



PARSHAS CHAYEI SARAH – RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND

Nothing Would Have Interrupted Yitzchak On His Way To Service of G-d

At the end of the story of Eliezer going to find a mate for Yitzchak, the Torah describes the first meeting of Yitzchak and Rivka [Bereshis 24:62-67]. The narrative begins with the words "Now Yitzchak came from having gone to the Well of L'Chai-Roee..."

Rabbeinu Avraham ben HaRambam wonders regarding the significance of the fact that Yitzchak had returned from this well. Who cares where he had just returned from when he met Rivka for the first time? Rabbeinu Avraham ben HaRambam gives a very interesting answer. The Well of L'Chai-Roee was the place where Yitzchak regularly davened [prayed]. When Yitzchak needed privacy and seclusion, he retreated to this place. The Torah stresses that this event occurred on his way BACK from the place, not on his way TOWARDS the place of the Well of L'Chai-Roee. The purpose is to teach us the following lesson: Had Yitzchak been on his way to execute his Service to G-d, even the arrival of Eliezer and Rivka would not have distracted him. It is only because he had finished praying and was now returning from this place that he took note of the arrival of his father's trusted servant and the young woman brought for him from Aram Naharaim to be his future wife.

Rav Moshe Shapiro wonders why it was that in previous generations, Europe produced students who were expert in all aspects of Torah knowledge and in our times, it does not produce such great Torah luminaries. Rav Shapiro suggests that it is because their diligence and focus was so laser-like in their formative years that they grew up to be the people they became later in life. Unfortunately, in our day and age, there are so many distractions to our Avodas Hashem [Service to G-d] and to our learning that we just do not produce the same type of Gedolim.

Rav Shapiro tells the story that Rav Chatzkel Abramsky once went over to a student and asked him where he was during seder [the fixed-time set aside for learning in the Yeshiva]. The young man explained that he went to a wedding and that the wedding was in a different city. The student explained that it took him 3 hours to travel back and forth to the wedding each way. Rav Abramsky was dumbfounded that this student spent so much time just to go to the wedding of a friend. Rav Abramsky told him that he himself went to only two weddings the entire time he was a young man -- one was his sister's wedding and one was his own wedding!

When people have that type of intense focus in learning (hasmadah), with an intensity that is so strong that nothing can derail them from Torah study, then they may grow up to be people of the caliber of Rav Chatzkel Abramsky.

This, according to Rav Avraham ben HaRambam, is what the pasuk is emphasizing here by describing the fact that Yitzchak met his bride AFTER have returned from Be'er L'Chai-Roee. On the way there, nothing would have derailed him.

We obviously are not on the level to aspire to such single-minded focus in our Divine Service. However, it is important for us and for our children to understand the significance of any time that we must take off from our learning and our Service to G-d. This is how Gedolim are produced.

[Courtesy of www.Torah.org – Rav Frand, Chayei Sarah 5772]