

Parshas Chayei Sara | November 10, 2023 | Volume 25 | Issue 3

## Middos: A Prerequisite to Torah

By: Rabbi Aryeh Erlanger (Originally Published 2004)

Our sages teach that true growth in Torah can be achieved only through improving one's character traits. Indeed, we find that all of our Torah leaders were exceptional in the way they related to their fellow human beings.

In this week's Parsha, the Torah describes Avraham's dealings with the Hittites to acquire a burial plot for his wife, Sarah. At the time, Avraham was mourning his wife, who had been a true partner in all of his holy work. Our sages tell us that Avraham taught the men and Sarah taught the women. Moreover, Sarah was greater than Avraham in prophecy.

It's not difficult to imagine Avraham's intense sorrow at that time. And in the midst of it all, he had to negotiate with the Hittites over a plot of land. This is after Hashem gave him the land of Israel, which even the Hittites acknowledged, as they said, "You are a prince of G-d among us." Still, they made the situation difficult for Avraham. (See the Malbim's commentary for the details of the give-and-take between Avraham and the Hittites.)

Despite this, we find Avraham addressing the Hittites with great respect and courtesy.

From Avraham's conversation with the Hittites, one cannot discern that this is a man who has just lost his wife.

This is a fundamental concept in middos. When relating to others, just because a person is suffering and in pain, others do not have to suffer as well.

The Torah mentions that Avraham bowed down to the Hittites. We must understand, however, that this was not flattery. A man as great as Avraham puts his trust in Hashem and does not flatter anyone. It is clear that Avraham behaved in this fashion because of the deep respect he had for his fellow human beings. Even in a difficult moment, Avraham did not forget his obligation to treat other people with respect.

Source: Michtav Me'elياهو

## Alumni Focus

### Rabbi Aryeh Erlanger

PAST



Rabbi Erlanger, teaching in Kollel, 2005

## 2003-2006

Years as a Denver  
Kollel Scholar

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Rabbi Aryeh Erlanger, teaching in 2023

## REBBI

Mesivta  
Edison Yeshiva

## Kollel Happenings



Rabbi Zev Cohen of Chicago addressing the Kollel.

Rabbi Cohen was in Denver as the keynote speaker for Agudah of Colorado siyum on Seder Nashim.