

וּמָת שָׂרָה בְּקֶרֶת אַרְבַּע הוּא: שָׂרָה אָמְנוּ, begins with the passing of our beloved mother, שָׂרָה חַיִּי פרשת וַיִּבְרָא בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וַיָּבֹא אֲבֹרָהֶם לִסְפֹּד לְשָׂרָה וְלִבְכָּתָהּ. Those who pay attention will notice a small כ in the word וְלִבְכָּתָהּ. רש"י comments on this, saying: וְלִבְכָּתָהּ מֵיַד יְדֵי בְשׂוּרַת הָעֵקֶדָה. שָׂרָה heard the news that יִצְחָק was nearly slaughtered, and from the shock of this revelation, she passed away.

The מדרש on this רש"י and the entire episode is vast. As many of us know, the שָׂטָן, representing the יצר הרע, tried everything to prevent the עֵקֶדָה. The עֵקֶדָה story is remarkable and has inspired many books, goyish and lehavdil, even in יידיש.

What's relevant here is that the שָׂטָן tried every possible tactic to prevent the עֵקֶדָה. He appeared as a child, as an old man, and even transformed himself into a river, nearly drowning אַבְרָהָם אֲבִינוּ, who was up to his neck in water, calling out to Hashem to save him. All of these attempts by the שָׂטָן failed.

The עֵקֶדָה was a success, and Baruch Hashem, we still discuss it to this day. So, what did the שָׂטָן do? He went to שָׂרָה and told her about the עֵקֶדָה. According to different opinions, she either died from hearing that יִצְחָק was going to be נִשְׁחַט or from hearing that he wasn't נִשְׁחַט. Regardless, the result is the same: שָׂרָה אָמְנוּ passed away.

I heard a דְּבַר תּוֹרָה from Rabbi Oelbaum, who attributes it to רַב מֵאִיר from פרמישלאן. As you all know, I often mention that my אֲלֹטֶע זִידֶע was a שׁוּחַט in פרמישלאן, whether it was at the time of רַב מֵאִיר from פרמישלאן or not is irrelevant, we have a deep connection to that holy city. I even have a סֵפֶר, a מַעֲשֵׂה בִיכָל, about רַב מֵאִיר from פרמישלאן, which anyone is welcome to come and look at.

רַב מֵאִיר from פרמישלאן shared the following insight: The שָׂטָן failed to prevent the עֵקֶדָה, so he took out his frustration by causing the death of שָׂרָה אָמְנוּ. What is this - sour grapes? He failed in his attempt, and now he takes it out on שָׂרָה?

Every night we recite in הַשְׂכִּיבֵנוּ: וְהִסֵּר שָׂטָן מִלְּפָנֵינוּ וּמֵאַחֲרֵינוּ, which teaches us the concept of חֲרָטָה. When a person does תְּשׁוּבָה, an essential component is חֲרָטָה, regret for the עֲבִירָה. If one regrets an עֲבִירָה, it almost entirely, if not completely, cancels out the עֲבִירָה. The famous מדרש says that חֲרָטָה chops off the legs of the מַלְאָךְ created by the עֲבִירָה. So עֲבִירוֹת חֲרָטָה can erase.

But what is less known is that חֲרָטָה can also, G-d forbid, erase a מִצְוָה. Imagine giving a quarter to someone at the shul in the morning. Later, you go to put a quarter in the parking meter, realize you don't have one, and regret giving it away. In that moment, you lose the מִצְוָה, because you had חֲרָטָה on it. So we must be mindful of our thoughts.

שָׂטָן successfully completed the עֵקֶדָה in line with the dvar Hashem. Afterwards, the שָׂטָן came again, trying to cause חֲרָטָה in אַבְרָהָם. The שָׂטָן wanted him to regret the עֵקֶדָה by making him think it was the cause of שָׂרָה's death.



When אברהם came to לִסְפוֹד לְשָׂרָה וּלְבָכוֹתָהּ, he cries, but with a small כ - he didn't cry excessively. Why? To show he had no חֲרָטָה for the עֲקֵדָה, even though it was a גֹּרֶם for שָׂרָה's death. Once again, the שָׂטָן was defeated.

This teaches us to be extremely careful with our thoughts, as everything we do or think is accounted for. We must have tremendous כּוֹוֶנָה and בְּטָחוֹן, especially now, as all of us, our children, our soldiers, and civilians are facing threats. May we merit a tremendous יְשׁוּעָה Hashem, and may Hashem bless us with בְּרָכָה וְהַצְלָחָה. We should take seriously what we need to do in the future, as sometimes we may be too comfortable in גִּלּוּת. I'm speaking to myself as well as to others; we all have room to improve in our mitzvos, especially myself.

