

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT CHAYEI SARAH

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Counting the days or making the days count



**TOMOR
BELOVSKI**

Tribe Fieldworker

Following on from the strong theme of *chesed*, kindness, in last week's parasha, we are reminded of its importance again in this week's parasha, Chayei Sarah. We know that our forefather Avraham exemplified the attribute of *chesed*, and therefore it is not surprising that he wants to ensure that it is prioritised in his future generations, starting with his son Yitzchak (Isaac). When Avraham commands his servant Eliezer to find a wife for

Yitzchak, he sends him to his own extended family, hoping Eliezer will find a suitable girl for Yitzchak there. We find an intriguing verse here: "And Avraham was old, having come in days (*ba ba'yamim*), and God had blessed Avraham with everything" (Bereishit 24:1).

Surely everyone who is old has come or advanced in days. What does this mean and why is it relevant here? The Shelah (Rabbi Yeshayahu Ha-Levi Horowitz, c.1555-1630) says that a Jew must carry out at least one act of *chesed* daily, in order for it to be considered a day. If not, it's as though that day doesn't count in a person's life. The Netivot Shalom (the Slonimer Rebbe, Rabbi Sholom

Noach Berezovsky, 1911-2000) explains that it's easy to understand then why Avraham was advanced in days, because each of his days was filled with *chesed*.

Why is *chesed* so important? The Netivot Shalom continues that the world only exists because God continually recreates it, as an act of *chesed*. Otherwise, it would cease to exist. Since our role in life is to emulate God in our actions, we too must continually do *chesed*, and through this, we not only enable the world to continue to exist, but ensure that each of our days really counts.

So, what act of *chesed* will you do today?

Parasha Quiz

1. How did Eliezer know that Rivka (Rebecca) was the right woman to marry Yitzchak (Isaac)?

- a. She gave him her jewellery
- b. She was a cousin of Avraham
- c. She offered water to both him and his camels

2. What gifts did Eliezer give to Rivka at the well?

- a. A sack of flour and jug of oil
- b. A gold nose ring and two bracelets
- c. Clothing

3. How did Rivka react when seeing Yitzchak for the first time?

- a. She cried with joy
- b. She told him about her journey in the desert
- c. She got off her camel and covered her face

4. Who was Rivka's father?

- a. Lavan
- b. Betuel
- c. Avraham

