בס"ד

*Rechovot*: The Wellspring of Redemption

After *Yitzchak Avinu* is driven out by the *Plishtim,* he begins to dig a series of wells. The Torah uncharacteristically describes these wells in considerable detail, including the disputes that arose between his shepherds and the shepherds of *Grar* over them. The first two wells were named *Eisek* and *Sitna*, reflecting the ongoing hostility of the *Plishtim*. Finally, *Yitzchak* digs a third well that remains uncontested. He names this well *Rechovot*.

Why is the Torah providing so much detail about stories of such seemingly insignificant well digging?

The *Ramban* (*Bereishit* 26:20) explains that these three wells serve as deep metaphors – and spiritual harbingers – for the three temples that were destined to be built in *Yerushalayim*. The first two *Batei HaMikdash* were hotly contested and eventually destroyed. This is why *Yitzchak* is forced to abandon these first two wells. It is not until the third *Mikdash* is built that *Yerushalayim* will experience a final epoch of peace, when the holy city will remain uncontested in the hands of *Yitzchak*'s descendants.

The *Ramban*'s approach dovetails beautifully with his understanding of an essential principle introduced by *Chazal* in the *Midrash Tanchuma*: מעשה אבות סימן לבנים – the actions of the fathers are a sign for the children. Earlier in *Sefer Bereishit* (12:6), the *Ramban* notes that *Hashem* often will inform a *navi* to perform a physical action that mirrors the content of his *nevuah.* For the spiritual message to fully take hold in this physical world and to become irrevocable, *Hashem* commands the *navi* to "solidify" and "seal" the *nevuah* through a physical action.

Similarly, the many stories of our holy *Avot* served as physical manifestations of spiritual *kochot* that would eventually enable their children to conquer, settle, and build the land of *Eretz Yisrael*. In this sense, *Yitzchak*'s digging of wells helped establish the spiritual foundations upon which all three *Batei HaMikdash* would eventually be built in *Yerushalayim*.

However, there is still an outstanding question. Why should a well serve as a metaphor for the *Mikdash*? Wouldn't another physical structure have served as a more natural representation of the future Temples? Why wells?

Unlike other bodies of water, a well's source is entirely hidden from view. While its supply of water continually replenishes, the origins of these waters are not clear to the one who draws from it. This is why a well serves as a perfect metaphor for the *Mikdash*. In the center of *Yerushalayim*, the *Beit HaMikdash* stands as the *sha'ar hashamayim*,

the heavenly gate through which all spiritual sustenance flows into this world. Essentially, the *Mikdash* "waters" all of Creation. Yet, the source of this spiritual sustenance remains hidden from view (much of this analysis is drawn from Rav Aharon Lopiansky).

Without the *Mikdash*, Creation's water source dries up. The lifeforce of the cosmos is severely limited when *Yerushalayim* remains incomplete.

The wells of *Eretz Plishtim*, it seems, are therefore uniquely bound to the eventual restoration of *Yerushalayim*. Amazingly, the *Radak* (*Bereishit* 26:23) explains that *Bnei Yisrael*'s hold over the land of the *Plishtim* will never be complete until the final days of *Mashiach*. Just as *Yitzchak*'s digging finally succeeded without opposition only his third attempt, so too the land of the *Plishtim* will only be uncontested when the third *Beit HaMikdash* is constructed and *Yerushalayim* is securely established.

May we speedily witness the day when the well of *Rechovot* is fully revealed, and *Eretz Plishtim* and *Yerushalayim* are firmly established in the hands of *Yitzchak Avinu*'s descendants.