

Sarah died in Kiryas Arba. (23:2)

Rashi expounds on the juxtaposition of the sudden passing of Sarah *Imeinu* upon the *Akeidah*, Binding of Yitzchak. Apparently, *Satan* came and informed Sarah of Avraham *Avinu*'s intention to slaughter Yitzchak. *U'kimaat shelo nishchat*, "And before he could have been slaughtered," she died. Sarah heard that Yitzchak was about to be slaughtered, and she died. Why does *Rashi* emphasize the fact that she died before he was slaughtered? It is obvious what happened. *Rashi* could have simply said that the very news that her son was on the way to his death, to be slaughtered by his father, was too much for her to handle. Why does he add that her passing occurred before the slaughtering?

Horav Moshe Cordovero, the *Ramak*, *zl*, explains that Sarah heard that Yitzchak had been slaughtered – but, in fact, he had not. Had Yitzchak actually been slaughtered, had Avraham followed through with the command, then Sarah would have been granted strength from Heaven to withstand the emotional and physical toll caused by this tragic news. It is only because she believed that it had already taken place, although, in fact, it had not, that she did not have the Heavenly-fortitude to handle the sudden pressure, that she died. Hashem decrees – and He gives us the power to handle the decree. A person receives only what he can handle – no more. This is why we see some people confront the most mind-numbing circumstances, emerging from them to lead productive lives, while others, under similar circumstances, would have snapped. One was given Heavenly strength to withstand the challenge; the other was not. Hashem does not give us what we are unable to handle. If He gives us a challenge, then we can handle it.

Horav Shlomo Levinstein, *Shlita*, relates the story of a *chassid* who was erroneously told that one of his close relatives had suddenly passed from the world. Overwhelmed with shock and pain, the man fainted. He was revived, and, a few moments later, when he reminded himself of the tragic news, he fainted again. This went on a number of times. The *chassidim* ran to their *Rebbe* to ask what to do for their friend.

The *Rebbe* came, walked over to the *chassid* and whispered in his ear, "It is not true. The news that your relative died was in error. He is very much alive!" When the *chassid* heard the wonderful news, his color returned and he sat up – calm and relaxed, as if nothing had happened. An hour went by, and the *Rebbe*'s words were confirmed. His relative was very much alive. Word spread, as the *chassidim* extolled the virtue and Divine Inspiration with which their *Rebbe* had been endowed.

When the *Rebbe* heard the accolades, he smiled: "It had nothing to do with me. It took no supernatural powers to know that a mistake had occurred. The *pasuk* says: *Baruch she'amar v'hayah ha'olam... Baruch gozeir u'mekayeim*. 'Blessed is He Who spoke and the world came into being... Blessed is He Who decrees and fulfills.' When Hashem issues a decree against a person – *gozeir* – *u'mekayeim*, He gives the person the strength to withstand the effects of the decree. Hashem is *mekayeim*, sustains/maintains the person. When I saw the *chassid* unable to withstand

the effects of the news, I knew that there had to be an error. He was not the beneficiary of added fortitude, because there had been no decree.”