**Chayai Sarah 2014**

א)

Shidduchim

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| **24:51**..."and let her be a wife for your master's son, as Hashem has spoken." |  | **כד:נא** ...וּתְהִי אִשָּׁה לְבֶן אֲדֹנֶיךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהֹוָה: |

Nachalas Tzvi daf 51:

Lavan and Besu’el are telling Eliezer that they are allowing Rivkah to be a wife for Yitzchak.

The question is: What is the explanation of the words in the pusuk “as Hashem has spoken”, meaning where do we find that Hashem said explicitly that Rivkah will be Yitzchak’s wife?

In Sotah 2a it says that 40 days before the fetus is formed a heavenly voice yells out and says ‘bas ploni to ploni’, meaning this fetus will marry so and so in the future. Also, the Medrash Raba tells us that Hashem makes shidduchim. So that's pshat in our pasuk. Hashem decreed that this shidduch will happen even before Rivkah was born.

ב)

Is it possible to change the nature of a person?

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| **23:11** “No, my lord, listen to me. I have given you the field and the cave that is in it, I have given it to you....” |  | **כב:יא** לֹא אֲדֹנִי שְׁמָעֵנִי הַשָּׂדֶה נָתַתִּי לָךְ וְהַמְּעָרָה אֲשֶׁר בּוֹ לְךָ נְתַתִּיהָ וגו. : |

(Originally heard from Rav Landau, a Rebbe in Reishit Yerushalayim):

Sefer Lekach Tov page 110 quotes the Darche Muser (Rabbi Yaakov Nyman):

Many are bothered by this sequence of events involving Efron and Avraham. In our pasuk it seems Efron wanted to give over the field for free. A few pesukim later, however, he says to Avraham "A land worth 400 shekel, what is it between me and you?” Here Efron is attaching a price to the land and hinting at the fact that Avraham should really pay for it! Eventually, Avraham weighs out the money and the simple explanation is that Efron took it. So why, originally, did Efron say he would give Avraham the land for free, then hint that he wanted money and then actually accept the money!?

The Alter Mi’Kelm brings a mashal to understand what happened. It’s known that there was a debate between the Rambam and philosophers of the world. They thought it’s possible to train animals to act properly and change their nature; so much so that they can act like humans. The **Rambam said** the opposite that **it's impossible to change the nature of an animal no matter how hard you try**. The philosophers wanted to prove the Rambam wrong. They trained a cat and ‘change’ its nature to act a certain way. After they trained it they brought the cat to the Rambam in front of a large audience, all gathering to see this ‘trained cat’. The cat walked in, dressed in a suit, and was acting as the waiter of the meal. It set the whole table, was bringing in wine glasses and pouring the wine, serving the soup, etc. Everyone present thought that these philosophers were right and they actually trained an animal to be like a human! At that moment the Rambam took out a box and released a mouse into the room. The second that the cat saw the mouse it dropped everything, breaking and spilling everything, and started to chase the mouse! Then everyone realized that, in truth, the Rambam was the one who was correct. **Even though you can teach animals to perform certain tasks, you can never truly change their nature.**

**The same thing applies to Efron. When he didn't see the money in front of him he acted as if he was a generous person, willing to give over the field for free. However, when Avraham told him he has money with him and he wants to pay him then everything changed. Efron saw the coins and immediately he turned back to who he really was. He stopped all of his good behavior and ran after the money like a cat runs after a mouse!**

**Unfortunately this practice and these characteristic traits and these actions of Efron can be found amongst ourselves as well. On the outside someone can have proper derech eretz and is full of good middos. But as soon as a certain desire or negative temptation comes their way or someone offends them then they lose all their good traits and act in the complete opposite way in a matter of seconds.**

(A practical way that this can occur to us is the following. Sometimes we will say to ourselves ‘I will just have one cookie or one piece of the cake.’ Before you know it you just consumed seven cookies or seven pieces of cake. This is the yeitzer hara. This concept is brought in the Eliyah Raba siman 170 who writes that everyone thinks since a person has a neshama yeseira, an extra neshama, on Shabbos that they can eat all they want.(See Shabbos 10:) The truth is by over eating you are violating 3 negative commandments: “bal teshaksu”, “hishamer lach”, “pen tishkach es Hashem”...don't abominate yourself, guard yourself, and don't forget Hashem!)

**While we, obviously, must work on individual middos and try to fix certain aspects of the way we act, the only real way to change human nature and correct our bad traits is through learning Torah. As the Gemara in Kiddushin 30b tells us, Hashem said ‘baratei yeitzer hara baratei Torah tavlin’ ‘I created an evil inclination and I created the Torah as its cure.’ When a person learns seriously and in the correct way it will mamesh change his nature!**

**Rav Shach says** (In Rav Shach speaks page 149) **learning Torah is not just another of the 613 mitzvos; it is much more. Learning Torah transcends the other mitzvos in one aspect: it can remold the basic character of those who learn it.**

This also shtims with divrei Torah on Rosh Hashana why we dip into honey. **If something falls into honey for example bread or meat it turns into honey.** (It depends on the size of item that falls into honey and the time the item remains immersed in the honey to change it to honey.) Even if something that isn’t kosher falls into honey after it turns to honey and it is permissible to consume the honey. (See Sulchan Aruch and poskim in yora daya siman 84 sif 12.) The Gemara in Tanis 7. says honey alludes to Torah. The Chafetz Chaim is his introduction to his Lekuti halachos on kadshim writes **if a person learns properly even if his nature is bad and he has bad middos the strength of the Torah he learns can purify and sanctify him and can change him (in a good way) to a completely different person. The middos of that individual will turn into sweet honey.**

Thank you Yair Moshe Ausabel for typing this up.

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