

O H R N E T

SHABBAT PARSHAT CHAYEI SARA · 24 CHESHVAN 5769 · NOV. 22, 2008 · VOL. 16 NO. 5

PARSHA INSIGHTS

SUPERHERO

"And I will have you swear" (24:3)

In a more modest world, mild-mannered Clark Kent would discreetly slip into a phone booth, tear off his shirt and reveal his true identity, Superman.

If truth be known, we can all be Superman.

Within us exist tremendous untapped powers. There are several well-documented cases of mothers lifting motorcars to save the lives of their children, or running at superwoman speeds to rescue their offspring from wild animals.

Ostensibly, these were ordinary folk, suddenly possessed of superhuman strength. G-d has put inside us enormous powers but most of the time we do not, or cannot, access them. Why?

In this week's Torah portion, Avraham makes his servant Eliezer swear not to seek a wife for Yitzchak from the Cananites *"rather, to my land and to my kindred shall you go and take a wife for my son."*

If Avraham doubted Eliezer's loyalty, why send him in the first place? And if Eliezer's loyalty was beyond ques-

tion, what was the need for an oath?

Avraham realized that it might not be easy to find an appropriate wife for Yitzchak. He made Eliezer swear so that if the going got tough, Eliezer would reach down into hidden reservoirs of persistence and continue the search.

Nothing substitutes for the will to succeed. Our mindset is very often our greatest enemy. Lack of self-esteem and/or self-confidence limits our ability to take wing and fulfill our potential.

A Jew is supposed to say to himself every day "When will my actions reach the actions of my fathers Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov?" When we compare ourselves to these giants we are reminding ourselves of the spiritual legacy locked inside us, which would, if we would only let it, send us looking for the nearest telephone booth to reveal our superman costume to the world.

• Sources: Based on the *Shem m'Shmuel*

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SEASONS OF THE MOON

BY RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR

THE AUERBACH EDITION

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OHRNET magazine is published by OHR SOMAYACH Tanenbaum College

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PARSHA OVERVIEW

Sarah, 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.

ISRAEL Forever

OLD CLAIMS AND NEW

Claims of foreigners to the land promised by G-d to the Patriarch Avraham for his descendants are hardly new. The Talmud tells us of the time that the descendants of Yishmael and the children that Keturah bore to Avraham presented a claim to a portion of the land since they too were heirs of the Patriarch. They came before Alexander of Macedon, who then ruled over Eretz Yisrael, and cited the Torah passages which traced their lineage to Avraham.

Gaviah ben Pasisa received permission to act as the

Jewish representative to refute their claims. He cited passages (*Bereishet* 25:5-6) from this week's Torah portion, which state "Avraham gave all that he had to Yitzchak. But to the concubine children of Avraham he gave gifts and sent them away." Does a father not have the right, asked Gaviah, to dispose of his possessions during his lifetime as he wishes?

This episode can be seen as a preview of today's efforts of Yishmael's descendants to claim a land that belongs only to the Jewish people who will own Israel forever.

LOVE OF THE LAND - THE PLACES

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

ALMA – TOMB OF RABBI YEHUDA BEN TEIMA

The famous Talmudic advice to be "bold as a leopard, swift as an eagle, fast as a deer and brave as a lion to do the will of your Father in



Heaven" was given by Rabbi Yehuda Ben Teima.

Tradition places his tomb in the area of Alma and Dalton near Tzefat in the hills of Upper Galilee.

לע"נ
מרת יוטא רחל בת ר' יוסף חיים ע"ה
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

PARSHA Q&A ?

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 *B'nei Chet* bestow upon Avraham?
4. Where was Avraham born?
5. How were Avraham's camels distinguished?
6. What is meant by "all the good of his master in his hand"?
7. What special character trait did Eliezer seek when choosing a wife for Yitzchak?
8. Why did Avraham's servant, Eliezer, run toward Rivka?
9. Why did Lavan run to greet Eliezer?
10. When Lavan told Eliezer that the house was cleared out, what did he remove?
11. Who did Eliezer want Yitzchak to marry?
12. Aside from Eliezer, to which other people did Rivka offer to give water?
13. Lavan answered Eliezer before his father, Betuel, had a chance. What does this indicate about Lavan's character?
14. What did Rivka mean when she said "I will go"?
15. What blessing did Rivka's family give her before she departed?
16. Who was *Ketura*?
17. What gift did Avraham give to Yitzchak?
18. How old was Avraham when he died?
19. For how many years did Yaakov attend the Yeshiva of *Ever*?
20. How many times is Eliezer's name mentioned in this week's Parsha?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 23:2 - Adam and Chava, Avraham and Sarah, 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.
6. 24:10 - Eliezer carried a document in which Avraham gave all he owned to Yitzchak so that people would want their daughter to marry him.
7. 24:14 - He sought someone who excelled in performing acts of kindness.
8. 24:17 - He saw that the waters of the well rose when she approached.
9. 24:29 - Lavan coveted his money.
10. 24:31 - Idols.
11. 24:39 - His own daughter.
12. 24:44 - To the men who accompanied Eliezer.
13. 24:50 - That he was wicked.
14. 24:58 - I will go even if you don't want me to go.
15. 24:60 - That the blessings given to Avraham would continue through her children.
16. 25:1 - Hagar.
17. 25:5 - The power of blessing.
18. 25:7 - 175 years old.
19. 25:17 - 14 years.
20. None!

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- *Kiddushin* with less than a perutah followed by gifts
- *Kiddushin* made simultaneously with two women, one of which *kiddushin* cannot take effect
- *Kiddushin* which cannot lead to marital relations
- What we can learn from the case of the man who made *kiddushin* with five women with their own fruit
- Making *kiddushin* with stolen property
- A *kohen* making *kiddushin* with his sacrificial portion
- Making *kiddushin* with Sanctuary property
- When one becomes liable for *me'ilah* re Sanctuary property
- *Kiddushin* with *ma'aser sheini* (second tithe) produce
- When does the sanctity of Sanctuary property become removed

THE SHOWBREAD GLUTTON

During the forty years that Shimon Hatzadik served as *kohen gadol* there was a blessing in the *lechem hapanim* showbreads which the *kohanim* divided up to eat after they were removed from a week's stay on the Sanctuary table. Each *kohen* managed to receive a *kazayit* measure of the holy bread, which more than satisfied him.

After his passing there was a shrinking of the breads, which meant that each *kohen* would receive only a tiny portion. The dignified *kohanim* therefore withdrew from

the division while the gluttons grabbed the portions of others.

One *kohen* who thus grabbed another's portion was derisively called a thief for the rest of his life.

Rashi points out that this *gemara* is not in conflict with the *gemara* (*Succah* 56a) which states that the *kohanim* entering the Sanctuary for their week's duty divided the breads due to them in the northern part of the Sanctuary. The *gemara* refers to the era of Shimon Hatzadik, when the division amongst all the *kohanim* left each of them with a proper amount and there was no cause for any grabbing.

• *Kidushin* 53a

What the SAGES Say

"There is a consensus that a woman whose suitor turned out to be of a higher family status than how he presented himself can invalidate the *kiddushin* because she can say that she does not desire a shoe too big for her foot."

• *The Sage Ulla - Kiddushin* 49a

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YA DON'T SAY!

From: Gary Rushworth

Dear Rabbi,

My brother-in-law is studying Hebrew at his local college and he and a colleague have concluded that the tetragrammaton (the name comprised of four Hebrew letters) is misinterpreted. They say "Yahweh" is the correct spelling of the Name of G-d, and "Jehovah" is a "trash" word, not worthy of discussion. I was appalled and didn't want to be standing next to him for a while. What, if any thoughts do you have on this?

Dear Gary,

Neither ya way or his way is the Jewish way. Now before you refuse to stand next to me, let me explain.

According to Jewish teachings and law, one may not pronounce this name phonetically according to the way it's written in Hebrew. The reason for this is because the Name is so holy that merely invoking it can have tremendous effects such that being uttered within the wrong circumstances or in the wrong way can be very harmful, aside from being included in the prohibition of taking G-d's Name in vain.

This is based on the idea that we have access to Holy Names for positive, constructive purposes. G-d created complementary spiritual and physical worlds. Just as man was given the ability to manipulate the physical world, so too he was given the ability to manipulate the spiritual world. Man exerts this influence through the use of holy names of G-d or of angels. However, just as man's influence on the world is dictated and limited by the laws of nature, so too his influence on the spiritual is circumscribed by certain laws and limitations. Therefore, only specific names mentioned in specific circumstances will cause the desired effect, and misuse thereof can be harmful (The Way of G-d 3:2:5-9).

The general way it works is as follows: When a person utters one of G-d's names, it arouses an illumination particular to that name. The illumination is transmitted through the spiritual world until its influence is perceived in the physical realm. An example of this is the verse "In every place that My Name is mentioned, I will come to you and bless you" (Ex. 20:21). Since there are great forces involved behind the scenes, this can only be used

by someone who has attained a great closeness and attachment to G-d.

Thus, the legal code establishes: "One is permitted to use holy names because G-d imparted in them strength to accomplish things when used by the righteous. And one who uses them demonstrates the greatness and power of G-d, as long as they are used with holiness and purity for the purpose of sanctifying G-d's name or for the purpose of a great mitzvah. But this is not common in our generations, as a result of our transgressions ...since we are unable to act with adequate purity and holiness" (Y.D. 179, Shach 18, from Ateret Zahav).

This is true regarding the various names of G-d in general, and particularly so regarding the tetragrammaton. The Talmudic Sages taught (Kiddushin 71a) that this name, comprised of the Hebrew letters "yud", "hey", "vav" and "hey", is called the "unique name", in that it hides within its mystical meaning an allusion to the deepest aspect of G-d we can comprehend. This is what is meant by the verse "This is my name forever" (Ex. 3:15). It was this unique name that was pronounced only by one person only once a year in only one place: by the High Priest on Yom Kippur in the Holy Temple. Our sources relate that anyone who heard it uttered, miraculously forgot exactly how it was pronounced.

The fact that it was Divinely ordained to be clouded in secrecy is hinted at in the Torah by the verse "This is My Name and this is my remembrance forever" where the Hebrew word for "forever" also connotes "hiddenness", and it was thus explained by the Sages that the Name as written, when spoken, is to be hidden. Meaning that while one writes the Name with the four Hebrew letters mentioned earlier, one pronounces it with the Hebrew letters "alef", "dalet", "nun", "yud" – "Adonoy". In fact, original Jewish teachings take this so seriously that the Talmud declares, "One who pronounces the Name according to the letters with which it is written has no portion in the World to Come" (Sanhedrin 90a).

That being said, of both of your ways, since your brother-in-law's way is closer to the actual pronunciation, ironically it is also the more "incorrect" way to refer to that name of G-d. In this light, your phonetically less-correct way is actually better!

TAKING A NUMBER

Question: There is a system in government offices and other places visited by a large public of requiring people seeking service to take a slip with a number and wait until their number is called. On one occasion I noticed a newcomer to the country who was not aware of the need to take a number and as a result watched people who had come long after him being called ahead of him. What is the right thing to do in such a case?

Answer: You would be doing such a person a great kindness if you notice him failing to take a number upon entering and

apprise him of the need to do so. In the case you describe it seems that you only became aware of the situation at a later stage. What you could do is to ask one of the clerks to let you speak to the office director. To him you would explain that you can testify that the newcomer had been waiting longer than people who were serviced before him, and you therefore appeal to him to make an exception to the rule and have him immediately taken care of.

You might be surprised to discover that even such officials have human feelings and will comply with your request for the benefit of all.

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY _____

A TOOTH IN TIME

The elderly man sitting in the dentist's chair began to cough uncontrollably and to gasp for breath. The dentist was in shock as he realized that the cause of his patient's agony was a tooth implant that had slipped from his hand into the man's throat.

Without delay the dentist took him into his car and sped to the nearest hospital, fearful for the life of his patient and concerned about the malpractice suit threatened by the man's two sons who had accompanied him on his visit to the dentist.

As the dentist and the sons nervously waited outside the surgery room they noticed that there was an unusual

amount of activity, with doctors running in and out. Only when the operation was successfully completed with the removal of the errant tooth did they discover what had taken place.

When the operating doctor made an X-ray of the throat in order to determine the tooth's exact location he noticed a cancerous growth. It was decided to immediately remove it and this caused the flurry of activity. The good news was that the dangerous growth was totally removed in time and could have been life-threatening if not for the search for the tooth.

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