

THE TORAH OF LEADERSHIP

Preserving or Initiating? | Erica Brown | November 11, 2021



Abraham's oath to the Philistine King Abimelech. Lithograph. University of Toronto Wenceslaus Hollar Digital Collection

Genesis 26:15-22

וְכָל־הַבְּאֵרֹת אֲשֶׁר חָפְרוּ עֲבָדֵי אַבְיֹוֹ בִּימֵי אַבְרָהָם אָבִיו סִתְּמוּם פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיִּמְלְאוּם עֶפְרוֹ:

וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְיֵמֶלֶךְ אֶל־יִצְחָק לֵךְ מֵעִמָּנוּ כִּי־עָצַמְתָּ מִמָּנוּ מְאֹד:

וַיִּלֶךְ מִשָּׁם יִצְחָק וַיֵּסֶוּ בְּגִזְל־גֶּר וַיֵּשֶׁב שָׁם:

וַיֵּשֶׁב יִצְחָק וַיִּחְפֹּר וְאֶת־בְּאֵרֹת הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר חָפְרוּ בִּימֵי אַבְרָהָם אָבִיו וַיִּסְתְּמוּם פְּלִשְׁתִּים אַחֲרָי מוֹת אַבְרָהָם וַיִּקְרָא לָהֶן שְׁמוֹת כַּשֵּׁמֶת אֲשֶׁר־קָרָא לָהֶן אָבִיו:

וַיִּחְפְּרוּ עֲבָדֵי־יִצְחָק בְּגִזְל וַיִּמְצְאוּ־שָׁם בְּאֵר מַיִם חַיִּים:



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וַיָּרִיבוּ רֵעֵי גֵרָר עִם־רֵעֵי יִצְחָק לֵאמֹר לָנוּ הַמַּיִם וַיִּקְרָא שְׁם־הַבְּאֵר לְעֵשֶׂק כִּי הִתְעַשְׂקוּ עִמּוֹ:

וַיִּתְּפוּרוּ בְּאֵר אֲחֻרַת וַיָּרִיבוּ גַם־עָלֶיהָ וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמָהּ שִׁטְנָה:

וַיַּעֲתֶק מִשָּׁם וַיִּחְפֹּר בְּאֵר אֲחֻרַת וְלֹא רָבוּ עָלֶיהָ וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמָהּ רְחֹבוֹת וַיֵּאמֶר כִּי־עָתִידָהּ הִרְחִיב יְהוָה לָנוּ וּפְרִינוּ בְּאֶרֶץ:

And the Philistines stopped up all the wells which his father’s servants had dug in the days of his father Abraham, filling them with earth. And Abimelech said to Isaac, “Go away from us, for you have become far too big for us.” So Isaac departed from there and encamped in the wadi of Gerar, where he settled. Isaac dug anew the wells which had been dug in the days of his father Abraham and which the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham’s death; and he gave them the same names that his father had given them. But when Isaac’s servants, digging in the wadi, found there a well of spring water, the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac’s herdsmen, saying, “The water is ours.” He named that well Esek, because they contended with him. And when they dug another well, they disputed over that one also; so he named it Sitnah. He moved from there and dug yet another well, and they did not quarrel over it; so he called it Rehoboth, saying, “Now at last the Lord has granted us ample space to increase in the land.”

Reflective Question

When, in your leadership, did you work hard to preserve what had been done by your predecessor and when have you had to go in a different direction?

Leadership Challenge

Consider naming or renaming an initiative to communicate a specific message.

