

בס"ד
ר"ח כסלו תשפ"ב
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פרשת תולדות

This week's parsha brings us the middle example of a statement made by Hashem to Moshe a Gemara in *Sanhedrin*¹ that demonstrates the incredible dutifulness of the Avos, with the other two examples occurring in last week and next week's parsha.

The Gemara states that Hashem said to Moshe, "Woe over those who are gone and are no longer found! Several times, I revealed Myself to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov as G-d Almighty and they did not question My attributes, nor ask, 'What is Your name?'"

Avraham Avinu was commanded² by Hashem to journey through the land, for it would eventually be given to him. He immediately obeyed, searching far and wide for a location to bury his wife, and not settling until he had purchased a plot for 400 silver shekels, which he did in Parshas *Chayei Sarah*. At no point did he question Hashem's credentials and characteristics, and he never protested despite the fact that Hashem never gave him the land in his lifetime.

Hashem gave Yitzchak Avinu a similar commandment in Parshas *Toldos*, telling³ him to live in the land and that He would be with him with blessings. However, Yitzchak's servants were unable to find water until they had fought with the men of Gerrar!⁴ Clearly, the ability to live in the land was not as simple as Hashem promised, yet Yitzchak never questioned the abilities of HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

At the beginning of next week's parsha, Hashem again makes a related commandment⁵ to Yaakov, telling him that the land that he lies upon at that moment will be given to him later on. Nonetheless, Yaakov continues to search for a place to settle his tent until he has purchased one for one hundred coins, and while this was not the easiest of tasks, he nonetheless refrains from questioning Hashem, or even asking his name.

It is with this tremendous sense of obedience and devotion that our forefathers were able to observe Hashem, and obviously, this is something that we should all strive to emulate. But how should it be done? In the third Mishnah of Pirkei Avos,⁶ Antignos Ish Socho comments: *Do not be like servants who serve their master in order to be rewarded, but be like servants who serve their master not in order to receive reward, [but out of love alone]... For one who serves out of love is zealous in the performance of positive commandments, while one who serves out of fear is heedful in the observance of negative commandments, so that his service is found to be complete.* An easy way to accomplish this is through a simple line in מוידים of ערב "וְבָקֵר וְצִהָרִים" as the Gemara in Berachos⁸ teaches us that this is proof that a man can include all his prayers in one act of devotion. With just one action, we can demonstrate our full obedience and observance to the Ribono Shel Olam, and hopefully, bring ourselves even closer to our Father in Heaven.

¹ סנהדרין קיא.

² בראשית יג:יז

³ בראשית כו:ג

⁴ בראשית כו:כ

⁵ בראשית כח:יג

⁶ פרקי אבות א:ג

⁷ תהלים נה:יח

⁸ ברכות לא.