



THE HISTORIC MATCH

Abraham sent his servant Eliezer to find a wife for his son Isaac. When Eliezer arrived at his destination he prayed to G-d and was promptly answered. A comparison with the prayers of Moses and King Solomon reveals that Eliezer the servant was answered more quickly than them. Why?

TEACHER'S MANUAL



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Eliezer, Abraham's servant, was sent to find a bride for Isaac. When he arrived at her city, he prayed to G-d and was immediately answered (Source 1). Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai notes the speed of G-d's response to the prayer of Eliezer and contrasts it with the prayer of Moses during the dispute of Korach, and King Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple (Sources 2, 3 and 4).

The question arises: Why was Eliezer's prayer answered even before he finished speaking, unlike Moses and King Solomon who were answered only at the end of their prayer? Seemingly, Eliezer's prayer was before the giving of the Torah - before G-d abolished the separation between the upper and lower realms. How was his prayer answered so quickly?

B. The Historic Match.....11

Why is this matchmaking story written in the Torah at such length? Chassidic teachings explain that this is because the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca symbolizes the general mode of service of the Jewish people in connecting the spiritual and the physical. This is also the reason why Eliezer's prayer for this match was answered so quickly.

C. Long Distance Match.....13

Isaac was a "perfect sacrifice," while his bride Rebecca came from a lowly and distant place (Sources 5 and 6). The match expresses the two most distant extremes because it symbolizes the general service of the Jewish people, in connecting the spiritual and the physical.

D. Giving it His All.....16

Why did Abraham, who was extremely wealthy at the time, give Eliezer a contract in which he gifts Isaac all his wealth (Source 7)? Jewish law states that people are not supposed to give away all of their money (Source 8)? The reason Abraham invested all his possessions into the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca was because this match was the inception and beginning of the entire Jewish nation.

E. A Nation of Matchmakers.....20

The lesson for us: We are in a very lowly time and place, in which it is difficult to unite

the spiritual and the physical. We must nevertheless know that just as Eliezer's prayer for this historical match was answered very quickly, our prayer for the realization of the connection between the spiritual and the physical will also be answered very quickly.

Introduction

Eliezer travels with a lot of wealth and possessions to Aram Naharayim to bring back a wife for his master's son. Arriving at his destination, he prays to G-d to make it easy for him to find the intended bride. Even before he finished his prayer, the intended bride appeared before him.

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A. Prompt Response

Eliezer Sets Out To Find A Match For Isaac

Source 1 Genesis 24

The Instruction:

Student's
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And Abraham said to his servant, the elder of his house, who ruled over all that was his, "Please place your hand under my thigh. And I will adjure you by the L-rd, G-d of the heaven and G-d of the earth, not to take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose midst I dwell. Instead, you should go to my land and to my birthplace, and take a wife for my son, Isaac."

The servant took ten of his master's camels, and he went, with all the best of his master in his hand. He arose and he went to Aram Naharaim, to the city of Nachor. He made the camels kneel outside the city beside the well of water in the evening, at the time the young women go out to draw water.

The Prayer:

And he said, "O L-rd, the G-d of my master Abraham, please cause this to happen to me today, and perform loving kindness with my master, Abraham. Behold, I am standing by the water fountain, and the daughters of the people of the city are coming out to draw water. The maiden to whom I will say, 'lower your pitcher and I will drink,' and she will say, 'drink, and I will also give your camels drink,' - this is the woman You have designated for Your servant, for Isaac. Through her I will know that You have performed loving kindness with my master."

וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל עַבְדּוֹ וְקֹן בֵּיתוֹ
הַמְשֵׁל בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ שִׁים נָא יָדְךָ
תַּחַת יְרֵכִי. וְאֲשַׁבְּעֶךָ בְּה' אֱלֹהֵי
הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֱלֹהֵי הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לֹא
תִקַּח אִשָּׁה לְבָנִי מִבְּנוֹת הַכְּנַעֲנִי
אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי יוֹשֵׁב בְּקִרְבָּו. כִּי אֶל
אֶרְצִי וְאֶל מוֹלַדְתִּי תֵלֵךְ וְלִקַּחְתָּ
אִשָּׁה לְבָנִי לְיִצְחָק.

וַיִּקַּח הָעֶבֶד עֶשְׂרֵה גַמְלִים מִגַּמְלֵי
אֲדֹנָיו וַיֵּלֶךְ וְכָל טוֹב אֲדֹנָיו בְּיָדוֹ
וַיָּקָם וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל אֲרָם נְהָרַיִם אֶל עִיר
נַחֹר. וַיַּבְרֵךְ הַגַּמְלִים מִחוּץ לְעִיר
אֶל בְּאֵר הַמַּיִם לְעֵת עָרֵב לְעֵת
צֵאת הַשָּׂאֲבֹת.

וַיֹּאמֶר: ה' אֱלֹהֵי אֲדֹנָי אַבְרָהָם,
הַקָּרָה נָא לִפְנֵי הַיּוֹם וַעֲשֵׂה חֶסֶד
עִם אֲדֹנָי אַבְרָהָם. הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי נֹצֵב
עַל עֵין הַמַּיִם וּבָנוֹת אֲנָשֵׁי הָעִיר
יֹצְאוֹת לְשֹׂאֵב מַיִם. וְהִיא הַנְּעֻרָה
אֲשֶׁר אָמַר אֵלַי הַטִּי נָא כַדֶּךָ
וְאֲשַׁתָּה וְאָמַרְתָּ שְׂתֵה וְגַם גַּמְלֶיךָ
אֲשָׁקָה אֵתְּהָ הַכַּחַת לְעַבְדְּךָ
לְיִצְחָק וְבָה אֲדַע כִּי עָשִׂיתָ חֶסֶד
עִם אֲדֹנָי.

The Test:

Student's
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He had not yet finished speaking, and behold, Rebecca came out. She was the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Abraham's brother Nachor, and her pitcher was on her shoulder. Now the maiden was of beautiful appearance, a virgin who no man had been intimate with. She went down to the fountain, and she filled her pitcher and went up. The servant ran toward her, and he said, "Please let me sip a little water from your pitcher." And she said, "Drink, my lord." She quickly lowered her pitcher to her hand, and she gave him to drink. When she finished giving him to drink, she said, "I will also draw for your camels, until they finish drinking." She quickly emptied her pitcher into the trough, and she ran again to the well to draw water for all his camels. The man was astonished by her, and he stood silently, waiting to know whether the L-rd had blessed his course of action with success. When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a golden nose ring, weighing half a shekel, and two bracelets for her hands, weighing ten gold shekels.

The Verification:

And he said, "Whose daughter are you? Please tell me. Is there place for us to lodge in your father's house?" And she said to him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah and Nachor." And she said to him, "We have plenty of straw and fodder, and there is also a place to lodge." The man kneeled and prostrated himself to the L-rd. He said, "Blessed is the L-rd, the G-d of my master, Abraham, Who has not forsaken His loving kindness and His truth from my master. As for me, the L-rd led me on the road to the house of my master's kinsmen."

וַיְהִי הוּא טָרַם כְּלָה לְדַבֵּר, וְהִנֵּה רִבְקָה יִצְאָת אֲשֶׁר יִלְדָה לְבְתוּאֵל בִּן מִלְכָּה אִשְׁת נַחֹר אַחֵי אַבְרָהָם וְכַדָּה עַל שִׁכְמָהּ. וְהִנְעֶרָה טֹבֶת מִרְאָה מְאֹד בְּתוּלָה וְאִישׁ לֹא יִדְעָה וְתִרְדּוּ הָעֵינָה וְתִמְלֵא כַדָּה וְתַעַל. וַיִּרְץ הָעֶבֶד לְקַרְאָתָהּ וַיֹּאמֶר הֲגַמְיָאִינִי נָא מֵעֵט מַיִם מִכַּדָּךְ. וְתֹאמֶר שְׂתֵה אֲדֹנָי וְתִמְהַר וְתִרְדּוּ כַדָּה עַל יְדֵה וְתִשְׁקָהוּ. וְתִכַּל לְהִשְׁקָתוֹ וְתֹאמֶר גַּם לְגַמְלֵיךְ אֲשָׂאב עַד אִם כָּלוּ לְשִׁתָּת. וְתִמְהַר וְתַעַר כַדָּה אֶל הַשִּׁקָּת וְתִרְץ עוֹד אֶל הַבְּאֵר לְשָׂאב וְתִשָּׂאב לְכָל גַּמְלָיו. וְהָאִישׁ מִשְׁתַּאֲהָ לָּהּ מִחֲרִישׁ לְדַעַת הַהֲצְלִיחַ ה' דְּרַכּוֹ אִם לֹא. וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר כָּלוּ הַגַּמְלִים לְשִׁתוֹת וַיִּקַּח הָאִישׁ נְזָם זָהָב בְּקַע מִשְׁקָלוֹ וּשְׁנֵי צְמִידִים עַל יְדָיָה עֲשָׂרָה זָהָב מִשְׁקָלָם.

וַיֹּאמֶר בַּת מִי אַתְּ הַגִּידִי נָא לִי הַיֵּשׁ בֵּית אָבִיךָ מְקוֹם לָנוּ לָלוֹן. וְתֹאמֶר אֵלָיו בַּת בְּתוּאֵל אֲנֹכִי בִן מִלְכָּה אֲשֶׁר יִלְדָה לְנַחֹר. וְתֹאמֶר אֵלָיו גַּם תִּבֶּן גַּם מִסְפּוּא רַב עִמָּנוּ גַּם מְקוֹם לָלוֹן וַיִּקַּד הָאִישׁ וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ לָּהּ. וַיֹּאמֶר בְּרוּךְ ה' אֱלֹהֵי אֲדֹנָי אַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא עֲזַב חֲסֵדוֹ וְאֱמִתּוֹ מֵעַם אֲדֹנָי אֲנֹכִי בְּדַרְךְ נִחַנִּי ה' בֵּית אַחֵי אֲדֹנָי.

Source 2 Bereishit Rabbah 60:4

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai's Analogy

Student's
pg. 5

“He had not yet finished speaking etc. (Genesis 24:15).” Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai taught: Three were answered with the prayer of their mouths. Eliezer the servant of Abraham, Moses, and Solomon. Eliezer, as the verse states “He had not yet finished speaking, and behold, Rebecca came out.” Moses, as it is written “And it happened as he was speaking all these words, the earth opened up from under them.” Solomon, as it is written “And when Solomon had completed praying to the L-rd, the fire descended from heaven.”

וַיְהִי הוּא טָרָם כְּלָה לְדַבֵּר וְגו'
(בראשית כד, טו), תַּנִּי רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן
בֶּן יוֹחָאִי שְׁלֹשָׁה הֵם נִעְנּוּ בְּמַעֲנֵה
פִּיהֶם, אֱלִיעֶזֶר עַבְדּוֹ שֶׁל אַבְרָהָם
וּמֹשֶׁה וְשִׁלְמֹה. אֱלִיעֶזֶר: וַיְהִי
הוּא טָרָם כְּלָה לְדַבֵּר וְהִנֵּה רֵבֶקָה
יֹצֵאתָ. מֹשֶׁה: דְּכַתִּיב (במדבר טז,
לא) וַיְהִי כְּכַלְתּוֹ לְדַבֵּר אֶת כָּל
הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַתִּבָּקַע הָאֲדָמָה
אֲשֶׁר תַּחְתֵּיהֶם. שְׁלֹמֹה: דְּכַתִּיב
(דברי הימים ב' ז, א) וְכַכְלֹת
שְׁלֹמֹה לְהַתְּפִלֵּל אֶל ה' וְהֵאֵשׁ
יִרְדֶּה מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם וְגו'.

Source 3 Numbers 16:28-33

The words of Moses in Korach's dispute

Korach, together with Datan and Aviram and two hundred and fifty prominent members of the tribe of Reuben, contested the status of Moses as leader and Aaron as high priest. Korach's argument was: “The entire congregation are all holy, and G-d is in their midst. So why do you raise yourselves above G-d's assembly?” (Numbers 16:3).

Moses suggested to Korach and his men to hold a test to establish who G-d had really chosen to lead the Jewish people. During the test, Korach and his two hundred and fifty men stood on one side, and Aaron stood on the other, all of them holding in their hands a pan containing incense.

G-d accepted the offering of Aaron, showing His approval of Moses and Aaron's leadership, and was about to destroy the entire Jewish nation as punishment for their support of Korach. After Moses' plea, G-d agreed to waive the punishment for the general population.

Moses further said that if Korach dies a natural death, it will be a sign that he - Moses - fabricated everything. But if the earth opens its mouth and consumes them, this will be a sign that Moses is indeed a true prophet. At that very moment, Korach, his family and all their possessions were swallowed up in the ground, and the two hundred and fifty leaders were burned in the fire.

And Moses said, "With this you shall know that the L-rd sent me to do all these deeds, for I did not devise them myself. If these men die as all men die, befalling the same fate of all men, then the L-rd has not sent me. But if the L-rd creates a new creation, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them and all that is theirs, and they descend alive into the grave, you will know that these men have provoked the L-rd." As soon as he finished speaking all these words, the earth beneath them split open. The earth beneath them opened its mouth and swallowed them and their houses, and all the men who were with Korach and all their property. They, and all they possessed, descended alive into the grave; the earth covered them up, and they were lost from the people.

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה בְּזֹאת תִּדְעוּן כִּי ה' שְׁלַחְנִי לַעֲשׂוֹת אֵת כָּל הַמַּעֲשִׂים הָאֵלֶּה כִּי לֹא מִלְּבִי. אִם כָּמוֹת כָּל הָאָדָם יָמָתוּן אֵלֶּה וּפְקַדְתָּ כָּל הָאָדָם יִפְקֹד עֲלֵיהֶם לֹא ה' שְׁלַחְנִי. וְאִם בְּרִיאָה יִבְרָא ה' וּפְצָתָהּ הָאֲדָמָה אֵת פִּיהָ וּבִלְעָה אֹתָם וְאֵת כָּל אֲשֶׁר לָהֶם וַיִּרְדּוּ חַיִּים שְׁאֵלָה וַיִּדְעֶתֶם כִּי נֶאֱצוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה אֵת ה'. וַיְהִי כְכַלְתּוֹ לְדַבֵּר אֵת כָּל הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַתִּבָּקַע הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר תַּחְתֵּיהֶם. וַתִּפְתַּח הָאָרֶץ אֵת פִּיהָ וַתִּבְלַע אֹתָם וְאֵת בֵּיתֵיהֶם וְאֵת כָּל הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר לָקְרַח וְאֵת כָּל הַרְכוּשׁ. וַיִּרְדּוּ הֵם וְכָל אֲשֶׁר לָהֶם חַיִּים שְׁאֵלָה וַתִּכַּס עֲלֵיהֶם הָאָרֶץ וַיִּאבְדּוּ מִתּוֹךְ הַקְּהָל.

Source 4 II Chronicles, 7:1-3

King Solomon's Prayer At The Temple Dedication

The foundations for the First Temple were laid by King David when he built an altar on Mount Moriah. But the actual construction of the Temple building was done by his son, King Solomon.

When King Solomon finished building the Temple, he gathered all the people in Jerusalem, and the priests brought the Holy Ark into the Holy of Holies. King Solomon then prayed before G-d, blessed the people and offered many sacrifices.

The joy at the dedication of the Temple is described in the Torah: "And the Levites who sang . . . attired in fine linen, with cymbals and with psalteries and with harps, standing east of the altar, and with them were priests - one hundred twenty sounding with trumpets. And the trumpeters and the singers were as one, to make one sound . . . with trumpets and with cymbals and with the musical instruments and with praise to the L-rd, "for He is good, because His kindness is eternal," (II Chronicles, 5:12-13).

When Solomon's prayer was answered and the Temple gates were opened for the entrance of the ark, a fire came down from heaven on the wood of the altar. This is how the Jewish people knew that G-d had chosen Mount Moriah as the place to establish the divine presence in the Temple.

Student's
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When Solomon finished praying the fire descended from heaven and consumed the burnt offerings and the sacrifices, and the glory of the L-rd filled the House. The priests could not enter the House of the L-rd, because the glory of the L-rd filled His House. All the Children of Israel saw the descent of the fire, and the glory of the L-rd on the House, and they knelt on their faces to the ground on the floor, and they prostrated themselves and said: "Give thanks to the L-rd, for He is good, for His loving kindness is eternal."

וּכְכֹלֹת שְׁלֹמֹה לְהִתְפַּלֵּל וְהָאֵשׁ
יָרְדָה מִהַשְּׁמַיִם וַתֹּאכַל הָעֹלָה
וְהַזְבָּחִים וְכָבוֹד ה' מָלֵא אֶת
הַבַּיִת. וְלֹא יָכְלוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים לָבוֹא
אֶל בַּיִת ה' כִּי מָלֵא כְבוֹד ה' אֶת
בַּיִת ה'. וְכָל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל רָאוּ
בְרִדַת הָאֵשׁ וְכָבוֹד ה' עַל הַבַּיִת
וַיִּכְרְעוּ אַפְּסֵים אַרְצָה עַל הָרֶצֶפָה
וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ וְהִדוּת לַה' כִּי טוֹב כִּי
לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד.

>> The Rebbe

Was Eliezer's Prayer More Important?

Student's
pg. 6

On the verse "he had not yet finished speaking," the Rebbe Rashab quotes the teaching of the Midrash: "Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai taught: three people were answered promptly, Eliezer, Moses, and Solomon." The Rebbe Rashab continues: "the Nezer Hakodesh commentary points out that although all three had their prayers answered promptly, Eliezer had an advantage over Moses and Solomon. While Moses and Solomon were answered when they concluded their prayers, Eliezer was answered when 'he had not yet finished speaking.'"

על הפסוק "וַיְהִי הוּא טָרַם כְּלֵה לְדַבֵּר
גו'" - מביא כ"ק אדמו"ר הרש"ב
במאמרו¹ את מאמר המדרש: "תני
רבי שמעון בר יוחאי, שלושה הם
שנענו במענה פיהם אליעזר משה
ושלמה וכו'", וממשיך במאמר:
"ובנזר הקודש מדייק שעם היות
שכולם נענו במענה פיהם, מכל
מקום יש יתרון באליעזר לגבי משה
ושלמה, שהם נענו ככלותם לדבר,
היינו כשגמרו תפילתם, ואליעזר
נענה טרם שכלה לדבר כו'".

Student's
pg. 7

The Rebbe Rashab asks, "this appears difficult: how can it be that Eliezer's prayer was more effective than those of Moses and Solomon, to the extent that he was answered before he even finished his prayer?"

ומקשה במאמר: "לכאורה אינו מובן
איך שייך לומר שתפילת אליעזר
פעלה יותר מתפילת משה ושלמה,
שהוא נענה קודם שגמר תפילתו
כו'?"

The simple question is, was Eliezer, Abraham's servant, more important to G-d than Moses and Solomon? Why was his prayer answered quicker than theirs?

Student's
pg. 7

To further explain the question: the concept of prayer is connecting the higher and lower realms; drawing down from the highest level to the lowest point. Logically, this connection should be much easier to accomplish after the giving of the Torah, when the decree that "the higher realms will not descend, and the lower realms will not ascend" was abolished.

How then is it possible that Eliezer, who lived in the pre-Sinai era, should be capable of effecting a greater connection between the higher and lower realms than Moses and Solomon were capable of effecting in the post-Sinai era?

The Rebbe explains that this isn't just an identity question, which person is more worthy, Eliezer or Moses. It's also a question of substance. Prayer connects the higher and lower realms. The capacity for this connection was greatly expanded post-Sinai, so it stands to reason that prayer in this era should be more effective. How then could Eliezer's prayer have worked quicker than that of Moses?

וביאור קושיה זו: כללות ענין התפילה הוא - חיבור עליון ותחתון, היינו, שתהיה ההמשכה ממקום עליון ביותר עד מקום תחתון ביותר. ובפשטות הרי נקל יותר לפעול את החיבור של עליון ותחתון לאחרי ביטול הגזירה שעליונים לא ירדו למטה ותחתונים לא יעלו למעלה.

ואם כן, מאחר שביטול הגזירה היה במתן תורה, ואליעזר היה קודם מתן תורה - איך יתכן שאצל אליעזר נפעל הענין של חיבור עליון ותחתון באופן נעלה יותר מאשר אצל משה ושלמה שהיו לאחרי מתן תורה!?

B. The Historic Match

>> The Rebbe

Why So Lengthy?

Student's
pg. 8

There is a well-known teaching of the sages that “the conversations of the servants of our forefathers are valued more than the Torah of the children. This is evidenced by the fact that the episode of Eliezer is repeated twice in the Torah, while many key Torah laws are only alluded to.”

ידוע מאמר רבותינו ז"ל "יפה שיחתן של עבדי בתי אבות מתורתן של בנים, שהרי פרשה של אליעזר כפולה בתורה, והרבה גופי תורה לא ניתנו אלא ברמיזה."

The Midrash makes note of the fact that the story of Eliezer searching for a match for Isaac appears at great length in the Torah. First, as we read, the Torah tells us of the condition Eliezer made with G-d and how it played out. Then, when Eliezer meets Rebecca's parents later in the Torah portion, the Torah records his repetition of the entire story of the condition and its fulfillment. Instead of briefly stating that Eliezer related to them the events described above, the Torah writes it all out again. Contrast this with the many times the Torah gives laws tersely, and many details are derived just from an extraneous letter. Why is the story of Eliezer written at such length?

The Midrash derives from this that “the conversations of the servants of our forefathers are valued more than the Torah of the children.” Chassidut explains this on a deeper plane:

The Chassidic teachings of our Rebbes explain that the reason why the story of Eliezer is repeated is because the match of Isaac and Rebecca symbolizes the mystical union of *mah* - “upper waters”, and *ban* - “lower waters” (Isaac as *mah*, and Rebecca as *ban*). This union is a concept of paramount importance.

ומבואר בדרושי רבותינו נשיאינו שהטעם של כפל הפרשה של אליעזר הוא - לפי שהפרשה של אליעזר עוסקת בפרטי השידוך שבין יצחק לרבקה, שבלשון ואותיות הקבלה זהו כללות הענין של חיבור ויחוד מ"ה וב"ן (כי יצחק הוא בחינת מ"ה, ורבקה היא בחינת ב"ן) - מיין עילאין ומיין תתאין, שזהו ענין כללי ביותר.

Man's purpose in this world is to connect the higher and lower worlds. The goal of all of the Torah and mitzvot is to forge a connection between holiness and our physical world, between body and soul. In Kabbalistic terms, this is referred to as connecting mah - upper - and ban - lower.

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Therefore, while the prayers of Moses and Solomon were also concerning matters of broad importance, they are incomparable to the prayer of Eliezer, which is the underlying principle of everything, the entire connection of above and below. This is the concept behind the connection between Torah and mitzvot and body and soul - which mirror the mah and ban connection.

והיינו, שעל אף שגם הענינים שבתפילת משה ושלמה הם ענינים כללים, אין זה מגיע לענין שבתפילת ובקשת אליעזר, שהוא הכלל של כל העניינים הכלליים להיותו כללות החיבור של מעלה ומטה, כללות החיבור של תורה ומצוותיה, וכללות החיבור של נשמה וגוף, שהם בדומה לבחינת מ"ה וב"ן.

Moses's prayer was also for an important matter - punishing Korach who was leading the Jewish people astray. King Solomon's prayer for G-d's presence to rest in the Holy Temple was also very important. But the match of Isaac and Rebecca stands in a different league, symbolizing the connection between the higher and lower realms.

The Reason For G-d's Quick Response

Student's
pg. 9

This clarifies why the response to Eliezer's prayer was so quick. The subject of this prayer was the match between Isaac and Rebecca, the union of mah and ban. Because this matter is of such cardinal importance, it needed to be achieved with alacrity. This is why Eliezer's prayer was answered before he even completed it, quicker than the prayers of Moses and Solomon.

ועל פי זה מובן הטעם מדוע הייתה צריכה להיות המשכת בחינת תגבורת החיות בתפילתו של אליעזר - מאחר שתפילת אליעזר הייתה קשורה עם השידוך של יצחק ורבקה, שזהו כללות הענין של יחוד מ"ה וב"ן, ומצד גודל הענין שבזה - צריכה להיות ההמשכה באופן של "עד מהרה ירוץ דברו". ולכן דווקא בתפילת אליעזר היה הענין של "טרם כלה לדבר גו" (ולא בתפילת משה ושלמה).

C. Long Distance Match

>> The Rebbe

Why Was A Match From Afar Necessary?

Student's
pg. 10

Based on the above we can also understand why Eliezer had to go beyond the Land of Israel in order to bring Rebecca. Rebecca was “like a rose among the thorns,” and she was brought from that negative place to marry Isaac, a “pure sacrifice” who was not allowed to exit the Land of Israel. Isaac and Rebecca were then joined in marital union.

על פי האמור לעיל יובן מדוע הוצרך אליעזר לרדת לחוץ לארץ כדי להביא משם את רבקה, שהיא היתה “כשושנה בין החוחים”, ומשם דווקא הובאה ליצחק, שהוא היה “עולה תמימה” (ולא הורשה לצאת לחוץ לארץ), ואחר כך היה החיבור והיחוד ביניהם.

Source 5 Bereishit Rabbah 63:4

Student's
pg. 10

Her father is a swindler and her brother is a swindler, and the people of her place are also like this. This righteous woman that comes from among them, what can she be compared to? She is like a rose among the thorns.

אָבִיָּה רַמְאִי וְאַחִיָּה רַמְאִי וְאַף
אֲנָשִׁי מִקוּמָה כּוֹ, וְהַצְדִּיקֵת הַזֹּו
שֶׁהִיא יוֹצֵאתָ מִבֵּינֵיהֶם לְמָה הִיא
דוּמָה, לְשׁוֹשְׁנָה בֵּין הַחוּחִים.

Source 6 Bereishit Rabbah 64:3

Student's
pg. 10

Live in this land: Rabbi Hoshea said, you [Isaac] are like a complete sacrifice, just as a sacrifice is disqualified if it exits the walls of the Temple, so too will you be disqualified if you go outside the borders of Israel.

גוּר בְּאַרְצֵי הַזֹּאת: אָמַר רַבִּי
הוֹשֵׁעִיָּה אֵת עוֹלָה תְּמִימָה, מָה
עוֹלָה אִם יֵצֵאת חוּץ לְקִלְעִים
הִיא נִפְסָלֶת, אִף אֵת אִם יֵצֵאת
חוּץ לְאַרְצֵי נִפְסָלֶת.

Isaac After The Binding - The Highest Level

Student's
pg. 11

The match between Isaac and Rebecca occurred after Akeidat Isaac, the binding of Isaac as a sacrifice. This means that in addition to the great level Isaac had reached as a result of the mitzvah of circumcision, he now had the added holiness reached by his willingness to be a sacrifice.

Isaac had been on a very advanced spiritual level even before the Akeidah. Rashi describes this when he writes that "Isaac understood that he was going to be slaughtered, yet he went along with his father willingly and joyfully." This was before the actual Akeidah, illustrating the high level he had already achieved earlier.

Even simple unlearned people know about the great spiritual level Isaac achieved as a result of the Akeidah, because we mention the merit of the Akeidah many times in our prayers. In the prayers of Rosh Hashanah we say "compassionately remember the sacrifice of Isaac today for his descendants." We also mention the Akeidah in our daily prayers, and add supplications (on non-festive days) before and after it, asking that G-d remember the merit of the Akeidah for the Jewish people.

After Isaac reached such a high level, Abraham sent Eliezer outside of Israel, which was a great descent. The Land of Israel was already holy at that time, as evidenced by the fact that Isaac was cautioned not to go down to Egypt because he was a pure sacrifice and the world outside the Land of Israel was unfit for him.

והביאור בזה: השידוך שבין יצחק לרבקה היה לאחרי עקדת יצחק, היינו, נוסף על העילוי שהיה אצל יצחק על ידי מצות המילה, "בריתי בבשרכם לברית עולם", היה אצלו גם גודל העילוי של העקדה.

גם קודם העקדה היה יצחק בדרגה נעלית ביותר, כמבואר בפירוש רש"י שגם כאשר "הבין יצחק שהוא הולך לישחט, וילכו שניהם יחדיו, בלב שווה", "ברצון ושמחה כו" - שכל זה היה קודם העקדה, ומזה מובן גודל מעלתו של יצחק לאחרי העקדה.

וכמובן בפשטות - אפילו לפשוטי עם - גודל העילוי שנפעל אצל יצחק לאחרי העקדה, שהרי על כל צעד ושעל מזכירים בני ישראל את הזכות של עקדת יצחק, כמו שכתוב בתפילת ראש השנה "ועקדת יצחק לזרעו היום ברחמים תזכור", ולא רק בתפילת ראש השנה, אלא בכל יום ויום אומרים בהתחלת התפילה פרשת העקדה, ובימי החול (בימים שאומרים תחנון) מוסיפים לפני זה ולאחרי זה בקשת תחנונים כו' שהקב"ה יזכור לבני ישראל את הזכות של עקדת יצחק כו'.

ולאחרי שיצחק הגיע לדרגה נעלית ביותר - שלח אברהם את אליעזר לחוץ לארץ, שזוהי ירידה גדולה ביותר, שהרי גם בזמן ההוא הייתה בארץ ישראל קדושה יתירה, שלכן נאמר ליצחק "אל תרד מצרימה", "שאתה עולה תמימה, ואין חוצה לארץ כדאי לך".²

Rebecca Was From Charan - The Lowest Level

Student's
pg. 12

It was specifically from outside Israel, Charan, that Eliezer was to bring a wife for Isaac. Rebecca had to be taken from the lowest place, where she had been "like a rose among the thorns," and brought to Isaac specifically from this place.

This means that even though Isaac was on such a high level that he was forbidden from leaving Israel, nevertheless Eliezer was sent by Abraham to bring a wife for him specifically from outside Israel.

This can be understood based on the above that the match of Isaac and Rebecca was the union of *mah* and *ban*, the connecting of the higher realm (*mah*) and the lower realm (*ban*). This is why Rebecca had to be brought specifically from outside Israel, from a lowly place.

ודווקא מחוץ לארץ היה צריך אליעזר לקחת אישה ליצחק, היינו, שהיו צריכים לקחת את רבקה ממקום תחתון ביותר, ממקום שהייתה בו "כשושנה בין החוחים", ומשם דווקא הביאוה ליצחק.

זאת אומרת: אף על פי שיצחק היה בדרגה נעלית ביותר, עד שנאסר עליו לצאת לחוץ לארץ, אף על פי כן, הלך אליעזר - בשליחותו של אברהם, "אחד היה אברהם" - לקחת אישה ליצחק מחוץ לארץ דווקא.

וענין זה מובן על פי האמור לעיל שכללות ענין השידוך והנישואין של יצחק ורבקה הוא הענין של יחוד מ"ה וב"ן, היינו, יחוד וחיבור עליון (מ"ה) ותחתון (ב"ן) - שלכן נלקחה רבקה מחוץ לארץ (מטה) דווקא.

משיחת כ"ף מרחשון ה'תשמ"ב, בלתי מוגה
תורת מנחם ה'תשמ"ב חלק א' ע' 399

As we learned earlier, the match of Isaac and Rebecca symbolizes the work of the Jewish people in all generations - connecting the upper and lower realms. This is why this match needed to encompass two great extremes. The groom was from the holiest place, a holy man who had devoted his life completely to G-d in the most absolute sense, and his bride was from the lowest place possible - outside of Israel, from a land and family of liars. This match represents the connection we are all supposed to make, between the upper and lower realms.

D. Giving it His All

Why was specifically this marriage chosen to symbolize the work of the Jewish people in connecting the upper and lower realms? In another talk, the Rebbe clarifies this point:

Source 7 Genesis 24:10

Student's pg. 13 The servant took ten of his master's camels, and he went, with all the best of his master in his hand. He arose and he went to Aram Naharaim, to the city of Nachor.

וַיִּקַּח הָעֶבֶד עֶשְׂרֵה גַמְלִים מִגֻּמְלֵי אֲדֹנָיו וַיֵּלֶךְ וְכָל טוֹב אֲדֹנָיו בְּיָדוֹ וַיָּקָם וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל אֲרָם נְהַרְיָם אֶל עִיר נַחֹר.

Rashi

רש"י

With all the best of his master in his hand: Abraham wrote a deed gifting to Isaac everything he owned, so that they would hasten [lit., jump] to send him their daughter. (Bereishit Rabbah)

וְכָל טוֹב אֲדֹנָיו בְּיָדוֹ. שְׁטַר מִתְּנָה כָּתַב לְיִצְחָק עַל כָּל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ, כְּדֵי שִׁיקְפָצוּ לְשַׁלַּח לוֹ בָתָם (בראשית רבה):

>> The Rebbe

Why Did Abraham Invest All Of His Money In The Match?

Student's pg. 13 Abraham's writing of a "gift-deed to Isaac for everything he owned, so that they would hasten to send him their daughter" raises a question.

הביאור בזה יובן בהקדמת שאלה נוספת על זה ש"שטר מתנה כתב ליצחק על כל אשר לו, כדי שיקפצו לשלוח לו בתם":

Even regarding the mitzvah of giving charity, there is a law that a person should never consecrate all of their possessions. A person who does this is in violation of the verse "give from everything you have," which means 'from' what you have, not all of what you have. How then could Abraham have given "everything he owned" to Isaac?

אפילו בנוגע למצות הצדקה הדין³ הוא, ש"לעולם לא יקדיש אדם ולא יחרים כל נכסיו, והעושה כן עובר על דעת הכתוב, שהרי הוא אומר⁴ מכל אשר לו ולא כל אשר לו כו". איך ייתכן אפוא שאברהם מסר "כל אשר לו" ליצחק⁵?

6 ראה משכיל לדוד כאן, שההכרח לפרש"י שנתן לו שטר מתנה – הוא, דאאפ"ל שאברהם "מסר כל אשר לו ביד העבד ונשאר ביתו ריקן".

3 רמב"ם סוף הל' ערכין וחרמים. וראה הל' דעות פ"ה הי"ב. הל' מתנות עניים פ"ז ה"ה. ובכ"מ.
4 בחוקותי כז, כה.
5

Source 8 Mishneh Torah, Arachin Vacharamin 8:13

Student's
pg. 14

A person should never consecrate all of his property or designate it all as a dedication offering. A person who does so, violates the Torah's guidance, for Leviticus 27:28 speaks of a person designating a dedication offering "from all that is his." The implication is that he should not give "all that is his," as our Sages explained. To give away everything is not piety, but foolishness, for he will lose all his money and become dependent on others. We should not show mercy to such a person. In a similar vein, our Sages said: "A man of foolish piety is among those who destroy the world."

Rather, a person who spends his money on mitzvot should not spend more than a fifth. He should conduct himself as our Prophets advised: "He arranges his affairs with judgment" (cf. Psalms 112:5), with regard to matters involving Torah as well as worldly concerns. Even with regard to the sacrifices for which a person is liable, the Torah showed compassion for a person's resources and dictated that the type of sacrifice be adjusted according to the person's financial capacity. How much more so should this approach be followed with regard to matters in which a person is obligated only because of his vows. He should take such vows only in a manner appropriate for him, as implied by Deuteronomy 16:17: "Each man according to his generosity, according to the blessings of G-d, your L-rd, which He has granted you."

>> The Rebbe

Student's
pg. 14

Even if Abraham had given everything to Isaac as an early inheritance, this would still be improper. How much more so considering that the purpose was "so that they would hasten to send him their

לְעוֹלָם לֹא יִקְדִּישׁ אָדָם וְלֹא יִתְּרִים כָּל נִכְסָיו. וְהָעוֹשֶׂה כֵּן עוֹבֵר עַל דְּעַת הַכְּתוּב שֶׁהָרִי הוּא אוֹמֵר (וַיִּקְרָא כו, כח) "מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ" וְלֹא כָּל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ כְּמוֹ שֶׁבָּאָרוּ חֻכְמִים. וְאִין זֶה חֲסִידוֹת אֲלָא שְׁטוֹת שֶׁהָרִי הוּא מְאָבֵד כָּל מְמוֹנוֹ וַיִּצְטַרֵּךְ לְבָרִיּוֹת. וְאִין מְחַמֵּין עָלָיו. וּבָזָה וּכְיוּצָא בּוֹ אָמְרוּ חֻכְמִים חֲסִיד שׁוֹטֵה מִכָּלֵל מְבַלֵּי עוֹלָם.

אֲלָא כָּל הַמְפִזֵּר מְמוֹנוֹ בְּמִצְוֹת אֵל יִפְזֹר יוֹתֵר מִחֻמְשׁ. וְיִהְיֶה כְּמוֹ שֶׁצִּוּוּ נְבִיאִים (תְּהִילִים קיב, ה) "מִכָּלֵל דְּבָרָיו בְּמִשְׁפָּט" בֵּין בְּדַבְרֵי תוֹרָה בֵּין בְּדַבְרֵי עוֹלָם. אֲפֹלוּ בְּקִרְבָּנוֹת שֶׁאָדָם חַיֵּב בָּהֶן הָרִי חֲסָה תוֹרָה עַל הַמְמוֹן וְאִמְרָה שֶׁיָּבִיא כְּפִי מִסַּת יְדוֹ. קַל וְחֹמֵר לְדַבְרִים שֶׁלֹּא נִתְחַיֵּב בָּהֶן אֲלָא מִחֻמַּת נִדְרוֹ שֶׁלֹּא יִנְדֹּר אֲלָא כְּרָאוּי לוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (דְּבָרִים טז, יז) "אִישׁ כְּמַתְנֵת יְדוֹ כְּבִרְכַּת ה' אֱלֹהֵיךָ אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לְךָ".

אפילו אם היה מוסר לו זאת כבר אז בירושה⁶, גם אז לא היה הדבר מובן⁷, על-אחת-כמה-וכמה שזה היה "כדי שיקפצו לשלוח לו בתם", ובפרט שגם אם לא היה מוסר את

לגבי מש"נ כאן "ויתן לו את כל אשר לו" בשטר מתנה. וע"פ המבואר לקמן בפנים, יש להוסיף ביאור בהפרש בין ב' הפסוקים, שבפסוק ראשון נתן לו "כל אשר לו" בשטר מתנה בגלל הנישואין של יצחק ורבקה, ובפסוק שני נתן לו "כל אשר לו" בתורת ירושה. ואכ"מ.

6 כדאיתא בפדר"א פט"ז (וראה רד"ל שם). משא"כ לשון רש"י הוא "שטר מתנה".

7 משא"כ מה שנאמר בסוף ימי חיי אברהם "ויתן אברהם את כל אשר לו ליצחק" (פרשתנו כה, ח), שהוריש לבנו יצחק "כל אשר לו" (וראה השק"ט בזה ברמב"ן ובמפרשי רש"י כאן ההוספה ב"ויתן אברהם גו")

daughter.” Abraham was an extremely wealthy man, and even if he had only given most of his money that would be enough for people to “hasten to send their daughter.” Abraham was 140 years old at the time, and would live a further 35 years, so he needed money to provide for himself and his family (in fact, during this time he took another wife and had additional children).

The match of the Jewish people

Student's The explanation of this:
pg. 15

The marriage of Isaac and Rebecca, the first marriage recorded in the Torah, wasn't just a private matter of the marriage of two individuals. This was a matter of general importance, the first marriage of a Jew, and a marriage that was the source of the Jewish people. Therefore, in addition to the private element of the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca, their union also represents the marriage of the Jewish people as a whole, because their marriage was the source of the descendants that enabled the continuation of the Jewish peoples through all subsequent generations.

This is the reason why Abraham gave “everything he owned” to his son Isaac: because this wasn't just a private marriage of Isaac and Rebecca, but the marriage of the entire Jewish people. As the first Jew, the head of the Jewish people, this marriage was of critical

”כל אשר לו”, אלא רק רוב, היה די בכך, בהיותו עשיר גדול ביותר, כדי “שיקפצו לשלוח לו ביתם”. ובפרט שאברהם היה אז בן ק”מ שנה, וחי אחר כך עוד כמה וכמה (ל”ה) שנים, וממילא היה זקוק לנכסים עבור עצמו ועבור בני ביתו כו’ (ובפרט לאחר “ויוסף אברהם ויקח אשה גו’ ותלד לו גו’⁸).

ויש לומר הביאור בזה:

נישואי יצחק ורבקה - הנישואין הראשונים הכתובים בתורה - אינם רק נישואין פרטים בין שני יחידים, אלא ענין הכי כללי: אלה היו הנישואין הראשונים של זוג יהודי (אחרי קיום מצוות מילה)⁹ ויתירה מזו - על ידי הנישואין הללו נעשה המשך של כלל ישראל. כלומר, נוסף על הנישואין הפרטיים בין יצחק לרבקה, מבטאים נישואיהם את הנישואין של כלל ישראל¹⁰, הנישואין הללו הביא את התולדות ואפשרו את המשך קיום עם ישראל עד סוף כל הדורות.

ויש לומר, שלכן מסר אברהם על ענין זה “כל אשר לו” ליצחק בנו, מפני שזו לא רק חתונה פרטית בין יצחק לרבקה, אלא נישואין של כלל ישראל, וממילא זה גם נוגע בכל ענינו של אברהם עצמו - בהיותו

(10) ראה עדין בלק”ש ח”ל ע’ 87 ס”ז.

(8) פרשתנו כה, א ואילך.
(9) ראה ב”ר פ”ט, ה.

importance to Abraham, and this is why he invested himself fully into it, with “everything he owned.”

הראש של כלל ישראל (היהודי הראשון). משום כך הוא הכניס בזה את כל כוחו - "כל אשר לו".

משיחת שבת פרשת חיי שרה, ה'תשנ"ב.
תרגום מאידית
תורת מנחם תשנ"ב, חלק א' עמוד 290

The simple explanation for why the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca was so important, and why it symbolizes the spiritual work of the Jewish people in all generations - to unite the upper world with the lower world - is because this marriage was the first Jewish marriage (as Abraham had married Sarah before he was circumcised). As a result, it was this marriage that brought about the birth of the entire Jewish nation. Additionally, it was Isaac about whom G-d said "Isaac will be your seed." This is why Abraham invested all his possessions into this match.

(Further on in this talk, the Rebbe goes on to explain that the match between Isaac and Rebecca represents the union of mah and ban, and therefore Abraham invested all his money into it, because this is the general service of the Jewish people, as we learned in the previous talk.

The novelty we see in this talk is the explanation according to Peshat (the simple way of understanding) for why it was specifically the match between Isaac and Rebecca that was chosen to symbolize the union of mah and ban: (a) it was the first Jewish marriage, and (b) it was this marriage that made possible the continued existence of the Jewish people - "Isaac will be your seed."

E. A Nation of Matchmakers

The Jewish people are essentially a nation of matchmakers. Not only because we are always busy 'setting-up' some friend or relative, but because of our spiritual work. We are busy every day matching the spiritual with the physical. When we say a blessing over the food we're about to eat, we match the spiritual with the physical. When we give hard-earned money to charity, we create another match, and so on.

At the end of the talk, the Rebbe points out what we can learn from the first matchmaker.

>> The Rebbe

Student's A practical lesson from the above:
pg.16

When we know and feel that we are in exile, a very dark state, we might wonder how we can possibly fulfill our mission in this world—observing the Torah and mitzvot—in such a dark state of exile. It is especially difficult to do this with joy, as we are commanded to.

ההוראה מכל האמור לעיל בנוגע לפועל:

כאשר יהודי יודע ומרגיש שהוא נמצא בגלות, חושך כפול ומכופל - יכול הוא לחשוב: כיצד יוכל למלא את תפקידו ושליחותו בעולם (בקיום התורה והמצוות כו') בהיותו בחושך כפול ומכופל של זמן הגלות, ובפרט כאשר תובעים ממנו שיהיה "עבדת את ה' אלקיך בשמחה ובטוב לבב"!

Sometimes it's hard to make a match. The parties come from distant places, and hard work is required to bring them together. In our spiritual lives we also sometimes feel the difficulty of connecting the physical and the spiritual. Yet we are expected to do this, and do it with joy...

The story of Eliezer teaches us that there is precedent for this.

When Abraham sent Eliezer outside Israel, to an exile-like state, he had his prayer answered even before he completed it. This response was quicker than even that of Moses and Solomon.

הנה על זה באה ההוראה מכללות הסיפור של פרשת אליעזר, שדבר זה כבר היה לעולמים:

כאשר אברהם אבינו שלח את אליעזר לחוץ לארץ כו', שזהו בדוגמת הירידה של זמן הגלות - הנה בהיותו בחוץ לארץ הייתה תפילתו באופן של "ויהי הוא טרם כלה לדבר גו'", היינו, שנענה באופן של "עד מהרה

This teaches a lesson for every Jew in exile:

There no reason to be disheartened by our being in exile. Not only are our prayers answered quickly by G-d, they are even answered before we complete them, because we are descendants and inheritors of Abraham.

Despite the fact that exile is a great descent, and despite our awareness of where we really stand in our Divine service, we must go about our service joyfully, with the knowledge that we will be answered by G-d before we even finish to ask.

ירוץ דברו", ובאופן נעלה יותר מאשר אצל משה ושלמה - "טרם כלה לדבר".

ועל-דרך-זה מובן בנוגע לעבודת כל אחד ואחת מישראל בזמן הגלות:

לא זו בלבד שאין לו מה להתפעל מכללות ירידת הגלות, בידעו כאשר מתפלל להקב"ה הרי הוא נענה תיכף ומיד, באופן של "עד מהרה ירוץ דברו", אלא יתירה מזו: בהיותו יורשו של אברהם - הרי הוא נענה באופן של "טרם כלה לדבר".

ולכן, מבלי הבט על גדול ירידת הגלות, ומבלי הבט על מעמדו ומצבו (כאשר עושה חשבון צדק בנפשו כו') - הרי הוא עובד עבודתו בשמחה וטוב לבב, בידעו שנענה על ידי הקב"ה באופן של "טרם כלה לדבר".

המשך שיחת כ"ף מרחשון ה'תשמ"ב, בלתי מוגה

We learn from Eliezer that G-d answers prayers for matches quickly. We are therefore confident that G-d will help us achieve our goal of connecting the physical and spiritual, and do so very quickly.