

THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



PARSHAT CHAYEI SARAH

London's Leading Young Professionals Platform and Jewish Communal Centre



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
TAL Founder & Director

PRAYING

Praying isn't as easy as it seems. Sometimes we pray for something for years, and never seem to be answered, yet on other occasions we can see immediate success in our prayers.

In this weeks parsha we learn of one of the greatest prayers in history – that of Eliezer.

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai said: Three people were answered while their words were still upon their tongues: Avraham's servant Eliezer, Moshe, and Shlomo.

Regarding Eliezer, the verse states, "He had not yet finished speaking, and –look!–Rivkah... came out" (v. 15).

Regarding Moshe, the verse states, "When he finished speaking all these words [after his authority had been challenged by Korach], the ground split open" (Bamidbar 16:31).

Regarding Shlomo, the verse states, "When Shlomo finished speaking to G d [at the inauguration of the holy temple], the fire descended from heaven". (Bereishis Rabah 60:4)

Three Tsadikim prayed and were answered. Yet there is a difference between Eliezer and the others. Eliezers prayer seems to be even greater, as he was answered even before he had finished his prayer.

Upon inspection the torah goes to great length to tell us about Eliezers mission. Much ink is spilled (so to speak) from the

time Avraham sends him away; to the time he succeeds in getting Rivkas consent.

Why does the torah elaborate so much on his mission? Who was Eliezer and was he really so great?

The Midrash brings a famous encounter between Avraham and Nimrod. Nimrod was the ruler of a vast empire and believed himself to be a deity. Avraham had other ideas and knew the truth. He challenged Nimrod and was thrown into the fire. Hashem saved Avraham, and shortly after Avraham left the country.

There is an amazing Targum Yonatan that states that Eliezer was none other than the son of Nimrod.

Nimrod seeing that this man Avraham had succeeded was so impressed that he said it would be better that his son clings to such a man, then to stay a prince in his palace.

Eliezer thus became Avrahams servant. But what kind of servant was he?

Avraham referred to his servant as 'Damesek Eliezer'.

Our Sages teach us that the word Damesek is an acronym of the words "Doleh Umashkeh", meaning the one who draws from the well and gives of it's water.

Furthermore, "He (Eliezer) controlled all that was his (Avrahams)." This teaches us that Eliezer had dominion over the Torah of Avraham (Yoma 28b). Eliezer had complete mastery of Avraham's teachings and was authorised to disseminate his lessons to others. The Midrash adds that Eliezer had control over all that

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was his - himself, he had complete self-control and mastery over his yetzer hara.

He was Avraham's Talmid, his vehicle for fulfilling his mission in the world of spreading Hashem's life sustaining Torah. He drew from Avrahams Torah and fed others. Not only was he a Talmid Chacham but he was also the most faithful of servants to Avraham.

Although he expounded on Avraham's teachings to the public, managed Avraham's estate and was Avraham's representative to the world, he introduced himself to Betuel and Lavan as 'Eved Avraham anochi', I am Avraham's slave. He considered himself to be a mere servant, and did not take credit for his achievements.

When the time came to look for a wife for Yitschak, Avraham summoned none other than his top confidant Eliezer for the mission.

Avraham did not want his son to marry any Canaanite women, and chose to send Eliezer in search of a wife, to his family in Aram Naharayim.

The Midrash enlightens us as to what occurred before Eliezer set off. Eliezer himself was father to a lovely daughter. In his eyes, it would have been the perfect match. He yearned that his daughter would marry Yitschak.

He approached Avraham and hinted to him that his daughter would offer

the perfect match.

Avrahams response was startling.

"My son is Baruch-blessed, and you are Arur-cursed, and one who is Arur cannot cleave to one who is Baruch." Eliezer was a descendent of Canaan the son of Cham who was cursed by Noach whereas Avraham was descended from Shem, who received Noach's blessings - they could not match.

Wow. If we were Eliezer, I wonder how we would have acted on hearing that? "I have been your confident, your servant for years, I do all you say, I teach your torah, I am in charge of your house, you are everything for me, how can you call me cursed?!

Eliezer's reaction was far from that. Instead he kept quiet, and fulfilled his masters request to go to Aram Naharayim many miles away to find a wife for Yitschak.

He arrived at the well and makes a supplication to the G-d of his master Avraham, and before he knows it he is answered.

We can now understand why his prayer was so potent.

The Gemara states 'The world subsists only through the merit of he, who in a quarrel restrains himself to nothingness "bolem azmo beshaat meriva". As it says "He hangs the earth upon nothing" (belima) (Iyov, 26:7). R. Abbahou said: the World rests only upon the merit of the one who thinks of himself as nothing, as it

says " Underneath are the arms of the world" (Devarim 33:27).

His prayer was potent because the whole world rested upon his shoulders. The Midrash (Bereishit Rabba 60:7) relates that through Eliezer's dedication and loyalty to Avraham, he changed from Arur to Baruch.

He might have been justified to answer back, to even renegade against his Shelichut, but that wasn't Eliezer. Eliezer was an Eved Neeman a true servant, true to Hashem, and true to Avraham. This was a massive merit. Yet this was not the only thing Eliezer had going for him.

Before he set out Avraham had prayed that Hashem send before him his Malach to help Eliezer. And once Eliezer reached the well, he prayed in the merit of Avraham. Thus Eliezer had the help of Zechut Avot. He prayed to Hashem in the merit of Avraham.

With these two powerful antidotes, his massive merit after an act of Belima, and the merit of Avraham enabled his prayer to reach the highest of heavens and he was answered even before he finished praying.

The best time to pray is after an act of selflessness. When one acts against his will, but for the will of Hashem. When we conquer our Yetser that is the shaat Ratson.

That Et Ratson together with the Zechut Avot will surely lead to success.



RABBI DAVID BAADANI
Director - TAL Chazanut Program

PARSHAT CHAYEI SARAH

The Torah is famously concise. Every word, every letter, is exact. So when the Torah chooses to tell a story twice, and in such detail, we should pay close attention.

In this week's Parsha, the Torah recounts the mission of Eliezer,

Avraham's loyal servant, to find a wife for Yitzchak. We read the story once as it unfolds, and then again, almost word for word, when Eliezer retells it to Rivkah's family. Why such repetition? The Torah, which can teach worlds from a single phrase, dedicates so many verses to repeating the same narrative. Why?

Rabbi levinstein explains that this repetition is not redundancy, it is revelation. The Torah is showing us

what true selflessness looks like.

Eliezer had a daughter of his own, whom he deeply wished would marry Yitzchak. He mustered the courage to approach Avraham and suggest the match. But Avraham declined. Eliezer's dream was denied, and yet, later on, Avraham entrusts him with the most sacred task of all: to find someone else to marry Yitzchak.

And Eliezer goes. Not reluctantly, not bitterly, but with absolute dedication,

prayer, and clarity. He puts his personal feelings aside and serves his master's mission. The Torah repeats his story, word for word, because when a person rises above ego, his story becomes Torah, eternal truth.

We live in a world that celebrates self-interest, ambition, and personal fulfillment. But the Torah reminds us that holiness begins when we can say,

"It's not about me." Eliezer's greatness was not in finding Rivkah. It was in letting go of his own dream so that G-d's plan could unfold.

Each of us faces moments where our personal desires collide with what is right. Eliezer's story teaches us that true greatness is measured not by what we achieve for ourselves, but by our

willingness to set aside our own dreams for a higher purpose. Selflessness is not a loss, it is the seed of lasting impact. When we act with love and integrity, even in ways that require personal sacrifice, our deeds resonate far beyond our immediate lives. The Torah repeats Eliezer's story to remind us that such choices are what shape the world and leave an eternal imprint.



HALACHOT BY RABBI ELI MANSOUR

The Special Significance of the Verse "Vi'yhi Noam Hashem Elokenu Alenu"

One of the chapters of Tehillim that we add before Baruch She'amar on Shabbat morning is the 90th chapter – "Tefila Le'Moshe," which concludes with the famous verse, "Vi'yhi Noam Hashem Elokenu Alenu U'ma'aseh Yadenu Konena Alenu U'ma'aseh Yadenu Konenehu" – "May the pleasantness of Hashem our God be upon us; may He establish the work of our hands for us – establish the work of our hands."

The Ben Ish Hai (Rav Yosef Haim of Baghdad, 1833-1909), in Parashat Vayigash, discusses the special significance of this verse. He interprets this prayer as a request that G-d should accept our Misva observance despite the fact that we do not perform them with all their deep intentions. We confess that we do not recite our prayers and perform our Misvot in the manner that we ideally should, with full concentration and with

a keen understanding of their deep meaning and significance, but we ask that Hashem should nevertheless accept our service.

The Rashash (Rav Shalom Sharabi, Yemen-Jerusalem, 1720-1777) explained this verse differently, noting that every Misva we perform brings a special spiritual light, but every misdeed we commit has the effect of extinguishing that light. When we recite this verse, we ask Hashem to restore the light of our Misvot, to forgive us for our wrongdoing so that our good deeds can once again shine with all their brightness.

The Ben Ish Hai notes that some have the practice of reciting this verse twice before performing a Misva, and he explains that this is done to satisfy both meanings. It is recited first to ask that Hashem accept our Misva despite our failure to have all the lofty intentions, and a second time as a prayer that our

Misva shall shine brightly despite our sins. Rav Meir Mazuz (1945-2025), in Ish Masliah, explains that some recite this verse twice because its recitation itself constitutes an important Misva, such that it must be recited first as a preparation for its recitation.

The Ben Ish Hai implies that this verse should be recited a second time not only before performing a Misva, but also when this chapter of Tehillim is being recited, such as on Shabbat morning. Common practice, however, clearly does not follow this opinion.

Many of those who recite "Vi'yhi Noam" before performing a Misva do so at the conclusion of the "Le'shem Yihud" declaration made for the purpose of preparing for the Misva act. Among Syrian Jews, the custom in Damascus was to recite the "Le'shem Yihud," whereas the practice in Aleppo was not to recite "Le'shem Yihud," and to recite only "Vi'yhi Noam."



WEEKLY PARSHA OVERVIEW

Parshat Chayei Sarah

Sarah, the mother of the Jewish People, passes on at age 127. After mourning and eulogizing her, Avraham seeks to bury her in the Cave of Machpela. As this is the burial place of

Adam and Chava, Avraham pays its owner, Ephron the Hittite, an exorbitant sum.

Avraham sends his faithful servant Eliezer to find a suitable wife for his

son, Yitzchak, making him swear to choose a wife only from among Avraham's family. Eliezer travels to Aram Naharaim and prays for a sign. Providentially, Rivka appears. Eliezer asks for water. Not only does she

give him water, but she draws water for all 10 of his thirsty camels (some 140 gallons)! This extreme kindness marks her as the right wife for Yitzchak and a suitable mother of the Jewish People. Negotiations with Rivka's father and her brother, Lavan, result in her leaving with Eliezer.

Yitzchak brings Rivka into his mother Sarah's tent, marries her and loves her. He is then consoled for the loss of his mother.

Avraham remarries Hagar, who is renamed Ketura to indicate her improved ways. Six children are born

to them. After giving them gifts, Avraham sends them to the East. Avraham passes away at the age of 175 and is buried next to Sarah in the Cave of Machpela.

Rabbi Sinclair,
Seasonsofthemoon.com

Q

1. Name the four couples buried in Kiryat Arba.
2. What did Sarah hear that caused her death?
3. What title of honor did the Bnei Chet bestow upon Avraham?
4. Where was Avraham born?
5. How were Avraham's camels distinguished?

A

1. 23:2 - Adam and Chava, Avraham and Sara, Yitzchak and Rivka, Yaakov and Leah.
2. 23:2 - That Yitzchak was almost slaughtered.
3. 23:6 - Prince of G-d.
4. 24:7 - Ur Kasdim.
5. 24:10 - They were muzzled, so they wouldn't graze in the fields of others.



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