

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM RABBI YITZI

לרפואה שלימה ליוסף יצחק בן ברכה

CHAYEI SARAH

Rivka Part I: A Rose Among Thorns

In Parshas Chayei Sarah, we meet our matriarch, Rivka. The Torah tells us more about Rivka than about any of our other matriarchs. It tells us in detail, how she got engaged to Yitzchak, what her pregnancy was like, how she made sure that her good son, Yaakov, got Yitzchak's blessings, and how she protected him. It tells us of many miracles that she was accustomed to and more.

Being that the Torah tells us so much about Rivka, we must conclude that there is much to be learned from her. Especially for Jewish mothers and girls and with regard to the nature and power of Jewish women.

What are the amazing qualities and miracles attributed to Rivka that are found in our parsha? What lessons are we meant to take from Rivka? What does Rivka teach us about the power of the Jewish woman?

According to Rashi, when we meet Rivka, she is three years old and quite mature for her age. She is a rose among thorns, as her family were idol worshippers, yet she remained pure and holy.

The first miracle that happened for her, was that when Avraham sent Eliezer to Aram Naharayim to seek out Rivka, the trip should have taken seventeen days, instead, Hashem shortened the way and he arrived the same day he left.

Why the need for this miracle? A rose has thorns to protect it while it blooms, but once it has already bloomed, it needs to be harvested and then the thorns become a hazard. The same is true about Rivka. That day she

became three, when the education of a Jewish child begins. Until then, being among her family didn't affect her negatively. However, now that she had reached the age of education, it was necessary to remove her from among the thorns.

The Torah tells us that Eliezer asked Hashem for a sign to know who was the right girl for Yitzchak. He would stand by the spring when the maidens would go out to draw water. He would ask one for a drink. Now, if she says, "Drink, and I will also give water to your camels," Then he will know that he has the right girl.

Even before he finished talking to Hashem, his attention was drawn by Rivka, of whom the Torah tells us here, that she was very beautiful, coming with her pitcher to draw water.

Here we are told of a second miracle. Eliezer was watching and he noticed, that as Rivka approached the spring, the water level rose up, making it easier for her to fill her pitcher. This miracle is attributed to her purity, innocence, and righteousness.

Excitedly, he ran towards her and asked her for a drink. She responded, "Drink... and I will also draw for your camels."

He wondered if she was the right one. When she finished watering the camels, he asked her, "Whose daughter are you?" To his amazement, she was Avraham and Sarah's great-niece and she invited him to stay at her parents' home. This told him that hospitality was a part of her upbringing and she would fit right in.

When her family heard Eliezer recount these miraculous events, they readily agreed to the match. But Beshuel, Rivka's father had second thoughts and wanted to interfere and stop the engagement. Before he could do so, Hashem sent an angel, which killed him.

The next morning, Eliezer wanted to take his leave with Rivka. Her brother Lavan and her mother protested, as it is a tradition for girls to have a year to prepare themselves for the wedding, "Let the girl remain with us for a year..." However, Eliezer was adamant, he insisted on taking her with him immediately. When they saw that he wasn't going to adhere to common custom, they began to question his whole story, which was the reason they readily agreed to the match without even asking her opinion. Initially, they felt that it was out of their power to refuse, being that Hashem's hand was moving the events. But because of this new turn of events, they reneged on the original deal.

RIVKA'S STORY SHOWS THE IMPORTANCE AND POWER OF JEWISH WOMEN IN BRINGING LIGHT AND BLESSING INTO THE WORLD.



They said, "Let's call the girl and ask her opinion." Rashi tells us, that from here we learn, that a woman cannot be engaged to someone without her consent. Since Rashi uses the word "woman" here, teaches us, that although Rivka was only three years old, she was mature like a woman, when it came to her well-being. Obviously, her family thought so as well, as they respected her opinion.

Rivka chose to go with Eliezer and the match was settled. They blessed her with the blessing that we now commonly bless brides with at their wedding, "May you grow to thousands of myriads!

On their return, Rivka saw Yitzchak in the field, she was so taken by his holiness, that she nearly fell off the camel she was on. We see from here that she had an innate ability to sense holiness.

Eliezer recounted to Yitzchak, the miraculous events of his trip. Then Yitzchak brought her into his mother Sarah's tent. Rashi explains that she was just like his mother Sarah. Meaning, that when Sarah was alive, there were three miracles that would regularly occur and when she died they stopped. When Rivka came, they resumed.

First, the candles that she lit on Erev Shabbos, burned until the next Erev Shabbos. Second, there was a blessing in her dough, meaning that even a small amount of her bread satisfied hunger. Third, a cloud hovered above her tent.

Seems that the order should be reversed. First, when she came into the tent, Yitzchak would have seen the cloud hovering above the tent. Then he would have experienced her bread and finally, it would take an entire week for him to know that her Shabbos candles would burn all week. Why does Rashi reverse the order?

In the next Parsha, we learn that our forefathers kept all the mitzvahs, even the rabbinically ordained precepts. The law is, that if there isn't a woman to light the Shabbos candles, then a man should light them. This being the case, it would make sense, that from when Sarah passed away, three years earlier, Avraham would have been lighting candles. And when Avraham was away, Yitzchak would have lit them. So why did Rivka, who was not married, and not even obligated to light them, as she wasn't yet Bas Mitzvah, make a point to light Shabbos candles? And why don't we hear of Avraham's and Yitzchak's candles burning all week?

From here we learn the value of Shabbos candles lit by women, even unmarried women, and even before Bas Mitzvah. That they bring light and blessing into the home all week. Even if you can't see the physical candles burning, there is a spiritual light that burns all week an account of mothers and girls lighting candles.

When young children say words of Torah, there is a purity to them, that makes them very powerful. The same is true when a young girl lights a Shabbos candle. It is so pure and holy, and it fills the home and the world with

spiritual light.

It is more powerful than that of any man, because just as a man can build or buy a house, but it takes a woman to turn it into a home. This is because Hashem imbued women with the ability to affect the home beyond what any man can do. The same is true when it comes to affecting the home spiritually, through lighting Shabbos candles.

Now we can understand why Rashi reversed the order. Because the first one of the three done by a girl, is lighting Shabbos candles, which like Rivka, starts at the age of three. This then brings her to the next blessing. That as she gets older and she starts doing things around the home, symbolized by making dough and bread, the work of her hands is blessed. And these bring to the third blessing, which comes with marriage, when she makes her own home, bringing to it a cloud of the Shechina, the Divine Presence itself, through keeping the laws of family purity.

It all begins with lighting Shabbos candles, bringing G-dly light into the home all week long. Every daughter of Sarah and Rivka has it in her to do the same. This great power of Jewish women is a gift and an inheritance from their mothers all the way back to Sarah and Rivka.

It is also this light that brings the light of Moshiach. Therefore, it is so important for every Jewish woman and girl, from the age of three, to light Shabbos candles.

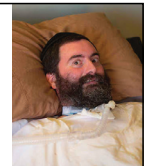
May the light of the Shabbos candles, fill your home and the world with Hashem's Presence, and usher in the coming of Moshiach. May he come soon.

*"Dear Rabbi Yitzi,
During these hard times, it is very difficult to stay focused and up beat. When I'm down I think about your story and resilience and it really pushes me forward. Thank you."*

- John L, Seattle

RABBI YITZI WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU! SEND YOUR MESSAGE TO:
(937) 770-4802 | TORAHFROMMYEYES@GMAIL.COM

Despite facing one of life's most difficult challenges, Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz continues to spread joy and faith to thousands around the globe. Diagnosed in 2012 with ALS, Rabbi Yitzi is now 95% paralyzed and no longer able to speak or breath on his own. Thanks to the miracle of technology, Rabbi Yitzi continues to spread his wisdom through his eyes, focusing on each and every letter of these Torah articles. Rabbi Yitzi, his wife Dina and their seven children are the Rebbe's Shluchim to Temecula, California.



DEDICATED IN HONOR OF THE ANNIVERSARY OF
MOSHE AARON & MASHA GEISINSKY

· BY YITZY & YEHUDIS GEISINSKY ·

SPONSOR AN EDITION OF TORAH FROM MY EYES: (937) 770-4802 | TORAHFROMMYEYES@GMAIL.COM

