

# Chayai Sarah 5778

BS"D Parashat Chayai Sarah 5778

Rabbi Nachman Kahana

## Eliezer's Agenda

Avraham Avinu sends his servant, Eliezer of Damascus, on a vital mission to find a suitable wife for Avraham's son Yitzchak; thus entrusting Eliezer with the future of Klal Yisrael.

Towards evening, Eliezer arrives in record time at Avraham's birthplace, Ur Kasdim, setting his caravan to rest by the town well. He then turns to the God of his master with a request that He "...show kindness to my master Avraham" (Bereishiet 24: 15-20.) Verse 15 begins:

"And it came to pass, that before He (Eliezer) had finished speaking, Rivka approached..."

The Torah points out that before Eliezer concluded his prayer to God, the selection had already been made.

In verse 17, we are told that Eliezer runs to meet her. He did not walk politely, as befitting one who is approaching a young maiden for the first time. He runs towards her.

In verse 18, we are told that Rivka "...hastened to put down her pitcher" and to pour out water for the 'parched' Eliezer.

In verse 20, Rivka is once again hurrying:

"And she hastened and emptied her pitcher into the trough", and then, "...and she ran again to the well to draw (water)"

In all, Rivka is described as running three times.

Question one: What is happening here?

Question two: In verse 42 where Eliezer is relating to Rivka's family the events of the last hour, Rashi quotes the Tanna R. Acha who lauds Eliezer's choice of words as being more spiritually dramatic than the study of Torah of later generations. What did R. Acha see in Eliezer's description of the day's events?

Let's return to the rush of people and events as described earlier. What we are witnessing here can only be described as the "theater of the absurd," with Rivka unnecessarily rushing and running in double time to provide water for Eliezer's entourage. But, in fact, there is nothing absurd in Rivka's seemingly un-ladylike rushing. It was the necessary result of Eliezer's premeditated and deliberate attempt to sabotage his mission.

Eliezer had an agenda.

On one hand, as the loyal servant of Avraham, he had to fulfill the mission of finding a suitable wife for Yitzchak. On the other, Eliezer had a daughter who he very much wanted Yitzchak to marry. Eliezer had to reconcile these two seemingly incompatible choices.

But in order to make them compatible, Eliezer concluded that he would make an honest attempt to find a wife, and if it failed he would be in an honest position to offer his daughter to Avraham as a wife for Yitzchak.

Let us return to verse 11 where we are informed that Eliezer arrives at the city

"...at the time towards evening, when the women come out to draw water."

It is not yet night, because no one comes out to "draw water" in the darkness. Yet, it is not afternoon which is too early

to draw water for the evening meal. Eliezer arrives a bit before the sh'ki'a – sundown – when there is still some daylight, but darkness is quickly descending.

In verse 12, Eliezer says:

“Oh Lord, the God of my master Avraham, may you so arrange it for me this day, that You do kindness with my master Avraham.”

Eliezer is not just asking for a kind-hearted young lady, of whom there must have been more than one in the entire city, Eliezer is conditioning it to happen “on this day,” when “this day” is about to end, as stated above that Eliezer arrived just before sh'ki'a.

Eliezer is putting God “to the test,” to resolve everything in just a few minutes. If night descends and the “basherteh” is not found, then Eliezer's mission will have been executed honestly but unsuccessfully and his daughter transformed into a suitable candidate as Yitzchak's wife.

However, HaShem knows the inner workings of every mind, so He has Rivka running three times in her need to bring drink to the entire caravan, finishing with barely a few moments to spare before the end of day. In verse 21, we are informed that Eliezer is amazed at what has just transpired before his unbelieving eyes. He is so overcome by the realization that Hashem had “read” his thoughts and undermined his plan to give the search a time limit of several minutes, that he is unable to contain himself and feels that he must relate the events of the day to Rivka's family.

Eliezer has another opportunity to block the choice of Rivka, when Lavan and Rivka's mother request that she stay on a while longer at home. But Eliezer already understood that no man can prevent the will of HaShem from being done. Eliezer argues with the family that he cannot wait, and that Rivka must come with him now, to which Rivka agrees against the wishes of her family.

In our own day, many of our spiritual mentors in the galut, together with the willing cooperation of their disciples and congregants, are creating a "theater of the absurd" in too many important issues in our lives.

In our contemporary "theater of the absurd," there are star actors, bit actors and, of course, the viewers. Our theater is a caustic comedy, and, unfortunately, there is no director or producer to scream out "cut".

A major absurdity is that while singing the praises of Eretz Yisrael, many spiritual mentors in galut have never stepped foot in the holy land; and many who have been here have no intention of leaving their "golden galut". Not only do these leaders distance themselves from HaShem's gift to Am Yisrael, they influence believing Jews that to live in the galut is God's will and to return to Eretz Yisrael is anti-Torah. Three times a day they sing the praises of Eretz Yisrael in birkat hamazon (grace after meals), and more times in the liturgy, while they have no intention of ever living in the holy land.

Thy sing the praises of Yerushalayim, as one who finds pleasure from the beauty of legendary Atlantis, which supposedly sank under the Mediterranean Sea. They sit and wait for the gates of their galut jail to open, while ignoring the reality that the hinges of the gates have been uprooted with the establishment of Medinat Yisrael, whose first official act was to pass the Law of Return, permitting free and open aliya to every Jew in the world.

The actors in our theater of the absurd taste sweet as bitter and bitter as sweet. They call the gentile lands of Europe, the USA, Australia, England, etc. "home", while they claim that the Jews in Eretz Yisrael are in golus.

They erect imposing buildings for their shuls and yeshivot while ignoring the reality that these edifices will very soon be churches or mosques.

No matter what these leaders claim, any connection between their clinging to the exile and spirituality is even less than coincidental. All the books, articles, drashot (sermons), and speeches on the necessity to wait for the Mashiach – who they claim will roll out the red carpet for the holy Jews of the galut to whisk them off to their luxurious villas in the Holy Land – are as realistic as was Eliezer's plan to thwart HaShem's plan to choose a wife from Avraham's family.

One can lie to friends, to one's wife and to oneself, but not to HaShem, who knows the real "me", and real "you", and real "us".

Eliezer is taught this lesson, and R. Acha praises him for seeing the truth. The conclusion? – I will let you, dear reader, draw your own.

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

Copyright © 5778/2017 Nachman Kahana