

למודי משה

חיי שרה – גליון פ"ח

“And I said to my master, ‘What if the woman does not follow me?’” (Bereishis) – ואמר אל אדני אלי לא תלך האשה אחרי

Insights into Halachah

Taking someone else's *shidduch* idea:

The majority of this week's *sedra* details the wondrous narrative of how Eliezer, the *shadchan* sent by Avrohom to find a wife for Yitzchak, succeeds in his mission. Avrohom sent his trusted servant Eliezer to go and find a wife for his son Yitzchok. When Eliezer relates the story of the entire dialogue he had with Avraham he says: “ואמר אל אדני אלי לא תלך אשה אחרי” – “And I said to my master, perhaps the women won't want to come with me”. Rashi points out, that the word *אלי* is written without a *vov* and should really be written as *אולי*. Rashi explains that the *pasuk* is hinting to us, that Eliezer had a daughter, and he was somehow hoping that Avrohom would take his daughter as a wife for Yitzchok, therefore, it's written *אלי* missing a *vov* which translates as “to me”.

What's the halachah if someone calls you up and asks you to be a *shadchan* for their son and suggests such and such a girl, and then instead of speaking to the parents of the girl, you decide that it sounds like a perfect *shidduch* for your son and you take the girl as your own daughter-in-law. Similarly, what's the *din* if someone asks you to be a *shadchan* for a certain girl to a certain boy, and you decide it's not a good match and she isn't suitable for this boy and you match her with a different boy instead?

The above cases aren't clearly mentioned in halachah but there is a very similar case and the *poskim* say that both cases have the same *din*. The Mishnah in *Kiddushin* (58b) writes: “אומר לחבירו צא וקדש לי אשה פלונית והלך וקדשה לעצמה מקודשת לשני” – “One who says to his friend “go to such and such a girl and ask her to marry me” and the *shliach* [went] and took the girl for himself, the *din* is she is married to the second one (the *shliach*)”. Even though the *shliach* didn't do what he was supposed to, the *din* is that he is married to the girl. The Gemara says: “מה שעשה עשוי אלא שנהג בו מנהג רמאות” – “What he has done is done, however, we treat him as *ramai* [trickster]”. True, what he has done is done, but he doesn't walk away unscathed, and in halachah we treat him as a *ramai*, we treat him as an immoral and untrustworthy person.

The Rambam (*Hilchos Ishus* 9:17) goes further and says, not only is he called a *ramai*, he's also called a *rosha*. In Talmudic times, it wasn't such a light sentence, today we call anyone a *rosha*, if someone pulls out in front of you he's called a *rosha*, but in the times of the Gemara it wasn't so simple. In the times of the Gemara if someone had the status of a *rosha*, it meant that the next Shabbos in *Shul* they would bang on the *bimah* and announce in front of everyone that he was a *rosha*.

The *poskim* say, the above doesn't only apply to a *shliach kiddushin* who steals his friend's idea, it applies to someone who steals his friend's *shidduch* idea as well. If someone takes someone else's *shidduch* suggestion and uses it for his own son or takes someone's idea and suggests it to someone else, the *kiddushin* may be valid, but the *shadchan* is a *ramai* and according to the Rambam a *rosha*.

Why is the *shliach* who took his friend's idea called a *ramai/rosha*?

In the case in the Gemara in *Kiddushin*, why is the *shliach* called a *ramai*, is it because he took the girl for himself, or is it because he didn't complete the job he was told to do? The *nafka minah* [practical difference] is, if he didn't take the girl for himself, but he decided that this girl isn't a good match for his friend and so he went and matched the girl up with someone else, is he still called a *ramai* in such a case?

The *Noda B'Yehudah* (*Mahadura Tinyona, Even HoEzer* 71) poses the following *shailah*: What happens if Reuven is made a *shliach* to marry off his friend Shimon to Leah, and he decides he wants to marry Leah, but instead of going to Leah direct and asking if she will marry him, he makes Levi a *shliach* to ask Leah if she wants to marry him, is the *kiddushin* a good *kiddushin*, and is Reuven considered married to Leah?

The Gemara says if the *shliach* takes the girl for himself he's called a *ramai* and the Rambam calls him a *rosha*, therefore, the act of *kiddushin* must be considered an *aveirah*. The *din* is “אין שליח לדבר עבירה” – “*shlichus* doesn't work when it comes to matters of *aveirah*”. If Reuven gets an *aveirah* for marrying Leah, it will come out that Levi wasn't a good *shliach*, consequently Reuven isn't married to Leah, what is the *din* in the above case?

The *Noda B'Yehudah* says there is no problem of “אין שליח לדבר עבירה” in the above case and Reuven is married to Leah. The *Noda B'Yehudah* explains, the *aveirah* isn't when the original *shliach* (Reuven) marries the woman (Leah), the *aveirah* is the fact that the *shliach* didn't perform the *shlichus*. Reuven's *aveirah* was right at the beginning when he decided he isn't performing the *shlichus*, whether he

takes the girl for himself, or he marries her off to someone else (Not Shimon) is a different story. Since the *aveirah* isn't the fact that he took her for himself there is no problem of *אין שליח לדבר עבירה*, therefore, Reuven is married to Leah.

We see from the above that the *shliach* is called a *ramai/rosha* for not listening to his friend, therefore, if a *shadchan* would steal a *shidduch* idea, even if it's not for the *shadchan's* own son or daughter the *shadchan* would be called a *ramai/rosha*.

If the girl doesn't want to marry the first person, the *shliach* can marry her

The halachah is, the *shliach* is only called a *ramai* if the woman was willing to marry the original person. If Reuven would make Shimon a *shliach* to marry her off to Leah and Leah says "Reuven! I can't stand Reuven" and then Shimon says "perhaps you want to marry me" and she is happy to, there is no problem.

There is a *shailah* in halachah if Shimon needs to tell Reuven what happened or not. If there is enough time and there is no reason to be worried that she will marry someone else in the interim, then Shimon should go back and tell Reuven what happened. If however, there is a chance that by the time Shimon goes back and tells Reuven what happens that Shimon will lose his chance then he can marry Leah and he isn't called a *ramai/rosha*.

Determining how much the *shadchan* gets paid:

It's noteworthy that the Torah makes no mention of Eliezer being paid for his task, a point that might be raised in favour of the Sephardic custom, according to which the *shadchan* traditionally receives no remuneration for his services. However, the Ashkenazic custom, is that *al pi din* [according to halachah] a *shadchan* rightfully deserves and is entitled to get paid *demai shadchanus* [money for making a *shidduch*]. Making *shidduchim* is a great mitzvah and one who does so is emulating the ways of Hashem. *Chazal* tells us, that Hashem sits and makes *shidduchim*, therefore, one who makes a *shidduch* is emulating the ways of the Ribono Shel Olam. Nonetheless, according to halachah a *shadchan* has the *din* of a *poel* [hired worker], who performs a service and is entitled to be paid for what she/ he does.

There are countless stories of couples who have gotten married and had difficulty having children and have asked the *gedolim* what to do, and the one of the first things they were asked was "have you paid the *shadchan* properly?". We see the importance of paying up the *shadchan* properly.

How much is a *shadchan* entitled to get paid? The *din*, we go after the *minhag hamokam*, the going rate for the community the *shidduch* was made in. The *minhag hamokam* tells us not only the amount the *shadchan* deserves, it also tells us when the *shadchan* has the right to claim the money. If for example a *shadchan* makes a *shidduch*, then they have a *l'chaim* and everyone is happy and the *shadchan* then demands to be paid and the family says they don't want to pay until after the *chasunah*, the *din* is we look at the *minhag hamokam*. If the *shadchan* normally gets paid in the town straight away then the *shadchan* has a right to claim the payment straight away, if however, normally the *shadchan* only gets paid after the *chasunah*, then she has to wait until after the *chasuna*.

If the *shadchan* came up with the idea without being asked and the *shidduch* fell through, the *shadchan* isn't entitled to any payment, if however, the *shadchan* was specifically hired to make a *shidduch* between a certain boy and girl and it fell through, the *shadchan* is still entitled to be paid.

What the halachah if the *choson* and *kallah* are from a cheap place, however, the *shadchan* is from an expensive place?

We just mentioned that the *demai shadchanus* is paid according to the *minhag hamokam*, the *Ponim Meiros* (2:63) asks, what's the *din* if both the *choson* and *kallah* come from the same city and the city is a *mokam hazul* [cheap place], however, the *shadchan* comes from a *mokam hayoiker* [expensive place]? Do we go after the place of the *choson* and *kallah* or do we go after the place of the *shadchan*?

The *Ponim Meiros* says, if the *choson* and *kallah* are both from the same city and the city is a *mokom hazul* and the *shadchan* is from a *mokam hayoiker* it's *poshut* [obvious] that they only have to pay the amount of where they live, and the fact that the *shadchan* comes from a *mokam hayoiker* makes no difference. A *shadchan* is like a *poel* [hired worker], and a *poel* gets paid for the services rendered, if the services were rendered in a cheap place the *poel* gets paid a cheaper price.

He brings a *ayah* [proof] from a Mishnah in *Bava Metsia* (83a). The Mishnah says: *השוכר את הפועלים ואמר להם להשכים ולהעריב מקום – שנהגו שלא להשכים ושלא להעריב אינו רשאי לכופן* – "One who hires workers and tells them to be by him from dawn until dusk, if he is in a place where the *minhag* is not to work from dawn until dusk, he isn't allowed to impose this on them."

The Gemara has a lengthy discussion and asks: *וליצחי היכי נהיגי* – "let's look at what the towns *minhag* is", and the Gemara answers: *בעיר חדשה* – "we are talking about a new town; therefore, they have no *minhag*". Then the Gemara asks: *וניחזי מהיכא קא אתו* – "let's look at the *minhag* of the town they came from" and the Gemara answers, we are talking about a case where it's not possible.

The *Ponim Meiros* says, we see from the above Gemara, that if the place the workers were working in already had an established *minhag hamokam* then we don't care about the *minhag hamokam* of where they came from, the Gemara only entertained the possibility of looking at the *minhag hamokam* of where the workers came from after the Gemara said we were dealing with a new city and there was no established *minhag hamokam*. Since it's *poshut* we go after the *minhag hamokam* of where the work was done, if a *shadchan* makes

a *shidduch* in a place where both the *choson* and *kallah* come from, and it's *mokam hazul*, even if she comes from a *mokam hayoiker*, since the job was done in a *mokam hazul* she gets paid the cheaper price.

What happens if the *choson* is from a *mokam hazul* and the *kallah* is from a *mokam hayoiker*?

Then the *Ponim Meiros* asks, what happens if the *choson* is from a *mokam hazul* and the *kallah* is from a *mokam hayoiker*. If you look at what the *shadchan* did for the *kallah*, i.e. that she find her a *choson* then her service was finding a *choson*, and she should get lower price, if however, you look at what she did for the *choson*, i.e. she found him a wife, and so her service was finding a *kallah*, then she should get the higher price, how do we look at it?

The *Ponim Meiros* concludes: If the *shadchan* is from the same place as the *choson*, and so the *choson* and *shadchan* are from the *mokam hazul*, it can be assumed that when the *shadchan* entered into making the *shidduch* it was done with the mindset that she/he would get the lower price. If however, the *shadchan* is from the place of the *kalah*, the *mokam hayoiker*, the *shadchan* can demand the higher price and can say "you are hiring me and I come from a *mokam hayoiker*, therefore, I aspect to be paid accordingly". If the *choson* argues that his city is cheap, and so why should he pay higher price, the *shadchan* can answer back, "you should have got a *shadchan* from your city".

Why is a *shadchan* different to a plumber?

If someone hires a plumber and the plumber charges more than the normal price, the employer can say "I could have hired someone else for X amount, therefore, I refuse to pay you more than X". Why don't we say the same thing with a *shadchan*?

The *Ponim Meiros* explains, when it comes to a plumber all plumbers are the same and so one can argue he could have got someone else for cheaper. When it comes to *shadchonus* however, *shadchonus* is an art and so one is paying for a special expertise. The fact that this *shadchan* was chosen and not another, is because this one has a special expertise, therefore the *shadchan* can charge the higher price.

Charging for making a *shidduch* doesn't take away from it being made *leshem shomayim*

Speaking of *shadchonus*, Rav Aharon of Belz said that whoever makes a *shidduch leshem shomayim*, for the sake of Heaven, is certain to merit righteous children. Does this mean that a person should preferably avoid taking payment for a *shidduch*, so that his intentions be considered purely *leshem shomayim*?

Rav Moshe Shternbuch answered "no". Making a *shidduch leshem shomayim* means having lofty intentions in mind: the fulfilling of the Divine will of pairing husband and wife together, and the contribution to the continuation of the Jewish people. This is certainly a great virtue. However, the receiving of payment, which is an ancient custom amongst Ashkenazi communities, does not flaw the intention, and may be done *lechatchilah*.

Separating feet (עקירת רגליו) before taking three steps back, when someone is davening behind you:

We discussed briefly last week, if one is allowed to separate his feet if he has finished *shemonah esrei* but is unable to take three steps back as there is someone davening behind him (especially on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur where it's difficult to stand still for so long). We said it's *poshut* [obvious] that one is allowed to separate his feet and rest them on a *shtender* before he takes three steps back, as he is no longer considered to be *omeid lifnei HaMelech* [standing in front of the King], as he has already finished his *shemonah esrei*, he just hasn't parted from the King. We also mentioned, it's *poshut* that if one has finished *shemonah esrei* but hasn't yet taken three steps back as there is someone davening behind him, that one is allowed to walk in front of him. We mentioned, not only if the reason a person shouldn't walk in front of someone who is davening is because it disturbs his *kavonah* [concentration], but even according to the reason that it's rude to walk in between a person davening and the *Shechinah*, since he has finished davening he is no longer considered to be *omeid lifnei HaMelech*.

We brought a *rayah* from R' Naftoli Kopshitz that one is allowed to separate his feet before taking three steps back from the fact that a *chazon* every Monday and Thursday separates his feet in order to take the *sefer Torah* to the *bimah* before taking three steps back at the end of *kaddish tiskabel*. Moreover we said, every day the *chazon* sits down to say *tachanun* before taking three steps back after *kaddish tiskabel*. We see clearly that one is allowed to separate his feet before taking three steps back. Even though the *chazon* is separating his feet in order to do a mitzvah, if the *chazon* was still considered to be *omeid lifnei HaMelech* even for a mitzvah he wouldn't be allowed to separate his feet. We see clearly that if one has finished *shemonah esrei*, but hasn't yet taken three steps back he is no longer considered to be *omeid lifnei HaMelech*.

The Magen Avraham seems to contradict the above?

The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 104:2) writes: לצאת אחר אין לפנות – "If one is davening on the road and an animal or wagon is coming towards him, he should turn off the road. In any other case however, he shouldn't move from where he is until he has finished davening, unless he is busy saying *tachnunin* [personal requests] after he has finished *shemonah esrei*." The *Mishnah Berurah* (9) brings the *Magen Avraham* who writes: דבתחנונים אחר תפלתו אז מותר אם העקירה לצורך מצוה קצת כגון מה שאנו נוהגין בש"ץ שתיכף אחר חזרת התפלה עוקר רגליו ויושב לתחנון במקומות שנוהגין לומר תחנון בישיבה וכן עולה לבימה לקריאת התורה אף שלא הגיע עדיין להקדיש שעם תתקבל שפוסע בו הג' פסיעות, או כגון

מה דאמרין בגמרא בר"ע שהיה אדם מניחו בזוית זו ומוצאו בזוית אחרת מרוב כריעות והשתחויות והיינו בתחנונים שלאחר התפלה אבל שלא לצורך
"אסור להאדם לזוז ממקומו עד שיפסע הג' פסיעות" – "In the *tachnunin* after *shemonah esrei* one is allowed to move from his place in order
to perform a mitzvah, such as what the *chazon* does after *chazoras hashatz* when he moves his feet and goes to sit down to say *tachanun*
in place that sits down to say *tachanun*. Similarly the *chazon* goes to the *bimah* for *krias haTorah*, even though he hasn't yet said *kaddish*
tisakbel in which he take his three steps back. Or for example what the Gemara says about R' Akiva, that he would start off in one corner
and end up in the other due the large amount of bowing and prostrations that he used to do during his *tachanunim* after *shemonah esrei*.
However, to move from ones place for no good reason, is forbidden until one takes three steps back." From the *Magen Avraham* it
seems quite clear that one isn't allowed to move from his spot at all, until he has taken three steps back?

However, perhaps there is no question from the *Magen Avraham* on what we mentioned above, as presumably the *Magen Avraham*
doesn't mean one isn't allowed to move at all, not even to separate his feet. Presumably what he means is, one isn't allowed to move
from the spot he was in and as long as one stays in the same spot, even if he stretches his feet a bit there is no problem, since he is no
longer *omeid lifnei HaMelech*.

R' Chaim Kanievsky brings a *rayah* [proof] to the above from a Yerushalmi

R' Chaim Kanievsky (*Siach HaSodeh, Berachos* 10b) says like what we mentioned above: המתפלל צריך שיכוין את רגליו נראה דדוקא המתפלל
"one who is davening has to keep his feet together, however,
only if he is actually davening, if he has finished davening, however, he is unable to take three steps back because someone is davening
behind him, he no longer need to keep his feet together". Then he asks that from the aforementioned *Magen Avraham* it seems not like
this, and he says, the *Magen Avraham* means: "one shouldn't move from the spot he
is in, but one doesn't have to keep his feet together, and he is allowed to move them."

Then he brings a *rayah* from the Yerushalmi in *Sanhedrin* (1:2) which says: ר' חייא בר אבא הוה קאים מצלי אעל רב כהנא וקם ליה מצליי מן
"R' Chiya bar Abbah was davening, and R' Kahnah came and started to
daven behind him, when R' Chiya finished davening he sat in his place without passing within four *amos* of R' Kahnah". R' Chaim explains,
that we must be talking about a case where R' Chiya was more than four *amos* away from R' Kahnah because if not, he wouldn't be allowed
to sit down, however, he wasn't able to take three steps back, as he would then enter within four *amos* of R' Kahnah. We see that even
though he was unable to take three steps back, he was allowed to sit down, if one is allowed to sit, then certainly one is allowed to separate
his feet. We see that if one has finished *shemonah esrei*, but hasn't yet taken three steps back, he is no longer considered *omeid lifnei*
HaMelech and is allowed to separate his feet.

Walking in front of someone who has finished *shemonah esrei*, but hasn't yet taken three steps back as someone is davening behind him:

We mentioned that it's *poshut*, that if one has finished *shemonah esrei* but hasn't yet taken three steps back as someone is still davening
behind him, that there is nothing wrong with walking in front of him. Although we said it's *poshut*, it would seem from the *Mishnah*
Berurah not like this. On the halachah of: "אסור לישב בתוך ד' אמות של מתפלל – "it's forbidden to sit within four *amos* of one who is
davening", the *Mishnah Berurah* writes: "ואפילו אם המתפלל עומד בתחנונים שלאחר התפלה כ"ז שלא פסע וה"ה לענין שלא לעבור נגד המתפלל
"even if one is only davening *tachnunim* after *shemonah esrei*, as long as he hasn't taken three steps back, it's forbidden to sit down
within his four *amos*, similarly, one isn't allowed to walk in front of him". It seems very clear, that as long as one hasn't taken three steps
back, he is still considered to be *omeid lifnei HaMelech* and one has to be careful not to walk in front of him. It would seem therefore, that
it's forbidden to walk in front of someone, even if he has finished *shemonah esrei* and is just waiting for the person behind him to finish.
Since in the end of the day he hasn't taken three steps back he is still considered *omeid lifnei HaMelech*?

Again R' Chaim Kanievsky (*Siach HaSodeh*) discusses the above *shailah* and he writes: "one is allowed
to take three steps back in such a case, just like he is allowed to sit down." R' Chaim says, even though from the *Mishnah Berurah* it would
seem that one isn't allowed to: "דכ"ז שלא פסע חשיב דעומד לפני המלך – "because as long as one hasn't taken three steps back he is still
considered *omeid lifnei HaMelech*", the *Mishnah Berurah* only means that he is considered *omeid lifnei HaMelech* in regards to: שלא
"interrupting with unnecessary speech", but not in regards to the halachah of one walking in front of someone
who is davening. Similarly says R' Chaim, the *Mishnah Berurah* (*siman* 97) which says in regards to spitting during davening, that even if
one is saying *tachnunim* it's *ossur*, which would imply that he is still considered *omeid lifnei HaMelech*, it's only in regards to spitting and
talking that one is considered *omeid lifnei HaMelech*, in regards to walking in front of him however, he is no longer considered *omeid lifnei*
HaMelech.

From the *sefer Shaarei Kodesh* it's clear that he is still considered to be *omeid lifnei HaMelech*

The *Agan HaSahar* (Vol. 3) brings that the *Shaarei Kodesh* writes in his *hagoas* to the *Avodas HaKodesh* of the *Chida*, that according to the
Maamar Mordechai who says if one has finished *shemonah esrei* he is allowed to answer שמו וברוך הוא וברוך שמו, it should come out, if Reuven
has finished *shemonah esrei* and wants to take three steps back, however Shimon is within four *amos* behind him, and Shimon has also
finished but hasn't taken three steps back because Levi is within four *amos* behind him, Reuven is allowed to take three steps back. Since

Shimon is no longer davening there is no problem of disturbing his concentration, and since Shimon is even allowed to say ברוך הוא וברוך שמו, Reuven is certainly allowed to take three steps back and walk in front of him.

However, according to the *poskim* who say that one shouldn't walk in front of one who is davening out of respect for the *shechinah*, and even if he is covering his face with a *tallis* and so won't get disturb, there is still a problem of walking in front of him, it should come out that Reuven isn't allowed to take three steps back. As long as Shimon hasn't taken three steps back, the *Shechinah* is still in front of him. The proof is, when one takes three steps back after *shemonah esrei*, when he says עושה שלום במרומיו, he is supposed to bow to the left, and when he says הוא יעשה שלום עלינו he is supposed to bow to the right, and the reason is: לתחלה משתחוה לצד שמאלו מפני שנותן כבוד – “first one bows to the left to give respect to the *Shechinah* which is in front of one who is davening, and the left side is the right side of the *Shechinah*”, **we see that as long as one hasn't taken three steps back, the *Shechinah* is still in front of him, therefore Reuven isn't allowed to take three steps back until Shimon has.**

Being that the *Agan HaSahar* is not such an easy *sefer* to find I will bring down his *loshan*:

שכתב במאמר מרדכי שאם סיים תפלתו מותר לענות אפי' ברוך הוא וב"ש ולפ"ז מסתפקנא למשל אם ראובן סיים תפלתו ורוצה לפסוע רק שמעון מתפלל תוך ד' אמותיו ושמעון גם הוא סיים תפלתו לאחר תחנונים רק לוי מתפלל לאחריו בתוך ד"א של שמעון ויותר מד"א מראובן לפ"ז לכאורה מותר לפסוע כיון ששמעון עומד לאחר התחנונים ואז אין שייך הטעם שיבלבל כוונתו כיון שאז אפי' ב"ה וב"ש מותר לומר אך לפי הטעם שכתבו הפוסקים שאסור לעבור נגד המתפלל מפני שהשכינה כנגדו ומפני זה כתבו שאפי' אם משלשל טליתו על פניו ג"כ אסור לעבור נגד פניו הגם שאז לא שייך שיתבלבל כונתו וא"כ לפ"ז אסור לראובן לפסוע שכל זמן שלא פסע שמעון שכינה כנגדו והראיה ממה דאיתא בשו"ע ס"י קכ"ג אחר שפסע ג' פסיעות כשיאמר עושה שלום במרומיו הופך פניו לצד שמאלו ואח"כ כשיאמר הוא יעשה שלום עלינו הופך פניו לצד ימינו כו' וכתבו הטעם שתחלה משתחוה לצד שמאלו מפני שנותן כבוד לשכינה שהוא כנגד המתפלל ושמאל האדם הוא צד ימין השכינה וא"כ מוכח שכל זמן שלא פסע עדיין שכינה כנגדו וא"כ אסור לראובן לפסוע נגד שמעון מפני כבוד השכינה עכ"ל

Betzel HaChochmah

The *Betzel HaChochmah* (6:32) brings a *rayah* that if one has said the second ירידת רצון and no longer intends to ask for any more *tachnunim*, it's like he has taken three steps back and completely finished *shemonah esrei*, therefore we can be lenient and say that he is no longer considered *omeid lifnei HaMelech*.

The *din* is, if one forgets ויבוא יעלה in *Shacharis* on Rosh Chodesh he has to daven again. The *Shulchan Aruch paskens*: דאם הוא רגיל לומר – “if one normally says *tachnunim* after *shemonah esrei* and after finishing *shemonah esrei* before taking three steps back he remembers that he never said ויבוא יעלה, he can go back to משמע דאם סיים התחנונים אף על פי שלא עקר רגליו חוזר לראש מידי דהוי אמי שאינו רגיל לומר תחנונים”. The *Magen Avraham* (422:2) writes: מיהו הלשון לא משמע כן וגם בגמ' איכא חד לישנא דמי שרגיל לומר תחנונים אפי' עקר רגליו אינו חוזר לראש ש"מ דס"ל דאין קבע לתחנונים וא"כ לישנא בתרא ג"כ אפי' סיים תפילתו ותחנונים כ"ז שלא עקר רגליו אינו חוזר לראש מיהו משמע בירושלמי פ"ה דברכות דכל שהסיח דעתו מלהתפלל הוי כאלו – “It seems from the *loshan* of the *Shulchan Aruch*, that if one finished his *tachnunim* even if he hasn't yet taken three steps back, he has to start again, just like one who doesn't normally say *tachnunim*, however, it's not *meshma* [implicit] like this. Also from the Gemara it would seem not like this, one *loshan* of the Gemara is, “one who normally says *tachnunim*, even if he has taken three steps back, doesn't need to start again, we see from here that there is no end to the amount of *tachnunim* one can ask for”, therefore, presumably, even the second *loshan* would agree that even if one has finished *shemonah esrei* and his *tachnunim*, as long as he hasn't taken three steps back he doesn't need to start again. **However, from the Yerushalmi in *Berachos* it's implicit that if one took his mind off davening (decided he had finished) it's equivalent to taking three steps back. It appears to me, that only if he said the רצון יהיו at the end of his *tefillah*”.**

It's clear from the end of the *Magen Avraham* when he brings the Yerushalmi in *Berachos* which says: כאלו הוי מלהתפלל הוי כאילו – “one who take his mind off davening (decided he had finished) is equivalent to taking three steps back” and he explains that the Yerushalmi means specifically if he has said רצון יהיו, that if one has finished davening *shemonah esrei*, even if hasn't yet taken three steps back that he is no longer considered *omeid lifnei HaMelech*.

However, perhaps we can be *madchah* [push aside] the *rayah*, as perhaps the *Magen Avraham* only means that it's considered like he has taken three steps and finished davening in regards to being considered *omeid betoch tefillosoi* [still in the middle of davening], however, it could be he is still considered *omeid lifnei HaMelech*. However, even if he is *omeid lifnei HaMelech* it doesn't help for not having to repeat *shemonah esrei* when missing out ויבוא יעלה as he is no longer *omeid betoch tefillosoi*, true he may be *omeid lifnei HaMelech* but he is no longer *omeid betoch tefillosoi*. (The last few *Mareh Makomas* I took and adapted slightly from *Madaney Kohan*)

Divrei Torah for the Shabbos Table

Sorah died because her time was up – no other reason

This week's *sedra* begins by saying: ויהיו חיי שרה מאה שנה ועשרים שנה ושבע שנים שני חיי שרה – “The years of Sorah's lifetime were 127 years, **the years of Sorah's life**” (23:1). The second half of the *pasuk* seems redundant. If Sorah lived 127 years, isn't it clear that these were the years of her life? What is the seemingly superfluous expression at the end of the *pasuk* coming to tell us?

Rav Pam notes that Rashi writes (23:2) that Sorah's death is juxtaposed to the *akeidah* to teach that the shock she experienced upon hearing that her son was almost killed was the cause of her death. Realizing this, somebody might mistakenly assume that if not for this tragic turn of events, Sorah would have enjoyed many more years, or even decades, of her long and productive life. To counter this erroneous conclusion, the Torah emphasizes that these were the years of life that Sorah was allotted, and if not for this episode, she would have died in some other manner at the exact same time.

Rav Pam often used this message to comfort those grieving the loss of loved ones. It often seems that if the doctors would have only tried a different treatment or if an accident could have been averted, their relative would still be alive. Painful as every loss is, *Parshas Chayei Sorah* teaches us that each person is given his own uniquely allotted lifespan, and nothing we think we could have done differently could have prevented this person's death.

Along these lines, it is apocryphally said that when the *Maloch HaMaves* (Angel of Death) received his job, he complained to Hashem that he will be universally cursed and hated for his actions and requested a different assignment. Hashem replied, "Don't worry. Nobody will ever blame you. They will always attribute it to the heart attack or the car crash or the illness." Part of our belief and trust in Hashem is to internalize that a person does not die because of COVID or anything else written by a medical examiner. The true cause of death in every single case is that Hashem decided that the person's mission is complete and his time on earth has come to an end. (R' Ozer Alport)

Important lesson from the *shalshelas*

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֱלֹהֵי אֲדֹנָי אַבְרָהָם הִקְרָה נָא לְפָנַי הַיּוֹם וְעָשָׂה חֶסֶד עִם אֲדֹנָי אַבְרָהָם
"And he said, "Hashem, G-d of my master Avrohom, grant me good fortune this day, and deal graciously with my master Avrohom" (24:12).

On the word וַיֹּאמֶר, in which Eliezer asks Hashem to help him to find the correct marriage partner for Yitzchok that day, there is a *shalshelas*, which indicates that the word should be *leined* in an elongated manner, a *shalshelas* is very rare and is only found four times in the entire Torah.

What is the deeper significance of this rare symbol, and what is the common thread linking the four episodes in which it appears? Rav Dovid Singer notes that the word *shalshelas* means "chain," and explains that this symbol is used to connote that an event is being viewed not only for its immediate impact, but also from the perspective of the *shalshelas hadoros* – ramifications it will have on the chain of future generations.

To illustrate this concept, Rav Yisroel Reisman recounts that when Rav Shlomo Heiman, the Rosh Yeshiva of Torah Vodaas, gave *shiur*, his delivery was passionate and involved. One day, there was a massive snowstorm and only a handful of *talmidim* were able to come, yet he was just as active and engaged as if the room was full. After the *shiur*, one of the *talmidim* asked why he got so worked up when there were so few people present for the *shiur*. Rav Heiman replied, "You're making a mistake. You think that I'm only speaking to the handful of you who are here in attendance today, but in reality, I'm also speaking to your children, your grandchildren, your *talmidim*, and all your future generations. I see a *shiur* room that's just as full today as it is when the weather is good, and that's why I gave the *shiur* with my usual excitement."

With this introduction, we now understand that when Eliezer was davening to Hashem, he wasn't only focused on the immediate issue of finding a suitable spouse for Yitzchok. The *shalshelas* teaches us that Eliezer understood that the ramifications of his selection were not only for the welfare of Yitzchok's marriage, but for all the generations of descendants who would come from it, and therefore he beseeched Hashem to arrange for the success of the *shalshelas* of Yitzchok's progeny.

This concept can similarly be used to explain the other three occurrences of the *shalshelas* in the Torah. In last week's *parsha*, the Torah tells us (19:16) that Lot hesitated when the *malochim* pressed him to leave Sodom to save himself and his family from its imminent destruction, so the *malochim* grabbed the hands of Lot, his wife, and his daughters and escorted them out of the city to safety. There is a *shalshelas* on the word וַיִּתְמַהֵמָה – "he tarried", which alludes to the reason the *malochim* were so insistent on rescuing Lot and his family: the chain of offspring who were destined to be descended from him, which includes Rus, Dovid and Shlomo, and ultimately Moshiach.

The third *shalshelas* in the Torah appears in *Parshas Vayeishev*, where the Torah records (39:8) that Yosef spurned the advances of the wife of his master Potiphar. The *shalshelas* on the word וַיִּמָּאֵן – "he rebuffed" – hints to the reason for Yosef's adamant refusal. The Gemara in *Sotah* (36b) teaches that the visage of his father Yaakov appeared to him and informed him that if he gave in to her enticements, his name would be excluded from the list of *shevotim* on the Kohen Gadol's *ephod*. When Yosef understood the potential future ramifications of his actions, he steeled his resolve and withstood the temptation to sin.

The final *shalshelas* appears in *Parshas Tzav*, where the Torah discusses the process of consecrating Aharon and his sons as Kohanim. When Moshe reached the ram that served to inaugurate Aharon as a Kohen (*Vayikra* 8:23), there is a *shalshelas* on the word וַיִּשְׁחַט – "he slaughtered" – for Moshe's actions affected not only Aharon, but the entire chain of future generations who would also be Kohanim as a result of this process.

Many times in life we find ourselves in doubt regarding the proper course of action in a challenging situation. At such times, we should remember the lesson of the *shalshelas* and recognize that the decisions we make often have long-term consequences that can significantly impact future generations. (R' Ozer Alport)

A contemporary application of water rising up to greet a future spouse

While Eliezer was still davening to Hashem to help him find an appropriate wife for Yitzchok, he noticed Rivka approaching with her jug. After she filled it from a spring, Eliezer ran toward her and asked her to please give him a little water to drink. Why was he so enthusiastic to meet her? Rashi explains that as Rivka approached the spring to draw water, Eliezer observed the water miraculously rise to greet her. He hoped that this was an indication of her piety and virtue, which would make her a suitable choice to marry Yitzchok.

Rav Yisroel Reisman recounts an incredible contemporary application of this story, which he heard first-hand from the parties involved. The wife of a middle-aged man tragically passed away. After some time had gone by, he decided that he wanted to remarry. When he informed his family of his intentions, one of his sons who was himself of marriageable age questioned him about his plans. He maintained that it is much easier for a young couple to go on a date, for the newness makes the outings exciting and creates the potential for romance. However, when a person is older and already has an

established family, the dating experience is fundamentally different. Thus, his son asked him how he expected to interact with potential spouses and determine whether they would be a good match for him.

The widower told his son that he had also thought about this issue and was aware that his circumstances were different this time around. However, he took comfort in the fact that in *Parshas Chayei Sarah*, Eliezer did not set out to find a *shidduch* (spouse) for Yitzchok based on emotional or intellectual connections. Rather, he asked Hashem to give him a sign that would let him know when he had found the right girl, and when Eliezer saw the water miraculously rise to greet Rivka, he interpreted this as a Divine omen. The man told his son that he would also trust in Hashem to guide him and to give him a similar sign when he had met the right woman.

A short while later, a mutual acquaintance told him about a widow who was also looking to remarry, and the widower arranged a time to speak with her. However, when he called at the designated time, the woman apologized that she was unable to speak to him due to an emergency. She explained that her young children had just stopped up the toilet and the water in the toilet was rising up toward her, so she needed to tend to the crisis before she could speak to him.

Presumably, this poor widow was distraught by the thought that she finally found a suitable man who was interested in calling her to schedule a date, and at the worst possible moment, her children sabotaged her dating prospects by creating a flood in the bathroom that required her immediate attention. In reality, Hashem runs the world, and when the widower heard that water was coming up toward her just as it did to Rivka, he took this as a Divine indication that this woman was destined for him, and the precise event that the widow thought had spoiled her opportunity to get remarried became the very mechanism that enabled her to remarry.

In the olden days people never used to get old

There is an interesting Medrash in this week's *sedra* on the *pasuk*: ואברהם זקן בא בימים - "And Avraham was old, coming in days..." (*Bereishis* 24:1). The Medrash points out that Avrohom asked for (signs of) old age. Avraham Avinu was the first person in the history of the world to "get old" and the Medrash says he in fact asked to "show his age".

His argument was that a man and his son (who would look like each other and both would appear to be young and vigorous) would come together to a new place and the townspeople would not know to whom to give more honour and respect. In our world, we have many cases where fathers and sons look alike, but it is very obvious as to whom is the father and whom is the son. The individual who is wider around the waist and white in the beard and the head, the one with more wrinkles on his skin – he is the father. Avrohom and Yitzchok had a problem. They looked alike and they both had black beards and their skin was the same.

Hashem told Avrohom that his request was a reasonable one. "By your life, this phenomenon will begin with you!" From the beginning of the Torah until *Parshas Chayei Sarah* the Torah does not use the word *zikhnah* [old age], until this *parsha* where we read ואברהם זקן בא בימים - "And Avraham was old...".

This request for "old age" and Hashem's concurrence, as it were, that it is a good idea runs counter to the mind-set that we have today. Today, people don't want to get old, they don't want to look old. People spend loads of money in order to remain and to look young. As Rav Shimshon Pincus, writes in his *sefer*, this has even crept into our circles.

What is the deeper message of Avrohom's request for "*zikhnah*"? It is obvious that this was not merely a practical matter of trying to identify who is the father and who is the son. It would have been a much simpler idea to have them wear name tags. The father could have had the name 'Avrohom' embroidered on his shirt and the son could have had a matching shirt with the name 'Yitzchok' embroidered upon it! Problem solved.

However, Avrohom said, "No. I want to be old and I want to look like an old man." And the Ribbono Shel Olam said, as it were, "It's a great idea!". So what has happened between the time of Avrohom Avinu and our day and age?

R. Shimshon Pincus offers the following insight: If a person has had an accomplished life and can look back proudly at his years, he is not upset at the fact that his future may be very limited. A person can look back at what he has accomplished and be proud of it. On the other hand, if people look back on their lives and do not have so much to show for them, the only thing that consoles them is the future that lies ahead of them. If you are 30 years old and you have a good 40, 50, or 60 years ahead of you then you have no problem with that. However, someone who is 60 or 70 years old knows that he has already lived most of his life. He faces the spectre that "he may not have much time left". A person wants to delude himself to think "I am still young. I still have a long time ahead of me." What about the fact that I go to the mirror in the morning and I see that I am not so young? Well, there is a way of getting around that. I want to be young or I want to look young. I want to feel young. Why? Because I want to tell myself that the future still stretches in front of me.

When people live empty lives, they do not want to get old, look old or feel old. Avrohom Avinu had no problem with this. Avrohom was בא בימים – he made good use of every single day. He looks back – at this point in his history – and says "Yes, I know most of my life is over, but that does not upset me because I have what to show for it." Therefore '*zikhnah*' – old age, is a badge of honour to wear. "I am old, but look what I have done." Therefore, Avrohom asked for *zikhnah*. It is only when a person cannot be proud of the past and his whole mind-set is "there is still a future" that he needs this charade that he still has a long and glorious future ahead of him even though chronologically that may not be the case.

Shidduchim

In this week's *sedra* we have the episode of Avrohom Avinu sending Eliezer on the most important mission of his life – to find an appropriate wife for Yitzchok. The future of Klal Yisroel depended on this *shidduch*. Avrohom made Eliezer make a *shavuah* [swear] that he will not take a girl of Canaanite lineage.

Avrohom further instructed his servant not to take Yitzchok back to the land of Avrohom's birthplace and family: "Hashem, G-d of the heavens, Who took me from the house of my father and from the land of my birth; and Who spoke concerning me, and Who swore to me saying, 'To your offspring will I give this land'; He will send His angel before you, and you will take a wife for my son from there." (*Bereishis* 24:7).

Rashi notes that in 24:3 Avrohom uses the expression “I will have you swear by Hashem, G-d of the heavens and G-d of the earth” but in *pasuk* 7, a mere 4 *pasukim* later, Avrohom merely invokes the name of “Hashem, G-d of the heavens...” without any reference to Hashem also being the “G-d of the earth”. Why is this so? Rashi says (on *pasuk* 7) “...now – at this moment in history – he is the G-d of the heaven and the G-d of the earth for I have familiarized Him in the mouth of the people (i.e., for I have put people in the habit of mentioning him); but when He took me from my father’s house, He was G-d of the heavens, but not G-d of the earth, for those who lived in the world did not recognize Him.”

I heard from R’ Yissocher Frand an interesting observation from the *sefer Shemen HaTov* on this Rashi. Is Avrohom bragging to Eliezer? Is he saying, “You, know Eliezer, it is only because of me that Hashem is now considered G-d of heaven and G-d of earth as well!”? This is not Avrohom Avinu. He is not boasting, and he is certainly not boasting in front of Eliezer. So why does he stress “and G-d of the earth”?

Avrohom Avinu was telling his servant, “Eliezer, now you are going to go do something called ‘finding a *shidduch*’ for my son. In order to find a *shidduch*, you need not only an *Elokai haShomayim* [G-d in heaven], but you need an *Elokai hoOretz* [G-d of the earth] as well. *Shidduchim* come about because of the direct involvement of the Ribbono Shel Olam. You cannot do this on your own and we cannot do this on our own, we need the involvement of the Ribbono Shel Olam.

As the Chazon Ish once said, in our day and time, when the Divine Providence of Hashem is so often hidden, there is still one area of life where we can see the direct involvement of the Ribbono Shel Olam. That is in *shidduchim*, when it comes to *shidduchim*, we see that indeed “marriages are made in heaven”.

Here on the threshold of sending his servant to find a match for his son, Avrohom mentions that Hashem is the G-d of heaven and also the G-d of earth. He is personally and actively involved in all that happens in helping us make our *shidduchim*.

The Chazon Ish’s point, that when it comes to *shidduchim* we can see the direct involvement of Hashem is something which anyone who has been through the *parsha* of *shidduchim* will see very clearly, however, I would like to bring a story involving the Chazon Ish himself to show this point.

Someone once came to the Chazon Ish to ask information about a certain *bochur*. The father asked, “Does he have *yiras Shomayim*?” The Chazon Ish told him the truth, though in a subtle way. “His *yiras Shomayim* could be better.” The father thought to himself, “Of course it could be better. Everyone can improve in his *yiras Shomayim*. The main thing is that he has *yiras Shomayim*.” He probed further, “How is his *hasmodas haTorah*?”. The Chazon Ish replied with the same phrase, “It could be better.” Once again, the father misunderstood this to mean that he learns very well, only it could be better. And that didn’t bother him, because everyone can learn better. “What about his *middos*? That’s vital. Does he have good *middos*?” “It could be better.” The man was satisfied with what he heard, and the *shidduch* was finalized. The Chazon Ish repeated this story to his sister, the Steipler Rebbetzin, and concluded, “He isn’t a fool. He has a sharp mind. He should have picked up on what I was hinting to him, but he didn’t. Because when a *shidduch* needs to occur, it will, and nothing can prevent it from happening.”

When a *shidduch* needs to occur, not only will nothing prevent it from happening, but it will happen at the exact time that it is supposed to happen. In this week’s *sedra* Eliezer davened היום אבררה הקרה נא לפני היום - “Hashem, G-d of Avraham, come before me today...” (24:12). He davened that he find the *shidduch*, היום - “today”. For that to happen, matters had to happen very quickly. It was already close to evening when he arrived. As it states (24:11): וערב ערב - “[Eliezer] had his camels kneel at the well outside the city, towards evening...” and he wanted the *shidduch* to be completed that same day.

Reb Chaim Brisker explains that as a result every aspect of the *shidduch* happened very quickly. והיה הוא טרם כלה לדבר והנה רבקה יוצאת - “He didn’t yet finish speaking his *tefillah*, and behold Rikvah came out, ותרח הנערה ותגד לבית אמה ... ותרח עוד אל הבאר ... ותמהר ותער כדה ... ותמהר לקראתה - “The slave rushed towards her... She hurriedly lowered her jug... She ran again to the well... The girl ran and told her mother’s house...” (24:15-28).

Reb Chaim explains that this is because *shidduchim*, with all their details, are designed by Hashem, including when the *shidduch* will occur. Rivkah and Yitzchok’s *shidduch* was destined to finish on that day, and therefore everything happened quickly, so it would occur. The *Beis Yisroel* would to say “when the right minute comes, it happens in less than a minute.”

Upon hearing about Yitzchok and Rivka’s *shidduch*, Lavan and Besuel said: מה יצא הדבר לא נוכל דבר אליך רע או טוב - “The matter is from Hashem. We can’t speak with you good or bad.” The Rashbam explains that they were saying, “Neither building the *shidduch* nor destroying it is in our hand, because regardless whether we want it or not, Hakadosh Baruch Hu is doing this, and He has the ability.” Hashem, alone, makes *shidduchim*, and nothing can prevent Hashem’s plan from happening. Therefore, although one must do *hishtadlus*, one shouldn’t become anxious and worried.

Just to end off with one final story involving the Chazon Ish: After the war, Reb Naftali Nebentzal remained the sole survivor of his family. There was a *shidduch* he wanted, and he made *hishtadlus* but it wasn’t happening. He asked the Chazon Ish whether he should do some more *hishtadlus*. The Chazon Ish replied, “You’ve done enough *hishtadlus*. Now let Hashem run the world, as He plans it.” He didn’t end up marrying that girl, but he married someone else – the girl that was destined for him.

Many years later, it was the day of the *bris* of Reb Naftali’s great-grandson. He davened in a *vasikin minyan*, they gave him an *aliyah* in honour of the *simcha*, and everyone shouted “Mazel Tov!” After davening, he said that he wished they wouldn’t have given him the *aliyah*. His childhood friend, who never had children, was in the *Beis HaMedrash*. This friend married that woman he so much wanted to marry years back. Now he realizes the miracle Hashem performed for him by preventing him from marrying her. Otherwise, he would be barren... And now he is celebrating the *bris* of his great-grandson."

We see that *shidduchim* are not in our control, and when the *shidduch* is meant to happen it will happen, not a minute earlier and not a minute later. May all those who have not yet merited to find their *zivug* yet, merit that the time destined for them to find their *shidduch* come very soon.

This week’s sheet has been sponsored by anonymous in the *zechus* that she and all those who are still waiting for their *zivug* find it very soon.

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