



Beautiful Test

"Is everything okay Mr. Segal? You look a little down."
I am more than just a little down, Yonason. I just lost my job and I have no savings. My family is depending on me and I do not know how I will feed them."
"Oy vey, I am so sorry."
"Hashem ya'azor (will help). He is just testing me. I have to strengthen myself."
"I admire you Mr. Segal."

A few months later, there is a knock at Mr. Segal's door . . .

"Are you Mr. Segal?"
"Yes."

"Shalom aleichem. My name is Mordechai Gelt. I am the attorney for the estate of Mr. Max Segal."

"Are you referring to Max Segal, my great uncle twice removed?"

"Yes. I am sorry to have to bring you the news that your uncle passed away last week."

"*Boruch Dayan Emes* (Blessed is the True Judge). He was such a nice man. I will truly miss him."

"Mr. Segal, you don't know how nice he was. He amassed a fortune of six million dollars in his lifetime and he left it all to you. You are a wealthy man, Mr. Segal."

Mr. Segal began to feel faint. His face grew pale.

"Six million dollars? All of my parnasa (livelihood) problems are solved! I am so fortunate! *Boruch Hashem!*"
"I am happy to bring you the news. Just come to our office at your convenience to sign the papers."

Mr. Segal was elated and grateful to Hashem for His chessed (kindness). He began to think more deeply into the matter.

"Wealth is also a test. Will I give enough tzedaka? Will I refrain from spending money on unnecessary things? Will I *mehader* (beautify) the mitzvos? Will I use my newfound time to learn Torah? Hashem ya'azor. Wealth is also a test."

A few months later . . .

"Mr. Segal, mazel tov. We have good news."

"Yes, doctor?"

"You are the father of a beautiful baby girl. Come and see your wife and the infant."

Mrs. Segal was beaming with the glow of a newborn mother. In her arms, she held the baby.

"She really is beautiful. Have you thought about a name?"

"This week is parashas Chayei Sara, which speaks about Sara Emainu. Perhaps we'll name her Sara."

"That is a wonderful name. There is a very nice *devar Torah*

from Rav Zalman Sorotzkin zt"l about Sara Emainu and her beauty. When the Torah relates Sara's age (at the time of her death), it repeats the word "years" three times. Rashi explains that all of her years she was a beautiful as a child of seven. Rav Sorotzkin asks, 'Why mention Sara's beauty at all? Especially at the time of her death. We glorify a person's righteousness, not their physical appearance.'

"That is an excellent question. What is the answer?"

"Beauty is a test. Just like poverty and wealth. What will you do with the beauty? Will you behave modestly, as is befitting of a Bas Yisrael? Sara Emainu was the most beautiful woman on earth. Officers saw her and praised her. Kings desired her. She could have been a queen in the palace of Paroh and indulged in all of the physical pleasures of this world. Yet, she remained a tzadekes in the tent



of Avraham until she died at age 127."

"One hundred and twenty seven. That is a familiar number."

"Yes, Queen Esther ruled over 127 nations. The *Medrash Rabba* refers to Esther at the granddaughter of Sara. She inherited her trait of *tznius* (modesty). Esther's great beauty caused her to be chosen as the queen for Achashverous. She could have forgotten all about Hashem and let Achashverous do the bidding of Haman. Instead, she stood up for her people, in spite of all the temptations that the royal position held. She would not use her beauty for ill-gotten gains."

"My dear husband. We have had all three tests – poverty, wealth, and now beauty."

"May Hashem help us with all of life's tests."

Kinderlach . . .

Beauty is a big test for a Bas Yisrael. The whole world is running after looks. They wear clothes that are too short, too long, too tight, or too bright. They wear jewelry, makeup, and accessories to attract attention to themselves. We know that beauty is a wonderful gift from Hashem. However, it is not for public display. A lack of *tznius* is the root of many evils and can undermine the *kedusha* (holiness) of Jewish life.

Kinderlach, dress and conduct yourselves properly, in the tradition of our holy ancestors -- Sara and Esther.

What Did You Accomplish Today?

"And Avraham was old, he came with his days, and Hashem blessed Avraham with everything" (Bereshis 24:1). Where did Avraham come to, and how can you come with days? Once a day passes, it is gone. You cannot bring days with you. The *Nesivos Shalom* zt"l explains this verse as follows. Hashem put us into this world to grow and develop. He helps us each and every day by giving us something to accomplish. Each person's task for the day is totally unique to him. No one else can do what he must do. We grow by meeting these daily challenges. At the end of our lives after 120 years, Hashem evaluates our days. Those days that we have grown by performing the mitzvos set before us, accompany us into the world to come. Those days come with us.

Kinderlach . . .

What did you accomplish today? Which challenge did Hashem set before you? Did you make shalom with your brother? Did you listen to Imma when you wanted to do something else? Did you daven (pray) with kavannah (concentration)? Did you learn Torah with all of your koach (abilities)? If you passed your tests for the day, then you have done Hashem's will and grown from it. You have put that day into your "spiritual savings account". That bank account will make you a wealthy person. Just keep making big deposits.

Parasha Questions

- What is the meaning of the word, "Machpela"? (Rashi 23:9)
 - How could one recognize Avraham's camels? (Rashi 23:10)
 - Why did Eliezer run to Rivkah? (Rashi 24:17)
 - Why did Lavan run to Eliezer? (Rashi 24:29)
 - What did Lavan clear out of the house? (Rashi 24:31)



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