

## **And Avraham was old, well on in years...and Avraham said to his servant...that you not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaani. (24:1,3)**

Nowhere in the *Torah* is so much space devoted to one incident, as it is to Avraham's initial command to Eliezer, his servant, followed by the eventual securing of a wife for Yitzchak. Indeed, the Ten Commandments occupy only fourteen *pesukim*, while the story of Yitzchak and Rivkah take up sixty seven *pesukim*! We infer from here the overwhelming significance of Jewish continuity. Avraham's mission in life, together with that of Sarah *Imeinu*, would die with them if there were to be no one faithful to carry on their legacy. Without a secure family, devoted and committed to the faith that he preached, what would Avraham really have accomplished?

Let us look at the beginning of the *parsha*, which recounts Sarah's death and Avraham's search to find a suitable burial place for his *eishas chayil*. The fact that Avraham seemed to have been alone is striking. What happened to all of his students, the converts that he had brought into the fold? Avraham and Sarah travelled everywhere to bring people closer to the monotheistic belief. Where were they? Where was Lot, his "devoted" nephew, who actually repented before he died? How was it that Avraham is left with Sarah - alone?

The answer is that while the others either converted or repented, it was not a complete, internal, all-encompassing experience. When Avraham needed them, they were not present. We infer this from the fact that there is no memory left of them. They did not transmit their conviction to their children, either because it was too late or because they did not care enough. When one believes with great conviction, it is passed on to his children. When one's belief is external - or at best fleeting - it dies with him.

Avraham *Avinu* fully understood the importance of choosing the suitable mate for Yitzchak. The future of *Klal Yisrael* hinged upon this union. This is underscored by the many *pesukim* devoted to this story. Without a future family of committed Jews, what good would the *Torah* be? Sarah had died and left a single child - Yitzchak. He represented the hope and future of their life's work. Without him, their work would be wasted, *Klal Yisrael* would never be. Yitzchak could not transmit his parents' legacy, however, unless he was also blessed with a special wife with whom he would carry on the Abrahamic mission. A present with no future quickly dissipates into the past.

