

PARASHAT CHAYEI SARAH

WHAT THE WORLD HAS DONE TO HOLINESS

“Ve Avraham zakein, bah bayamim, VeHashem berach at Avraham Bakol.” G-d blessed Avraham with everything when he was old. Avraham tells Eliezer to put his hand in his makom hamilah. What are we talking about? Why would Avraham ask him to do that? The Zohar says that Avraham Avinu is the chariot that the shechina rests on. The torah is the holiest thing in the world. Avraham is the holiest man in history.

Rav Yaakov Milisa (one of the greatest of chazal, wrote Netivot Mishpat and commentary on Shir Hashirim) says, if all the songs of Shir Hashirim are holy, then the Shir Hashirim is one of the holiest books. But it appears that its not holy. The Rambam says, if you take all of history, it doesn't compare to the day that Shir Hashirim was given to us. There are apikorsim that asre so tied down to the desires of this world that they take Shir Hashirim in a disgusting way. The reason Shir Hashirim was written was to show the love between G-d and the Jews. G-d created us this way (desiring women) so we can understand love and longing. He could have made us asexual and just solved the “problem”.

The world takes sex and makes it dirty. We look at the episode with Avraham and Eliezer as crazy. To Avraham, this was one of the holiest things he could do. It was like Eliezer was putting his hand on a sefer torah. But to us, its all about filth and tayva, it's animalistic. There is a beautiful castle in Scotland. It is the most beautiful castle in the world. It is very hard to get there, but many people come from all over to see it. One day, an artist decides to paint this castle and does it. They put this painting in a museum and people come from all over to see it. Then, one night a punk comes and messes up the painting, he urinates, defecates and throws up on the painting. What was once a beautiful painting, is now disgusting. The next day, the people come to see the painting and are just disgusted by it. Now when people talk about the painting, they just talk about how disgusting it is, instead of how beautiful it was. That is what the world has done to sex. To Avraham Avinu, it's the holiest thing in the world and to us it's disgusting. All of life can be holy.

In New York, it's a law to teach kindergarteners about HIV and AIDS. Kindergartens in Israel teach them holy things. 75% of American teens have sex before high school graduation, that's 54,000 teens in New York alone. 4 billion Americans spend 10 billion dollars on pornography. That is more than the revenue accrued by the NBA, NFL and MLB combined! To the Avot, it was the holiest thing!

Any amora in the gemara could do techiyat hameytim. Rav Amnon Chasida was beyond a

regular amora. There were captive women in Naharda and they had to keep them in the city for one night. Who was the most trustworthy person in the city? Of course Rav Amnon Chasida. So they brought these women and put them in his attic and they take a ladder that takes 10 people to carry and block the door to the attic with it. At night, when the Rav is going to bed, he glances at one of the women in the attic, he goes and lifts the ladder that takes 10 people to carry and starts climbing up the ladder. The women scream, "Fire, fire...there's a fire in the house!" People run to come and save them and they see this Rav halfway on this ladder. They ask him, aren't you embarrassed that you were caught? He says, I rather be embarrassed by everyone in this world forever than in front of G-d.

The navi says that if anyone builds Yericho, his children will die, and he will too. There is a man who starts building up Yericho despite this curse. When he lay the foundation of the city, his first son died. When he set up the door frames, his second son died. And he kept on building. Rav Chaim Shmulevitz says the darkness of sin is so great that you can't even see what's in front of your eyes anymore. His sons were dying, and he couldn't even tell that it was because of Yehoshua's curse!

"You are what you think about." If you think about sex, that's what you are. The passuk says that Abraham "came in his days". What does that mean? Rabbi Jonathan Sacks says, it is a proven statistic that worshippers who attend services at least once a week live at least 7-14 years longer than those who do not. You go more than once a week, you have a longer life in this world. You have people who are very old but not old in days. You can be old and have done absolutely nothing. What new opportunity can you find here? There's an excitement when doing mitzvot and chesed.

An average human body that weighs 170 pounds, sells for around \$25. Without your soul, you're nothing. The Sfas Emes died at the age of 56. At his eulogy, one of the speakers said that he had "arichos yamim". How many years you live is not up to you. The only thing that is up to us, is "arichos yamim". What do you do with your days? "We're just passing through". The Chofetz Chaim had a very small house. He had a table, a chair and a bed. One time, a person came to his house and asked him why he lived in such bad quarters. He asked him, "where are you staying at right now?" "I'm at the Radin Inn." "How come you don't live in a nicer place?", the Chofetz Chaim asked. "Because I'm just passing through." "Well, I am also passing through." If you have nothing to give your life up for, life is meaningless.