

SICHA SUMMARY

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 25

Chaye Sara, Sicha 2

The Context:

When Avraham sent Eliezer on a mission to find a wife for his son, Yitzchak, he assured him that he would be successful, “G-d, G-d of the heavens, Who took me from my father's house and from the land of my birth, and Who spoke about me, and Who swore to me, saying, 'To your seed will I give this land' He will send His angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there.” (Bereishis 24:7)

After Eliezer met Rivkah at the well, he returned with her to her father, Besuel's, house and recounted his experience to Besuel. Yet he made some minor changes in his presentation. Instead of sharing Avraham's blessing verbatim, he altered it: “And he said to me, 'G-d, before Whom I walked, will **send His angel with you** and make your way prosper, and you shall take a wife for my son from my family and from my father's house.” (Ibid, 24:40)

What is the difference between G-d sending His angel “before you” or “with you,” and why did Eliezer make that change?

The Explanation:

When Avraham assured Eliezer that G-d would send His angel “before you” he was guaranteeing him that G-d would orchestrate his success with minimal human effort. Eliezer and his efforts would merely be following G-d's angel. And indeed, at every turn in his journey, Eliezer experienced Divine intervention. Most famously, even before completing his prayer at the well, Rivkah emerged.

But when Eliezer had to request Besuel's permission to take Rivkah as a wife for Yitzchak, he could not divulge that Avraham had guaranteed him Divine intervention regardless of human effort and action, because then Besuel would respond that his permission is irrelevant, “let G-d take care of it for you.” Eliezer therefore changed the blessing to “G-d... will send His angel with you,” implying that G-d will assist Eliezer in his own efforts, but not supplant them.

Even though Eliezer concealed his supernatural Divine assistance, he still

alluded to it in his presentation to Besuel, subliminally suggesting that his quest would be fulfilled regardless. In repeating Avraham's blessing, Eliezer added the phrase, "and make your way successful." True hatzlacha — success, is when the fruits far exceed human labor, a clear indication that G-d is ensuring the mission's execution.

The Lesson:

The sages teach that "the conversation of the servants of the forefathers is more desirable than the Torah of their children." One explanation of this is that regarding the "Torah of their children" meaning, our conventional Torah and mitzvos, we are given free choice whether to fulfill it or not.

Yet regarding Eliezer's experience, he was guaranteed Divine success regardless of human choice and effort.

Those who are emissaries of the leader of the generation cannot excuse the lack of their tangible success by claiming that they did their work in spreading Judaism, but those under their influence have free choice whether or not to draw closer to Torah and mitzvos. If the emissaries would define themselves as servants of Avraham, and pray for their work to be impactful, thus acknowledging that their success is dependent on a higher power, then they would experience otherworldly success, beyond even the limits of their own efforts.
