



הרב הראשי עיה"ק אלעד **מרדכי מלכא שליט"א**
נשיא וראש מוסדות "אור המלך"

מחבר ספרי שו"ת דרך המלך, אמרי מרדכי, ודרכי המלך על המועדים ועוד
רשת מעונות, ורשת גנים, ת"ת פרי תואר, ובית יעקב פרי תואר, תיכון בית יעקב החדש, ת"ת מאור ישראל,
שיבה קטנה ארחות יהודה, ביהמ"ד גבוה לרבנים ודיינים "לקח טוב" קופת "מפעל החסד" אלעד
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Parashat Chayei Sara

Man's Requirement to Clarify Spiritual Matters

Our *parasha* states, *Bereishit* (24:1-4), "Now Avraham was old, well on in years, and Hashem had blessed Avraham with everything. And Avraham said to his servant, the elder of the household, who controlled all that that was his: Place now your hand under my thigh. And I will have you swear by Hashem ... That you not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites ..."

Questions

1. Why did the Torah describe Eliezer as "The ruler of the household, who controlled all that was his?" It would have been sufficient to write, "And Avraham said to Eliezer, his servant, place your hand..."
2. The *Gemara* (*Yoma* 28b) says that "controlled all that belonged to Avraham" means that Eliezer mastered all of his teacher's (Avraham's) Torah; "*Damesek*" means that he would draw up and give others to "drink" from his master's Torah. Why does the Torah choose this specific incident to give such elaborate titles and praises for Eliezer?
3. If Eliezer was such a faithful servant, entrusted with all of Avraham's possessions, then why was it necessary for him to take an oath before finding a match for Yitzchak?

The Way of the World

When we pause and look around us, we see that it is common for people to conduct thorough investigations before purchasing clothing, jewelry, and certainly a house. If they need to consult a doctor, they will first research which doctor has extensive experience and great expertise. In short, when it comes to their personal needs they leave very little to chance. Yet, regarding matters concerning Torah and mitzvot, they rely on whatever comes their way and don't bother to make sure that everything checks out. Avraham, the founder of *Klal Yisrael*, teaches us that the exact opposite should be the case. When it comes to our personal affairs, one can rely and put his trust in others. However, when it comes to spirituality, the rule is "respect but suspect" and one may not rely on assumptions and appearances. Everyone is suspect and may be influenced by personal motives, regardless of his beard, hat, and frock. We are obligated to meticulously investigate and verify all the details, for we are dealing with matters affecting our *neshamah*.

When it Comes to *Ruchniut*, Spirituality, Trust No One

Now we can understand the actions and words of Avraham *Avinu*. Avraham wanted to teach his descendants the proper approach to life: Eliezer, the faithful servant, can be trusted to manage the household and the finances; for one's personal affairs, one can rely and place his trust in others. When it comes to *ruchniut*, this is not so, regardless of the individual under discussion. That is why Avraham went out of his way to describe Eliezer in the most glowing terms to teach us that even someone as great and righteous as Eliezer cannot be relied upon in *ruchniut* matters. He therefore required him to take an oath before setting out to find a match for Yitzchak. The



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pasuk states, "You should have complete faith when you go with Hashem, your G-d." The commentators say that you should only have complete faith in Hashem, not people.

You Can't Trust Anyone, Even the *Kohen Gadol* on Yom Kippur

We find in the *Mishnah* (*Yoma* 1:5) that even the *Kohen Gadol* on Yom Kippur needed to take an oath before being allowed to do the *avoda*. *Beit Din* was afraid that he may have been influenced by the heretical *Tzedukim*, Saducees, and would not trust him without him first taking an oath: "The Elders of *Beit Din* entrusted (the task of preparing) the *Kohen Gadol* to the Elders of the *Kehunah*. The Elders of the *Kehunah* took him up to *Beit Avtinus* and ... told him, '*Kohen Gadol*, we are the agents for *Beit Din* and you are our agent and the agent of *Beit Din*. We bind you with an oath, by the One whose Name dwells in this house, not to deviate from our instructions. They turned and wept and he turned away and wept."

Mussar from R' Yisrael Salanter

A story is told about Rav Yisrael Salanter, which demonstrates the mistaken attitude that many people have in this area. Rav Yisrael once arrived at an inn and was soon approached by the innkeeper. The innkeeper had noted Rav Yisrael's noble features, his beard and his *peiyot*, and asked him whether he could *shecht*, slaughter, a chicken for him. Rav Yisrael replied that he needed some time before he could answer him. After a few minutes, Rav Yisrael walked over to the man and asked him if he could lend him some money for a short period of time. The man looked at his guest with wonder and said, "You look like such a wise man. How can you make such a foolish request? How could I lend you money? I don't know you - how can I know whether you can be trusted to return the money or whether you have the means to pay me back?" Rav Yisrael replied, "Listen to what you're saying! How can you rely on me to *shecht* for you when you don't even know me?! Who knows if I am reliable and won't end up feeding you *neveilah*, improperly slaughtered meat? If you won't trust me with a small amount of money, how can you trust me with something that concerns your *neshamah*?!"

A True Story

In 1993, the *Chareidi* community of Yerushalayim was shocked and dismayed to find out that a major caterer of *Chareidi smachot* had tricked the public and fed them *Rabbanut* meat. Despite the man being an observant Jew, he had fooled his customers and not used meat with a proper *hechsher*. Rav Moshe Aryeh Freund, the *Ra'avad* of the *Eida Chareidit*, said that the burden of guilt fell upon those who had been against the idea of placing caterers under Rabbinical supervision. These people claimed that the additional cost of *kashrut* supervision would cause the catering prices to rise significantly and was unnecessary, and this allowed the caterers in Yerushalayim to do business with no one looking over their shoulder. Rav Freund dismissed their claims and said that it is worthwhile to pay any amount of money necessary to save oneself from eating forbidden food. He hoped that after this man had been exposed, the situation would change and people would only use caterers who had a reliable *hechsher*.

On a Personal Note

After my wedding, I learned in an all-day out-of-town *kollel*. As none of the members of the *kollel* would be returning home for lunch, the directors of the *kollel* arranged a hot lunch to be served in the afternoon. They



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would purchase the meat from a certain person who prayed in the *beit haknesset* which housed the *kollel*; the man, on occasion, would even come to learn in the *kollel*. He purchased the meat from a slaughterhouse under *Rabbanut* supervision; at times, they would find a cow that was "*glatt kosher*," and they would sell that specific cow to this man. This was the meat that he would bring for the *kollel*. I was a *shochet*, having been taught *shechita* by my father, *zatzal*. I knew that this man's arrangement was no simple matter, and it was problematic to rely on the *kashrut* of such meat. Therefore, I didn't rely on this man and didn't eat the meat whenever it was served. The other members of the *kollel*, and even the *roshei kollel*, did partake from this meat and would even purchase additional meat from him to take home to their families, as the price he charged was far less than the going rate in Bnei Brak. After about a year, the man bought a cow to sell to the *kollel* for the upcoming *chag*. One member of the *kollel* bought the tongue of the cow from him. Later, I found out that a different member of the *kollel* had also purchased a tongue from this man. I thought to myself, *A cow only has one tongue! Any cow with two tongues is treif!* Obviously, this raised questions about the man's reliability and after a thorough investigation, it was revealed that he had a storage area where he would keep non-"*glatt*" meat and would affix the "*glatt*" stamp on them. This was the meat that he had been feeding the *kollel*. Unfortunately, there are many such stories: In Yaffo there was a *shochet* who looked like a *charedi* in all respects, and the community relied upon him. Before his death, he summoned members of the community and asked them for forgiveness for having fed them non-kosher meat for years. There was a similar story in Monsey and people had to *kasher* their pots and pans. All this is the result of relying on external appearances and not bothering to thoroughly check and verify how things really stand.

Words of Mussar

We have learned from Avraham Avinu how a person should live his life. Even if one completely trusts another person with his money and possessions, when it comes to Torah, mitzvot, and *kashrut*, anyone with a personal interest cannot be relied upon. Today, many people will walk into a restaurant and not bother to check whether there is a *kashrut* certification or whether it is up to date, but content themselves by simply asking whoever is behind the counter whether the place is kosher. As soon as they hear "yes," they are already in middle of their meal. The same is true when they purchase mitzva items; they are satisfied by appearances or any weak affirmation that all is as should be and don't bother to ask or investigate any further. They may end up buying *tefillin* that are not kosher, will say blessings in vain, and end up with *aveirot* instead of mitzvot. They may even go their whole life without putting on *tefillin* and be considered in the category of those who never wear *tefillin*, *rachmana litzlan*. The same tragedy could occur when they try to dedicate a *sefer* Torah in the memory of their parents; they will buy the *sefer* Torah without doing any research and instead of increasing their parents' merits, they will have their memory blotched by causing people to make blessings in vain. It is therefore incumbent on a person, at the very least, to put in the same effort into *ruchniut* as he would invest in his own personal affairs. Certainly, he shouldn't do the reverse and put all his time and energy into materialism, leaving no stone unturned for the best possible results in this passing world, while in *ruchniut* relying on whatever comes his way. For this world passes, and he takes nothing with him from all the money and possessions that he worked so hard to obtain. However, his good deeds and mitzvot, are his for all eternity and accompany him to the end of days. A person should thereby try to invest as much effort as possible in fulfilling the Torah and mitzvot, for this is his purpose in this world.



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Shabbat Shalom,

Rav Mordechai Malka