



Chayei Sarah

D'VAR TORAH

Office of The
CHIEF RABBI

Chayei Sarah and the tragic war: The whole Jewish people is one family!

The name of the main character is missing. That's what we find in Parshat Chayei Sarah.

Let's say a school were putting on a play of this week's Parsha and a child came home and said, "I'm going to play Eliezer". I think his parents would be exceptionally proud of him, because we all know that Eliezer is the key character in the portion, which includes within it the longest chapter of the book of Bereishit.

However, let's have a look at the names that are mentioned in the Parsha. The name of Avraham is featured thirty seven times. Yitzchak, is mentioned thirteen times. Rivka twelve times, Sarah nine, Ephron nine, Bethuel four, Lavan three and Eliezer, zero.

Yes, he's the main character, but he's called either Ha'eved – the servant or Ha'ish – the man.

His name does not appear.

And the enormous message conveyed to us by the Torah is that sometimes the greatest contributions to humankind are made by people whose names are not in neon lights.

And that was Eliezer.

That's why, in the Talmud, we are taught: Gadol Sichatam Shel Avdei Avot MiTorotam Shel Banim – the everyday conversation of the servants of the founders of our faith is more significant to us than the Torah, than the formal instruction given to descendent of those founders.

Because when it comes to the literal Torah, we find that the Torah is so concise, and we have to work out what every word says, what every letter means.

But here, the Torah expands on everything that Eliezer said and what he did, because we can learn so much from him.

And indeed, this is what we are finding right now in the midst of a tragic war in Israel.

The contribution to the Jewish people is being made by so many Eliezers. We don't know their names, but the whole Jewish people is one mishpocha, we're one single family right now and we feel the pain of those who are suffering, and everybody is helping in such an extraordinary way.

And you know something?

Eliezer's name says it all. We're helping, we're contributing from the depths of our hearts.

But – 'Eli-ezer' – ultimately, it is God who will help because that's what Eliezer means – Hashem is my help!

And may Hashem indeed help Medinat Yisrael and Am Yisrael at this time. And may we indeed prevail.

Am Yisrael Chai and Shabbat Shalom.