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## פרשת חיי שרה

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### פרק כג פסוק טז

וַיִּשְׁמַע אַבְרָהָם אֶל-עֶפְרוֹן וַיִּשְׁקַל אַבְרָהָם לְעֶפְרוֹן אֶת-הַכֶּסֶף אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר בְּאָזְנֵי  
בְּנֵי-חֵת אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שְׁקָל כֶּסֶף עֹבֵר לְסֹחֵר:

### רש"י

וַיִּשְׁקַל אַבְרָהָם לְעֶפְרוֹן. חָסַר וַי"ו, לְפִי שְׂאֵמַר הַרְבֵּה וְאָפְלוּ מְעַט לֹא עָשָׂה,  
שֶׁנִּשְׁטַל מִמֶּנּוּ שְׁקָלִים גְּדוּלִים<sup>1</sup>

### מושג

צְדִיקִים אוֹמְרִים מְעַט וְעוֹשִׂים הַרְבֵּה, רְשָׁעִים אוֹמְרִים הַרְבֵּה וְאָפְלוּ מְעַט אֵינָם  
עוֹשִׂים

### Translation:

The Tzadikim say little but do much, the wicked say much but do not do even a little.

### Explanation:

A person who is truly a Tzadik does not talk about what he is going to do, but rather does the good deed. But a Rosha talks all the time about the great things he will do, but in the end does nothing. One can frequently know how much a person will actually do by how much they talk about it.

### Looking in the Pasuk:

As we look at the name עֶפְרוֹן we find it mentioned many times and every time it is spelled with a וַי"ו. Only once is it spelled without the וַי"ו, leading Rashi to wonder why. Also, why at the end of the Pasuk does it add עֹבֵר לְסֹחֵר, money that was accepted in the market?

The answer is that Avrohom understood<sup>2</sup> very well that עֶפְרוֹן would only accept the best coins, even though עֶפְרוֹן was talking as if he was generous. Avrohom saw that עֶפְרוֹן's words were empty and therefore his name is spelled empty, missing the וַי"ו.<sup>3</sup>

### Musag Learning Outcomes:

Know: Personality of Ephron. Wicked say much yet do nothing, opposite by Tzadik.

Understand: Correlation between speech and action.

Think: Analyze text of Pasuk comparing spelling of Ephron's name and extra words.

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1 See note #1

2 See note #2

3 See note #3

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## NOTES

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1. Rashi's comment comes from 2 sources which he molded into one. The idea of the missing vov comes from the Midrash Rabba:

בראשית רבה (וילנא) פרשת חיי שרה פרשה נח סימן ז  
היינו הא דכתיב (זה מה שכתוב) (משלי כח:כב) נִבְהַל לְהוֹן אִישׁ רַע עֵינָיו, וְלֹא יִדַע פִּי־חֶסֶד וּבְאֲזָנוֹ,  
*He who hastens to be rich has an evil eye, and considers not, that want shall come upon him.*

נבהל להון איש רע עין, זה עפרון שהכניס עין רע בממונו של צדיק, ולא ידע כי חסר יבואנו, שחסרתו התורה וא"ו הדא הוא דכתיב וישמע אברהם אל עפרון וישקול אברהם לעפרון, עפרון כתיב חסר וא"ו

בבא מציעא פז. The idea of רשעים אומרים הרבה (and the source of our Musag) comes from the Talmud. כתוב (בראשית יח) ואל הבקר רץ אברהם, אמר רבי אלעזר: מכאן שצדיקים אומרים מעט ועושים הרבה, רשעים אומרים הרבה ואפילו מעט אינם עושים. מנלן (מאיפה יודעים)? מעפרון. מעיקרא (בתחילה) כתיב ארץ ארבע מאות שקל כסף, ולבסוף כתיב וישמע אברהם אל עפרון וישקל אברהם לעפרון את הכסף אשר דבר באזני בני חת ארבע מאות שקל כסף עבר לסחר דלא שקל (לקח) מיניה (ממנו) אלא קנטרי.

2. Here we touch upon an interesting question. Did Ephron actually tell Avrohom that he wanted the best coins or did Avrohom understand from Ephron's speech that he would only take the best coins (as I infer here)? From the beginning of the Pasuk we can infer the latter. The words וישמע וישמע seem unnecessary. Rather it means that he 'heard' exactly what Ephron was really saying; that he would only take the best coins. This approach seems to be the one taken by the רשב"ם here who comments on the words וישמע אברהם and writes ברמיזא. The Rashbam comments that Avrohom understood by the 'hints' mentioned by Ephron exactly what he had in mind.

This, however, begs another question. How did Avrohom know? What were these רמזים the Rashbam is referring to?

There seems to be an interesting correlation between doing much/saying little and saying much/doing little. We usually understand that the two are not really related, just that רשעים not only do little but they also talk a lot, and צדיקים not only do much but they also talk a little. But perhaps the two are more tightly related. There is a saying, "I will let my actions do the talking". People who act see no reason to talk about what they do as their actions will speak for themselves. When someone talks so much about what they are about to do, it is a sure sign that they do not plan on actually doing anything. (Of course if an action was done in private then this would not hold true.)

Avrohom just had to hear the constant public declarations of Ephron's intent to do good, and he knew that such good would never be forthcoming and only the best coins would be accepted.

(As an aside, I have frequently wondered if the connection between acting and speaking might be even more powerful. It is possible that those who speak much about the good they are about to do, will not actually do anything as they begin to feel that the talk alone was sufficient. They feel so good about the talk they have provided that they forget that they actually have done nothing!)

3. The כלי יקר provides an interesting explanation as to why the וי"ו was removed. He begins by quoting the בעל הטורים who comments that עפרון is the same gematria as רע עין (See the Midrash quoted in footnote 1, where we see that עפרון is indeed called רע עין). Things get really interesting when you realize that the gematria for both is 400, the exact amount Ephron took from Avrohom. The כלי יקר then quotes the Gemarah בבא בתרא ט: which teaches: כל הנותן פרוטה כל הנותן פרוטה, לעני מתברך בשש ברכות, one could thus conclude that if he or she did not give to the poor, but rather acted as a רע עין, they would lose these six blessings. Thus, says the כלי יקר, Ephron lost the six blessings, represented by losing the וי"ו (6) in his name.

4. Questions for further thought:

The purchase of מערת המכפלה was the first acquisition of land in ארץ ישראל.

- Why did Avrohom have to purchase the land?
- Didn't Hashem promise to give him the land?