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Shluchim of the Rebbe to Mumbai India



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Contents

A. Eliezer, Abraham's Servant.....1

After Abraham's victory in battle, G-d promises him great reward. Abraham responds that without a son to continue his legacy, such reward is meaningless to him.

From Abraham's words, "the steward of my household is Eliezer of Damascus," Rashi teaches us about Eliezer's greatness:

He successfully managed Abraham's affairs, helped him triumph in battle, and assisted in Abraham's mission to spread faith in G-d (Sources 1–2).

In addition, the Sages list Eliezer as one of the nine righteous people who entered Paradise alive (Source 3).

B. A Son to Inherit.....5

The Rebbe asks: Why does Abraham emphasize Eliezer's virtues when asking G-d for a son?

It would seem to weaken his argument.

The explanation: It is natural for a person to want to see their life's work succeed.

Eliezer may appear to represent perfect success—devoted, capable, and righteous, but the Torah teaches that this is only half the job.

True continuity and eternity exist only when a child continues in their parents' path and devotes themselves to it completely.

Moreover, the greatest reward a person can receive is that their children continue their life mission.

Lesson for our lives: Someone who works for a higher calling or purpose must ensure that his children continue that mission with the same strength and dedication.

C. The Critical Importance of Education.....11

This is why the greatest Jewish leaders placed such strong emphasis on education.

Education is how we ensure that the ideals for which Jews gave their lives throughout the generations will endure in future generations.

In the book of Exodus, when G-d speaks to Moses, He says:

"I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."

Rashi comments: "I appeared–to the Patriarchs." (Source 4)

What is Rashi adding?

The Rebbe explains: Rashi clarifies that the primary greatness of the Patriarchs was not their personal spiritual achievements, but that they were "Patriarchs"—they raised and educated children who continued in their path.

That is why, when we recite Shema Yisrael twice daily we immediately continue with "and you shall teach them to your children."

The way to ensure the eternity of Shema Yisrael is through education.

After G-d promises Abraham that his children will inherit him, He commands him to bring sacrifices.

This teaches that to succeed in educating one's children, we must be willing to make sacrifices—to give of ourselves.

That is the essence of a sacrifice: giving up something of ourself for a higher cause.

Introduction

The Obama Presidential Library is currently under construction, intended to commemorate the legacy and achievements of America's 44th president. The cost of the project is estimated at $830 million.

This example reflects a broader phenomenon: influential and prominent individuals often seek to ensure that their names and life's work will not be forgotten with time, and that they will be remembered for generations to come. Some write autobiographies, others establish institutions or buildings bearing their names—all motivated by a desire to leave a lasting mark for the future.

But what is the Jewish perspective?

In this lesson, we will explore what the Torah teaches about the true and lasting way for a person to ensure that his life's work endures for generations to come.

השיעור לפרשת לך-לך

משיחת יום ה' פ' לך לך, ו' מר-חשון, ה'תשכ"ד,

הנחה בלתי מוגה,

תורת מנחם, כרך ל"ח, עמוד 217

ומשיחת שבת פרשת וארא, ראש חודש שבט, ה'תשכ"ב

הנחה בלתי מוגה,

תורת מנחם, כרך ל"ב, עמוד 380

A. Eliezer, Abraham's Servant

Source 1 Genesis 16:1-6

Student's pg. 1

אַחַר הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה הָיָה דְבַר ה' אֶל אַבְרָם בַּמַּחֲזֶה לֵאמֹר: "אַל תִּירָא אַבְרָם, אָנֹכִי מָגֵן לָךְ, שְׂכָרְךָ הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד".

After these words of Abram's, G-d's word came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear punishment, Abram; I am a shield for you. Furthermore, your reward will still be very great."

וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָם: "ה' אֱלֹקִים מַה תִּתֶּן לִי, וְאָנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ עֲרִירִי, וּבֶן מֶשֶׁק בֵּיתִי הוּא דַּמֶּשֶׂק אֱלִיעֶזֶר?"

Abram said, "G-d, of what benefit would anything be that You would give me, seeing that I am childless, and because I have no son, the steward of my household is Eliezer of Damascus?"

Rashi

Student's pg. 1

וּבֶן מֶשֶׁק בֵּיתִי: כְּתַרְגּוּמוֹ, שֶׁכָּל בֵּיתִי נְזוֹן עַל פִּיו, כְּמוֹ וְעַל פִּיךָ יִשַּׁק, אַפּוֹטְרוֹפּוֹס שֶׁלִּי, וְאִלּוּ הָיָה לִי בֵּן, הָיָה בְּנִי מְמֻנֶּה עַל שֶׁלִּי.

Steward of my household: Its meaning is as Onkelos translates it: "the provider in my house," i.e., the person by whose orders my entire household is provided for, similar to: "and by your orders will all my people be provided for," i.e., my steward; were I, however, to have a son, my son would be in charge of my affairs.

דַּמֶּשֶׂק: לְפִי הַתַּרְגּוּם מִדַּמֶּשֶׂק הָיָה, וּלְפִי מִדְרַשׁ אַגָּדָה שֶׁרָדַף הַמְּלָכִים עַד דַּמֶּשֶׂק. וּבַתַּלְמוּד דָּרְשׁוּ נוֹטָרִיקוֹן דּוֹלֶה וּמַשְׁקֶה מִתּוֹרַת רַבּוֹ לַאֲחֵרִים.

Damascus: According to Onkelos' translation, it means that he came from Damascus. But according to an aggadic explanation, he was so called because he had pursued the kings until Damascus. In the Talmud it is explained as an acrostic: "one who draws and gives drink" to others of the teachings of his master.

Student's pg. 1

וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָם: "הֵן לִי לֹא נָתַתָּה זָרַע, וְהִנֵּה בֶן בֵּיתִי יוֹרֵשׁ אֹתִי".

Abram continued, "Look, You have given me no children. Eliezer, a mere member of my household, will inherit me."

Student's pg. 2

At that moment the word of G-d came to him, saying: "This person will not be your heir! Rather, one born from your own flesh will inherit you."

G-d took Abram outside his tent and said, "Look towards heaven and count the stars—if you can count them!" He said to him, "That is how numerous your descendants will be."

Abram believed in G-d, and G-d accounted it for him as an act of righteousness.

וְהִנֵּה דְבַר ה' אֵלָיו לֵאמֹר: "לֹא יִירָשְׁךָ זֶה, כִּי אִם אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא מִמֵּעֶיךָ – הוּא יִירָשֶׁךָ".

וַיּוֹצֵא אֹתוֹ הַחוּצָה, וַיֹּאמֶר: "הַבֶּט נָא הַשָּׁמַיְמָה, וּסְפֹר הַכּוֹכָבִים, אִם תּוּכַל לִסְפֹּר אֹתָם?" וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ: "כֹּה יִהְיֶה זַרְעֶךָ".

וְהֶאֱמִן בַּה', וַיַּחְשְׁבֶהָ לוֹ צְדָקָה.

>> The Rebbe

Eliezer of "Damascus"

Student's pg. 2

When Abraham speaks about Eliezer—saying that he, and not Abraham's son, would inherit all that he owned—he emphasizes: "The steward of my household is Eliezer of Damascus."

With this, Abraham is highlighting Eliezer's virtues, as Rashi explains:

כאשר אברהם מדבר אודות אליעזר - שהוא (ולא בנו) עתיד לירש את כל אשר לו - מדגיש אברהם: "בן משק ביתי הוא דמשק אליעזר"[1].

בכך מדגיש אברהם את מעלותיו של אליעזר - כפי שמפרש רש"י:

(a) "The steward of my household—the person by whose orders my entire household is provided for." In other words, when Abraham needed to manage his affairs, Eliezer ran them on his behalf, and did so successfully.

א) "בן משק ביתי - שכל ביתי נזון על פיו", היינו, שכאשר אברהם צריך לנהל את עסקיו, מנהל הוא - אליעזר - עבורו את עסקיו, ועושה זאת בהצלחה.

Abraham was a very wealthy man and possessed many assets. Eliezer was the one who managed all of them successfully.

Student's pg. 2

(b) "Of Damascus—he had pursued the kings until Damascus." This means that when Abraham had to go to war, Eliezer led the fight and achieved victory.

ב) "דמשק - שרדף המלכים עד דמשק", היינו, שכאשר אברהם אבינו הוצרך לילך במלחמה, ניהל אליעזר את המלחמה וניצח בה.

1. שם, ב.

Student's pg. 3

(c) "Damascus" is also interpreted as an acronym for "one who draws and gives drink" to others from his master's teachings. Meaning, when Abraham studied and spread knowledge of the Creator in the world, Eliezer received his teachings and carried out his mission of spreading them further.

ג) "דמשק... נוטריקון דולה ומשקה מתורת רבו לאחרים", היינו, שכאשר אברהם לומד תורה ומפרסם בעולם אודות הקב"ה שהוא בורא העולם וכו', הרי אליעזר הוא זה שמקבל תורתו וממלא השליחות שלו לפרסמה בעולם.

Why was he called "Damascus"?

What is the meaning of the word "Damascus" that appears before his name?

Our Sages explain that the Hebrew word "damasek" is an acronym for the Hebrew words "doleh u'mashkeh"—"drawing and giving to drink." Abraham is compared to a well of living waters, and Eliezer was the one who drew from that well and gave others to drink.

In other words, he was not merely Abraham's servant but also his disciple and emissary—spreading Abraham's teachings to others and making the values of faith and morality that he learned from his master accessible to people near and far.

Source 2 Talmud, Yoma 28b

Student's pg. 3

Eliezer was a veteran yeshiva student, as the verse says, "Abram said to his servant Eliezer, the oldest member of his household who ruled over all he had", and Rabbi Elazar said: This means he mastered his teacher's teachings. "He is Eliezer of Damascus," Rabbi Eliezer said: He "drew and gave to drink" his teacher's wisdom to others.

אֱלִיעֶזֶר עֶבֶד אַבְרָהָם, זָקֵן וְיוֹשֵׁב בִּישִׁיבָה הָיָה, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל עַבְדּוֹ זְקַן בֵּיתוֹ הַמֹּשֵׁל בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ", אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר: שֶׁמּוֹשֵׁל בְּתוֹרַת רַבּוֹ. "הוּא דַּמֶּשֶׂק אֱלִיעֶזֶר" — אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר: שֶׁדּוֹלֶה וּמַשְׁקֶה מִתּוֹרָתוֹ שֶׁל רַבּוֹ לַאֲחֵרִים.

Another interpretation of Damascus is that it was his hometown. It's also possible that he earned this name thanks to his gallantry in war where he chased the four kings until Damascus.

Abraham's Soldier

A world war broke out between two groups of kings. The four kings who were victorious conquered vast territories and took many captives, including Lot, Abraham's nephew.

The Torah describes how Abraham came to his nephew's rescue, going out to battle with a force of only 318 fighters. However, a traditional interpretation explains that Abraham's entire army consisted of just one soldier—Eliezer. Even so, Abraham achieved a miraculous and decisive victory, pursuing the defeated kings all the way to Damascus.

According to this interpretation, Abraham told his men that anyone who had sinned should not join the battle, lest their wrongdoing cause the entire group to fail. Upon hearing this, all of them—except for Eliezer—returned home. The number 318 mentioned in the Torah actually alludes to the numerical value of the name of Abraham's last remaining soldier—Eliezer.

The Man Who Entered Paradise Alive

The Sages list nine righteous individuals who entered Paradise while still alive. This remarkable group includes well-known figures such as the prophet Elijah, as well as others who are less familiar, like Chiram. And who else appears on this distinguished list? Eliezer!

Source 3 Derech Eretz Zuta 1:9

Student's pg. 3

Nine entered Paradise alive: Chanoch son of Yered, Elijah the Prophet, Mashiach, Eliezer the servant of Abraham, Chiram the king of Tzur, the servant who saved Jeremiah from the pit, Yavetz (some identify him as Otniel ben Kenaz, the Judge of Israel), Batya, daughter of Pharaoh, Serach the daughter of Asher, and some include Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi.

תִּשְׁעָה נִכְנְסוּ בְּחַיֵּיהֶם בְּגַן עֵדֶן. וְאֵלּוּ הֵם: חֲנוֹךְ בֶּן יֶרֶד, אֵלְיָהוּ, וּמָשִׁיחַ, וֶאֱלִיעֶזֶר עֶבֶד אַבְרָהָם, וְחִירָם מֶלֶךְ צֹר [שֶׁשָּׁלַח אֶרֶז וּפוּעֲלִים לִבְנְיַן הַבַּיִת], וְעֶבֶד מֶלֶךְ הַכּוּשִׁי [שֶׁהִצִּיל אֶת יִרְמְיָהוּ מִבּוֹרוֹ שֶׁל צִדְקִיָּהוּ], וְיַעְבֵּץ בְּנוֹ שֶׁל רַבִּי יְהוּדָה הַנָּשִׂיא, וּבִתְיָה בַּת פַּרְעֹה, וְסָרַח בַּת אָשֵׁר. וְיֵשׁ אוֹמְרִים רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לֵוִי.

After reading the Midrashic teachings about Eliezer, we come to truly appreciate who he was.

Abraham, our forefather, was the founder of a new faith—belief in one G-d—and he dedicated himself to spreading that faith among the nations of the world. To accomplish this, he established a tent at a crossroads where he would host travelers and guests. During these encounters, he would teach them about the Creator. The movement quickly gained momentum and began to attract many followers. Abraham would bring the men closer to monotheism, and Sarah would do the same for the women. Gradually, a sizable community formed around them, supported by a large and active infrastructure.

And who managed all of this? Eliezer.

He was the one who ran Abraham's household, overseeing the logistics of the tent—the very first "Chabad House" in history. He organized its operations, and handled security when needed, even going out to battle to rescue Lot. He was also a great Torah scholar, "drawing and giving to drink" from his master's teachings to the growing circle of students and followers.

He was the dream assistant that any leader or visionary would want—talented, devoted, and fully aligned with his master's mission and vision.

Yet when the defining moment arrived, Abraham expressed his deep pain to G-d: that after all his efforts and achievements, it was his servant Eliezer who would inherit everything—and that he had no son to continue his legacy.

B. A Son to Inherit

>> The Rebbe

Why emphasize Eliezer's qualities?

Student's pg. 4

There is an apparent difficulty here:

Given the context of Abraham's argument before G-d—"What is the use of all that You have given me?"—it would have been enough for Abraham to say, "You have given me no offspring, and the one who will inherit me is a member of my household," meaning that his heir would be a stranger.

Why then does Abraham emphasize, in arguing that his heir is a stranger, that this person is one who possesses all the admirable qualities mentioned above? Why is it relevant for us to know this, to the extent that the Torah relates Abraham's praise of Eliezer in detail?

ולכאורה אינו מובן:

מצד תוכן הסיפור על דבר טענת אברהם להקב"ה "מה תועלת בכל אשר תתן לי" - מספיק שיאמר אברהם "הן לי לא נתתה זרע והנה בן ביתי יורש אותי", היינו, שהיורש שלי הוא אדם זר;

לשם מה מדגיש אברהם אבינו - בטענתו שיורשו הוא אדם זר - שאדם זר זה הוא אליעזר שיש לו כל המעלות הנ"ל?! מה נוגע לנו הדבר - שבשביל זה מספרת לנו התורה אודות השבחים ששיבח אברהם את אליעזר?!

Everyone wants to succeed

Student's pg. 4

The explanation is that this detail contains a profound lesson that sheds new light on the entire episode.

Human nature is such that every person desires to see success in the areas to which they devote their efforts.

Some people find their energy and passion in business and commerce. Others are driven by the pursuit of conquering new lands—even the

והביאור - שבענין זה יש הוראה עמוקה שמאירה את כללות הסיפור באור חדש:

טבעו של אדם - שרצונו וחפצו שתהיה לו הצלחה באותם ענינים שמתייגע בהם.

יש בני אדם שהחיות והלהט שלהם הם בעניני עסק ומסחר. יש בני אדם שהדבר שמעניין אותם הוא כיבוש

Student's pg. 5

ambition to conquer the world—meaning they seek new fields of activity to master and to prove their superiority in them. Still others devote their entire focus to spreading their faith or teachings—their ideals—throughout the world.

מדינות חדשות, ועד לכיבוש העולם, כלומר, שדות פעולה חדשים שצריכים לכבוש מאחרים ולהוכיח שמצליחים בהם יותר. ויש בני אדם שכל מעיינם הוא בהפצת אמונתם ותורתם - האידיאלים שלהם - בכל העולם.

At first glance, all these people share a common trait: when they see success in their endeavors—whether in spreading their faith and teachings, in conquering new territories, or in expanding and developing their business ventures—they feel that they have achieved the central goal and ultimate purpose of their lives.

ולכאורה, הצד השוה שבכולם, שכאשר רואים הצלחה בעניניהם - הצלחה בהפצת אמונתם ותורתם, הצלחה בכיבוש שדות פעולה חדשים, או הצלחה בהרחבת העסקים ופיתוח עסקים חדשים - משיגים הם בכך את הרעיון המרכזי והתכלית המרכזית של חייהם.

Continued success is only guaranteed by children

Student's pg. 5

The Torah however teaches that seeing success is only half of the job.

באה אפוא התורה ומספרת לנו - שכל זה אינו אלא חצי עבודה:

When can a person truly feel satisfied and joyful from spreading his faith and teachings, conquering new spheres of activity, or developing successful enterprises? When can they see these as meaningful goals and derive pleasure from them? Only when they know that all these efforts will be continued not by a stranger, but by their own child.

מתי יכול להיות אדם מרוצה ושמח מהפצת אמונתו ותורתו בכל מקום, מכיבוש שדות פעולה חדשים, ומההצלחה בפיתוח העסקים, מתי יכול לראות בזה תכלית ומטרה, ומתי יכול להיות בזה תענוג - אך ורק כאשר יודע שכל העניינים האלה יועברו וימשיכו להתנהל (לא על ידי אדם זר, אלא) על ידי בנו דוקא!

It is human nature not to be content merely with the knowledge that one's work will be carried on by someone capable. They want it to be continued specifically by their own child.

טבעו של אדם - שאינו מסתפק בכך שעניניו ימשיכו להתנהל על ידי אדם שיוכל לקחת על עצמו את כל העניינים, אלא רצונו וחפצו שהעניינים שלו ימשיכו להתנהל על ידי בנו דוקא.

Otherwise, the continuity and preservation

לולי כן, עלול ההמשך - ההמשכיות

Student's
pg. 6

of everything Abrahm stood for may not be assured.

This highlights that a person's true reward is when all of their life's accomplishments and achievements are carried forward by their children and grandchildren. Only then are those achievements complete and endowed with enduring value.

It is for this reason that Abraham, in speaking to G-d, emphasizes Eliezer's virtues when he says, "You have given me no offspring."

Even though he had a loyal servant like Eliezer—"the steward of my household, Eliezer of Damascus"—who would surely continue to spread his teachings, expand his enterprises, and conquer all the realms he sought to reach, Abraham nevertheless says to G-d that this is not the reward he seeks: "What is the use of all that You have given me?"

Abraham's deepest desire was to have children of his own—children who would carry on all the work and missions for which he had fought, risked his life, and sought G-d's blessing for success.

וההנצחה של כל מה שאברהם אבינו מייצג - לא להיות מובטח.

בכך מודגש שהשכר האמיתי של אדם הוא כשכל הישגיו וחידושיו בחייו, עוברים ונמשכים על ידי ילדיו ונכדיו, רק אז כל ההישגים נשלמים ויש להם ערך אמיתי ונמשך.[2]

וזהו שאברהם מדגיש את מעלותיו של אליעזר בדברי טענתו להקב"ה "הן לי לא נתתה זרע":

גם כאשר ישנו עבד מסור כמו אליעזר ("בן משק ביתי הוא דמשק אליעזר"), שבודאי ימשיך לפרסם תורתו של אברהם, להרחיב את עסקיו, ולכבוש את כל המדינות שרוצה אברהם לכבוש - אומר אברהם להקב"ה שלא זה הוא השכר שמבקש ממנו ("מה תועלת בכל אשר תתן לי");

רצונו וחפצו של אברהם - שיהיו לו ילדים שלו, אשר הם יהיו אלה שימשיכו את כל הפעולות והענינים שעבורם נלחם, עבורם מסר נפשו, ועבורם ביקש מהקב"ה ברכת הצלחה!...

Eternity — Achieved Only Through Children

From this we learn something very deep and fundamental. Every person wants to succeed in their life's mission. Abraham's mission was to spread faith in G-d—the foundation of Judaism. And indeed, during his lifetime, he was remarkably successful, inspiring large numbers of people to believe in one G-d.

2 השיחה שאנו לומדים נאמרה לעסקני ישיבות תומכי תמימים ליובאוויטש, בחדרו הק', בתור התחלה ל"דינר" השנתי של מרכז ישיבות תומכי תמימים ליובאוויטש. באותו יום שלח הרבי מכתב למשתתפי הדינר, ובו הובא התוכן והנקודה של השיחה הזו. שתי הפסקאות הללו הן מאותה אגרת. אגרות קודש כרך כ"ג עמוד י"ג.

But Abraham understood that for this faith to be truly eternal, something more was needed. It was not enough to have large followings of believers. It was not enough to write books explaining faith. Even the most skilled and passionate advocates—no matter how dedicated—cannot guarantee that the faith would endure.

There is only one way to ensure true continuity: to educate one's children and grandchildren in the same path, so that they live it, advance it, and are ready to sacrifice for it. That is the only way to make Judaism everlasting.

That is why Abraham asked G-d for a son—someone who would carry Judaism forward for all generations.

(One might ask: why specifically through a child? Couldn't Eliezer have continued Abraham's mission? After all, Judaism accepts converts as fully equal members of the Jewish people. The explanation, as explained in Chassidic teachings, is that self-sacrifice for Judaism exists innately within the soul of every Jew—and, of course, also within a convert once he has a Jewish soul. But before the Giving of the Torah, those who joined Abraham and Sarah did not yet have that inner transformation. Indeed, we find no lasting remnant of all the many people who were drawn to Abraham's faith at that time.)

The greatest reward—children

Student's pg. 6

This serves as a lesson and a directive for each of us.

Student's pg. 7

Waging a campaign or struggle for a certain ideal, such as for spreading Torah so that it reaches every corner of the world, — is not enough;

We must also ensure that our children and entire families will be faithful continuers of that work. And not only continuers, but dedicated participants and fighters for the same ideals and the same truth for which their parents and grandparents struggled.

This matter is so crucial that even when G-d grants abundant reward—"Your reward shall be very great," and even the greatest reward

ענין זה מהוה לימוד והוראה לכל אחד ואחת מאתנו:

כאשר מנהלים מערכה ולוחמים עבור אידיאל מסוים, עבור הפצת תורה, שיגיעו הדברים בכל פינה - אין זה מספיק;

יש להבטיח שהילדים וכל בני המשפחה יהיו "ממשיכים" נאמנים, ולא רק "ממשיכים", אלא גם "מתחרים" ו"לוחמים" נאמנים - למען אותו אידיאל ואותה תורה שעבורם נלחמו אביהם וזקניהם!

וכל כך חשוב ונוגע דבר זה - שגם כאשר הקב"ה נותן שכר רב ("שכרך הרבה מאד"), ועד לשכר הגדול ביותר שביכלתו של הקב"ה ליתן ליהודי ולכל

Student's pg. 7

imaginable that only G-d Himself can grant—as long as there is no assurance that one's life's work will be carried forward specifically by their own child, a person feels no satisfaction in the reward, nor in the struggle that they dedicated their life to.

אדם, הרי, כל זמן שחסרה הוודאות בהבטחת המשך הדברים על ידי בנו דוקא, אינו מרגיש שום תועלת בכל השכר, ובכל המלחמה שניהל במשך כל ימי חייו!

A *person's deepest joy lies in their own children.*

Beyond the fact that true continuity can exist only when the children dedicate themselves to lives of Torah and spreading Torah, there is also a unique reward in knowing that one's own children are following in one's ways. That is why Abraham asked specifically for this blessing.

Story - You Have to Know What to Ask For (Teacher's manual only)

In 1959, Rabbi Zalman Gurary managed an extensive business network in Brazil. Through these enterprises, he developed close commercial ties with wealthy businessmen whom he would meet during his frequent visits to the country.

Rabbi Shmaryahu Gurary (Rashag) was the Rebbe's brother-in-law, and the director of the Central Tomchei Temimim Yeshivah. He asked his cousin Rabbi Zalman Gurary if he could accompany him on one of his business trips to Brazil in order to raise funds from his wealthy acquaintances for the yeshivah.

Rabbi Zalman wasn't too enthusiastic about the idea, but after persistent requests from Rashag, he set a bold condition:

"If you will secure from the Rebbe a promise that upon our return from Brazil, I'll be granted a private audience during which I'll receive a blessing for whatever I ask—then I'll agree to take you with me to Brazil and introduce you to the businessmen so they'll contribute to the yeshivah."

Rashag told the Rebbe about the condition, and the Rebbe agreed.

The two men traveled to Brazil. Within just a few days, they succeeded in raising remarkable sums. Rabbi Zalman would later recount to his grandson that every wealthy man they met responded warmly to Rashag's appeal and contributed very generously.

When they returned to 770, bearing enough funds to sustain the yeshivah for many months, Rabbi Zalman told Rashag in his characteristic style:

"I've fulfilled my part of the deal to your satisfaction. Now it's your turn to ensure the second part happens. Schedule my private audience with

the Rebbe, and make sure I receive the promised blessing."

When he entered the Rebbe's room, the Rebbe greeted him warmly and said, "What would you like to ask for?"

Emotionally, Rabbi Zalman began telling the Rebbe about a large cargo ship he had recently operated, filled with merchandise being shipped from one country to another. Tragically, the ship had sunk at sea with all its cargo, causing him a massive financial loss. His request was that he be able to recover all the money he had lost.

The Rebbe's expression suddenly turned serious, and he said words that Rabbi Zalman would never forget:

"If one is given the opportunity to ask for anything he wants, he must have the wisdom to know what to ask for."

The Rebbe then added,

"You should ask that your descendants be Chassidim, G-d-fearing Jews, and that they grow up in the path of our Rebbes."

Hearing the Rebbe's unexpected comment, Rabbi Zalman immediately replied, "Very well, that is my request."

The Rebbe smiled and said,

"That—you shall have."

C. The Critical Importance of Education

>> The Rebbe

Student's pg. 8

This is why we find that the great leaders of the Jewish people—from Moses until today—placed the utmost importance on education: on raising Jewish children to be faithful continuers of everything for which their ancestors fought and gave their lives throughout the ages.

These leaders were not content with merely making proclamations and statements about the need to strive for a world of justice, integrity, and peace. They worked tirelessly to ensure that our children, our grandchildren, and our families would themselves carry the banner of those ideals for which Jews had sacrificed themselves for generations.

This is not just an added bonus, something that is merely desirable if circumstances allow. It is the very essence of our true reward for all that we struggled and achieved in life—the ability to educate children who will continue in our own path.

ולכן מצינו שגדולי ישראל - החל ממשה רבינו ועד לדורות האחרונים - הטילו את מלוא כובד המשקל על ענין החינוך, לחנך ילדי ישראל להיות ממשיכים נאמנים לכל הענינים שעבורם נלחמו יהודים ומסרו נפשם במשך כל הדורות.

גדולי ישראל לא הסתפקו בהכרזות והצהרות שצריכים לפעול למען עולם של צדק ויושר ושלום, אלא השתדלו ופעלו שהילדים שלנו, הנכדים שלנו והמשפחה שלנו יהיו נושאי הדגל עבור כל האידיאלים שעבורם מסרו נפשם יהודים במשך כל הדורות.

ענין זה אינו דבר נוסף, אשר, אם יצליחו לפעול, אזי טוב, ואם לאו, גם לא נורא; ענין זה הוא עיקר שכרו של אדם עבור כל הענינים שנלחם עבורם וניצח במשך כל ימי חייו - כשיש לו אפשרות לחנך ילדים שימשיכו בדרכו הוא.

We often speak about the importance of being a "light unto the nations." Indeed, the Jewish people have contributed to the world in every field—in science, in medicine, and most significantly, in morality. We brought the eternal values of the Ten Commandments to humanity.

Yet, when all is said and done, even if we continue to do all of this on the widest and most meaningful scale, it is still not enough. The most important thing is that the younger generation of the Jewish people become the torchbearers of these ideals.

That is the true reward of the Jewish people throughout the generations—that there is always a

new generation carrying the mission forward. And this is also the only way to ensure that our faith will endure: when there are living children who continue it, and who are ready to dedicate themselves to it completely.

The Defining Attribute of the Patriarchs

In another address, the Rebbe observes that the defining attribute of the patriarchs was their being patriarchs, that they taught their progeny how to serve G-d.

Source 4 Exodus 6:2-3

וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹקִים אֶל מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו: "אֲנִי ה'.

Student's pg. 8 **G-d rebuked Moses by saying to him, "I am G-d.**

וָאֵרָא אֶל אַבְרָהָם אֶל יִצְחָק וְאֶל יַעֲקֹב בְּאֵ-ל שַׁדָּי, וּשְׁמִי ה' לֹא נוֹדַעְתִּי לָהֶם".

Student's pg. 9 **I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob only as E-l Shadai ['G-d Almighty']; I was not manifest to them by My Name G-d.**

Rashi

וָאֵרָא: אֶל הָאָבוֹת.

Student's pg. 9 **I appeared:** To the patriarchs.

>> The Rebbe

Source 5 Toras Menachem, vol. 32, p.380

כמה[3] מפרשים[4] מתעכבים על כך ושואלים: מה מוסיף כאן רש"י על הפסוק עצמו — "וארא אל אברהם אל יצחק ואל יעקב?"

Student's pg. 9 **Several commentators ask: what does Rashi add by commenting on the verse "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob"?**

ובפרט על פי הידוע מהשל"ה[5], ועוד יותר מאדמו"ר הזקן ורבותינו נשיאינו שלאחריו, שהפליגו בגודל הדיוק של כל תיבה ואות בפירוש רש"י — הרי ודאי שנדרש ביאור: מה מוסיף כאן רש"י בדבריו "אל האבות?"

This is especially difficult in light of what we know from the Shelah, and even more so from the teachings of the Alter Rebbe and the later Rebbes who followed him. They taught that every word and letter in Rashi's commentary is considered and precise. It is therefore clear that this comment—"to the patriarchs"—requires explanation. What, exactly, is Rashi adding?

והביאור בזה: כוונת רש"י

The explanation is that Rashi intends to

3. משיחת שבת פרשת וארא, ראש חודש שבט, ה'תשכ"ב, הנחה בלתי מוגה, תורת מנחם, כרך ל"ב, עמוד 380

4. ראה רא"ם ושפ"ח. ועוד. וראה גם תו"מ חי"ח ע' 317א. וש"נ.

5. במס' שבועות שלו (קפא, א).

להדגיש, שעיקר מעלתם של אברהם יצחק ויעקב היא – היותם "אבות". אף שבכל אחד מהם היתה המעלה הפרטית של עבודתו – אברהם בחסד, יצחק בגבורה, ויעקב בתפארת, ואצל כל אחד מהם היתה המדה שלו בתכלית השלימות ובלי גבול[6] – אף על פי כן, לא זהו עיקר מעלתם, אלא – היותם "אבות".

ועל דרך מה שכתוב באברהם, ראשון האבות[7] – "כי ידעתיו למען אשר יצוה את בניו ואת ביתו אחריו וגו'": הקב"ה אוהב את אברהם, ולמה? – כיון שהוא מצוה "את בניו ואת ביתו אחריו", ואינו מזכיר את מעלת עבודתו הפרטית.

ואף שבפסוק לא נאמרה במפורש תיבת "אבות" – הרי רש"י מפרש ומגלה זאת בפסוק זה: עיקר מעלתם של אברהם יצחק ויעקב – המדות – היא בכך שהם אבות, דהיינו שמביאים תולדות.

Student's pg. 9

highlight that the primary distinction of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lies in their being patriarchs. Although each of them possessed an individual greatness in their personal divine service—Abraham in kindness, Isaac in strength, and Jacob in harmony—and although each of these qualities was expressed in perfect and boundless form, still, that is not their essential greatness. Their true distinction is that they were patriarchs.

Student's pg. 10

As the verse says of Abraham, the first of the patriarchs: "For I have known him, so that he may command his children and his household after him." G-d's love for Abraham is described not as a result of his personal spiritual greatness, but because he ensured that his descendants will follow his path.

And although the word "patriarchs" does not appear explicitly in the verse, Rashi reveals that this is its deeper meaning: the chief virtue of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—their defining quality—is that they were patriarchs, that they raised children like themselves.

Actualizing Shema

Student's pg. 10

The importance of education is also emphasized in the recitation of the Shema twice each day.

We recites the Shema when we rise in the morning, at the start of the day. At the end of the day, before going to sleep, we recite it once more.

חשיבות החינוך מודגשת גם בקריאת שמע פעמיים בכל יום:

כאשר יהודי קם בבוקר, בהתחלת היום - קורא הוא "שמע", ובסיום היום, קודם שנתו - חוזר וקורא "שמע".

6. ובפרטיות: מדת החסד דאברהם אבינו – כדאיתא בספר הבהיר (הובא בפרדס שכ"ב פ"ד) ש"אמרה מדת החסד לפני הקב"ה מימי היות אברם בארץ לא הוצרכתי לעשות מלאכתי שהרי אברם עומד ומשמש במקומי", ד"מדת החסד" קאי על חסד דאציילות שהוא בלי גבול, ומכיון שמדת החסד אמרה שאברהם משמש במקומה – מוכח שהחסד דאברהם הוא בלי גבול. מדת הגבורה דיצחק – שהרי אפילו עתה "אפרו של יצחק נראה לפני צבור ומונח ע"ג המזבח" (פרש"י בחקותי כו, מב). מדת התפארת והרחמים דיעקב – כמ"ש "ויבא יעקב שלם", שמצד שלימות עבודתו עמד בב' הנסיונות דלבן ודעשו, ונשאר בשלימות (כדלעיל סוס"ב, ובהערה 36) – מהנחה בלתי מוגה.

7. וירא יח, יט ובפרש"י.

Student's pg. 10

One of the central themes included in the Shema is the commandment of education: "You shall teach them diligently to your children."

This emphasizes that regarding all the matters connected to the declaration of Shema—"Hear, O Israel"—with which we begin and end the day, we must remember that they must be followed by "You shall teach them to your children." We must transmit, teach, and plant these values in our children so that they, too, will continue to live by them.

ומהענינים העיקריים שנקבעו בקריאת שמע הוא ענין החינוך - "ושננתם לבניך"[8].

וזהו שאומרים ליהודי: בנוגע לכל הענינים שעבורם הנך מתחיל ומסיים את היום ב"שמע ישראל", עליך לזכור שצריך להיות ההמשך והסיום של "ושננתם לבניך", למסור וללמד ולנטוע את הדברים בילדים, שימשיכו לילך בדרך זו.

Every Jew says Shema, "Hear, O Israel." The Torah ensures that each time this is said, it is immediately followed by the words "You shall teach them to your children." These words serve to remind us what lies at the core of Jewish life, and what ensures that the words "Hear, O Israel" will continue to be spoken in the generations to come as well.

Student's pg. 11

This is the true blessing that a person can ask and receive from G-d—that the spreading of Torah, the establishment of new endeavors, and all their business affairs will be continued not merely by a worthy and faithful person, like Eliezer, but specifically by their own child or grandchild.

וזהו השכר האמיתי שמתברך יהודי ופועל אצל הקב"ה - שהפצת התורה, כיבוש המדינות וכל עניני העסק, ימשיכו ויתנהלו לא רק על ידי אדם טוב ואמיתי, כמו אליעזר, אלא שכל הענינים יומשכו ויתנהלו על ידי בנו או נכדו דוקא.

In the Merit of the Sacrifices

Student's pg. 11

This leads us to the continuation of the weekly portion. G-d says to Abraham, "Take for Me a calf." Rashi explains that this means that the merit through which the Jewish people will remain in the Land of Israel is that of the sacrifices.

ומכאן באים להמשך הפרשה - שהקב"ה אמר לאברהם "קחה לי עגלה וגו'"[9], "בזכות הקרבנות"[10]:

Source 6 Genesis 15:9

Student's pg. 11

G-d said to him, "Bring for Me three calves, three goats, three rams, a turtledove, and a young dove."

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו: "קְחָה לִי עֶגְלָה מְשֻׁלֶּשֶׁת וְעֵז מְשֻׁלֶּשֶׁת וְאַיִל מְשֻׁלָּשׁ, וְתֹר וְגוֹזָל".

8. ואתחנן ו, ז.
9. פרשתנו שם, ט.
10. פרש"י שם, ו.

Rashi on verse 6

Student's pg. 11

Abraham said to G-d: Let me know by what merit my descendants will continue to remain in the land."G-d answered him: "Through the merit of the sacrifices."

אָמַר לְפָנָיו, הוֹדִיעֵנִי בְּאֵיזֶה זְכוּת יִתְקַיְּמוּ בָּהּ, אָמַר לוֹ הַקָּבָ"ה, בִּזְכוּת הַקָּרְבָּנוֹת.

>> The Rebbe

Student's pg. 11

Every truly good thing must contain an element of giving of yourself. Good things don't come easily. If something comes effortlessly, that itself shows it isn't of real significance, and it will slip away as easily as it arrived. This is why sacrifice is necessary. And the greater the goal, the greater the sacrifice it calls for.

Student's pg. 12

So too here: if we want not only success in what we do but also continuity through our children, we must be ready to make sacrifices—meaning to give of ourselves for the cause of education. Practically speaking, this means financial participation.

כל דבר טוב - צריך להיות קשור עם "קרבן", היינו, הקרבה עצמית. דבר טוב לא יכול לבוא בקלות. כאשר דבר מסוים בא בקלות, הרי זו הוכחה שאין זה דבר חשוב[11], ובאותה קלות שבא הדבר, הרי הוא הולך ומסתלק. ולכן יש צורך בענין של קרבן דוקא. ובזה גופא - ככל שתגדל מעלת הדבר, צריך להיות גם הקרבן גדול יותר.

ועל דרך זה בנדון דידן: כאשר רוצים שתהיה לא רק הצלחה ונצחון בכל הענינים, אלא שיהיה גם המשך הענינים על ידי הילדים שלנו - צריכים להיות מוכנים ולא להירתע מענינים של קרבנות, כלומר, להקריב מעצמו עבור הענין, ובנדון דידן - על ידי ההשתתפות בממונו כו'.

משיחת יום ה' פ' לך לך, ו' מרחשון, ה'תשכ"ד,
הנחה בלתי מוגה,
תורת מנחם כרך ל"ח עמוד 217

When G-d promised Abraham that his children would inherit him and inherit the Land, He told him to bring sacrifices. This symbolizes that in order to receive something of true value, one must be willing to give something up for it. Anything real does not come easily.

The same applies here: if we wish that our children should walk in the ways of G-d, we must be ready to sacrifice something of ourselves—to give of our own resources.

This talk was delivered during a special private audience held for donors to the network of Chabad yeshivot in the United States. At the end of the talk, the Rebbe encouraged them to give five times more than they had originally planned.

11. ראה לקו"ש ח"ה ע' 54, ובהנסמן שם.

Key Points:

Student's pg. 12

• *Abraham complained to G-d: "What will You give me… and the steward of my house is Eliezer of Damascus." Eliezer was not an ordinary servant, but an exceptional figure—a capable economic and military manager, a head of a yeshivah who "drew and gave to others from his master's Torah," and one of the nine righteous individuals who entered the Garden of Eden alive.*

• *The Rebbe asks: Why does Abraham emphasize all of Eliezer's virtues when presenting his complaint? Seemingly, that would weaken his argument.*

• *The Rebbe explains that this is precisely Abraham's point. Success in one's career, business, or even in spreading ideas is only "half the job." True fulfillment, true reward, and—most importantly—the eternity of one's life's work are achieved only when it continues through one's children.*

• *Education is central in Judaism—it is the only way to ensure the perpetuation of G-d's path. Therefore:*

• *The primary greatness of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is not only their personal spiritual achievements, but the fact that they were Patriarchs—fathers who instructed their children to follow after them.*

• *Immediately after the declaration of faith, "Hear O Israel," the Torah commands, "And you shall teach them diligently to your children." This reminds us that the continuity of Judaism for future generations depends on the education of our children.*

Student's pg. 13

• *A legacy requires sacrifice. Things of true value do not come easily. When G-d promised Abraham continuity, He commanded him to bring sacrifices—teaching us that if we wish our children to carry on the path, we must be ready to give of ourselves for that purpose.*

Takeaway:

Student's pg. 13

We all strive for success and to build a lasting legacy. Abraham teaches us that true success is measured by its eternity. Our real legacy is not only what we achieve ourselves, but what we succeed in passing on to the next generation. That's why our most meaningful investment is in the education of our children—and it's not easy. It requires sacrifice.