanced expressions in this episode.

5. See Yalkut Levi Yitzchak Al HaTorah, Vol. 1, Siman 166.

To watch a video or hear a podcast of this idea, visit: irguntorah.org/toras-reb-levi-yitzchok

גאולה ∞ GEULAH

Yalkut Moshiach uGeulah al HaTorah
Translated by Yaakov Paley

When Every Single Day Will Count

The Zohar explains the verse, "Avraham was old, advanced in days" – all of Avraham's days were truly his because each day's spiritual service had been fully accomplished.

This teaching explains a redundancy in a prophecy of the Future Era – "There will no longer be ... a youth or an old man who will not fill his days" (*Yeshayah* 65:20). If he is elderly, do we not know that he has filled his days? Rather, in the final Re-

demption, all mankind will serve G-d and divine knowledge will abound.

Unlike nowadays, when an elderly person may have no spiritual accomplishments to show for his long life, in the era of Redemption everyone will fill each day completely with its intended divine service.

Mikri Dardiki

.....
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**MEIR BEN SHIMON
HALEVI A"H**
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