

# Kinder Torah

Parashas Chaye Sara

## Self Repair

Avraham Avinu had a son, and his trusted servant Eliezer had a daughter. When the time came to choose a wife for Yitzchak, Eliezer hoped that his daughter would be considered. Avraham Avinu had other plans. He sent Eliezer to his homeland, Aram Naharim, to look for a wife from among his family members. The Altar of Navardok explains that Eliezer knew that he was biased. His *Yetzer Hora* would try to sway him to make his mission fail. Therefore, he took several precautions to insure that he would carry out the word of his master Avraham.

He prayed for success to Hashem on his own, and did not rely solely upon the prayers of Avraham Avinu. This gave him extra prayers and additional motivation to succeed. When he saw the first indication that Rivka was a suitable wife, he gave her the jewelry immediately, without asking her family background. If he delayed, his *Yetzer Hora* would have the opportunity to confuse him and make excuses not to give the jewelry. Eliezer was subsequently offered food by Lavan but refused to eat until he discussed the marriage. Again, he did not want to give his bias the opportunity to enter the picture. Finally, Eliezer resisted Lavan's attempt to get Rivka to remain in his house for up to a year. He wanted to bring her home immediately and conclude the marriage.

How strongly a person must fight his *Yetzer Hora*! Eliezer was Avraham's trusted servant, yet he did not trust himself to stand up to his *Yetzer Hora* without taking many precautions. We see from this, says the Altar of Navardok, how a person must wage war against his *Yetzer Hora*. This is the purpose of the whole Torah. Our sages state, "The conversation of the servants of our forefathers is more pleasing than the Torah of their sons" (Bereshis Rabba 60:8). We learn the purpose of the whole Torah - battling the *Yetzer Hora* to correct our character faults - from the conversations of Eliezer. His personal battle is a lesson for all time.\*

### Kinderlach . . .

*We work hard to learn, understand, and remember Torah. Mishna, Gemora, Rashi, Tosafos, Rambam, Halacha, mussar, Tanach, and other subjects require great efforts to master. The Altar of Navardok teaches us that patience, kindness, honesty, diligence, inner happiness, and other middos (character traits) are at least equally difficult to master. However, they are no less important. They are, in fact, the purpose of the Torah. Learn from Eliezer, kinderlach. Fulfill the purpose of the Torah. Fix up your middos.*

\*For further explanation see *Lekach Tov*.

## The Corridor

"Hello, is this the Chaye Netzach engineering firm?"

"Yes."

"My name is Mr. Prozdor. I would like an appointment with your top architect."

"In connection to what, sir?"

"I just bought a piece of land, and would like to build a house there."

"The architect will have to come to the site. How is Wednesday at 3:00?"

"Fine. Thank you."

*Wednesday arrives and Mr. Prozdor meets the architect at the land site.*

"Yes, Mr. Prozdor. How can we help you?"

"I would like to build a nice big house on this land. I would also like the house to have a nice sized entrance corridor."

"Let us measure the plot and see how much room you have."

*They carefully measure the lot together.*

"We can build a big home on this land."



However, the entrance corridor can only be normal size. If you want a big corridor, we must make the rooms of the house smaller. The plot is too small for both a big house and a big entrance. The decision is yours."

"What do you advise?"

"Everyone makes their sitting room as big as possible. That is the room where you relax with your family and entertain guests. The entrance is just a corridor that you quickly pass through on the way to the main room. If you make the corridor big and the sitting room small, you will be a laughing stock. You made the main room small and the unimportant room big."

This story is based upon a parable of the Chofetz Chaim. The corridor is *Olam Hazzeh* - the physical world in which we currently live. The sitting room is *Olam Habba* - the eternal spiritual world that awaits us after we finish our work here. Where shall we place our efforts? Which room shall we make big and nice? The one in which we will spend all of our time. Why waste time beautifying the

corridor, a place that we only pass through for a short time? Therefore, most of a person's efforts in this world should be invested in preparing his home in the next world. He need only invest minimal effort in the corridor; enough to keep him going. Anyone who does the opposite should be a laughing stock.

The sefer *Lekach Tov* relates this idea to a verse in this week's parasha. "I am a stranger and a resident among you," said Avraham Avinu to the sons of Ches (Bereshis 23:4). The Dubno Maggid asks, "How can one be both a stranger and a resident at the same time?" We find a similar terminology in parashas Behar, "For you are strangers and residents with Me" (Vayikra 25:23). Our sages explain that our living status in this world determines our eternal relationship with Hashem. If we live like strangers in this world, treating it only as a corridor to the true world - *Olam Habbo* - then Hashem will reside with us forever. We will take our Torah and mitzvos - our main occupation in this world - with us into the next world and enjoy them while basking in the glow of the *Shechina* (Divine Presence). However, if we consider ourselves residents in *Olam Hazzeh*, spending very little time on Torah and mitzvos, then we will be strangers to The Almighty in the next world. Therefore, it is worthwhile to be a stranger here, in order to be a resident over there.

### Kinderlach . . .

*A big beautiful home awaits you - one with 613 rooms. You have your whole life to work on furnishing that home. Every time you do a mitzvah, you broaden that room. A more careful, correct, and deliberate performance of the mitzvah will give you a bigger, nicer room. Does anyone want to live in a dark, dingy, small house forever? Of course not! Therefore, spend your time and effort in this world furnishing your eternal mitzvah house in Olam Habbo. Use the best quality materials and labor - beautiful artisanship and design. On the other hand, do not put any more than the minimal effort into your temporary quarters here in Olam Hazzeh. They are only short lived. May Hashem reward all of your efforts with a big beautiful palace - forever.*

### Parasha Questions

- If Yitzchak's prospective wife did not want to come with Eliezer, should Yitzchak go to meet her? (24:5-8)
- When was Eliezer's request answered? (24:15)
- Why did Eliezer run to Rivka? (Rashi 24:17)

Kinder Torah © Copyright 2005 ❖ All rights reserved to the author Simcha Groffman ❖ P.O.B. 5338, Jlm, 91052, Israel ❖ Tel: (02) 585-2216

Kinder Torah is distributed each week in Ashkelon, Bat Yam, Bayit Vegan, Beit Shemesh, Beit Yisrael, Beitur, Bnei Brak, Boston, Cleveland, Detroit, Elfrat, Eilat, Ezras Torah, Gateshead, Geula Givat Shaul, Givat Ze'ev, Gush Shemonim, Haifa, Har Nof, Ilford, Istanbul, Izmir, Johannesburg, Kfar HaRif, Kiryat Sefer, Kosel Maaravi, Los Angeles, Maale Adumim, Maale Amos, Maalot Dafna, Machane Yehuda, Manchester, Mattersdorf, Mattisyahu, Modlin, Neve Yaakov, North Miami Beach, Peduel, Philadelphia, Psagot, Ramot, Rechovot, Rommema, San Simone, Sanhedria HaMurchevet, Telz Stone, Toronto, Unsford, Yishuv Eli, Zichron Yaakov and other cities. Subscribe for yourself or sponsor your shul. Just 120¢ per year. All contributions are deductible from Maaser Kesafim. #374#