

Chaye Sarah

Perceptions • MarCheshvan 27, 5784 • November 11, 2023 • Issue #2020

*R*ashi mentioned at the end of last week's *parsha* that the entire lineage just mentioned was just to get to the verse about Rivkah being born, the soul mate and soon-to-be-wife of Yitzchak. But if so, one could ask, why did the Torah go beyond that verse and end with, "And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, had also given birth to Tévach and Gacham and Tachash and Ma'acab"? Do we even care, now that we know that Rivkah was born?

Dedicated to the success and well-being of all those fighting for the safety of the Jewish people. May Hashem Yisborach bless and protect you at all times, and make you successful in your holy mission. May we merit to be part of the final redemption, and personally greet Moshiach very soon, b"H.

There is a message in this. There always is. It's as if to say that though from *our* perspective Rivkah was the main event, the "diamond in the rough," (she was the diamond and they were the rough), from her family's perspective she was just another family member. If anything, Rivkah was probably seen as the "white sheep" of the family, the non-conformer who they couldn't wait to marry off and get out of the house.

It's reminiscent of another story, this one in the *Gemora*:

Rebi Yehoshua *ben* Levi met Eliyahu standing at the entrance of a cave of Rebi Shimon bar Yochai and asked him, "When will *Moshiach* appear?"

He answered, "Go and ask *Moshiach* himself."

"But where can he be found?"

"At the gate of Rome."

"And by what sign [can I recognize him]?"

“He is among the poor people afflicted with wounds. They open *all* their bandages, adjust them, and then redress them all at one time. However, [*Mosbiach*] only opens, adjusts, and dresses *one* wound at time, to avoid delay if he is [suddenly] called.” (*Sanbedrin* 98a)

Well that’s weird, no? Why would *Mosbiach* be inflicted with wounds and forced to associate with the poor? One would expect him to be some *tzaddik* either learning Torah full time in the *Bais Midrash* like other *talmidei chachamim*, or out doing *cbesed* like other *tzaddikim*. Is this just another anomaly of Jewish history, or something significant having to do with *geulah* itself?

This helps:

For a great soul to leave the *Klipos*, you should know, it must be done *b’irmah utachbulos* (with trickery and scheming). . . Thus, you will find that many great souls have come in the bodies of simpletons, and sometimes even in the children of evil people, just as Avraham being born from Terach. . . It is also the reason for the stories of Tamar, Rus, Rachav. . . all the souls of converts, and all the kings from Dovid and *Mosbiach* who have come from Rus the Moabite, and the union of Yehudah and Tamar. (*Sba’ar HaGilgulim*, Introduction 38)

So true. The question is, *why*?

Shabbos Day

THERE ARE TWO types of war, physical and spiritual, and neither needs much of an explanation. Physical war we know only too well, and spiritual war we understand to be the ongoing battle against the *yetzer hara*. Obviously the two are completely related, the success in the former depending upon the success in the latter, as we see in *Parashas Ki Seitzei*.

Our spiritual enemy has allies just as our physical ones do. The *yetzer hara* is inside of a person, and can often be attributed to natural instinct. It gets people to do bad things, but not necessarily to become evil. So where is all the evil in the world coming from, especially when it comes to enemies like Hamas?

The *Sitra Achra*, of course. The “devil” (we call him the “*Sabtan*,” which means “obstructor,” and which other religions turned into “Satan”) may be in the details, but he is the “force” behind all the evil in the world. The more intense the evil, the more he is behind it. It was him talking through the snake to get Chava to eat the forbidden fruit.

According to tradition, the *Sabtan* is an angel that, just like the rest of them, works for God. It's a long story that can be abbreviated with just two words, free-will. Everything God has created and continues to create is to enable man to have and use free-will, in order to choose either good or evil and, be personally responsible for their choice. This way a person can be rewarded for their right decisions and punished for their wrong ones.

As we have all experienced in life, the *yetzer bara* remains dormant if not exposed to temptation. It is the *Sitra Achra* that often finds a way to stick temptation in our face and arouse the *yetzer bara*. How many times have people “innocently” done something that has incited someone else in some spiritually negative way? You can blame the *Sitra Achra* for that.

But even the *Sitra Achra* struggles to do his job if a person is spiritually on guard, what the *Mesillas Yesbarim* calls *zehirus*—cautiousness. Getting a person to sin is the “two” of a one-two punch. Getting a person to the point that they *can* sin is a function of something *Kabbalah* calls the *Klipos*, a negative spiritual “energy” that in Creation that spiritually desensitizes a person.

For example, a person might be spiritually on guard against sin one moment, and then find themselves in a spiritually compromising environment (like a bar) the next moment, and lose their energy to fight the good fight. Sometimes it can even just be a single individual, a person whose personality tends to make people take life less seriously. Certain forms of entertainment certainly do this to many people.

Whatever the means, the result is the same, *spiritual desensitization*. The *Sitra Achra* make take advantage of the reality to get to a person's *yetzer bara*, but the reality itself is built into Creation and called the *Klipos*—Peels. They are called this since they spiritually encase a person's heart to make them less spiritually astute.

There is a technical explanation of what the *Klipos* are and how they came to exist, but that's *kabbalistic*. The main thing is that they exist and impact our lives all the time, something most people are unaware of, making them super vulnerable to their effect. Even worse, the *Klipos* seem to have some kind of consciousness that lets them plan and scheme against us and, they constantly conspire to use whatever means they can to make a person, or people, spiritually stumble. We may not know our vulnerabilities that well, but the *Klipos* sure seem to.

Seudas Shlishis

THEIR BIGGEST FEAR is the final redemption, and therefore anyone connected with it. They seem to know that the final redemption means their demise, so the

Klipos do everything they can to block it, or the people who might facilitate it. After 5,784 years of exile and no final redemption to date, we can assume the *Klipos* have been quite successful until today.

Or at least, that is what we would like them to believe. Last week's *parsha* was the perfect example of this. Lot went down to Sdom, the wickedest place on earth at that time and home of the *Klipos*, and married a woman from there. They had four daughters, two of whom married men from Sdom. Nothing Messianic about any of that. Nothing there to worry the *Klipos*.

Then Sdom was destroyed, and Lot had to flee for his life. Maybe that caught the attention of the *Klipos* for a moment, but the moment that Lot's daughter "drugged" him to have children from him, the *Sitra Achra* and *Klipos* must have laughed themselves all the way into false security. As they knew, God hates incestuous relationships. Even if Lot's daughters did miraculously conceive immediately, what of it? Could anything Messianic come from *that*?

Well, actually, yes! Moav was the nation that gave birth to Rus who eventually did *yibum* with Boaz to further the ancestral line of Dovid *HaMelech* and *Moshiach*. And the *Klipos* did not see that coming because it also took Elimelech moving to Moav during a famine against the *balachab*. It was such a spiritual mess that anyone looking on could not have foretold the positive result that would eventually come from it.

Because when the *Klipos* sense something Messianic is happening, they gird their loins and go to war to stop it any way they can. So *geulah* has to move forward in a way that makes it look as if it is going backwards, like the whole Yehudah and Tamar affair in *Parashas Vayaishev*.

According to the students of the Vilna *Gaon*, this is why their teacher had to turn back from going to *Eretz Yisroel*. He had already kicked off the ingathering of the exiles and was on his way to do what he could to expedite the *geulah* process. The *Klipos* may have created circumstances that forced the *GR"A* to return back to Vilna instead.

Perhaps this is why Rivkah is sandwiched between spiritually lacking people, as if to hide her from the *Klipos* who surely would not have let her go had they known what she would eventually mean to the *geulah* process. The *Klipos* would have created circumstances to make Eliezer's mission unsuccessful, which is why, perhaps, Eliezer worried about failure before he even left.

Ain Od Mivado, Part 72

IT KIND OF seems as if God is playing chess against Himself. It's confusing enough that God has to "oppose" the *Sitra Achra* and the *Klipos*, that seem to win big time against Him sometimes, even though they work for Him. Now we find out that God has to do tricks to "fool" them so they don't interfere in His plan for redemption. No wonder people struggle with the idea of *ain od Milvado*. It sure looks like a bunch of different chefs fighting for control of the same kitchen.

The *Kli Yakar* on the *Shema* (*Devarim* 6:4) reiterates that this is what the *Shema* means. It says, "All those opposing realities are just one God." *One* God with *one* purpose that *never* misses a beat or moves in the *wrong* direction. Up, down, forwards, backwards, it's all the same for God. It just looks as confusing as it does to us. . . *for the sake of our free-will*.

We don't understand that. From our point of view, we don't lose any free-will if our enemies just go poof, and those who stand against God just disappear into thin air. Did our free-will become any freer after the events of *Simchas Torah* this year?

Well, *yes*. Look at the ongoing reaction of the Jewish people to the situation. Look at the increased unity of the Jewish people. Look at all the extra *chesed* being done. Look at all the extra prayers and intention people have added. Look at how many people have taken on some *mitzvos*, or extra ones, since. Look at how much power people have gained over their *yetzer baras*.

That is what free-will is all about: will free of the *yetzer bara*. And even if people don't keep it up, what they have done in the meantime has had a positive impact on Creation and the *geulah* process that can't be undone. *Ain od Milvado*: one God, one plan, one goal, and all of it, the parts we understand and the parts that confuse us, are all to this end.