



# KINDER TORAH

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PARASHAS CHAYE SARA

## GREATNESS AND HUMILITY

"I am an alien and a resident among you" (Bereshis 23:4). What a strange statement for Avraham Avinu to make! Alien? Resident? This is not a very complimentary self-description. He describes himself as an outsider; one who has no real right to be among the people. Was this true? Not at all! The Bnei Ches themselves reply to Avraham's statement by calling him a Prince of G-d. Hashem Himself promised Avraham that he would give this land to him and his descendants forever. Therefore, he truly was a prince in his own land. Why did Avraham Avinu refer to himself as an alien and a resident?

The Otzar HaMedrashim cites a Medrash, which answers this question. This is the way of tsaddikim. The Almighty elevates them, and they humble themselves. Hashem promised Avraham Avinu and his descendants the land of Canaan forever. Now he was searching for a place to bury his dear wife. What did he find? A piece of land for which he had to pay dearly – 400 silver shekels! Would he not be justified in complaining to Hashem? Perhaps, but this is not the way of tsaddikim. Avraham Avinu did not complain. Even more so, he spoke to Bnei Ches with deference. "I am an alien and a resident among you." What humility! Hashem treasures this trait. Therefore, the Almighty replied by saying to Avraham, "You lowered yourself. I swear by your life (so to speak) that because of this I will raise you up to be a ruler and a prince among them."

We learn three important lessons from this Medrash. Firstly, tsaddikim are truly great people. Secondly, they are also truly humble. Thirdly, Hashem loves this humility, and rewards it by elevating the person.

### Kinderlach . . .

*We are all striving for greatness. We have the examples of our Holy Forefathers to guide us. They were outstanding in many ways. One way is their humility. Although they reached the highest heights, they referred to themselves as ordinary people. They ascribed all of their good qualities and accomplishments to Hashem. What an example for us! When we succeed in our studies, our mitzvos, our middos, let us all say, "Boruch Hashem!" He gave me success. "Hodu Lashem ki tov." Thank Hashem for He is good. All of the honor is His. That is humility kinderlach. That is true greatness.*

## EVERYTHING

And Avraham was old; he came with his days. And Hashem blessed Avra-

ham with everything" (Bereshis 24:1). Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch elucidates this verse with a beautiful explanation. "Avraham was *zaken* (old)." The Gemora (Kiddushin 32b) describes a *zaken* as one who has acquired (Torah) wisdom. During his days on this earth, the *zaken* conquers two worlds. He masters the Torah wisdom of this world, which earns him an exalted position in the world to come. "He came with his days." He utilized his days to bring holiness into the world. They escorted him into the next world.

And Hashem blessed Avraham *bakol* (with everything)." The root word "*kol*" is also used by Yitzchak and Yaakov to thank Hashem. Yitzchak said, "And I ate *mikol* (from everything)" (Bereshis 27:33). Yaakov said, "And I have *kol* (everything)." These three expressions describe the lives of our holy forefathers. Avraham's life was one of constant success, both in *ruchnius* (spiritual elevation) and *gashmius* (wealth). He was viewed as the "Prince of *Elokim* (G-d)" among the nations. "*Bakol*" - every one of his endeavors was blessed.



One who observes a mitzvah will know no evil" (Koheles 8:5). Yitzchak viewed everything in his life as a mitzvah. Therefore, he experienced no evil. Even hardships were viewed by him as an opportunity for growth. He ate "*mikol*". He gained from every life experience.

Yaakov's life was one of giving. He endured constant exile and hardship. E-sav, Lavan, the disappearance of Yosef, all tormented him. Yet he never aspired to take anything for himself. His only concern was for others. He had "*kol*". He never felt a lack because he never expected anything. Our three holy forefathers. Outwardly they led very different lives. Yet inwardly they were all happily satisfied with the life that Hashem gave them.

### Kinderlach...

*What will you be later in life? Rich or poor? Strong or weak? Sociable or quiet? Will you have many children or few? No one knows. Hashem will decide these things. We have only to be happy with Hashem's decisions. Hashem blessed Avraham with success in everything. He was happy with Hashem's blessings. Yitz-*

*chak was happy with the opportunity to grow from everything. Yaakov was happy because he had everything he needed to give to others. Kinderlach, our Avos HaKedoshim (Holy Forefathers) taught us how to live life. Be happy with everything Hashem gives you.*

## BEFORE . . . DURING . . . AFTER

Eliezer, the servant of Avraham Avinu had a mission to accomplish: to find a wife for Yitzchak. How did he begin this mission? He made a request from Hashem. "Let it be the maiden to whom I shall say, 'Please tip over your jug so I may drink,' and who replies, 'Drink and I will even water your camels.' You will have designated her for your servant, for Yitzchak. May I know through her that you have done kindness with my master." (Bereshis 24:14). Immediately after he finished speaking with Hashem, Rivkah appeared and showed that she was the one worthy to marry Yitzchak. What did Eliezer do next? "He bowed down to Hashem. He said, 'Boruch Hashem the G-d of my master Avraham, Who has not withheld His kindness and truth from my master.'" (Bereshis 24:26-27).

Rav Shimshon Pincus zt"l writes in his sefer Shearim BiTefillah, that everything comes to us as a result of *tefillah* (prayer). It is impossible to receive anything in life without first requesting it from Hashem. We see that Eliezer's first preparation for his mission was to request success from Hashem. After he succeeded, his first action was to thank Hashem. He was the One Who brought him success.

### Kinderlach . . .

*In our lives we always have challenges before us, and accomplishments behind us. What is our first step toward meeting those challenges? To pray to Hashem and ask Him for success. As we said before, He placed the challenge before us, and He is the only One who can help us succeed. What is our first order of business after an accomplishment? "Boruch Hashem! Thank you Hashem!" We should say this after even the smallest accomplishments. In this way, we will constantly feel Hashem's presence. We will realize that He is with us all of the time. Before, during, and after every event in our lives.*

### Parasha Questions:

- Which gifts did Avraham give to the sons of the concubines and why? (Rashi 25:6)
- Why does the Torah relate the age of Yishmael? (Rashi 25:17)
- Why is Ephron's name written without the letter "vuv" in verse 23:16? (Rashi 23:16)
- Why did Eliezer run to call Rivka? (Rashi 24:17)

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