

The Seeds of the Tree of Chesed-Parshas Veyara

By Rabbi Eliyahu Kirsh

Parshas Veyara opens up with the primary motif of Avraham Avinu; Avraham personified chesed. Till this day, chesed is an identifying symbol for Am Yisroel. We are told how Avraham Avinu, together with his wife, prepared a meal for three weary travelers who were traveling on a hot day. Of course, Chazal tell us how Hashem purposely made the day extremely hot so that Avraham should not have to be busy with guests as he was recovering from his Bris Milah at the age of ninety nine years old. Yet, when Hashem saw how distressed Avraham was not to have guests, he made three Malachim appear to him as travelers so he could do the mitzvah of Hachnosas Orchim. From the details that the Torah gives us about this setting of hachnosas orchim, our Rabbis throughout the ages deduced many important lessons for us as well as omens for future events in klal Yisroel.

The Gemara in Baba Metizia 86b states that in merit of three things that Avraham did, we were granted three things. In merit of the Cream and milk that Avraham set before his guests we were given the manna. In merit of the fact that Avraham stood by his guests, we were granted the Clouds of Glory and in merit of the water that Avraham had fetched for his guests, we were granted the Well of Miriam. The Maharsha raises the question that we are told in Taanis 9a that in merit of three leaders, Moshe, Aharon and Miriam we were furnished with three gifts in the desert. The well was specifically in Miriam's merit, the manna was in Moshe's merit, and the clouds of glory were in Aharon's merit. The Maharsha reconciles these two Gemaras by stating that from Avraham Avinu we would have merited these gifts only for a short time. Together with the merits of Moshe, Aharon, and Miriam, we had these gifts for forty years.

Rav Chaim Smulevitz zt"l, Rosh Yeshiva Mir Yerushalayim, resolves this issue in the following manner: All plants, even the tallest trees, start with a tiny seed. However, the seed will not blossom into any type of plant without earth, sun, and water. Only a proper combination of all of these elements will cause the seed to sprout into a plant or tree. While each of the three leaders of the generation that left Mitzraiym had special virtues to bring about their respective gifts, the 'original seed' for all of these gifts was the chesed of Avraham Avinu. Moshe, Aharon, and Miriam were the other elements needed to make the 'tree grow.' He proves this point from the Targum Yonaasan on the pasuk in Bamidbar regarding the well [Bamidbar 21;18] which states that this well was dug by the Avos of the world, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov and the leaders of the nation, Moshe and Aharon, thus bringing both ideas together.

May we merit going in the path of Avraham and Sarah, our exalted ancestors. May, we also merit to pass on to our children their legacy of chesed. May we ultimately continue to contribute to chesed so that, very soon, we will earn the special Zechus that will bring about the Geulah Shleima. Amen.