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Rabbi Shmuel Brazil



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תשפ"ו RAV BRAZIL PARSHAS CHAYEI SARAH

A DOUBLE SOUL REDEMPTION THROUGH CHESED

In the *parsha* of Eliezer's acquiring the shidduch Rivka for Yitzchak we find the root word **גמל** mentioned 17 times and the root word **גם** (the first two letters of **גמל** or **הגמאני**) ten times. All together there are 27 mentions which correspond to the 27 letters of the *Aleph Beis*. Let us delve a little into this symbolic role of the **גמל** and the *shidduch* and exit with an incredible lesson for life and *avodas Hashem*.

We suggest that the reason why a camel is called a **גמל** is from the root word **גם** translating as also or more than expected. A camel can store thirty gallons of water inside its body and go weeks without a refill. This ability gives it another interpretation of **גמל** which means to wean a baby from nursing and in this aspect make it independent from its mother. So too it is used as a transit in the desert because it is removed and independent from the necessity of drinking water unlike most animals and people.

Let us focus for a moment on the usage of the term **גמילת חסדים**. What does the word **גמילת** add more to the word **חסדים** in the place of using other verbs such as *עשיית* or *פעולת* *chassadim*? When Rivka was tested with the *middah* of *chesed* it wasn't about performing acts of *chesed* when asked to do so, or even to do *chesed* on her own initiative. It was about to do unlimited, unsolicited, *chesed* in a supernatural fashion. Every movement in the *chesed* act that Rivka did was described in the Torah with adjectives of non stop alacrity like Avraham *Avinu* **ותמהר** **ותרץ**. Eliezer only asked from her a little water to drink and Rivka not only gave him to drink but she gave to all the ten camels 300 gallons of water not finishing until they themselves stopped drinking. This entire scenario occurred with Eliezer's servants just standing idly by, watching as the entire episode unfolded without even lifting a finger to help this three year old child. Yet Rivka fulfilled her desire for *chesed* without any animosity, regrets, or grudge but with joy and the feeling of meriting this incredible opportunity.

Eliezer only asked Rivka if in her house there is lodging for us to sleep. She answered with three **גם**'s - **גם תבן גם מספוא גם מקום ללון** - Not only do we have room to sleep for one night but for many nights and we have a place for your camels and animal food to feed them with (Rashi). The *chesed* that Rivka performed was with **shefa** *rav*, unlimited, unsolicited and with an overflow of kindness. All the particulars of this episode was **גם**, a *shefah* avalanche of *chesed* which paralleled the house of Avraham *Avinu* and his hospitality down to the last minutest detail.

Rivka meets her *shidduch* Yitzchak as she was riding on a **גמל**. The symbolic depth of this first encounter was for the *Hashgacha* to demonstrate that Rivka is not just a *chesed dooer*, a mitzvah girl, but rather a **חסד בעלת** with a superlative **גם** an overflow of *chesed* that knows no bounds and limitations. Her entire *metzius* and essence was *chesed*, an individual who will lead *Klal Yisrael* to fulfill their destiny of their forefather Avraham *Avinu* and the way of Hashem upon which the *passuk* says **תפל** **חסד קל כל היום**. And with all this, she still remained *tzenius* and humble as the *passuk* says

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לגמל she leaned down to hide her face because of *tzinius* (Rashbam Seforno). With all the *chesed* that she did in her outpouring way, Rivka nevertheless was a *tzenuah*.

However Rivka was not the only individual in the *parsha* who demonstrated an excellence with the *middah* of *chesed* in the episode of consummating the *shidduch* for Yitzchak. Eliezer demonstrated his outstanding *chesed* to Avraham his master by not allowing his self-interests to interfere with the making of the *Shidduch*. As *Chazal* point out that he had an unmarried daughter whom he wished would marry Yitzchak. He could have unconsciously sabotaged his efforts to ensure that the *shidduch* with Rivka would be foiled so that maybe his daughter could have a chance of this million dollar *shidduch* with Yitzchak. Yet he succeeded to overcome this inner battle by being completely subjugated to the fulfillment of his mission to his master and by not allowing his self-interests to distract or take away from his loyalty to Avraham.

This is also alluded to with the encounter of Lavan and Eliezer whereupon the *passuk* describes (Bereishis 24,30) והנה עומד על הגמלים על העין. Why does the *passuk* use the word על הגמלים standing "over" the camels "over" the well? What message is this depiction supposed to convey? It is similar to the description when Rivka meets Yitzchak that she was on the גמל excelling in the *middah* of *chesed* to his master by totally negating his self-centeredness for the purpose that the *shidduch* will be executed properly with the utmost of efficiency and pure unadulterated *chesed*.

With this we can also explain the extra על over the well. There are two sets of "eyes" available for a person to use, an inner selfish eye or an outer selfless eye. Are you basically a taker or a giver? The *passuk* is hinting here that Eliezer was successful in his mission because he worked on being control over his eyes that they should rather be focused and concentrated to see other people's plights and situations, and how by negating one's own interests he can fulfill *gemillas chassadim* to others in its highest form.

Yet the hint of "על העין" goes even deeper than that. If one counts the letters above the letters העין he will arrive at ופכס which is *gematriah* 167 עה"כ. This number refers to *Megillas Esther* which contains 167 *pessukim*. The word מגילה has the letters גמל as its root. It was the selfless *middah* of *chesed* that turned the pending tragedy of annihilation of the Jewish Nation into a Yom Tov of victory and celebration ונהפוך הוא. It was a dire necessity for Esther to divulge to the King, Haman's evil plot to destroy *Am Yisrael*, even though she was not invited into the King's presence which itself was a brazen act punishable by an immediate death sentence. She told Mordechai צומו עליו ואני ונערוטי אצום כן. You and *Am Yisrael* should fast and *daven* for my safety and I and my maidens will *daven* for your safety from the treacherous decree. Don't think about yourself but rather about the needs of your fellow Yid. This sacrificial *chesed* to control one's eyes to be used exclusively for the benefit of others even though you need your own personal *yeshuah* as well, will serve as a *zechus* for everyone's salvation. Hence the name מגילת אסתר. That is also the reason of *Matanos Laevyonim* and *Mishloach Manos* לרעהו Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld said איש is *gematriah* לרעהו. A man is measured by how much he is concerned with לרעהו outside of himself.

Let us go now one more level deeper in the interpretation of the symbolic animal the גמל that played a major role in the *Shidduch* of Rivka and Yitzchak. *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is described in the Torah

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(Devarim 4,34) Has any deity performed miracles coming to a nation and taking it for Himself out from another nation. Chazal comment *Am Yisrael* in *Mitzrayim* was compared to an embryo in its mother's womb receiving life sustenance and nurturing from the mother. We were so embodied with the Egyptian culture and *tumah* that we were almost inseparable. Yet Hashem's *geulah* was that we were plucked out from this *tumah* and a state of spiritual dysfunction, of which one would never think such a redemption is possible.

Both Eliezer and Rivka shared the same situation as *Yisrael* in *Mitzrayim*. Eliezer was cursed by Noach his ancestor, that Canaan and his descendants will be *אָרֹר* cursed and slaves. He was shackled for life without any seemingly plausible alternative or escape. Yet *Chazal* tell us that because he served his Master with utmost loyalty by fulfilling his mission of *chesed* for Avraham, even though he had self-interests not to do so, he was thereby extricated from his curse to *beracha* ה' בְּרוּךְ, a true supernatural event.

Likewise, Rivka was a precious *neshama* raised in a family which had clutches of evil upon evil upon her, idolatry worship, witchcraft, horrific *middos*, Besuail, Lavan to say the least. Yet she had a redemption from this evil after she demonstrated above superior *chesed* by unsolicited giving to all the *גַּמְלִים* to drink at least 300 gallons without a running hose to refill the buckets and trough. This was an act of supernatural *chesed*, and due to her sterling act of character she was supernaturally removed from their clutches of evil to become the wife of Yitzchak.

In both cases the super natural display of *chesed* produced a supernatural manifestation of redemption from *Mitzrayim* גוי מקרב גוי לקחת to remove one nation from being locked within the prison of another nation without the existence of a key to leave it. This too is hinted in the word *גַּמַל* which is the acronym גוי מקרב גוי לקחת The twenty seven times that we find the root word *גַּמַל* in the *Shidduch* episode represents the twenty seven letters by which the world was created and continues to be so at every moment. *יבנה עולם חסד* the world is constantly coming into existence through the *midda* of Hashem's *chesed*. It is the *middah* of *chesed* that if one exercises his *bechira* to do *chesed* with self - sacrifice he can tune in at that very moment of creation of the world of nature and bring the supernatural into his life to free him from chains and the clutches of his *yetzer hara* that seem impossible to break. *עולם חסד יבנה*. He will be able to build a new world for himself.

Gut Shabbos,

Rav Brazil