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Chayei Sarah

A PARSHA THOUGHT

Ms. Bakol Who Just Had Everything

RABBI HILLEL MILEVSKY



The *pasuk* tells us that "...Hashem had blessed Avraham with everything" (*Bereishis* 24:1). Just reading through the last few *parshios* one can see that Hashem has given him riches, possessions, honor, longevity, and children. What else could a person ask for?

Interestingly the Gemara in *Baba Basra* 16B asks what it means that Hashem blessed Avraham with everything, and gives seven answers. One opinion is that Avraham had a daughter and named her "Bakol."

It's always interesting to see which names from *Tanach* stick around and which do not. For example, Rabbi Yishmael is a *Tannah*; however, his name is not so popular these days. Bakol, however, is a name that I have never heard of!

The commentaries ask why the Torah would limit Avraham's blessing to the fact that he had a daughter. In addition, it almost seems random to be telling us that he had a daughter.



The commentaries explain that the word *bakol* is referring to an attribute called "*bakol*" and the word *bas* (daughter) is a language of an attribute. *Bakol* is the

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

LEARNING WITH THE KOLLEL

WITH
RABBI MEIR MINSTER

There is a discussion in the Gemara (*Avodah Zara* 8b–9a) whether personal petitions should be offered before the *Shemoneh Esreh* is said, during the *Shemoneh Esreh*, or after completing it. The conclusion is that one is permitted to add appropriate relevant requests at each of the middle *berachos*, as well as requests of all types in the *beracha* of *Shema Koleinu* or after the *Shemoneh Esreh*.

Within the Gemara's presentation of the basis of this argument, a reference is made to an observation discussed elsewhere (*Berachos* 26b) that each of our three daily *tefilos* were inspired by a different one of our forefathers. Avraham arranged *Shacharis*, as stated in last week's *parasha*: Avraham arose early in the morning to the place he had **stood** before Hashem (*Bereishis* 19:27). Yitzchok instituted *Mincha,* as it says in our *parasha*, Yitzchok went out to **converse** in the field toward evening (*Bereishis* 24:63). Yaakov created *Maariv*, as it

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

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says, he **encountered** the place … (*Bereishis* 28:11).

It is interesting to note that all three of these expressions (stood, converse, encountered) are interpreted to mean prayer by the Gemara, but what is the significance of the fact that a different word is used in each instance?

Rabbi Yissachar Dov of Belz offered the following explanation. Avraham created the opportunity for one who is prepared to stand properly (*makom kavua*), in Hashem's presence, with full focus and sincerity, to have his prayers accepted. A very high standard indeed. Yitzchok broadened this capacity for acceptance of prayers to include those prayers that are more casual, less focused, and more like a conversation. Yaakov expanded the power of prayer further, allowing for prayers to be accepted even as they are offered, before they are even completed, as in the verse (*Yeshaya* 65:24) "even before they call, I respond… ."

A PARASHA THOUGHT CONTINUED

middah of sufficiency, of being happy with one's lot. There are two ways to view Avraham's life. One is as a life of hardships and difficulty, such as getting thrown into a furnace, leaving his house and having to uproot everything he grew up with, going through famine, his wife being kidnapped twice, fighting in a war, and getting circumcised at an old age. The list goes on. On the other hand, he had riches, possessions, honor, longevity, and children.

Elon Musk recently said that "whoever said money can't buy happiness really knew what they were talking about." The Mishnah in *Avos* tells us that anyone who has an *eiyin tovah* (a good eye) is from the students of Avraham and those who possess the opposite are from the students of Bilam. The commentators explain that an *eiyin tovah* means sufficiency. It is the recognition that I have what I need. Everything Hashem gives me is exact and I am not meant to have what anyone else has.

Avraham had the attribute of *bakol*; he understood that he lacked nothing. Everything he had was exact and all his challenges were there for him and perfectly placed in his life. He understood the purpose of being tested was to elevate him and bring out *kochos* and potentialities that would otherwise be dormant and unrealized.



TRACING OUR MINHAGIM

RABBI YEHUDAH LEVI

Many traditional Jewish weddings feature a *badeken*, the ceremony in which a groom covers the face of his bride. Some have the custom that as part of the *badeken* the groom, or other prominent guests, bless the bride with a specific prayer: "Our sister, may you come to be thousands of myriads, and may your offspring inherit the gate of its foes." This biblical verse is the blessing Lavan offered his sister Rivka upon her departure to be wed to Yitzchak, and numerous explanations are offered as to why the composition of the wicked Lavan is what we choose to invoke. The Chasam Sofer (Rabbi Moshe Sofer, 1762-1839) writes that our wish is that the blessing Rivka received be fulfilled through the offspring of her son Yaakov (and not Eisav). Besides an early connection between this blessing and Jewish weddings in general found in the Tannaic work *Maseches Kallah*, there does not appear to be mention of this practice in any traditional or medieval rabbinic source. However, the 19th century *Chasam Sofer* and *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* (Rabbi Shlomo Ganzfried), both of Central Europe, do cite this blessing as being customary.