



MIDEI CHODESH

B'CHODSHO

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The God of Heaven and the God of Earth

Sometimes a Torah thought that you learned years ago acquires new and urgent significance, as the world around you shifts.

Rashi notes that when Avraham instructs Eliezer to find a wife for Yitzchak, he refers to God twice... with a striking difference...

Speaking of the God who launched Avraham's own life mission, the Patriarch states:

"HaShem, God of Heaven who took me from the house of my father and from the land of my birth ..."

Yet, when Avraham refers to God in "real time," at the point when he is speaking to Eliezer, he states: "and I will have you swear by *Hashem, God of Heaven and God of Earth...*"

Why the remarkable difference? asks Rashi. Why does Avraham describe Hashem as the God of Heaven when recounting the instruction of *Lech Lecha*; yet speak of Him "now" as the God of Heaven *and* the God of Earth?

Answers Rashi... Avraham effectively makes an astounding claim concerning his own life work:

When I was commanded to embark upon my initial journey, Hashem was only the God of Heaven. His name was not known here on Earth.

Now, however, that I have made HaShem's name known through my words and my actions, I can confidently say that he is

the God of Heaven and the God of Earth.

In one dramatic stroke, Avraham identifies, not only his own mission, but the mission of his descendants throughout time. We are tasked with the duty to be *mikadeish shem shamayim*, to sanctify God's name, to bring God into this world; through our fulfillment of His will.

Today, this sanctified task is shaped by heartbreak, struggle, and sacrifice...

For, as we fight to gain security on this strip of land that is our nation's home; our struggle is one of global dimensions...

This is a war between light and darkness; between the sanctification of life and the celebration of destruction and death; between the force of good and the power of Amalek; between those who strive to bring God into the world and those who would deny Him entry.

All eyes are upon us. Amazingly, we find ourselves once again at the vanguard, at the spear-point, of a conflagration that will affect the future of humanity.

The cost is, oh so, dear! *But God's presence in this world depends upon our victory...*

This is a war that we must, and with HaShem's help will, win. ■

Rabbi Goldin is the author of the OU Press volumes "Unlocking the Torah Text," and "Unlocking the Haggada."