

## Now Avraham was old, well on in years, and Hashem had blessed him with everything. (24:1)

We think of life as measured by years: a long life is one during which one has lived many years; a short life is defined the opposite way. *Horav Eliyahu Lopian, zl*, derives from the above *pasuk* that we should measure life by days – complete days. He quotes the *Zohar HaKadosh*, who teaches that at the beginning of each day, a person's forthcoming "day" asks him, "What will it be today?" What type of day will you have? Will you stand up to the challenges and tests prepared for you by the *yetzer hora*, evil inclination? Will your *yetzer tov*, good inclination, rally and give you the resolution and fortitude to overcome, to triumph? Hence, when a person (at the end of his "one hundred and twenty years") stands before the Heavenly Tribunal and claims success for a life well-lived, he might be shocked to realize how many deficient days he has had. He will be mortified to confront the reality that he actually has not lived such a long life after all. In fact, when he tallies up the sum total of his complete days, he will be saddened to note that he has had a very short lifespan. Avraham *Avinu* lived a life of perfection, in which every moment of every day was used constructively. Thus, he was *ba bayamim*, "came with all of his day."

How does one merit to live such a life? What is the key component that one should employ? What perspective should one maintain in order to live every day to its fullest? I think the answer lies in the concluding words of the *pasuk*: *Va'Hashem beirach es Avraham bakol*, "And Hashem blessed Avraham with everything." When a person acknowledges that everything in life is a blessing from Hashem -- *bakol* – everything -- the good and (what seems to be) the bad are all part of Hashem's blessing, then the person's perspective on his day – the various events, incidents, challenges – highs and lows – are all accepted as having been Heavenly decreed. Such a person goes about his day with complete equanimity, with total faith in Hashem. Thus, every day is complete – no ups and downs. Everything is up, since it emanates from Hashem. His entire life is lived to fulfill the *ratzon*, will, of Hashem.

The *mitzvah* of *mechiyas Amalek*, erasing the memory of our archenemy, Amalek, includes an unusual text, which is part of the *mitzvah*. *Timcheh es zeicher Amalek*, "Erase the memory of Amalek from beneath the Heavens" (*Devarim* 25:19). What is the meaning of, "From beneath the Heavens"? The *Tiferes Shmuel* (as cited by *Horav Elimelech Biderman, Shlita*) explains that these words define the root of Amalek's belief, and, hence, his sinful behavior. He believes that everything that occurs in this world happens *mitachas ha'Shomayim*, "from beneath the Heavens" – naturally. Heaven plays no role in whatever happens in this world. Thus, we are mandated to erase Amalek – *mitachas ha'Shomayim*, and become aware that everything which takes place anywhere in the universe is all min ha'Shomayim, from Heaven, by Heaven.

The *Gerrer Rebbe, zl, Imrei Emes*, derives this idea from the *pasuk* *V'sashmideim mitachas shmei Hashem*, "Destroy them from beneath Hashem's Heavens" (*Eichah* 3:66). We must destroy the notion that anything happens by chance. Coincidence is a word that should be erased from the

lexicon of the observant Jew. Coincidence and chance are two words that are heretical. Nothing happens “under the Heavens.” Without Hashem’s decree, nothing would happen – period.

Prior to the *Satmar Rebbe’s chuppah*, his father, the saintly *Kedushas Yom Tov* asked him, “Do you know why the *chuppah*, wedding canopy, takes place beneath the stars, outside (preferably) and not in a building? It is to remind the *chosson* and *kallah* to look up to Heaven and rely solely on Heaven. It would be a grave error to place one’s trust in his father/father-in-law or the dowry one has been promised.” It is Heaven – and only Heaven -- upon whom we should place our trust.”

The *Kedushas Yom Tov* (unknowingly?) was foreshadowing his own *petirah*, demise, immediately after his son’s *sheva brachos*.

“Things happen” is a popular, overused cliché. Interestingly, we never apply this cliché when “good” things happen. It is when something totally unexpected occurs, something not to our liking, something which suddenly supplants us from our comfort zone. Then, for lack of a better word, we say, “Things happen.” What happened is that “Hashem happened”! It seems bad, but, if we would think, apply ourselves and wait patiently, we would see that there is a good and just reason for everything that occurs.

Rav Biderman presents an insightful analogy – one about which we should think – and rethink – constantly. Someone wanted to take the bus to work one day. “Things happen,” and he missed the bus. He was now forced to take a taxi – something which did not bring him great joy – since the taxi was long in arriving and charged a hefty sum. It was not going to be one of his better days. The man was visibly upset and could not stop *kvetching* about all of his “suffering,” due to being late for the bus.

A good friend, who possessed more than a modicum of common sense, told him, “If you hear that the bus that you missed was in an accident, and that a number of passengers were injured, some critically – would you not praise Hashem for having you miss that bus? Now, I ask you, is it really important for you that the bus should flip over and any number of people be injured just so that you could have a good feeling? Instead, you should praise Hashem that He is leading you in good ways, regardless of what happened to that bus. Who knows why you missed that bus? Nonetheless, you must believe that there was a very good reason for you to miss that bus.”