

PARSHAS CHAYEI SOROH – SHLOMO ZALMAN COHN

The פרקי דרבי אליעזר tells us that following the עקידה, the שטן came to שרה and informed her that יצחק had been asked to sacrifice himself as a קרבן to ה'. The שטן related that יצחק had been unwilling to do so, and consequently had to be forced against his will to become a human sacrifice. Upon hearing this falsified account of the Akeida, Soroh became so distressed that she passed away from grief.

The ספר קהלת יצחק asks why the שטן lied to שרה, causing her so much anguish. We know that the שטן's mission in life is to set obstacles before a person, making it more difficult for him to do Mitzvos. In this way the person receives a greater reward for doing these מצוות that were more challenging to him. In the case of the Akeida there seems to have been no such purpose achieved in the שטן causing Soroh so much grief.

In fact the שטן uses two tactics to challenge people in their quest to attain spiritual perfection. The first tactic is, as mentioned above, to make the מצווה more difficult to accomplish. The שטן indeed used this method to prevent אברהם אבינו from carrying out the Akeida. When this tactic failed, the שטן tried his second tactic – he caused Soroh Imeinu's death – a tragedy which was likely to make אברהם regret having carried out the Akeida. A person who has accomplished a מצווה against great odds may regret having done it, when challenged by disastrous consequences such as financial loss, embarrassment etc. When a person regrets having done a מצווה he loses the reward he would have earned for its performance. However, in this case too, the שטן was unsuccessful. אברהם did indeed mourn for his wife, eulogising her by relating her good deeds, but he limited the mourning as hinted by the small 'כ' in the word ולבכותה (בעל הטורים). אברהם never regretted having performed the Akeida despite its apparently tragic consequences, and in his greatness he limited his mourning for this reason.

In truth, the שטן is ה'’s agent to help people earn great reward in the next world. It is his lack of success in enticing people to give up trying to perform, or regretting their performance, that enables him to achieve his mission. We underscore this in תפלת מעריב each evening when we pray “וזהסר שטן מלפנינו ומאחרינו”, that ה' should remove the שטן from in front of us (when he tried to prevent us doing מצוות) and from behind us (when he attempts to make us regret having carried them out).

Based on the sefer - ילקוט לקח טוב -