



A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA

מורינו הרה"ג ר' אברהם גורביץ שליט"א

פרשת חיי שרה

וַיִּקַּח הָעֶבֶד עֶשְׂרֵה גַמְלִים וכו'. וַיֹּאמֶר ה' וכו', הִקְרָה נָא לִפְנֵי הַיּוֹם וַעֲשֵׂה חֶסֶד וכו'. הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי נֹצֵב עַל עֵין הַמַּיִם וכו'. וְהִיא הַנַּעֲרָה אֲשֶׁר אָמַר אֵלַיָּה וכו', אֲתָה הַכֹּחֶת לְעַבְדְּךָ לִיצְחָק וְכֵּן אֲדַע כִּי עֲשִׂיתָ חֶסֶד עִם אֲדֹנָי. וַיְהִי הוּא טָרָם כָּלָה לְדַבֵּר וְהִנֵּה רַבְקָה יֹצֵאת וכו'. וְהָאִישׁ מִשְׁתַּאֲהָ לָּהּ מִחֲרִישׁ לְדַעַת הַהֲצָלִיחַ ה' דְּרָכּוֹ אִם לֹא.

(בראשית כד, י-כא)

The servant took ten camels... And he said, "Hashem, may You so arrange it for me this day, and do kindness with my master Avrohom. Behold, I stand here by the spring of water... and let it be that the maiden to whom shall I say... her will You have chosen for Your servant, for Yitzchok; and may I know through her that You have done kindness with my master." And it was when he had not yet finished speaking that suddenly Rivkah was coming out... The man was astonished at her, reflecting silently to know whether Hashem had made his journey successful or not. (Bereishis 24:10-21)

This week's *Sidrah* recounts Eliezer's journey to fulfil his mission of finding a suitable wife for Yitzchok Avinu. When he arrived in the city of Avrohom's relatives, he went to the well of water and requested Hashem to show him a sign to indicate who would be the right wife. The Divine response was so swift that even during his supplication *hashgachah* had already prompted Rivkah to leave her house and go to the well. When Rivkah excelled in the test he had set forth, Eliezer was amazed by the immediate fulfilment of his prayer, which surpassed all his expectations.

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* notes that this experience of *siyata dishmaya*, which Eliezer witnessed, profoundly changed him. Inspired by how quickly his *tefillah* had been answered, he emerged as a different person. Previously, the Torah referred to him as an עֶבֶד, *servant*. However, following this transformation, his identity was adjusted, and the *possuk* states וְהָאִישׁ מִשְׁתַּאֲהָ לָּהּ, indicating that he was now defined as an אִישׁ, *a man*, which signifies greatness. The Torah continues to refer to him as אִישׁ a few more times throughout the *parshah*. For example, it notes his recognition of the Divine assistance when he saw that Rivkah was from the family of Avrohom: וַיִּקַּד הָאִישׁ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָּהּ. It also describes Lavan's greeting: וַיָּבֹא אֶל הָאִישׁ; and finally, it mentions Eliezer arriving at Besuel's house: וַיָּבֹא הָאִישׁ הַבִּיתָה.

Eliezer's newly attained *madreiga* can also be inferred from the Torah's change in terminology regarding him in last week's *parshah*. By Akeidas Yitzchok, the Torah (22:5) describes Avrohom telling Eliezer and Yishmoel to wait with the words: נִשְׁבּוּ לָכֶם פֹּה עִם הַחֲמוֹר, *Stay here by yourselves with the donkey*. Chazal clarify that the use of the word עִם instead of אֶת implies that Eliezer and Yishmoel are considered an עִם הַדּוֹמָה לַחֲמוֹר, *a donkey-like people*. However, in our *parshah*, the *possuk* (24:30) states: וְהִנֵּה עֹמֵד עַל הַגְּמָלִים, *and behold, he was standing over the camels*, using the word עַל, *over*, instead of עִם. This indicates that he was no longer categorised as being animal-like.

However, this metamorphosis of Eliezer was short-lived. When Rivkah's family agreed to let her marry Yitzchok, the Torah reverts to describing Eliezer as an עֶבֶד. The *possuk* states: וַיְהִי כֹאֲשֶׁר שָׁמַע עֶבֶד, *and it was, when Avrohom's servant heard their words*. This indicates that Eliezer's great inspiration had faded, and the spiritual heights he had reached were not long-lasting.

Eliezer's fall in *madreigah* can be further indicated by the way he speaks to Besuel. The *possuk* (24:49) states: וְעַתָּה אִם יִשְׁכַּם עֲשִׂים חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת אֶת אֲדֹנִי, הַגִּידוּ לִי, וְאִם לֹא, הַגִּידוּ לִי, וְאִפְנֶה עַל יְמִין אוֹ עַל שְׂמָאל. *And now, if you intend to do kindness and truth with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, and I will turn to the right or to the left.* This speech is quite troubling. How could Eliezer phrase it as if there was another option regarding whom Yitzchok would marry? A man who had witnessed such a clear revelation of Hashem's wondrous ways and had experienced such phenomenal success should have confidently declared to Besuel in all confidence, "Hashem is showing the path here with no room for doubt. Do as His will, give me Rivkah, and let me get on my way!" The fact that Eliezer was now doubting Hashem's complete control indicates that he had lost his earlier recognition of Divine Providence.

The Lev Eliyohu (Lech Lecha) highlights another example of this concept. The kings of Sedom, Amorah, Admah, Tzevoim and Bela observed Avrohom Avinu miraculously engaging in battle against Kedorlaomer and his allies. They witnessed Avrohom, with only 318 warriors, overpower vast armies and ultimately defeat them. Rashi (14:17) cites the Midrash that at the time of Avrohom's incredible victory, the kings were so impressed by him that they appointed him as their leader. However, just a few years later, they had become wicked and sinful, sinking into deep depravity and immorality, which led to their total destruction. The inspiration they derived from Avrohom's victory was fleeting and had no lasting impact on their behaviour.

We learn an important lesson here. Sometimes we can be inspired and motivated to reach new heights in our Avodas Hashem. However, it is crucial to make a conscious effort to maintain that level of commitment. We do not want to be like Eliezer, who, despite experiencing a profound change and transformation, quickly reverted to his original state. Instead, may we strive to draw inspiration and *chizzuk* from the circumstances around us, leading to lasting change.

ימי הלימוד הבעל"ט

ט"ז - י"ז כסלו

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