

Chayai Sarah –The Brachos in the Homes of Our Avos and Emahos By Rabbi Eliyahu Kirsh

In Bereishis 24:67-68 we are told of the marriage of Yitzchak Avinu and Rivka Emainu and how Yitzchak was comforted after his mother through his marriage to Rivkah. Rashi tells us that when Yitzchak brought Rivka into the tent she became like his mother. There was a recreation of the home he grew up in. When Sarah was alive, there was a bracha in the dough, indicating that the mitzvah of challah was properly kept. There was also a cloud hanging over the tent demonstrating that the laws of Taharas Hamishpacha, family purity were kept properly. This can be understood that not only were the technical laws of niddah kept properly but that all aspects of married life were observed properly. The home was a model for proper conduct and mutual respect at the standards required by the Torah. [Perhaps this can be understood in a modern day context by the events of the funeral of the Rebbetzin of Rav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach Zt'l. As is customary, everyone expected the Rav to ask his wife for forgiveness, *mechila* by her aron. He told everyone that there was no need to ask *mechila* because they always made sure to forgive each other for any offense no matter how slight.] Homes that are conducted in this proper fashion are worthy of having a cloud of glory hanging over them. Furthermore, when Sarah Emainu lit the Shabbos lights on Friday afternoon, the lights miraculously lasted till the following Friday. These brachos all sadly ended at the demise of Sarah Emainu. They returned when Yitzchak and Rivka were wedded.

This moving Rashi requires some reflection. Surely Avraham and Yitzchak lived their lives with the utmost kedusha. All of their actions reflected the derech of Torah and Mussar. Yet it seems the home was missing what we would call today, 'a woman's touch.' Not only the physical presence of one of the Emahos was missing but also the atmosphere that is created by the home of Torah-based marriage was also missing. Perhaps this helps us understand why Chazal stressed to us that a man without a wife lacks brachos, among other things. A man or woman alone, no matter how big a tzadik or tzadekes, simply cannot build what the Torah calls a home. Only the entity of husband and wife together can do this.

When Yitzchok married Rivkah, all of these beautiful brachos returned. Now their home was a haven for true kedusha. It was so clear that Rivka was the right wife for Yitzchak and the legacy of Avraham and Sarah was able to continue. Indeed, we should always look to the Avos and Emahos to understand what building a true Jewish home entails. May we be zoche to build such homes for ourselves and pass these values to our children, grandchildren and future descendants, assuring the continuity of the legacies of Avraham and Sarah.