

פרשת חיי שרה

This week's Parasha tells the story of Avraham Avinu instructing his trusted servant Eliezer to find a wife for his son Yishak. The Torah astonishingly devotes *sixty seven* Pesukim in telling this story!

Pasuk מב' begins; "ואבא היום אל העין" – "I came today to the well". Eliezer tells the family of Rivkah that he arrived today at the well and proceeds to describe all the miraculous events that occurred, proving that Rivkah is the chosen one for Yishak. Rashi comments on this Pasuk:

"היום יצאתי והיום באתי מכאן שקפצה לו הארץ. אמר ר' אחא יפה שיחתן של עבדי" – "Today I left and today I arrived. From here we see that the land jumped to him. R' Acha says, the simple talk of the servants of the Avot is more precious to Hashem than the Torah of their children"!

Rashi explains that when Eliezer left Avraham Avinu he experienced קפיצת הדרך. His destination miraculously came closer to him and enabled him to complete a journey- that would normally take several days- in only one day. Rashi then comments that from the amount of Pesukim devoted to this incident, we see how precious even the "small talk" of the *servants* of the Avot is before Hashem. There are many complex laws of the Torah learnt from only a single letter, but here the Torah devotes *sixty seven* Pesukim to a *story* involving the servant of Avraham Avinu!

The miracle of קפיצת הדרך was accomplished by the great Sadikim using a certain name of Hashem. This name is א-ה-ו-ה. This name comes from the first Pasuk in the Torah "בראשית ברא אלקים את השמים ואת הארץ". By contemplating and having certain Kavanot on this name, the Sadikim are able to either; a) bring *themselves* closer to their destination, b) Bring

the *destination* closer to them. This depends on how they use the name. With א-ה-ו-ה; they are able to bring *themselves* closer to their destination. When they reconfigure the name to spell; ו-ה-א-ה, they bring the *destination* closer to them!

The Torah hints to this holy name in the above mentioned Pasuk. The Roshei Tevot (first letters) of ; "וּאֵבָא הַיּוֹם אֶל הָעֵין" is ו-ה-א-ה-the name of הַדָּרֶךְ, that causes the earth to move closer to you. This is what Rashi was alluding to when he comments "מִכָּאן שֶׁקִּפְצָה לוֹ הָאָרֶץ"-“from **here**”, meaning; from this holy name hidden in these words (ו-ה-א-ה), is how it happened that the *land* moved towards Eliezer!

This is why Rashi waits until this Pasuk (which is 42 Pesukim into the story), to comment on how much Hashem values the simple talk of the servants of the Avot. Seemingly, Rashi should have mentioned this at the onset of the story! Why wait for Pasuk 42?! We now understand that Rashi was showing us that it is from this Pasuk that we see how in even the “simple words” of Eliezer were hinted the names of Hashem!! This is the Pasuk that illustrates Rashi’s point!

From whom did Eliezer learn this holy name? Obviously, from his master and teacher Avraham Avinu. In his instructions to Eliezer, Avraham Avinu made him swear in the name of Hashem that is; "אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֱלֹהֵי" "הָאָרֶץ" (ר"ת א-ה-ו-ה). He chose this reference to Hashem, in order to teach Eliezer this holy name of א-ה-ו-ה. The numerical value of this name is 17. Pasuk 10 speaks of Eliezer’s departure and says; "וַיֵּלֶךְ, וְכָל טוֹב אֲדֹנָיו בְּיָדוֹ"-“he departed and all the good of his master was in his hand”. The word טוב equals 17. The Pasuk shows us that in his departure to Haran, he used this name that equals 17 in order to expedite the trip.

Eliezer’s miraculous journey to find a wife for Yishak exemplifies the miracles occurring even in today’s time, surrounding the circumstances of a man and woman’s finding each other for marriage. Many of us have incredible stories of how and when we met our spouses, and how the hand of Hashem was evident throughout.

A Jewish wedding and the union between husband and wife have great importance and deep meaning to it. We are obligated at a wedding to rejoice with the bride and groom, and someone that enjoys the meal of a Chatan without making him happy violates five transgressions (this is why the custom is that the **bride's** family pays for the wedding meal. This will prevent someone from benefiting from a *Chatan's* meal without making the Chatan happy- it is not called "the meal of the Chatan" if the **bride** is paying!). If a person properly rejoices with the Chatan he merits having clarity in his study of Torah.

We see from here the great significance in making the Chatan happy and the ramifications of doing so. This begs the question; why would we need to cheer up a groom?! This is the night of his life! He has a new wife, new clothing, and is about to begin an exciting new life. What would he be feeling sad about that would necessitate cheering him up?!

The explanation is that the groom realizes "what he just got himself into". He is now a married man. Until now, he was able to live rent free and worry free with his parents. Now he must face the "real world" and provide for not only himself but for a wife and family! It is this realization of the financial responsibility he has just incurred that makes the Chatan anxious, and it is our job to lift his spirits.

How do we lift his spirits? By reassuring the Chatan that Hashem will provide for his needs, and that it is *precisely because* he is getting married that he will now be blessed with the finances to pay for it all!

This is seen from the story of Eliezer which-as mentioned-is symbolic of all Jewish marriages. The miracle of Eliezer was "ואבוא היום אל העין"-the land "came to him" using the name of א-ה-ו-ה. The land symbolizes material and physical things. By making the land come *to him*, Eliezer showed that the result of marriage is that the material blessings of prosperity and money come to the man. This is why we wish the Chatan "סימן טוב ומזל טוב"- the word טוב equals 17, and as mentioned, this is the same Gematriyah as the

name א-ה-ו-ה. We hint to the Chatan that just like this holy name caused the earth to “jump” towards Eliezer, so too the earth and the material blessing it represents will jump towards you! This is why we dance in front of the Chatan. Dancing consists of jumping up and down; we show the Chatan “look, the earth and its blessings will now jump towards you”!! This explains the custom to invite the Chatan for an Aliyah to the Torah on the Shabbat before his wedding and when the Chatan is finished, the people throw wheat or rice at him. The wheat represents the earthly blessing that he is about to experience!

This is another understanding of what it says "מצה אשה מצה טוב" -“if you’ve found a wife you’ve found **good**”. If you’ve married a woman you have accessed the blessings that are represented by טוב (17), and the name א-ה-ו-ה, when the earth (material blessings) will jump to you! It also says "לא טוב היות אדם לבדו" -“it is no good for a man to be alone”. If a man does not get married he lacks this blessing of טוב and א-ה-ו-ה.

How exactly does this work? Why when a man gets married does he merit this material blessing? What is it about marriage that triggers heavenly abundance? The answer is based upon the deeper ramifications of the union of man and woman in marriage.

The Shechinah of Hashem is with us in this world (as it says ושכנתי בתוכם). Our job is to reunite Hashem with his Shechina (these are very deep and esoteric concepts that we are oversimplifying for our purposes). Before we perform certain Misvot we say "לשם יחוד קודשא ברוך הוא ושכינתיה" - the Misvah we are about to perform should unify Hashem with his Shechinah.

The Shechinah is synonymous with the name of Hashem of א-ד-נ-י. The numerical value of the name א-ד-נ-י is 65. The numerical value of the name of Hashem י-ה-ו-ה is 26. When we are successful in merging Hashem with his Shechinah, we merge these two names and we come to a total of 91. 91 is the numerical value of the special name of Hashem of Parnasah; פ-א-י (the first letters of פותח את ידך). When a man unites with a woman in

marriage, this in turn causes a heavenly unification of Hashem with his Shechinah. This unification causes the two names of א-דני and הויה to merge resulting in 91. This 91 activates the name of Hashem פאי, and causes Parnasah and blessing to rain down upon them. This is why at the time of a marriage; a man merits the blessing of Parnasah. This is another reason why Rav Shemuel Bar Yishak juggled **three** myrtles in front of the Chatan (see 2009 notes on Parashat Chayei Sarah). The three myrtles correspond to the three letters of the name פאי, which the Chatan “brings down” at this time!

This is also symbolized in the act of the Chatan stepping on a glass cup under the Chupah (every action under the Chupah has great significance. For example; it is said that if the bride places her right foot above the right foot of the Chatan, she will control him throughout their marriage!). The name of Hashem of אלקים equals 86. This is also the numerical value of the word הטבע-nature. Hashem “hides” himself in the nature, and everything that is considered nature is of course really Hashem. Another word that equals 86 is כוס-cup. The Chatan breaks a cup or a glass under the Chupah to symbolize that through this marriage he is “breaking the טבע”(86). He is defying the natural cause of events, and even though now is a time that seemingly should begin a difficult period of providing for a family, it will really be the onset of great blessing for him.

The greater the harmony is in the home, the greater the blessing is for the man and the stronger his connection to the financial blessing represented by the union of Hashem and his Shechinah activating פאי-Parnasah. It says that one argument pushes away 100 Parnasah's! The better the relationship is between man and wife, the more financial success the husband will enjoy! This is why Rava advised his students (Gemarah Baba Metzhiah 59A). "אוקירו לנשייכו כי הינו דתתעתרו"-“respect your wives so that you will become wealthy”, as the Pasuk says "ולאברם הטיב בעבורה" -“to Avram they were good to on *her* account”.

There is another spiritual effect that marriage has. This is to break our association with the angels of the אורא אחרא (side of impurity). When a

man is born he does not have a wife. The female angel of impurity לילית (not to be pronounced), attaches itself to the man to try and be his mate. This causes difficulties for a man, and creates great tests of impurity for him. When a female is born, the male angel of impurity סמאל (not to be pronounced) attaches to her in order to be her mate. This too causes a certain impurity in the woman. (We refer to these two angels in the Amidah when we say; וכל אויבך וכל שונאך מהרה יכרתו). When a man and woman unite in marriage, they sever their bond to these angles! The man breaks away from לילית and the woman from סמאל. This is indeed cause for great celebration!

How careful must we be in our approach and our attitude towards weddings? A wedding is a moment of heavenly unifications and disconnection from spiritual impurities! We must of course dress appropriately and have the proper reverence at this auspicious time!

The names of these angels of impurity total 611 (סמאל=131, לילית=480, 131+480=611). The learning of Torah breaks the strength of these angels. תורה=611, showing that it counteracts the affects of these angels. This is the meaning of what it says; "בראתי יצר הרע בראתי תורה" "I created a Yeser Hara and I created the Torah as the antidote for it". The תורה (611) is the antidote to the Yeser Hara (the angels of impurity that total 611).

This is also alluded to in the Gemarah Shabbat 43A, where it says "כופין את הסל לפני האפרוחין"-"we may turn over a basket for little chicks". The Zohar calls the little children studying Torah; אפרוחון. The Gemarah's deeper message is that we are כופין (force or subjugate) סל-the word סל stands for the two angels לילית and סמאל. Through אפרוחון-the pure study of Torah by the children.

We also find this union of Hashem and his Shechinah, and the breaking of the power of the impure angels on the holy day of Shabbat. It says that in the beginning, Sunday "married" Monday, Tuesday married Wednesday, and Thursday married Friday. The only day left without a mate

was Shabbat. The Shabbat asked Hashem; what about my mate? “Don’t worry”; Hashem responded “the Jewish people will be your mate”. Every seventh day we marry the Shabbat. That is why we say to the Shabbat; "באי כלה, באי כלה"-“come my bride, come my bride”! We wear our finest garments and eat the finest foods, in honor of our wedding to Shabbat! This “marriage” causes the unification and “wedding” between Hashem and his Shechinah, and breaks the connection of the angel’s *סמ* and *לילי*! This is hinted in the word *שבת שבת*. *שבת שבת* equals 702. When we add the names of Hashem *א-דני* and *הויה* (that merge through the Shechinah uniting with Hashem), we get 91. The names of *לילי* and *סמ* (whom we disconnect from) total 611. $611+91=702$ (*שבת*)! From this we see that what is taking place every Shabbat is the unification of *הוא ושכינתיה* (Hashem with his Shechinah) and the breaking of the forces of the angels of impurity!

This is why Shabbat is called; *מקור הברכה* the *source* of blessing and Parnasah. This is because we are combining the names of *א-דני* (*שכינה*) with *הויה* that total 91 and connect to Hashem’s name of Parnasah; *פאי* (91)!!

How wondrous and lofty are the ramifications of the Shabbat Kodesh! We unite the holiness of Hashem with his Shechinah, we cause the combining of names of Hashem to bring down blessing and prosperity, and we shatter the forces of the angels of impurity. By respecting the holy Shabbat (as well as our spouses) we bring down the maximum blessing and *שפע*. May we merit to bring about the ultimate unification of *הוא ושכינתיה* with the *מן צדקנו* !