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Sunday November 15 at 2:00 PM, WWW.BUILDPTI.ORG

Parshas Chayei Sarah

by ***Rabbi Baruch Bodenheim***
Rosh Yeshiva

Assigning Proper Values

Let me share an amazing story. Josh was in the middle of a major business meeting, working on a multimillion-dollar deal. His secretary buzzed in and said, "Your wife is on the phone. Should I tell her you'll call her back?" "No, I'll pick up," Josh replied. "Please excuse me for a moment," Josh said to the investors as he picked up the phone. After a few minutes, Josh said to his wife, "Is it okay if we continue this conversation a little later? I'm in the middle of a big business meeting." His wife agreed and Josh continued the meeting.

As they walked out of the meeting, one of the investors turned to Josh and said, "I apologize for intruding, but from the conversation you had with your wife it didn't seem to be something so important. Why did you take the call?" Josh replied, "Because I want my wife to know that she is number one in my life. The business deal we are negotiating is just money. Money comes and goes. Maybe we'll make the deal and maybe we won't, but my wife…is my life. She is my most important priority and I want her to feel that." The investor said, "I am jealous of you; I wish I had that attitude."

In Parshas Chayei Sarah we find a fundamental concept about having the right priorities. Rashi[1] quotes a Gemara[2] which derives that Yishmael did teshuvah. When Avraham passed away, the Torah states that Yitzchak and Yishmael buried Avraham, listing Yitzchak before Yishmael. This indicates that Yishmael, although senior to Yitzchak by fourteen years, recognized Yitzchak's greatness and allowed him to start the burial. How does this one-time occurrence of allowing Yitzchak to go first indicate that Yishmael did teshuvah in all areas of his life?

Rav Shlomo Wolbe[3] answers with an incredible principle about assigning proper values. When someone does something wrong, it often demonstrates that his values are distorted. He has assigned more importance to the wrong choice than the right one. Teshuvah is all about *recalibrating* – assigning the proper values to the choices before us. When Yishmael recognized that proper honor was due to Yitzchak and gave preference to him in Avraham's burial, Yishmael demonstrated that he had reset his values properly. He was back on the right path.

Daily life is all about assigning proper values to actions and people. Many decision points come our way throughout the day. The ability to determine what to do and what not to do…and what to prioritize…depends on our internal set of values.

My wife taught me that when someone calls about a shidduch, I should put the return call on top of my list. Helping people to find their shidduch is a top priority!

An easy way to determine what we value is to consider what are the things we praise or speak of in a positive manner. If we constantly speak of the greatness of various athletes, entertainers, or successful entrepreneurs, that's a telling expression of our values.

Rabbeinu Yonah[4] says that this concept is what Shlomo HaMelech intended with the pasuk, "Like a forging pit for gold and silver, so is a person according to what he praises."[5] A forging pit discerns the purity of gold and silver. The same is true of what one ascribes praise to. It discerns the essence of a person. His words demonstrate what he most values. If one speaks highly of righteous people, that itself is an indication of his own virtue.

I am amazed at the people who come to learn at our yeshiva and at other community shuls. Many come to learn early in the morning, as well as in the evening after a long day. Their actions proclaim that what they value is Torah learning.

Rabbi Singer *zt"l* founded Yeshiva Ner Boruch – PTI based on the principles he was taught by his rabbeim, Rav Aharon Kotler *zt"l* and Rav Moshe Feinstein *zt"l*. The objective was to create a warm and inviting Makom Torah which gives every Jew the ability to learn Torah in a deep and engaging manner, regardless of his skill set.

Our new building will rest on this timeless foundation. Our expanded home will welcome all who seek deep, accessible Torah learning, regardless of age, experience, or degree of religiousness, their common goal being a passion for truth.



1 Chayei Sarah 25:9
2 Bava Basra 16b
3 Rav Wolbe on Chumash, Chayei Sarah 25:9; Alei Shur II p. 30
4 Shaarei Teshuvah 3:148
5 Mishlei 27:21

Halacha in the Haftarah - Parshas Chayei Sarah

by ***Rabbi Moshe Silverstein***
Maggid Shiur

In this week's *Haftarah*[1], the *pasuk*[2] describes how *Bas Sheva* entered *Dovid's* room to inform him that *Adoniyahu* proclaimed himself king in opposition of *Dovid's* promise that *Shlomo* would be his successor. The *Gemara*[3] says that subsequent to her entering the room, *Bas Sheva* cleansed herself thirteen times. *Rashi*[4] explains that this is based on the fact that there are thirteen words in that *pasuk*. *K'nesses Hagedolah*[5] quotes Rav Shlomo Algazi who notes that if *Bas Sheva* is counted as two words there are fourteen words in the *pasuk*. The fact that the *Gemara* assumes that there are thirteen words demonstrates that the correct spelling of *BasSheva* is as one word – בתשבע, and that is how it should be written in a גט, *a halachic bill of divorce*. Indeed, *Dagul Mervavah*[6] writes that this *Gemara* supports the *Beis Shmuel's* ruling[7] that *BasSheva* should be spelled as one word. This was also the opinion of the *Maharshal*[8], who explains that the names we use to refer to a person comprise one single name and should be spelled as one word because once the words are used as the name of a person, they become one compound word and should not be written as two words.

However, *Tiv Gitten*[9] quotes *Nachalas Shiva*[10] who suggests that perhaps what led *Maharshal* to rule that *BasSheva* is one word is that in *Shmuel* the two words of the name are punctuated with a מקף, a joining hyphen – בת-שבע. However, *Tiv Gitten* notes that in *Tehillim*, *Bas Sheva* is written as two words with no hyphen – בת שבע, and indeed, he writes that he saw a גט written in Prague with *Bas Sheva* written as two words. Further, he wonders why *Beis Shmuel* disregards the *Sefer Sheimos*[11] that quotes *Damesek Eliezer* who writes that if one writes בתשבע as one word the גט would be invalid. Although *Sefer Sheimos* suggests that perhaps *Damesek Eliezer's* conclusion was that the גט would be valid if written as one word, *Sefer Sheimos* concludes that ideally, it should be written in a way that looks like two words and only בדיעבד, ex post facto, is it valid if written as one word in accordance with the *Maharshal's* opinion.

Although the *Gemara* seems to indicate that *BasSheva* is counted as one word, *Tiv Gitten* suggests that perhaps that is because there is a hyphen in the punctuation that joins the words such that they are counted as one in the word count. In fact, he adds, they would be counted together as one even if there were no joining hyphen since the two words comprise a single unit, a name, despite that they are technically written as two separate words. We can add that even when *Maharshal* suggested the possibility that they are two separate words he required them to be written on the same line since they comprise one name unit as the *Gemara*[12] suggests is the litmus test to determine if two words comprise one name irrespective of whether they are written as one word. Indeed, *Shulchan Aruch*[13] rules that even names that lend themselves to being split into two words cannot be split amongst two lines. Thus, the fact that the *Gemara* counts *Bas Sheva* as only one in the word count does not necessarily mean that they are one word but just that they are one unit and at most would have to be on the same line. In fact, *Margoliyos Hayam*[14] quotes *Radak*[15] who seems to write the same regarding a similar *Gemara*[16]:

The *Gemara* says that *Achav* merited to rule for twenty-two years because he honored the *Torah* that was given with twenty-two letters. The *Gemara* cites a *pasuk*[17] to demonstrate that he honored the *Torah* by refusing to surrender it to *Ben Hadad*, the king of *Aram*. *Radak* explains that this is hinted at in the fact that the *pasuk* contains twenty-two words. Anticipating that one may observe that there are twenty-three words in that *pasuk*, *Radak* clarifies that the name *Ben Hadad* is considered one word because it is one name. He does not simply write that it <u>is</u> one word but that although בן הדד are two words they are <u>considered</u> as one because they comprise one name. Thus, the word count ascribed to a *pasuk* is not necessarily indicative of the technical number of words because two words that comprise a single name unit may be counted as one even if they do not blend into one compound word as written in the *pasuk*. Accordingly, the *Gemara* is not necessarily a conclusive proof regarding the proper spelling of *Bas Sheva.*

Based on the above, *Tiv Gitten* concludes that *Bas Sheva* should be written to look like two words but that the גט is valid either way provided that the complete name is on one line. *Aruch Hashulchan*[18] rules that a small space should be left between the two words such that it isn't noticeably one or two words. However, the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*[19] writes that it must be written as two words. He contends that the fact that the punctuation includes a hyphen doesn't justify combining two words into one when writing without punctuation. Further, he notes that בת שבע is spelled as two words in *Tanach* and there's no reason to write it differently in a גט. Finally, he reasons that since some invalidate it as one word but none invalidate it as two, it should be written as two. He also notes that the compromise position of writing the word with a small space is incorrect. Nevertheless, it seems to be the consensus that so long as the full name is written on one line, the גט is valid, at least בדיעבד, whether it is written as one word or two.

Notwithstanding, the potential need to join two words comprising a name as one compound word apparently is only when formulating a name. For example: The *Gemara*[20] says that the name ראובן was formed from two words - **ראו**, see, and **בן**, son, as *Leah* invited all to "***see*** *the difference between my* **son** *and my father-in-law's son*" as she prophetically contrasted her son with *Esav*. The resulting name, ראובן, remains as one compound word thereafter, and *Maharshal* would maintain that so is the case with the name *BasSheva*. Yet, if one's name is comprised of two separate preexisting names which do not blend together to create a new meaning, such as *Avraham Yitzchok*, even *Maharshal* would agree that the name would be written as two separate words - אברהם יצחק.[21]

1 מלכים א א:א-ל"א
2 מלכים א א:ט"ו
3 סנהדרין כב ע"א
4 רש"י סנהדרין כב ע"א ד"ה קנחה
5 כנסת הגדולה אה"ע ס' קכ"ט אות ר"ג
6 דגול מרבבה על בית שמואל דלקמן
7 בית שמואל אה"ע ס' קכ"ט שמות נשים אות ב
8 ים של שלמה גיטין פ"ד שמות גיטין ס' ל"א אות א, אות י
9 טיב גיטין על בית שמואל שם אות א (ד)
10 נחלת שבעה ס' מ"ו שמות נשים בת שבע
11 ספר שמות - שמות נשים אות ב בת שבע
12 חולין ס"ד ע"ב - ס"ה ע"א
13 שלחן ערוך אה"ע ס' קכ"ט סע' ל"ב, ל"ג
14 מרגליות הים סנהדרין כ"ב ע"א אות י"ד
15 פ' רד"ק מלכים א כ:ד
16 סנהדרין ק"ב ע"ב
17 מלכים א כ:ט
18 ערוך השלחן אה"ע ס' קכ"ט סע' קכ"ז, שמות הנשים אות ב
19 (ספר אהלי שם שמות נשים אות ב ושם יוסף שם (ה)
20 ברכות ז ע"ב
21 אגרת מדיין ביה"ד הרבני בפתח תקוה, ח' באב התשע"ב, בענין שם בת שבע בגט הע' 1

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