



**Chayei Sarah: Older and Wiser**

Rabbi Shmuel Silber

So much has happened. The journey which began with *Lech Lecha* has yielded so much fruit. Avraham has created a family and a dynasty. But it is now, in this week's Parsha that Avraham must deal with the tragic loss of his beloved Sarah. In the aftermath of this loss, Avraham decided to send his trusted servant Eliezer to find a wife for Yitzchak. In the middle of these two narratives (the death of Sarah and the search for a wife for Yitzchak) the Torah states:

*"And Abraham was old, advanced in days, and the Lord had blessed Avraham (ba'kol) with everything."  
(Bereishis 24:1)*

What is the meaning of this statement, *God blessed Avraham with everything*? The commentaries advance many different interpretations. Some explain that Avraham was blessed with wealth, longevity, fame and children. Avraham had it all.

The Ramban (1194-1270) advances an incredibly novel approach. *Kol* is one of the descriptive appellations for God. God is "*Kol*," He is anything and everything. The entirety of universal creation begins and ends with God. Everything in this world is wholly and fully dependent on Him. As such, *Ba'Kol* means that God blessed Avraham by giving him a little piece of God's luminescent Divinity. God blessed Avraham by implanting a little piece of Himself into His trusted servant.

The Netziv (Rabbi Naphtali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin (1816-1893) further develops this idea. God is the One we turn to in moments of crisis and need. God is the one we reach out to when we need assistance and reassurance. God is the one who heals the sick and mends the broken heart. This was the power of Avraham. Avraham's days were filled with counseling those who were lost. Avraham's sacred task was to infuse hope and optimism in those who were down on their luck. Avraham was the one who dispensed pearls of wisdom to those who needed direction. Avraham was the one who shouldered the pain of the other as if it were his own. This is how our first patriarch spent his days and nights; devoted to and attending to the needs of the other. In fact, this helps to answer a profound question. *Why did Avraham send Eliezer to look for a wife for Yitzchak? Why didn't Avraham go himself? After all, This was a most important task. The wife of Yitzchak would fill the void left by the passing of Sarah. Why would Avraham outsource such an important endeavor?* Because he was too busy tending to the emotional, physical and spiritual needs of the other. This was the sacred task of Avraham Avinu. There was someone else who could find a wife for Yitzchak. There was no one else to heal the masses.

I believe we can learn an incredible lesson. All of us want a *ba'kol* life. We want blessings and we want them in great abundance. We want health, family, *parnassa* and happiness. The Torah teaches us that sometimes the greatest sense of fulfillment does not come from something you do for yourself. Sometimes, the greatest feeling of completion and Simcha comes from giving to the other. When we help, when we roll up our sleeves and try to make a difference that is truly when we feel we have everything.

God blessed Avraham with the ability to help and heal the other. And Avraham felt complete, happy and fulfilled. May we be privileged to inherit that Divine spark and use it to improve the lives of those around us. May we find the strength to mend the broken hearts and fix that which is broken. May we be blessed with a life of *ba'kol*.