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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,  
ישיבה קטנה ארחות יהודה, ביהמ"ד גבוה לרבנים ודיינים "לקח טוב" קופת "מפעל החסד" אלעד  
Chief Rabbi of Elad, Israel MORDECHAI MALKA, Founder & President of Institutions "Or Hamelech"



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## Parashat Chayei Sarah

### The Greatness of One Who Does Not Respond to an Insult

Our *parasha* states (24:5), "And the slave said to him, 'Perhaps [*ulai*] the woman will not want to return with me to this land; should I return your son to the land from which you left?'" Later the *parasha* quotes the wicked Lavan as having exclaimed upon seeing Eliezer, "Come blessed one of Hashem! Why do you stand outside, for I have cleared the house and made a place for the camels."

Rashi explains that when Eliezer suggested to Avraham that perhaps Yitzchak's future wife would not wish to come to Eretz Yisrael, he said *ulai* (perhaps), which is normally spelled **אולי**, yet here it is spelled **אלי**, without a *vav*, which means "to me." For Eliezer had a daughter, and he wanted to find a reason to offer his daughter as a match for Yitzchak. Yet Avraham responded that there could be no such match, for Yitzchak was blessed, and Eliezer – a descendant of Canaan - was cursed, and the cursed cannot join together with the blessed.

#### Way of the World

When we contemplate the world, we will notice that when one person offends, insults, or disgraces another, his anger flares and he responds in kind, hurling sharp insults of his own. There are those who take it a step further, printing flyers that publicly disgrace the other fellow. Only then does he calm down, happy about having defeated his enemy. This is as we have witnessed during this difficult period of the elections where much to our dismay, many do not hesitate to use any and every tactic to fight against their competitor. They denigrate and publicly disgrace them, violating the entire Torah in the process. They do so out of anger, thinking that this is the way that they will achieve their goal. But our holy Torah teaches us the exact opposite, that we have an obligation to cling to the ways of the Almighty, who does not immediately punish those who violate His will; rather, He is willing to forgive and be patient even with the wicked. By going in the ways of Hashem, one becomes beloved to Hashem, even rising from the category of "cursed" to "blessed," as we will soon explain.

#### By Not Responding, Eliezer Became Blessed

I would like to humbly suggest that while Eliezer was indeed cursed – he was a descendant of the cursed Canaan, and some say that he was the son of Nimrod – he clung to his teacher Avraham. He learned from his ways and from all of the Torah that he taught as our Sages teach us, but the title of "cursed" still did not leave him. However, when he offered his daughter to Avraham, who refused, stating that Eliezer was cursed, and Eliezer did not respond – then he became blessed. For the nature of man is to respond harshly to such words – he may have thought, *How could it be that after serving Avraham faithfully for decades and learning all of his Torah, Avraham still spoke about him derogatorily?* Nevertheless, he did not respond to his disgrace; on the contrary, he swore to his teacher and carried out his mission faithfully. By doing so, he merited the distinction that our Sages (*Masechet Derech Eretz, Perek Haminin 13*) bestowed upon those who do not respond to insults, "Those who are insulted, but



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do not insult in return, hear their disgrace but do not respond ... about them the *pasuk* states, 'And His beloved ones are like the sun rising in its power.'" In other words, when someone is insulted but does not respond in kind, he becomes beloved to Hashem and therefore becomes blessed. Therefore when Eliezer came to Lavan and carried out his mission faithfully, Hashem's Name was associated with him, as Lavan said, "Come blessed one of Hashem!" So says the Midrash.

### The Reward of One Who Does Not Respond to an Insult

The *sefer Maaseh Nissim* relates that there was a building contractor who was very close with the Baba Sali. The Baba Sali truly loved him, and when he came to the Baba Sali for a *bracha* or advice, the latter always greeted him joyfully and with a shining countenance. Indeed, the Baba Sali's blessings were fulfilled, and he grew tremendously successful and wealthy, and gave much *tzedakah* and performed acts of *chessed*. He once visited the Baba Sali, and there was a very long line. As always, the Baba Sali's family let him enter from the side entrance, since they knew how happy his visits made the Baba Sali. However, this time the Baba Sali greeted him differently. As the man stood at the entrance of the Baba Sali's study, the *tzaddik* began to scream at him, "Liar! Cheater! Theif! You have been tricking me the entire time!" Everyone grew frightened from hearing the screams; what had now been revealed that the Baba Sali was shouting at him like this? The Baba Sali concluded by requesting that the man leave his house immediately. Indeed, the man left, humiliated and heartbroken, not knowing what he had done wrong. Understandably, this affected him terribly, and no matter how many times he examined his deeds, he could not figure out what had evoked the ire of the *tzaddik*, and he could no longer visit him either. At the time, he was working on a building project in Mitzpeh Rimon, and one day he had concluded working, already having left the site for the day. Nevertheless, to get his mind off the troubling words of the Baba Sali, he returned to the building site yet another time. The Arab workers were still working rigorously, trying to show him that they were putting in the maximum effort to finish as fast as possible. When they finished working it was late, and he offered to give them a lift back. However, most of them chose to stay there for the night, and only two of them joined him. While driving on a curve, he lost control of the car, and it rolled off a mountain. The car was obviously totaled, the Arabs were killed instantly, yet he remained alive, without a scratch. With great difficulty, he managed to escape from the car and climb back up to the highway. He stopped a car, told the driver what had happened to him, and asked him to drive him to the police station, so that he could file a report. Following this miracle - which left everyone incredulous as to how he was saved - he decided that he must visit the Baba Sali, even though he was anticipating a harsh tongue-lashing and to be thrown out of the house once again; nevertheless, he decided to try his luck. This time, when he approached the threshold of the Baba Sali's study, the Baba Sali rose to his feet and exclaimed, "Come blessed one of Hashem! I have been waiting for you!" The man obviously could not figure out what was going on, but he discerned that the *tzaddik* knew what had happened to him, and so he asked him why he had merited such a great miracle. The Baba Sali answered, "You should know that the acts of *tzedakah* and *chessed* that you do would have protected you and annulled the harsh decree. However, recently, you grew somewhat haughty on account of your *tzedakah* and *chessed*, and this took away

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from the mitzvah, placing you in great danger. Therefore, to save you, I had no choice other than to denigrate you tremendously. Even though one who shames another publicly loses his place in the World to Come, nevertheless, I decided to embarrass you in order to save you."

**I believe that the explanation to the story is as we have stated, that one who is insulted but does not respond, becomes the beloved of Hashem, and all of the harsh decrees are annulled.**

#### Words of Mussar

We have learned that the secret to greatness, success, wisdom, long life, and nullifying harsh decrees is entirely dependent on being forgiving and his willingness to overlook the harm perpetrated by others. He is willing to remain silent and bear his disgrace. This is greatness, and it makes him into the beloved of Hashem. It even changes him from being cursed to blessed, and guarantees him greatness, like the sun rising in all its power. Therefore an individual should consider that each time he enters an argument and is insulted, he has a chance to win the lottery. If he keeps quiet, he becomes the beloved of Hashem, all his sins are forgiven, and he merits spiritual and physical bounty. By doing so, he will be able to defeat his *yetzer hara*. One who acts accordingly will always have peace in his home and harmony amongst his peers, for he will be beloved both Above and below. All the more so, during this period of the elections, *chas ve'shalom* that he should get drawn into exchanging harsh words and the like. On the contrary, let him realize that it is all for his benefit and success. Hashem should help that we should defeat our *yetzer hara* and bring gratification to our Creator, and increase love, unity, and peace. *Amen*.

Shabbat Shalom,  
Rav Mordecai Malka