

Torah Tidbits

ISSUE 1539

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פרשת חיי שרה
PARSHAT CHAYEI SARA
SHABBAT MEVARCHIM

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OU Israel Rabbinic/Leadership Chizuk Mission



Sedra Summary
Rabbi Reuven Tradburks
Page 12



Our Dynasty is Our Destiny
Rebbetzin Dr. Adina
Shmidman Page 48

ויקם השדה והמערה אשר-בו לאברהם
לאחזת-קבר מאת בני-חתן בראשית כ"ג:כ'

YERUSHALAYIM SHABBAT PARSHAT CHAYEI SARA ZMANIM
CANDLES 4:07 PM • HAVDALA 5:21 PM • RABBEINU TAM 6:00 PM



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HELPFUL REMINDERS



Rosh Chodesh Kislev is on Tuesday November 14th

ראש חודש כסלו יהיה ביום שלישי הבא עלינו ועל כל ישראל לטובה
מוֹלַד חוֹדֶשׁ כִּסְלוֹ יִהְיֶה בַּיּוֹם שֵׁנִי, שִׁבְעַת עֶשְׂרֵה דְקוּוֹת וּשְׁנֵי חֻלְקִים אַחֲרֵי שִׁבְעַת בְּבִקְרָה



Earliest Kiddush Levana, 3 Days After Molad: 4 Kislev/Thurs.night Nov. 16

7 Days After Molad: 8 Kislev/ Mon. night Nov. 20

Last Opportunity to Say Kiddush Levana until: 15 Kislev/Mon. night Nov. 27

A SHORT VORT | BY RABBI CHANOCH YERES

Rav, Beit Knesset Be'it Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

יִרְץ הַעֶבֶד לִקְרֹאתָהּ וַיֹּאמֶר הִגְמַאֲיִנִי נָא מֵעַט מִיָּם מִכֶּדֶךְ (כד:י"ד)

"And the servant ran to meet her, and said: Give me a drink, I pray, A little water from your pitcher." (24:17)

Why did Eliezer "run" to greet Rivka, at this early stage of just seeing her?

Rashi quotes the Midrash that Eliezer saw that the waters from the well rose to Rivka.

However, if Eliezer really did witness such a great miracle performed for Rivka, why was it necessary for Eliezer to continue to test to see whether she would treat him kindly? The miracle itself should have sufficed the proof of her worthiness.

The Admor Rabbi Yechezkel M'Kozmir (1771-1856 Poland) answers that even though Eliezer saw the miracle of the water rising to her, Eliezer knew that deeds and personality traits are much more significant than any mystical hints.

Shabbat Shalom

CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



OTHER Z'MANIM



	CHAYEI SARA		TOLDOT	
	CANDLES	HAVDALA	CANDLES	HAVDALA
Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	4:07	5:21	4:03	5:17
Aza Area (Netivot, Sderot et al)	4:25	5:24	4:21	5:20
Beit Shemesh / RBS	4:26	5:22	4:22	5:18
Alon Shvut	4:23	5:21	4:19	5:18
Raanana / Tel Mond / Herzliya / K. Saba	4:23	5:22	4:19	5:18
Modiin / Chashmonaim	4:23	5:21	4:19	5:18
Netanya	4:23	5:21	4:19	5:18
Be'er Sheva	4:25	5:23	4:21	5:20
Rehovot	4:24	5:22	4:20	5:19
Petach Tikva	4:07	5:22	4:03	5:18
Ginot Shomron	4:22	5:21	4:18	5:17
Haifa / Zichron	4:12	5:20	4:07	5:17
Gush Shiloh	4:22	5:20	4:18	5:17
Tel Aviv / Givat Shmuel	4:24	5:22	4:20	5:19
Givat Ze'ev	4:27	5:21	4:23	5:17
Chevron / Kiryat Arba	4:23	5:22	4:19	5:18
Ashkelon	4:25	5:24	4:21	5:20
Yad Binyamin	4:24	5:22	4:20	5:19
Tzfat / Bikat HaYarden	4:15	5:18	4:10	5:14
Golan	4:19	5:18	4:15	5:14
Nahariya/Maalot	4:20	5:20	4:16	5:16
Afula	4:21	5:19	4:17	5:16

Rabbeinu Tam (Jerusalem) - 6:00 PM • Next Week - 5:56 PM

All Times According to MyZmanim (20 mins before Sunset in most Cities;
40 mins in Yerushalayim and Petach Tikva; 30 mins in Tzfat and Haifa)

Daf Yomi: Bava Kama 9

JERUSALEM

Ranges 11 days Wed - Shabbat

Nov 8 - 18 / 24 MarCheshvan - 5 Kislev

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin **5:08 - 5:16**

Sunrise **6:01 - 6:09**

Sof Zman Kriat Shema **8:41 - 8:46**

Magen Avraham **8:04 - 8:09**

Sof Zman Tefila **9:35 - 9:39**

(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanya)

Chatzot (Halachic Noon) **11:22 - 11:24**

Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha) **11:52 - 11:54**

Plag Mincha **3:37 - 3:32**

Sunset (Including Elevation) **4:49 - 4:43**



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DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

RABBI AVI BERMAN
Executive Director, OU Israel

One of the most common questions I have been getting for the last four weeks is, “Avi, how can I volunteer?” “How can I help?” “Rabbi Berman, tell us what we can do.” I always tell them that the first response in the Jewish arsenal is prayer. After all, *Klal Yisrael* depends on *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, and first and foremost we must turn to Him and *daven* our hearts out. We have the most amazing soldiers in the world, but we must rely on *Hashem* to be successful and come home safely. As part of this effort, the OU has been providing *chizuk* calls and online *Shiurim* three times a day, where a person can call in and receive inspiring and encouraging messages from the OU staff, and recite chapters of *Tehillim* together.

However, the reality is that people also want to roll up their sleeves and get to work, to volunteer, to do something. Last week, OU Israel provided such an opportunity for rabbis and lay leaders from twenty one communities all across America. We hosted them on a rabbinic mission to Israel to do, in addition to pray. They came to embrace, give support, and be *mechazek*, our brothers and sisters who have been injured, lost loved ones, or have had family members kidnapped and taken hostage in Gaza. They were able to see firsthand what is happening here, and when they returned to America, they were able to tell their communities what they saw and encourage them to *daven* more, learn

Torah more, or to help support the volunteer work in Israel.

There was one main goal of this mission. And that was to make sure that every rabbi and lay leader who came on the mission would “adopt” at least one family among the families that we met. Whether that was the family of a soldier, a civilian in the hospital who was injured over the last four weeks, a widow whose husband died fighting for Israel, or any other person or family who needs support right now. We wanted these communities to see and show their support.

When my friends and colleagues in New York called me to ask about planning such a mission, I told them that I am all in favor of this mission, but on one condition: that the mission does not end when they board the plane back to America. A mission like this must continue so long as *chizuk* is needed, so long as our brothers and sisters are in pain, and this is exactly what they had in mind. These rabbis and lay leaders cannot just come to feel they’ve given support, and then forget about it two days later. This trip must be the start of a long term mission of care, concern, and support.

And so it was. We visited homes, hospitals, an army base. We went to Tel Hashomer, Soroka Medical Center, and Hadassah Har Hatzofim hospitals. We had the opportunity to *daven* at the *Kotel* and *Maarat Hamachpela*. We visited families from Sderot down south, all the way up to Akko

in the north, and throughout Israel, to give support during these difficult times.

To say it was emotional is an understatement. We had meetings afterwards with the members of the mission, divided into smaller groups, to talk about what they experienced. To see rabbis shed tears like this... it's hard to describe. But there was one comment that caught my attention more than anything else. And it was one that repeated itself among the different groups, separately. They would say, "Avi, I feel as if I received more *chizuk* from them than they did from me." I heard that sentiment over and over again.

What they saw was *mesirut nefesh*.

They gained a deeper understanding that they were part of a greater cause. The passion for the State of Israel. The sense of purpose and mission. The pride of parents for their children for the fact that they helped make history for Israel and helping to bring back security to the Jewish people. Our mission members saw all of this, and it inspired them. It was taken to heart.

Many soldiers do not receive the *hakarat hatov* that they really deserve. I knew we had to visit one particular unit that deals with probably the most unpleasant aspect of the job. And that is the Rabbanut Hatzva'it, which deals with identifying the bodies of the deceased, and preparing them for burial. Since *Simchat Torah*, they have unfortunately been working non-stop around the clock. I am not exaggerating when I call

these people angels. We met with soldiers that had run around to find and obtain DNA machines, fingerprint database machines, and all the rest, doing everything they possibly can to identify every soldier and every civilian, and bring them to respectful burials.

We spoke to them. I couldn't believe what they had to see, experience. I won't go into the gory details. But let me just say that they



had to see, smell, deal with, the most unpleasant things a person can experience. But when you talk to them, you get a sense far from being bothered by the job, they see it as their *zechut*. That they know

that they have helped yet another family have a Jewish burial. That they have brought clarity to a family that now no longer has to go on

In loving memory of
our beloved father and grandfather
JOACHIM WEINDLING z"l

May the Torah learning
from this issue be לעילוי נשמת

חיים יצחק בן נפתלי ז"ל
כ השון - on his 17th yahrtzeit

Greatly missed by his children
and grandchildren
Marsha, Melissa, and Becky Pottash
Steven and Lizzie Weindling
Shoshanah-Ruth, Naftalia Maya,
and Yaira Rachel Weindling
Nan Abbot and Lee DiTullio

not knowing where their child or loved one is. These are absolute angels. They are performing this *mesirat nefesh* in closed rooms, behind the scenes, without any big ceremonies or parades.

So I knew we needed to visit them. We provided a well-deserved BBQ lunch generously donated by a loving brother and sister in North America, a big hug, heartfelt dancing, and we were joined by Rav Shmuel Eliyahu who gave all of us, rabbis, soldiers, and lay leaders, important *chizuk*. Once again, we were struck by the feeling that, on this mission of giving *chizuk*, we received a lot more than we were able to give.

The members of the mission left late last week, but already sent us their *shul* flyers dedicating *shiuirim* and other community events to the families they had adopted, and in memory of those lost loved ones of these

families. The mission is not over. It has only just begun. So I encourage all of you to go seek ways to give *chizuk*. What I suspect you will find, as I did on this mission, is that you will gain much more than you can give.

I want to take this opportunity to give tremendous thanks to the leadership of the OU in North America including the four representatives who led the mission Rabbi Yaakov Glaser, Rabbi Adir Posy, Rabbi Yisrael Motzen, and Rabbi Naftali Herrmann. And I want to thank my entire staff who helped tremendously to make this mission possible. Without them, it would not have happened. Unfortunately, the size of my column is limited, and I cannot tell you the endless stories I have from this unbelievable mission. So I invite you, dear reader, to visit the OU Israel Instagram page [@theouisrael](https://www.instagram.com/theouisrael) to view the incredible videos and pictures that Laya Bejell and Nina Broder are publishing there, and see what we are doing to provide and gain *chizuk* at OU Israel every day.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



Rabbi Avi Berman
Executive Director, OU Israel
aberman@ouisrael.org

**In loving memory of
my beloved husband
of 71 years**

**משה מרדכי הלוי סג"ל ז"ל
Martin M. Segal z"l**

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FROM THE DESK OF RABBI MOSHE HAUER

OU EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT



Strangers in Our Land

Much of the world around us has adopted a narrative and perspective that eludes our understanding. This has been deeply disorienting and confusing for us in the context of the existential battle that the Jewish people is engaged in, both in Israel and in a world enflamed with antisemitism. This has been even more difficult than the challenges we have become more accustomed to facing from the main streaming of non-traditional values that have similarly placed the traditional religious community on the defensive, portrayed consistently as archaic and intolerant and as an impediment to the culture that others wish to create.

Is this our unique contemporary experience, living as we do in times of rapid and disorienting change? Maharal of Prague (*Gevuros Hashem* end of ch. 9) thought otherwise, as he considered this a phenomenon basic and endemic to those who wish to live true and elevated lives. He saw this attitude expressed in the words of our daily *Amidah*: “To the righteous, the pious, the elders of Your people the House of Israel, the remnant of their scholars, the righteous strangers (*geirei hatzedek*), and to us, may Your compassion be aroused.” To Maharal, the righteous strangers are part of this listing because in fact every

moral and pious person whose primary drivers are the Torah’s eternal moral and spiritual values experiences life in this world as a bit of an outsider.

This tension is reflected as well in the dialogue of Avraham with the inhabitants of Chevron (Bereishit 23:4). “I am a stranger and a resident amongst you.” Generations of commentary struggled to understand how one person can characterize himself both as a stranger to and a

**In Memory of
MIRYAM VITERBI a”h
on her first yahrzeit
and her husband
NATAN BEN HORIN z”l**

Miryam was a proud descendant of the rabbis of Padua, Italy and was hidden in Assisi during World War II, and Natan was an Israeli war veteran and a diplomat representing the Jewish people at the Vatican in Rome. Both were accomplished in their fields and their extensive research.

Remembered and honoured for their devotion and contribution to our people.

זכרונם לברכה

**Our condolences to her nephews
Emanuele and
Rabbi Benedetto Carucci Viterbi**

*From their neighbours
in Yerushalayim
Tova & Colin Robinson*

resident of the same community.

Rav Soloveitchik saw the phrase as reflecting this duality that is the lot of the Jew within society, especially within modern civilization. "Certainly, I am a resident, I am one of you. I engage in business as you do, I speak your language, I take full part in your social-economic institutions. But at the same time, I am a stranger and, in some aspects, a foreigner. I belong to a particular world, one that is completely foreign to you. It is a world in which I am at one with the Creator. It is a world populated by characters unknown to you, with a tradition that you do not understand, with spiritual values that seem impractical in your eyes. It is a world filled with altars and sacrifices, a world of Torah, of loving-kindness, of sanctity and purity."

Avraham was known as the *Ivri*, the person who was at odds with the entire world, even as he was beloved and impactful in that world. This is a legacy that we, his descendants, carry. As fully integrated, successful, and appreciated as we may become within the worlds of science, business, government, or medicine, we necessarily maintain our core value system that leaves us independent and apart, and often feeling foreign. We feel that due to our unique values, and we feel that deeply due to our identity as Jews.

We hope and pray for a time when those around us will look to us as Avraham's contemporaries looked to him. *Nesi Elokim atah b'tocheinu*. "You are a Prince of G-d in our midst." "Avraham, we see you as neither a resident nor a stranger. You are amongst us but above us, distinguished by the nobility of your faith, your spirit, and your values." ■

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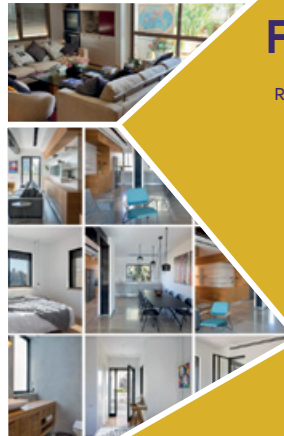


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ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY

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PARSHAT CHAYEI SARA

Our parsha is the transition from Avraham and Sara to Yitzchak and Rivka; Sara dies at the beginning of the parsha, Avraham toward the end. Avraham buys Ma'arat Hamachpela where Sara is buried. Avraham directs his servant to travel to Avraham's land to bring a wife for Yitzchak. Upon arrival, the servant asks G-d to show him the right one, the one who will give drink to him and his animals. Rivka appears, does what he had hoped. He tells the story to her family. They agree that she is the one. Yitzchak greets them on their arrival and marries Rivka. Avraham's other children are listed. Avraham dies. Yishmael's descendants are listed.



1ST ALIYA (23:1-16)

Sara dies at age 127 in Kiryat Arba, Chevron. Avraham needs to buy a burial plot. He is treated with nobility and respect. The people want to give him a plot, while he insists on purchasing it. He is successful in buying Ma'arat Hamachpela.

Avraham has clearly earned the respect and admiration of the people. He in turn treats them with great respect, bowing twice. The promises made to Avraham, of fame, of fortune and of family, have all been fulfilled. Yitzchak has been born; Avraham is a man of great prominence; the people call him a prince of G-d. And he is wealthy. But. The promise that he would

have the Land of Israel? He does not even own a burial plot. Fame, fortune and family, yes; foothold in the Land, no.



2ND ALIYA (23:17-24:9)

Sara is buried. Avraham requests from his chief of staff to swear to not have Yitzchak marry a Canaanite. Rather, "go to my land, my birthplace" to find a wife for Yitzchak. Do not take Yitzchak there. If she refuses to come, you have done all you can.

Yes, Avraham addresses his chief of staff. While we commonly refer to him as Eliezer, his name does not appear in this story. He is not the only anonymous person to profoundly influence the story of the Jewish people. He takes his place alongside the man Joseph will encounter on his way to see his brothers, who steers Joseph in their direction. Both nameless. As if to say: is *he* finding a wife, or is *He* finding the wife for Yitzchak? Many messengers has He.

And why is Avraham so insistent on sending his servant to "my land, my birthplace"? You cannot help but hear an echo from Lech Lecha – "from your land, from your birthplace" – said to Avraham. It could be that Avraham is seeking a woman to lead the new generation of the Jewish people who will walk in his footsteps. Literally. He is seeking a woman who will walk in the footsteps of Sara. Sara, not just Avraham, left her land, her birthplace, her family home, journeying to the Land of Israel. This new generation will be led by a

woman who too leaves her land, her birthplace and her parent's home.

Following in the footsteps will animate Yitzchak and Rivka's life. Yitzchak will do many of the things that Avraham did – digging the wells, going to Gerar. Rivka will walk in the footsteps of Sara; Sara sent Yishmael away, Rivka will in effect cause Esav to be sent away from the Jewish people.



3RD ALIYA (24:10-26)

The servant arrives in Nachor's city. He asks G-d for a sign; the woman who gives me and my camels to drink, she is the one. Rivka appears and does just that. She tells him she is from the family of Nachor. And there is food for the camels and room for him to stay. The man bows to G-d.

Rivka is not only going to walk in Sara's footsteps, leaving her home to go to the Land of Israel. She also follows in the footsteps of kindness. In the story of Avraham and Sara's generosity to the 3 men at the beginning of Vayera, there are 2 "ratz – run" and 2 "maher – fast"; they served their guests enthusiastically. Rivka has 2 maher's and 1 ratz here and then another when she runs home. And – Avraham offered his guests "a little water". Here too the servant asks for "a little water". Not sure that drawing water for 10 camels would be called a little – but nary a peep of objection from Rivka. She is an enthusiastic and magnanimous woman of generosity, just like the family of Avraham.



4TH ALIYA (24:27-52)

Rivka runs to tell her mother. Her brother Lavan greets the man, welcomes him in. But before he eats, the man insists on relating what just happened.

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He relates that he is Avraham's servant. And that Avraham has been blessed. And is insistent on bringing a wife for Yitzchak from his family. And of his own deal with G-d: that if the woman did as he had said, he would see it as a sign. And his bowing to G-d. He finishes by asking them if Rivka shall join him. They respond yes; he bows to G-d.

Happy endings are fun to read once. Or twice. The commentaries address the detail with which the Torah repeats the story, this time told by the servant. They mine the story for lessons.

But one lesson that jumps out is the G-d talk. There is a lot of G-d talk by this servant. But not just the servant; Lavan and Betuel respond "this has come from G-d", "she will go as G-d spoke". Talk of G-d does not seem foreign to them. Perhaps this is the lingering effect of Avraham's influence; even after all these years of being away from his family, the influence of his belief in G-d still persists. And the servant, the chief of staff's language is deeply religious language – he certainly has been profoundly influenced by Avraham's calling in the name of G-d.



5TH ALIYA (24:53-67)

The servant is ready to leave.

When Rivka's mother and brother ask for a little more time, the servant presses them. They ask Rivka her wish; she will go. They bless her. Upon their arrival in the Negev, Yitzchak is coming from Beer L'chai Roi. He sees the camels; she sees him. Yitzchak is told of all that occurred. Yitzchak and Rivka marry.

With the mission to find a wife for Yitzchak successful, someone is missing from this return: Avraham. They travel right to Yitzchak.

Rivka and he marry. And Avraham is not heard from again. A true passing of the baton.

Why is it necessary to tell us Yitzchak was in Beer L'chai Roi? In fact, he returns there and resides there after Avraham's death. Why? That is the place where Yishmael was saved from near death after being banished by Sara. Perhaps Yitzchak regrets Yishmael's banishment and seeks to make peace with his brother. We will see that he does the same later with his own sons; he seems to want both Yaakov and Esav to continue his legacy. The men seem to want reconciliation; the women see the need to be definitive. Sara banishes Yishmael. Rivka banishes Esav. Yet, Avraham is reluctant to send Yishmael away and Yitzchak seeks reconciliation with Yishmael and seeks to bless Esav. The women prevail. The Torah sides with the women; Yitzchak and not Yishmael, Yaakov and not Esav are the forefathers, the bearers of the legacy of Avraham.



6TH ALIYA (25:1-11)

Avraham marries Keturah; they have 6 sons. All that Avraham

has he gives to Yitzchak; these are sent eastward with gifts. Avraham dies at age 175; he is buried by Yitzchak and Yishmael in Ma'arat Hamachpela. Yitzchak is blessed by G-d: he lives in Beer L'chai Roi.

The transition from Avraham to Yitzchak is complete. While G-d has been a silent partner in this parsha, here He completes the generational transfer – He blesses Yitzchak. The Jewish people will be Yitzchak and not Yishmael.



7TH ALIYA (25:12-18)

The generations of Yishmael are enumerated. Yishmael dies. His

descendants dwell from Egypt to Assyria.

Yishmael's story is brief. He has numerous and powerful offspring. The brevity is to emphasize that the Torah is not as interested in the history of power as in the history of the covenant of G-d with the Jewish people. And that will be told at great length.

HAFTORAH

1 MELACHIM 1: 1-31

The theme of this week's *haftorah* echoes the theme in our parsha which mentions both the death of Sarah and Avraham.

King David was an older man and a woman was assigned to him to serve him and provide warmth.

Adoniyahu, one of King David's sons, began to prepare for ascension to his father's throne. This was despite the fact that King David expressed his wishes that his son Shlomo succeed him.

Adoniyahu convinces two very significant personalities - the High Priest and the commander of King David's armies - to champion his cause.

Adoniyahu arranged to be transported in a chariot with fifty people running before him. He then invited supporters to a festive party to promote his aspirations to attain the royalty.

At this time Natan communicates with Batsheva, mother of Shlomo, and conveyed to her the importance of approaching King David and pleading with him that he articulate his choice of Shlomo to be the next king.

King David responds positively to this request. He says the following: "Indeed, as I swore to you by the Lord God of Israel saying, 'Surely Shlomo, your son, shall reign after me and he shall sit on my throne in my stead, surely, so will I swear this day.' ■

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THE PERSON IN THE PARSHA

BY RABBI DR. TZVI HERSH WEINREB
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Sarah, Esther, and the Sleepy Students

Jews live their lives within the framework of the Jewish calendar. At this time of year, we identify strongly with the narratives contained in the weekly Torah portions that we read in the synagogue. Our thoughts are with the biblical characters of the current *parshiyot*. We live in the company of Abraham and Sarah, Lot, Hagar and Ishmael, and Isaac and Rebecca.

If we are not thinking of the heroes and villains of the *parsha* of the week, we have an alternative. We can turn our thoughts to the recent holidays or to the ones which we shall soon celebrate. The holiday of Succoth is now part of the rapidly fading past, so we might be thinking of Chanukah, which is but a few weeks away. We are certainly not yet thinking of Purim.

The list of biblical heroines whose stories delight our children and inspire us at this time of year does not yet include Queen Esther. In this week's Torah portion, *Parshat Chayei Sarah* (*Genesis* 23:1-25:18), we do encounter two queenly women. We mourn the death of the matriarch Sarah, and we admire Rebecca's ability to live up to the spiritual standards of the mother-in-law she never met.

But Esther? There is neither trace nor hint of her existence.

So why would I be writing about Esther at

this time of year? Purim is still many months away, and there are other female role models in the current Torah portions. Even Chanukah, which occurs much sooner than Purim, features feminine heroines such as Yehudit. Where does Esther shine in?

For the answer let us turn to the Midrash and to that singular sage, Rabbi Akiva. We know that Rabbi Akiva lived a remarkable life, underwent many changes, became a pre-eminent Torah scholar, and died a martyr.

The Midrash introduces us to Rabbi Akiva in reference to the very first verse in this week's Torah portion. It is a verse which seems to require no exegesis. The verse simply says, "Sarah's lifetime—the span of Sarah's life—came to one hundred and twenty-seven years." What further explanation or commentary is necessary? She lived a long and productive life. What more is there to say?

To answer this question, we must remember that Rabbi Akiva was, first and foremost, a teacher. Like every teacher, he had a difficult task. Some students paid attention to Rabbi Akiva's lectures some of the time, but few, if any, listened attentively to every lecture. Like every teacher before and since, Rabbi Akiva had to devise methods to gain the attention of his disciples.

And so, the Midrash takes us into Rabbi Akiva's classroom. We really should consider this quite a privilege, for there are very few opportunities given in rabbinic literature to actually enter the classroom of one of our sages, let alone a sage as prominent as Rabbi Akiva.

Here is the Midrashic passage: "Rabbi Akiva was sitting and expounding Torah. His audience fell asleep. He tried to awaken them, and said, 'What motivated Queen Esther to reign over one hundred and twenty and seven provinces? We must assume that Esther, as a descendant of Sarah who lived for one hundred and twenty and seven years, considered it proper to reign over one hundred and twenty and seven provinces.'" (*Bereshit Rabbah* 58:3)

What are we to learn from this cryptic passage? To those of us who are teachers, there is a measure of comfort to be derived from learning that Rabbi Akiva too had difficulty maintaining the attention of his students. We also learn that his students were fully aware of the role that the number 127 plays both in the book of *Genesis* and in the book of *Esther*. We can assume that there is something about Rabbi Akiva's mention of this coincidence that awakened the sleepy classroom. But surely there is a much more profound lesson to be learned here.

Many commentators have searched for this deeper meaning. They point out that Sarah's life was a very full one, and at every stage she displayed the vigor of the seven-year-old child, the idealism of the twenty-year-old, and the wisdom of the aged centenarian. No moment went to waste. She led an active life, overcame numerous frustrations and obstacles, and prevailed. Her life was the paradigm of a life of meaning and accomplishment.

If there is a lesson to be learned from her life,

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it is that every year is valuable, and so is every month and every week and every day and every hour. If we are to translate 127 years into 127 provinces, then each year is an entire province, each month a region, each week a city, each day a neighborhood, each hour a street, each minute a building, and every second an entire room.

If one allows himself a second of slumber, he forfeits a room. If one sleeps for a week, he loses an entire city. Every segment of time represents a significant opportunity, and with every wasted moment opportunities are lost.

This is Rabbi Akiva's lesson to his sleepy students. "You're not merely dozing off and enjoying idle daydreams. You are wasting time, killing time, and in the process losing opportunities which will not present themselves again. If you miss a moment of a Torah lecture, you create a void that can never again be filled."

Rabbi Akiva's lesson is a lesson to all of us. In

contemporary terms, it is a lesson about time management. Time is a gift, but it is an ephemeral gift. A moment lost can never be retrieved.

But Rabbi Akiva insists that this is not his lesson, but Sarah's lesson. It is the legacy that she left for her descendants. Queen Esther grasped that legacy. She did not assume the role of a passive queen, but actively reigned over all of her 127 provinces. She studied their needs, recognized their individual differences, and helped each of them best utilize their unique resources. As Grandmother Sarah valued each and every one of her years, so too did Esther value every one of her many provinces.

So must we all learn to utilize all of our blessings to the fullest, whether they be the blessing of longevity or the blessing of political power, the blessing of wealth or the blessing of grandchildren. Living a full life means appreciating all of our blessings and making the most of them.

What wonderful teachers we have had, and how differently and creatively they taught us these lessons. Sarah taught them in the context of the family tent. Esther taught them from her royal palace. Rabbi Akiva taught them from his classroom lectern.

Whatever our place in life, following their lessons will lead to a life of meaning and purpose, the kind of life for which we all strive.

Thus, although this week's Torah portion carries Sarah's name in its very title, she would be the first to make room for her progeny, Esther, to join her in teaching her lesson to us. Esther too has a place in *Parshas Chayei Sarah*. ■

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Jewish EMT Reunites With Muslim Bedouin Father and Son He Rescued Following October 7th Hamas Attack That Killed The Man's Wife

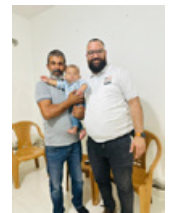
On Wednesday, United Hatzalah volunteer EMT Ariel Pachima paid a visit to a Muslim father and son whom he rescued and treated on the 7th of October, following the attack by Hamas terrorists that claimed the life of the man's wife together with more than 1,400 other Israelis. Early on the morning of October 7th, Hamed and Fatima, residents of the Bedouin town of Arara BaNegev were driving to Mivtachim, a town close to the Gaza border, where Hamed works in a greenhouse growing tomatoes. They had brought along with them their young boy in the back of the car. As Hamed stopped the car at an intersection, Hamas terrorists on motorcycles who had infiltrated Israeli territory, opened fire on Hamed and Fatima's car. Hamed's wife was killed almost immediately, while Hamed and their infant son sustained injuries from shrapnel.

Hamed managed to exit the car and sought refuge with his child, remaining in hiding for several hours. At one point he and his son were caught in a crossfire between Hamas terrorists and IDF soldiers and he thought they were going to die. After the soldiers eliminated the terrorists they found Hamed hiding and were about to shoot him as they thought that he too was a terrorist. The company commander, noticing the child, and Hamed speaking some Hebrew, told the soldiers not to shoot as he was Israeli. "I saw my death right in front of me until the commander said I was Israeli," Hamed told Ariel during the meetup.

After the soldiers left, Hamed decided to leave the area with a car he found and drove to the Ofakim intersection nearby, that is where he crossed paths with Ariel who was serving as an EMT on an ambulance. Ariel was on a makeshift response team that consisted of only him and the ambulance driver, whom he didn't even know. "When I arrived in the south to help I was told to simply get on the ambulance and go help people. The driver and I didn't even have enough time to get to know one another, we just went and helped whoever we could, and we found Hamed and his son.

Hamed had sustained shrapnel injuries to his back, and the boy had shrapnel injuries to his shoulder and upper torso. Both were bleeding. Ariel cleaned and bandaged the wounds, while the driver drove as fast as he could to Soroka Hospital, knowing that they would need to come back and treat and transport others.

Following this encounter, Pachima lost contact with Hamed. Ariel, who works at a cement factory in Beer Sheva was approached by a fellow employee who lives in Arara BaNegev and is Hamed's neighbor who reconnected the two.





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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."

STATS

5th of the 54 sedras; 5th of 12 in Bereshit.
Written on 171 lines in a Torah, rank 37.
4 Parshiyot; 3 open, 1 closed.
105 pesukim - ranks 32 (11 in Bereshit).
1402 words - ranks 37th (11 in Bereshit).
5314 letters - ranks 36th (11 in Bereshit).

MITZVOT

None of the 613 mitzvot are in Chayei Sara, however, as we mention often, there are Midot and values and other lessons to be learned. This is one of 17 mitzva-less sedras, 9 of which are in Sefer Bereshit, 3 in Shemot, none in Vayikra, 2 in Bamidbar, and 3 in Devarim.

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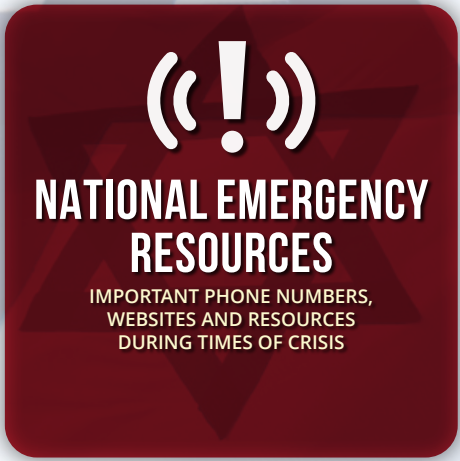
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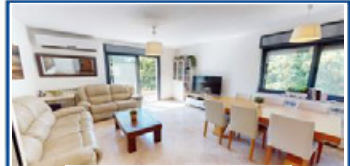
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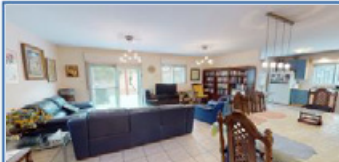
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Abraham: A Life of Faith

Abraham, the Sages were convinced, was a greater religious hero than Noah. We hear this in the famous dispute among the Sages about the phrase that Noah was “perfect in his generations,” meaning *relative* to his generations:

“In his generations” – Some of our Sages interpret this favourably: if he had lived in a generation of righteous people, he would have been even more righteous. Others interpret it derogatorily: In comparison with his generation he was righteous, but if he had lived in Abraham’s generation, he would not have been considered of any importance. *Rashi on Genesis 6:9:2*

Some thought that if Noah had lived in the time of Abraham he would have been inspired by his example to yet greater heights; others that he would have stayed the same, and thus been insignificant when compared to Abraham. But neither side doubted that Abraham was the greater.

Similarly, the Sages contrasted the phrase, “Noah walked with God,” with the fact that Abraham walked *before* God.

“Noah walked with God” – But concerning Abraham, Scripture says in Genesis 24:40:

“[The Lord] before Whom I walked.” Noah required [God’s] support to uphold him [in righteousness], but Abraham strengthened himself and walked in his righteousness by himself. *Rashi on Genesis 6:9*

Yet what evidence do we have in the text itself that Abraham was greater than Noah? To be sure, Abraham argued with God in protest against the destruction of the cities of the plain, while Noah merely accepted God’s verdict about the Flood. Yet God invited Abraham’s protest. Immediately beforehand the text says:

Then the Lord said, ‘Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what He has promised him.’ *Genesis 18:17-19*

This is an almost explicit invitation to challenge the verdict. God delivered no such summons to Noah. So Noah’s failure

to protest should not be held against him.

If anything, the Torah seems to speak more highly of Noah than of Abraham. We are told:

Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord.

Genesis 6:6

Twice Noah is described as a righteous man, a *tzaddik*:

1. “Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God” (Genesis 6:9).
2. “The Lord then said to Noah, ‘Go into the Ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation’” (Genesis 7:1).

No one else in the whole of *Tanach* is called righteous. How then was Abraham greater than Noah?

One answer, and a profound one, is suggested in the way the two men responded to tragedy and grief. After the Flood, we read this about Noah:

Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. He drank some of the wine, making himself drunk, and uncovered himself in the tent. *Genesis 9:20-21*

This is an extraordinary decline. The “righteous man” has become a “man of the soil.” The man who was looked to “bring us comfort” (Genesis 5:29) now seeks comfort in wine. What has happened?

The answer, surely, is that Noah was indeed a righteous man, but one who had seen a world destroyed. We gain the impression of a man paralysed with grief, seeking oblivion. Like Lot’s wife who turned back to look on the destruction, Noah finds he cannot carry on. He is desolated, grief-stricken. His heart is broken. The weight of the past prevents him from turning toward the future.



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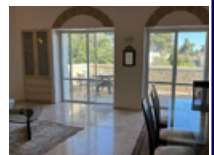
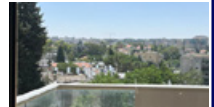
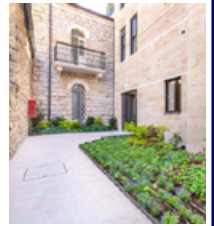
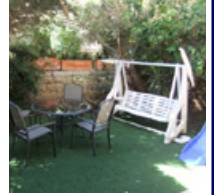
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Now think of Abraham at the beginning of this week's *parsha*. He had just been through the greatest trial of his life. He had been asked by God to sacrifice the son he had spent so many years waiting for. He had been asked to face sacrificing and losing the most precious thing in his whole life. It's hard to imagine his state of mind as the trial unfolded.

Then just as he was about to lift the knife the call came from Heaven saying 'Stop', and the story seemed to have a happy ending after all. But there was a terrible twist in store. Just as Abraham was returning, relieved his son's life spared, he discovered that the trial had a victim after all. Immediately after it, at the beginning of this week's *parsha*, we read of the death of Sarah. And the Sages suggested that the two events were simultaneous. As Rashi explains:

"The account of Sarah's demise was juxtaposed to the Binding of Isaac because as a result of the news of the 'Binding,' that her son was prepared for slaughter, and was almost slaughtered, her soul flew out of her, and she died."

We'd say today she had a heart attack from the news.

Now try and put yourself in the situation of Abraham. He has almost sacrificed his child and now as an indirect result of the trial itself, the news has killed his wife of many years, the woman who stayed with him through all his travels and travails, who twice saved his life, who in joy gave birth to Isaac in her old age. Had Abraham grieved for the rest of his days, we would surely have understood, just as we understand Noah's grief. Instead we read the following:

And Sarah died in Kiryat Arba, that is

Hebron in the land of Canaan, and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her, *and Abraham rose up from before his dead*.

Abraham mourns and weeps, and then *rises up* and does two things to secure the Jewish future, two acts whose effects we feel to this day. He buys the first plot in the Land of Israel, a field in the Cave of Machpelah. And then he secures a wife his son Isaac, so that there will be Jewish grandchildren, Jewish continuity. Noah grieves and is overwhelmed by his loss. Abraham grieves knowing what he has lost. *But then he rises up and builds the Jewish future*. There is a limit to grief. This is what Abraham knows and Noah does not.

Abraham bestowed this singular gift on his descendants. The Jewish people suffered tragedies that would have devastated other nations beyond any hope of recovery. The destruction of the First Temple and the Babylonian exile. The destruction of the Second Temple and the end of Jewish sovereignty. The expulsions, massacres, forced conversions and inquisitions of the Middle Ages, the pogroms of the 17th and 19th centuries, and finally the Shoah. Yet somehow the Jewish people mourned and wept, and then rose up and built the future. This is their unique strength and it came from Abraham, as we see in this week's *parsha*.

Kierkegaard wrote a profound sentence in his journals:

It requires moral courage to grieve, it requires religious courage to rejoice.

Perhaps that's the difference between Noah the Righteous, and Abraham the Man of Faith. Noah grieved, but Abraham knew that there must eventually be an end to grief.

We must turn from yesterday's loss to the call of tomorrow. We must help to be born. ■

These weekly teachings from **Rabbi Sacks** zt"l are part of his 'Covenant & Conversation' series on the weekly Torah teaching. With thanks to the Schimmel Family for their generous sponsorship, dedicated in loving memory of Harry (Chaim) Schimmel. Visit www.RabbiSacks.org for more.

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Our hearts and prayers continue to be with our brave IDF soldiers and their families, those who have lost loved ones, those in captivity, and all of Klal Yisrael.

Thanks to your support, OU Israel has mobilized to provide the physical and emotional support needed to overcome trauma.

Respite for Evacuated Families

We have representatives in 6 hotels in Yerushalayim to ensure the families there receive physical and emotional support. NCSY Israel ran a carnival at the Ramada hotel for over 1,800 displaced children. The Zula band is going around to the hotels to provide uplifting respite for children, teens and adults. We will continue to provide for these families.

OU Israel's Crisis Hotline

OU Israel launched a Hebrew emotional support hotline (**Chaverim Makshivim *8298**) which is providing support for the tens of thousands of Israeli teens who are suffering emotionally and mentally from the trauma, loss, anxiety and more since the start of the war. The hotline is run by trained social workers and volunteers who will provide a listening ear, and support and caring to help people cope and become more resilient.

Opportunities for English-Speaking Olim

We recognize the challenge that so many of our English-speaking olim families are grappling with as we face the current reality in Israel. Many are dealing with





the anxiety of their first experiences with sirens and many are facing the first time their children are serving in the IDF during a war. OU Israel is providing twice-daily chizuk calls, virtual art therapy for children, tools for parents to help their families overcome trauma, volunteer opportunities and more. Recordings of the chizuk calls and additional resources can be viewed at ouisrael.org/program/chizuk.



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Crucial Support to Those Who Lost Loved Ones

Sadly, teenagers in our greater OU family have been killed in the past three weeks. More of our teens have lost parents, siblings and other family members. The presence of OU Israel staff at more than 91 funerals and shiva homes has provided teens with love and critical support.

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Over the past years, I shared with you the contrasting depiction of King David's final days as described in our haftarah taken from Sefer M'lachim with that found in Sefer Divrei HaYamim A. However, I rarely (if at all) chose to contrast Avraham's final days with those of David, as the differences are certainly understandable, given the gap of hundreds of years between the two lives and the resulting challenges they faced. In the parasha, we confront an aging patriarch choosing a fitting partner for his son who would successfully carry on his own life's work, while in the haftarah, we face a weakened regent struggling to crown a successor to sit on his throne. Both had to prepare for the future – one, for his family, one for his nation.

But when we pause to study the saga of David, we might rightfully wonder about his choice of successor. Shlomo was a young man of perhaps 12 years or 16 years of age, a rather tender age to take on such a weighty position. Indeed, when we read the haftarah and the attempted coup of Adoniyahu, David's oldest surviving first-born (from the King's wives), we see that he had gathered a large and impressive following - including many of the nation's influential leaders. People like Yoav, David's long-time chief-of-staff, and Evyatar, the former Kohen Gadol, supported Adoniyahu's attempt to usurp the throne from the elderly King. And one can

well understand why they did so!!!!

Consider: David was weakening, he could not even keep himself warm and, it seems, hardly left the palace - indeed, the text lets us know that he knew very little of what was taking place outside. It was crucial for the nation of Israel to have a leader, and a young teenage boy was hardly a proper choice - especially when there was an experienced older prince who was far more fitting for the job!! Additionally, there is absolutely NO mention – in all of Sefer M'lachim – of Hashem's choice of Shlomo to succeed David (it is found only in Sefer Divrei HaYamin A) and perhaps very few knew of G-d's promise to David – including those who hoped to crown Adoniyahu! So why were they wrong in attempting to place Adoniyahu on the throne??

Well, they were wrong for a very good reason!!! As we read of the invitees to Adoniyahu's "coronation", we also read of those who were NOT invited and we discover that, although **all** of the princes were invited, Shlomo was **not invited** (see v. 10). Indeed, it seems that they knew very well of David's choice of Shlomo – but they didn't care.

David had seen his sons vie for his throne throughout his life. He saw his eldest, Amnon, ravish Tamar, David's daughter, with no fear of retribution - he was, after all, the crown prince. Avshalom, the next son, murders Amnon, starts a civil war and usurps the royal throne, even

attempting to assassinate his own father. And now, at the end of his days, David sees Adoniyahu and some of his highest officers, trying to take over the throne.

David knows very well what is happening. David knows why – because he had seen this before.

As in past years, David HaMelech sees people who want to win. They care for position, they care for fame, they care for power....but they don't care for the nation. He recognizes individuals who are willing to defy the king, ignore the majority and divide the people so that they can rise to power. That is why Yoav, whom David had removed from his generalship, and Evyatar, who also lost his High Priesthood, joined the coup.

They wanted their power back!!

And when people are willing to divide a united nation, when they are thirsty to “win”, when they care for themselves more than they care for their nation....they can never be allowed to “take the throne.”

We have seen in our own time how different views can lead to dividing a nation if there is no common discussion and no compromise. We, who now stand united as perhaps never before, must be careful to remember the painful months, even years, of incessant bickering and splintering of our people.

After G-d helps us defeat the forces of pure evil, IY”H, we must make sure that our leaders will care for the nation more than they care for themselves and that they will talk to each other even when they disagree with each other and will work to insure the rift that was will never appear again.

In short, it is time to place Shlomo, Shalom, upon the throne. ■



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נָא כְדָךְ וְאֲשַׁתָּה וְאִמְרָה שְׁתֵּה וְגַם גְּמִלִיךְ אֲשַׁקֶּה
אֵתְּהּ הַכֹּחֶת לְעַבְדְּךָ לְיִצְחָק וְבָה אֲדַע כִּי־עָשִׂיתָ חֶסֶד
עִם־אֲדֹנָי: (בראשית כד:יד)

And it will be, [that] the maiden to whom I will say, 'Lower your pitcher and I will drink,' and she will say, 'Drink, and I will also water your camels,' her have You designated for Your servant, for Isaac, and through her may I know that You have performed loving kindness with my master." (Bereshit 24:14).

Avraham's servant Eliezer embarks on a mission to find a shidduch for Yitzhak. Eliezer asks Hashem for a sign that the girl he selects is in fact the most appropriate match. If Eliezer meets a young woman at a well and she offers him water as well as offering to provide water to his camels, then he will be certain that she is fit for Yitzhak.

On its face, it appears as if Eliezer is focusing on the prospective wife's middot (character traits). Is she someone who is sympathetic not only to individuals but to the well-being of animals as well. The Beit Halevi offers a deeper insight into the behavior of Rivka.

In order to provide Eliezer with water, there were no paper cups available at the time. Rivka had to allow Eliezer to drink directly from the vessel. She was unaware of his cleanliness. Perhaps his germs and saliva would

get mixed in with the remaining water in the vessel. How would she react? If she spills the remaining water out in front of Eliezer, it would be embarrassing to him. If she would carry the vessel home and then pour it out it would be a waste of time and energy. If she would allow her family to drink that water, it may not be hygienic. What is Rivka to do? She offers the animals to drink the remaining water. It is both sympathetic to the animals and the most eloquent resolution to deal with the rest of the water in the vessel from which Eliezer drank.

In fact, Rivka tells Eliezer:
וְתָכַל לְהִשְׁקֹתוֹ וְתֹאמַר גַּם לְגַמְלֶיךָ אֲשַׁבֵּב עַד
אִם־כִּלּוֹ לְשִׁתּוֹת (בראשית כד:יט)

And she finished giving him to drink, and she said, "I will also draw for your camels, until they will have finished drinking." (Bereshit 24:19).

Rivka does not just state (as Eliezer does) that she will provide water to the camels. She adds, "until they finish drinking". She is even willing to refill the vessel if they are still thirsty. That statement highlights that she does not want to embarrass Eliezer by wasting the water. She is authentic about her concern for the camels and will even refill the vessel to satisfy their thirst.

The lesson we learn from Rivka's behavior is that to engage in chesed is important and commendable, but at the same time, we have to act in a wise manner. To always consider the impact our actions may have on the recipient and on others. Our intention

may be commendable, but we need to ensure that the end result is positive as well. Rivka exhibited “*smart chesed*”. May we be able to do so as well when we engage in helping and providing for others. ■

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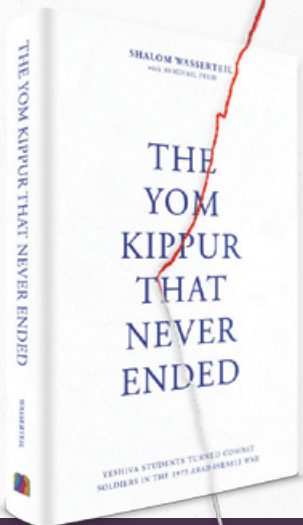
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Eternal End

Throughout his commentary on the Torah, Rashi will connect the events at the end of one *parashah* to the events at the beginning of the next one. As the death of Sarah Imeinu is the first topic in our *parashah*, Rashi recounts that the news of the *Akeidah*, the last topic of the previous *parashah*, was so startling to Sarah that she dies (*Rashi, Bereisheet 23:2*). How are we to understand her sudden death? Additionally, earlier Rashi comments that Sarah's life was "*kulan shavin l'tovah*", all the days of her life were equally good. Can we find goodness in the circumstance of her death?

Every *nisayon* that a person endures is meticulously designed by Hashem according to the individual's distinct capabilities. The Brisker Rav teaches that the *nisayon* of the *Akeidah* was specifically intended for Avraham Avinu and he alone was therefore able to pass it with his unique inner strengths. Sara Imeinu was not involved in this *nisayon*, as such, she was unaware of the details of their journey. Therefore, when the Satan came to tell her what had almost transpired, she could not endure the shock and as a result, died. Sara Imeinu is obviously not disparaged for this; her life is still considered one of goodness and wholehearted service of Hashem, "*kulan shavin l'tovah*."

David Hamelech reminds us that Hashem is "*Hanoten sheleg katzamer, k'for ke'afar yifazer* – He who gives snow like fleece, He scatters frost like ashes" (*Tehillim 148:16*). The Chasidic masters explain that although Hashem may give us "snow," i.e., difficult situations, he also gives us "wool" to warm us. Each of us is equipped with the tools to manage the circumstances we find ourselves in, every *nisayon* fits each person with precision.

Rav Wolbe notes that the unique language *chazal* use to describe Sarah's death indicates the manner in which she passed from this world. The term "*parcha nishmata*," Sarah's soul flew, is the same one used to describe *Am Yisrael's* experience at Har Sinai. "*Parcha nishmatam*," their souls spontaneously left their bodies from the enormity of the Divine spiritual encounter. When Sara Imeinu was told about *Akeidat Yitzchak*, she was so overcome by the magnitude of what had occurred that her soul could not be contained within her physical being. A climactic culmination of how she lived, her death was characterized by her intense desire to connect with her Maker.

The *Koshnitzer Maggid* understands *chazal* as expressing Sara Imeinu's deep yearning to have been part of the *Akeidah*, to have the opportunity to entirely subsume herself within the Divine. Hashem responded to her passionate wish and took her soul. Her death is a testament to

her desire to be *mekadesh shem shamayim*, to sanctify Hashem's Name. In doing so, teaches the Tosher Rebbe, Sara Imeinu infused all Jews with the genetic code to love Hashem unconditionally, to be fully devoted and committed to His Will.

As we continue to fight the battle for our Land and our people, we must always remember that we are servants of Hashem, representatives of His absolute sovereignty in the world. We must fight the battle on the spiritual front as well, pursuing truth, dedicating ourselves to Hashem's Will with devotion, commitment and love, as Sara Imeinu taught us in the way she lived from beginning to end. ■

ADDICTION KILLS

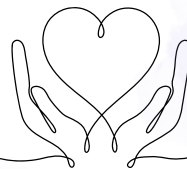
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RABBI JUDAH

MISCHEL

Executive Director, Camp HASC
Author of *Baderech: Along the Path of Teshuva* (Mosaica 2021)

Take Heed!

Reb Zev Wolf Kitzes was the Rav of Tulchin and later became one of the most dedicated disciples of the Baal Shem Tov. When Reb Zev was preparing to embark on a journey to Eretz Yisrael, he stopped in for a blessing from his Master. The Baal Shem Tov blessed him with a safe and uplifting journey, adding a cryptic comment on the way out: “Reb Zev! When you meet someone *baderech*, along the path, it is for a reason; take heed and be sure to take him seriously.” Reb Zev didn’t think much of it, gathered his belongings and began his journey.

A *nesiya* to Eretz Israel was the opportunity of a lifetime: davening at the Kotel, in Meiron by Rebbe Shimon Bar Yohai, at Kever Rachel, and of course, a visit to *Ir haAvos*, Chevron. At the end of his journey, after pouring his heart out at *Me’aras haMachpela*, the hour was late. He had extended his tefilos longer than expected and his fellow travelers were waiting for him. There was a bit of commotion as they tried to catch their ride to the port of Acco so they could board their ship and begin the arduous trip back to Medzibuz.

They hastily returned to their lodgings, gathered their belongings, and set out in the winding alleyways of the old city of Chevron. They passed an old man on the street who looked up at them and wished them a ‘*Shalom aleichem*.’ The travelers were under pressure,

and barely noticed the man, but the *alter yid* was walking next to them and he strained for their attention. “I see that you’ve come from a faraway land. Where are you from?” Barely turning around, Reb Zev muttered, “We’re from Mezbuzh and are on our way back right now. I’m sorry, we’re *manish* running late!”

As the travelers approached their wagon, the old man pressed, “Please, just one thing... can you tell me, how are my *kinder* doing over there?” With a harried, distracted look, Reb Zev answered, “*Baruch Hashem*, day by day, we’re managing!” They quickly climbed onto the wagon and clutched their seats as the agitated driver took off toward the port of Acco. The interaction with the old man was quickly forgotten.

It was Erev Shabbos when the group arrived back in Mezhibuz. Reb Zev could not wait for the opportunity to ‘give Shalom’ and provide an update to his Rebbe. How shocked he was to find the cold reception that awaited him; completely ignoring his presence, the Baal Shem Tov wouldn’t even look in his direction. The scene repeated itself throughout Shabbos, the Baal Shem Tov turning a cold shoulder to his dedicated student, who was now disappointed and confused. By the end of Shabbos, he



Hadassah & Steve Jacob and family on
the birth of their **great-granddaughter**

couldn't take it anymore, and cried out, "Rebbe, what have I done wrong? Please, What did I do to deserve this treatment?"

The Baal Shem Tov shook his head in disappointment. "Reb Zev, *ayy* Reb Zev, what was the one thing I told you? To pay attention to everyone you meet. You were *zocheh* to a *gilui*, a revelation of Avraham Avinu, who came to ask of you regarding the well-being of his children, so many of whom are facing poverty, starvation and hardship. There are *gezeros* of conscription and anti-semitism, not to mention *hisnagdus*, *machlokes* and *sinas chinam*. Families are torn apart, communities are suffering... and all you could muster was that 'We're managing?!' You had the opportunity to ask, to beg, to plead for the coming of *Moshiach*, for the completion, for the fulfillment of the *Bris ben haBesarim*. 'We're managing??' – Gevalt, Reb Zev, did you ever blow it...."

On one of the pillars inside the "Avraham Avinu Shul" in Chevron is a plaque featuring the 'shaar', the cover page of *Sefer Emek haMelech*, a Kabbalistic work by Rav Naftali Hertz Bachrach, published in 1648. There is a short and impactful *maaseh* mentioned in the *hakdama*, the introduction. On the eve of Yom Kippur (in 1619), nine men were waiting for a minyan. Most of the residents of the city had ascended to Yerushalayim, a day's walk. As the sun set and the reality sunk in that there would not be a minyan for Kol Nidrei night, the assembled cried out to Hashem over their inability to form a proper minyan on the holy night....

"And they lifted their eyes and there stood an elderly man, in the distance, and they were overjoyed to see him, for he had completed

the minyan. They worshiped on the holy day and honored the man greatly. At the end of the sacred day, the chazan led the way toward his home to break the fast, with the honored guest walking behind him. When he arrived at his home, the chazan turned around and saw that the guest was gone. That night, the man appeared to the chazan in a dream, telling him that he was Avraham Avinu, who had come to complete the minyan."

From then on, the shul was known by the name *Beit Kneset Avraham Avinu*.

In the midst of war, as we read of the acquisition of the holy city of Chevron, let us redouble our yearning for the entirety of the Land of Israel and take heed and pay attention to each person who joins our minyan, and all those we meet *baderech*, along our path. This Shabbos, let us not be satisfied with simply 'managing'! May we awaken *zechus Avos*, merit the revelation of Avraham Avinu as well as all of our forefathers and mothers, and bring in the coming of the true and complete Redemption, *b'mheirah!* ■



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SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

Just last week, we commemorated the 66th *yahrtzeit* of the great *tzadik* **Rabbi Yaakov Friedman, the Admor of Husiyatin zy'a**. A descendant of the illustrious *Reb Yisrael Friedman, the Rizhiner Rebbe, z'ya*, Rav Yaakov made aliya to *Eretz Yisrael* in the late 1930's, and succeeded his father-in-law as the *Admor of Husiyatin* in Tel Aviv. His *drashot* and teachings are recorded in a beautiful *sefer* known as *Ohalei Yaakov*. The Rebbe lived through the formative years of the establishment of the State of Israel, during the turbulent times of both the days leading up to the Declaration of Independence, the subsequent war, and the earliest days of our fledgling state, and was a powerful voice for the importance and significance of the return of the Jewish People to the Land.

Our *sedra* this week opens with the passing of *Sara Imeinu*, and *Avraham's* purchase of *Maarat HaMachpela* in *Chevron*. The *pasuk* tells us: *'V'Tamat Sara B'Kiryat Arba, Hee Chevron...'* *And Sara died in Kiryat Arba, which is Chevron...'*

The *Ohalei Yaakov* points to a very interesting *Midrash* in the *Yalkut Reuveni*, which offers a creative interpretation of this *pasuk*:

'V'Tamat Sara B'Kiryat Arba - And Sara passed on b'kriat shema -while reciting the *dalei* (the fourth letter) at the end of the word *echad*-of *kriat shema*..."

Kiryat Arba - represents *Sara's* recitation of *Kriat Shema* as she left this world and entered the next.

The Rebbe, in explaining this *Midrash*,

points to a teaching from the great *Mekubal*, **Rav Chaim Vital zy'a**, prime disciple of the *Arizal*. In *Shaar Hay of Shaar HaKavanot*, Rav Chaim Vital wrote:

"We must be prepared to give our lives, to sanctify Hashem's name. The *dalei* in the word *echad* in the first verse of the *Shema*, represents Hashem's four letter name..."

The *Ohalei Yaakov*, takes this idea from Rav Chaim Vital, and explains that *Sara Imeinu*, as she departed from this world, leaves us an eternal message connected to the unbreakable bond between the Jewish people and our sacred Land.

Throughout our history, the Rebbe explained, and especially during the turbulent early years of *Medinat Yisrael*, which the Rebbe merited to experience, *Am Yisrael* has been willing to risk their lives for the gift that is *Artzeinu HaKedosh*.

May we always remember and hold dear, the many *neshamot* who have enabled us the *zechut* to build our lives in our sacred, eternal home. Perhaps, more than ever, the Rebbe's words resonate with each of us so strongly. *Yehi Ratzon*, may all those working to protect us, continue to be safe, and may we soon be blessed to live here in *Artzeinu HaKedosh* in complete peace and tranquility ■

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GEULAS YISRAEL

BY RABBI MOSHE TARAGIN
Ram, Yeshivat Har Etzion

Is Celebrating Tzahal a Lack of Emunah?

Growing up in the 70's, in the aftermath of the Six-Day War, I heard a comment which, even as a young boy, troubled me. A rabbi mentioned that, initially, the great nissim of 1967 carried Messianic potential. Tragically, this opportunity was squandered because too much credit was attributed to Tzahal. The ensuing parades declaring “kol haka-vod l'tzahal” reflected a lack of *emunah* and closed any Messianic window. Though I was too young to fully process my disagreement, something struck me as mistaken.

As ma'aminim or believers, we always trace success and failure to divine decisions. Whether it be financial prosperity, personal health, or military success, we believe that everything is in the hands of Heaven or הכל ביד שמים. Given this perspective, is it appropriate to celebrate the heroism of our soldiers? Does belief in Hashem as an מלחמה איש clash with our culture which venerates the bravery and courage of IDF chayalim?

EMUNAH AND BITACHON

By referring to the generic term “faith”, we often confuse two related but very different theological principles: *emunah* and *bitachon*. *Emunah* is an immutable philosophical conviction, whereas *bitachon* is a policy decision.

Emunah acknowledges fundamental articles

of faith, including the role of *hashgacha*: events aren't random or haphazard but part of a larger divine trajectory. Events which may appear to be natural are deliberately authored by Hashem. Sometimes Hashem decides to intervene in a supernatural and overt manner, but, more frequently, He scripts history through seemingly “routine” or “natural” events, thereby concealing His authorship. *Emunah* demands unconditional belief in an absolute set of theological principles including divine *hashgacha*.

Unlike *emunah* which is unchanging, *bitachon* is an ever-changing decision about balancing human effort alongside divine intervention. Though *emunah* affirms that Hashem CAN supernaturally intervene, we don't have the automatic right to rely upon His miracles, and therefore we must take appropriate human measures to achieve success. Additionally, Hashem often delivers success in response to prior human initiative. Either way, human investment, referred to as *hishtadlut*, is not a lack of *emunah*. Though our *emunah* is unflinching, we don't possess the right to entirely depend upon Hashem at the cost of diminished or nonexistent human effort. Cautioning us against overreliance upon miracles, Chazal warn that, despite *emunah*

אין סומכים על הנס. *Bitachon* is a constantly changing calibration of human effort and divine assistance.

Ya'akov provides the paradigm for steadfast *emunah* coupled with calibrated *bitachon*. Facing a murderous and vengeful brother, he refused to rely solely upon Hashem's supernatural miracles for protection. Various concerns drive him to greater *hishtadlut*: perhaps he already received too much divine benevolence to continue to “draw from the well”. Perhaps his minor transgressions (as he views them), will hinder divine intervention. Because of all these concerns, and despite his stout *emunah*, Ya'akov prepares for battle rather than passively trusting Hashem for protection. Though his *emunah* confirms that Hashem will decide the outcome of this skirmish, he feels that, at this moment, he shouldn't be fully reliant upon miracles.

While *emunah* never wavers or fades, *bitachon* depends upon the person and the circumstance. All that being said, whether we take greater human initiative or completely rely upon miracles, we always trace success back to Hashem.

WAR IS DIFFERENT

Yet, evidently, war and military success are still different. For some reason, during war, Hashem Himself encourages soldiers to take partial credit for their success, provided they don't completely ignore His role.

On the one hand, we are cautioned against exclusive attribution or even excess attribution to human effort. The 7th perek of sefer Shoftim describes Gidon's preparations for the war against the *Midyanim*. Though initially numbering 32,000 soldiers, his army is whittled down to a puny 300, to avoid false pretensions that the victory was



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due to military skills. Concerned that the victorious army would completely forget Him, Hashem preferred a tiny army so that His role would be unmistakable.

On the other hand, the Torah's well known warning against human attribution or כחי קד יעצם is not issued surrounding military success but regarding self-aggrandizing financial prosperity. The Torah never explicitly warns against attributing military success to human efforts. Prior to war, a Kohen reminds our armies that Hashem battles with them. However, this isn't a warning against self-attribution but a “pep talk” to boost morale by informing worried soldiers that Hashem “takes the lead” against our enemies.

More so, a striking midrash (Yalkut Shimoni, Tehillim 724) illustrates that if we recognize Hashem's authorship, we are also allowed, and even encouraged to

celebrate human military feats. After his vanquishing of the giant warrior *Golyat*, Dovid Hamelech was paraded as “a conqueror of tens of thousands”. Immediately, Dovid reroutes the credit to Hashem אמר דוד לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא אתה עושה המלחמה וְלָךְ הוּא הַנְצַחֵן, acknowledging that any victory was solely Hashem’s provenance.

Surprisingly, Hashem responds by sharing the “credit” with Dovid:

א”ל הקדוש ברוך הוא דוד, נתת לי הַנְצַחֵן, אף אני נותן לך הַנְצַחֵן : “you attributed the credit to Me I will attribute it to you”.

Though, typically, all credit is assigned to Hashem, military success is assigned both to Hashem as well as to human agents. What makes war different? Typically, we attach full responsibility to Hashem, whereas on the battlefield, credit is “shared”.

WAR IS A “MENTALITY”

Success at war doesn’t just demand talent and skill. To be successful at war, a soldier must deeply believe in their abilities and toughness. Courage and bravery demand not just vision of a larger purpose but also self-confidence and deep belief in your abilities. Success at war can’t be achieved without mental toughness and inner strength.

A gemara (Mo’ed Katan 16b) captures the hard-edged emotions necessary for military success. The gemara marvels at kindhearted and “tender” scholars morphing into soldiers and becoming as “hard as wood”. Success at war demands not just external skills but inner conviction and inner bravado. For that self-esteem and boldness to develop, a soldier must believe in himself and his potential. For an army culture to succeed human heroics must be celebrated and military feats honored.

Every human project demands human initiative or *hishtadlut* alongside *emunah*. In general, *hishtadlut* demands the application of human skills and talents. Unlike other spheres though, *hishtadlut* in war requires self-esteem and personal pride for courage and bravery. Though it feels like excess self-attribution, military pride and celebration of the courage of IDF *chayalim* are all part of the necessary *hishtadlut* Hashem desires during war. Without human beings feeling pride at their accomplishments our military *hishtadlut* would be hollow and ineffective and we would be fully reliant upon miracles.

Ironically, serving in the army is the one area of religious experience in which belief in Hashem and attribution to human effort don’t clash. We know that Hashem wages war. We also know that he wants us to take the initiative. To take the initiative which He desires it is insufficient to merely apply skills and talents. We must also believe in the human courage and bravery which Hashem endowed in us.

We hope one day for overt miracles and war fought entirely through supernatural means. In the absence of these miracles, we continue to invest *hishtadlut* in the battles we know Hashem fights on our behalf. Ideally there should be absolutely no contradiction between our *emunah* in Hashem as an מלחמה and the celebration of human courage.

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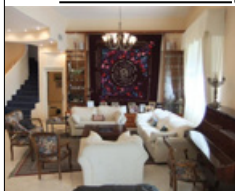
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Our Dynasty is Our Destiny

MELACHIM ALEPH 1:1-31

This week's Haftorah begins with a description of Dovid HaMelech in his old age, **זָקֵן** and the rocky road toward the transfer of leadership. His son, Adoniyahu declares himself king. Dovid, at the initiation of his wife Batsheva and his trusted advisor and prophet Nathan, announces that Shlomo will be the continuation of the Davidic dynasty and inherit the kingship. Why is it necessary to report Adoniyahu's attempt to usurp Shlomo's ascent to kingship? Ultimately, wasn't the Davidic line secured with Dovid HaMelech's own anointing?

The connection between the Parshiyot and Haftorot are sometimes more obvious, and sometimes less so. One possible connection for this week's readings is the use of the words **זָקֵן** describing both Avraham and Dovid. In their advanced ages both Dovid and Avraham recognize the need to assure a strong future for the Jewish people. Avraham does so by going to great lengths to find an appropriate wife for his unmarried son Yitzchok and Dovid does so by publicly proclaiming Shlomo king. Dovid and Avraham teach us by example that no matter our age or strength we must continuously work for the betterment of Klal Yisroel.

It is especially significant that the area of focus for both Avraham and Dovid in the

waning years of their lives is continuity. All too often iconic figures achieve greatness in their own lives, but are sadly unable to transmit it to succeeding generations. A succession plan was crucial for both Avraham and Dovid. The distinction of these men lies not merely in their ability to see the importance of breeding successors, but more so in their awareness of the particular needs of those who would assume the mantle of leadership following them. Avraham understood Yitzchok could only achieve his mission and his potential through the continuity of family. Dovid is keenly mindful that since Adoniyahu announced his rulership, only a public pronouncement could securely enshrine Shlomo as the next *melech al Yisroel* - king of the Jewish people.

Both Avraham and Dovid enabled continuity through deliberate actions; they carried out actions for their sons that were not carried out for them. Great leaders, like Avraham and Dovid, are prepared to do for others what was not done for them if it is indeed for the greater good and future of the people. They understand the value of *mesorah*, of transmitting values and heritage.

May Hashem bless us with the strength

and energy to assure the continuity of our people and Land, the wisdom to cherish our heritage and recognize the needs of others. Building a nation through family and dynasty is our destiny. ■

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Yoni thanks Hashem for having the opportunity of having Tziporah in his life, to learn of her caring, patience and happiness, to overcome her challenges. May Tziporah's Neshama be a light onto the world, in a time of darkness, and may her Neshama shine to Gan Eden. Yoni misses Tziporah with tears in his eyes, as Hashem gave him a gift, a crown jewel, now he returns her to Hashem.

With thanks and Toda. Love, Yoni

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Sara's Outcry

In the midst of the unspeakable horror that was the Warsaw Ghetto, a holy fire continued to burn bright. This ember was Rebbe Kalonymus Kalman Shapira, the Piasezner Rebbe, who served as the spiritual leader and father to thousands of adherents until his murder by the Nazis. His powerful sermons of the war years are preserved in *Esh Kodesh*, a work with an astonishing backstory. When it became apparent to the Piasezner that the ghetto would be liquidated, he buried the book manuscript in a canister. The canister was miraculously unearthed by Polish construction workers after the war, and the book was first published in Israel in 1960.

In a remarkable teaching, written amidst unfathomable anguish, the Piasezner Rebbe addressed the great challenge of continued faith in God's justice in the face of terrifying and agonizing adversity. He began with the opening verse of *Parashat Chayei Sara*: "The years of Sara's life were one hundred and twenty-seven years, the years of Sara's life" (Genesis 23:1). Why the repetitive phrase "the years of Sara's life" at the end of the verse?

The rebbe explained that the repetition is a sign of her extreme, lifelong piety which surpassed even Avraham's. When the years of Avraham's life are later tallied (Genesis 25:7), there is no such repetition. Sara's faith and devotion were unparalleled, even in

her final moments on this earth.¹

The Piasezner Rebbe quoted Rebbe Menachem Mendel Torem of Riminov (1745–1815)² on the comparison drawn in the Talmud between salt and suffering, based on the Torah's use of the word *berit*, "covenant," with each.³ Just as salt sweetens the meat by bringing out its flavor, so too suffering sweetens the putrid sins of man. Rebbe Menachem Mendel furthered the analogy. Salt is only a taste enhancer when applied proportionately—too much salt spoils the meat. Similarly, suffering must be diluted with mercy so that it is proportionate and does not crush a person.⁴

Rashi tells us that the juxtaposition of Sara's death at the beginning of *Parashat Chayei Sara* with the *Akedah* in *Parashat Vayera* is indicative of a causal link. Sara died after hearing that her only son had been bound like a sacrifice and almost slaughtered.⁵ In the rebbe's words:

Our master Moshe, the faithful shepherd, juxtaposed the death of Sara to *Akedat Yitzhak*, in order to advocate for us and to

1. *Esh Kodesh*, 5700, *Chayei Sara*, 9.

2. Since Rebbe Menachem Mendel's teachings were not published, they are scattered in the works of his disciples. Here the Piasezner Rebbe quotes him from *Maor va-Shamesh*, written by his namesake and maternal great-grandfather Rebbe Kalonymos Kalman ha-Levi Epstein (c. 1750–c. 1825), who was a disciple of Rebbe Menachem Mendel.

3. *Berachot* 5a.

4. *Esh Kodesh*, 5700, *Chayei Sara*, 10.

5. Rashi on Genesis 23:2, s.v. לשרה ולבכותה, based on *Genesis Rabbah*, 58:4.

demonstrate what happens when there is too much suffering, God forbid: her soul departed. Furthermore, if this could happen to Sara, so righteous a woman that when she was 100 she was like 20 with regard to sin..., and all of Sara's years were equivalent for good, yet she could not bear such deep agony, how much more so is this true for all of us.⁶

Even the greatest, most pious Jews of all time were fragile human beings who could be broken by intolerable suffering.

The Piasezner Rebbe then boldly claimed that Sara's death, the result of overwhelming psychological trauma, was an act on behalf of all Jews, as a protest to God, a demonstration that the Jewish people cannot bear excessive suffering. She gave up her life, if you will, in order to "teach the Creator" the limits of human suffering. She *chose* to show God the effect of suffering when it is too much to bear.

Even someone who on account of God's compassion survives their suffering, parts of their lifeforce, mind, and spirit are still crushed and obliterated. Does it matter if one is partly dead or fully dead?

This explains why the verse repeats "the years of Sara's life." Sara cut her life short. She had been allotted more years that would never be lived out, which could be construed as a blot on her piety. Since she acted for the good of her people, however, the final phrase in the verse instructs us that the lost years were like the rest. Her saintliness pervaded them all equally.

This sermon was delivered orally on the Shabbat of *Parashat Chayei Sara*, November 4, 1939. Only two months earlier the

Rebbe of Piasezna had suffered one of the most excruciating blows of his life: the deaths of his only son, his daughter-in-law, and his sister-in-law, all killed by the Nazi aerial bombing of Warsaw in September 1939. In speaking of Sara's loss, the rebbe's own tormented voice is audible.

In this gut-wrenching sermon, the rebbe affirmed that crushing heartbreak and psychological pain can be traumatic. In severe cases, a part of us dies. While the classic religious response to suffering is submission, Sara confronted the Creator, challenging Heaven to be more responsive and compassionate to the evil that man is made to endure. This gesture legitimates, the rebbe seems to say, our wrestling with theodicy. We are permitted—perhaps even obligated—to press God in our search for beacons of truth and justice in the smothering fog of suffering.

The Piasezner Rebbe concluded his unforgettable sermon with the following prayer: "Therefore, may God have mercy upon us and all Israel, and may He rescue us quickly spiritually and physically, with open kindnesses."⁸ Although wounded more than we can know, the rebbe's faith remained steadfast, anticipating redemption. We can imagine to ourselves the rebbe turning with humility and deep faith to God in Heaven, his lips forming a heartfelt petition: "I may not understand Your ways, but I will not give up on seeking Your closeness and anticipating the final redemption." The holy rebbe pleaded for that day to come soon. ■

8. Ibid.

Rabbi Goldscheider is the author of the newly published book 'Torah United' (OU Press), featuring divrei Torah on the weekly parasha from Rav Kook, Rabbi Solovetichik, and the Chassidic Masters.

6. *Esh Kodesh*, 5700, *Chayei Sara*, 10.

7. Ibid.



Pikuach Nefesh Principles, Part II: Public Pikuach Nefesh

לעילוי נשמת
יואל אפרים בן אברהם עוזיאל זלצמן ז"ל

Introduction: These days, the precious need to save lives is on our minds. We will now present some of the halachic and practical underpinnings of the laws that *pikuach nefesh* (saving a life) takes precedence over almost all of the Torah's *mitzvot* and prohibitions. Now we look at the distinction between public and private *pikuach nefesh* decisions and contemplate some ramifications, especially regarding Shabbat.

Presentation: The following approach to the unique qualities of *pikuach nefesh* decisions for matters decided on a communal and especially a national level are based on the writings of our mentor, Rav Shaul Yisraeli *zt"l* (see Amud Hayemini, *siman* 17). Rav Asher Weiss presented the same basic approach in a question and answer session after the outbreak of the war.

As we mentioned last week, a danger can be too remote to count for *pikuach nefesh* dispensations. Let us say, for example, that the potential danger from a specific situation is only 1 out of 10,000 and that this would not qualify to justify an individual violating Shabbat. A halachically-guided police force would need to have a policy about what to do if they are called to neutralize the danger, in

this or equivalent cases – do they drive there on Shabbat or refuse to do so? The policy they decide upon will be applied indefinitely, in every police station, week after week. Therefore, although any specific case is highly unlikely to cause loss of life, the cumulative effect of a decision not to drive is statistically very likely to cause loss of life. (Additionally, if criminals know the police will not come, it will increase the occurrence of such crime, which can also endanger life.) Because the decision is made by and for public policy, not on individual basis, we include all, including future, situations that are affected by the policy decision, in the equation for the halachic decision-maker to address. This will often lead him to conclude that *pikuach nefesh* applies.

An apparent fallacy of this cumulative view approach is that to save a tiny number of lives, many thousands of *chillulei Shabbat* must be performed, whereas in the decision regarding an individual case, limited *chillul Shabbat* would be needed. Rav Yisraeli responded that in the face of even one life we need to save, there is no limit on the number of people or actions involved in violating Shabbat. When the decision is correctly viewed broadly, we do not distinguish between many *chillulei Shabbat* stemming from different situation

The Orthodox Union - via its website - fields questions of all types in areas of kashrut, Jewish law and values. Some of them are answered by Eretz Hemdah, the Institute for Advanced Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, headed by Rav Yosef Carmel and Rav Moshe Ehrenreich, founded by HaRav Shaul Yisraeli zt"l, to prepare rabbanim and dayanim to serve the National Religious community in Israel and abroad. Ask the Rabbi is a joint venture of the OU, Yerushalayim Network, Eretz Hemdah... and OU Israel's Torah Tidbits.



and many stemming from one.

Rav Yisraeli also explained the idea of *machshilan le'atid lavo* (see Rosh Hashana 21b; Eiruvin 44b; Rambam, Shabbat 2:23). If someone went to save a life, he may violate Shabbat (to what extent is a *machloket*) in returning so that people will agree to save lives on future *Shabbatot*. *Chazal* deemed this as a case where we should view the future danger from the reaction to a strict halachic ruling in the present as a concern to consider in the present.

How should an individual citizen act in the realm of situations like these? Certainly, one with a public role **must** follow leniencies that stem from the public outlook. For example, a soldier on guard duty must not refuse to violate Shabbat to do this, even if he is correct that the chance of a dangerous infiltrator around his post are extremely low. If he did, **the system would not work!** Even regular citizens, for example, during Covid, were required to avoid infection as instructed, even if by age/health, they were not significantly endangered by the virus, because they

were endangering others. Even regarding protecting only one's own life, especially as part of a war effort, the rules of safety that citizens are **demand**ed to take as part of the home front element of the war are binding and justify *chillul Shabbat*. However, in most cases of safety recommendations for individuals (which Halacha generally views positively), Shabbat violations are not justified if the danger involved is objectively tiny and the average person is not concerned about it (I purposely avoid examples).■

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Terumot and Ma'aserot on the Battlefield

One beautiful phenomena since the beginning of the Swords of Iron war is the outpouring of love by Israelis of all stripes, who generously donate to the soldiers at the various outposts and bases. Donations include fresh produce, from which soldiers cannot be sure that *terumot* and *ma'aserot* were separated properly (if at all). In light of this, we have received many queries from soldiers wanting to know what the best course of action is.

Beit HaOtzar, the *ma'aser* fund of Torah VeHa'aretz Institute, decided to help soldiers who want to ensure they eat tithed food during combat. Recently, Beit HaOtzar has begun to assign coins for *chillul ma'aser sheni* and *pidyon neta revay* for any soldier in need of this service. This free membership to Beit HaOtzar facilitates easy separation of *terumot* and *ma'aserot* on produce whose origin is unknown.

Soldiers still need to separate more than 1% and recite the text


Note that soldiers still must separate a little more than 1% of the produce and recite the formula for separating *terumot* and *ma'aserot* (without a *berachah*). As part of the formula, they say that holiness of *ma'aser sheni* is transferred to a coin designated on their behalf. Afterwards, all

they need to do is wrap up and dispose the little more than 1%, and the produce is permissible to eat. The formula for separating *terumot* and *ma'aserot* can be found on our website Hebrew and English websites (toraland.org.il; en.toraland.org.il).

It is gratifying to see that, even though it is a time of war, soldiers still insist on observing the *mitzvah* of separating *terumot* and *ma'aserot*. ■

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Challenging Situations for Challenging Times

Last time we discussed the Likrat Kallah program that enables brides to go to the mikvah before their wedding, with constant accompaniment from PUAH and medical expert advice from our medical team.

As the war started, couples started to get married under complex circumstances and PUAH was a valuable resource for such couples. In the first two weeks of the war over 30 couples were helped by PUAH to get to the mikvah before their hurried wedding.

On average PUAH helped with more than two weddings every day. Each couple received counseling, a tailor-made plan from the doctors and access to PUAH's experts when necessary.

It quickly became clear that the same system can be used to help wives of soldiers who are fighting on the frontlines and who receive a few hours of leave to visit their homes. It is extremely important to give these exhausted troops the ability to have physical contact with their wives during these short respites in the fighting and time on the front.

PUAH offered this service for all women who wanted, and, in the first two weeks of the war, over 300 women turned to PUAH seeking expert advice. PUAH provided counseling for

these couples and made every effort to find halachic leniencies to enable the women to go to the mikvah or preserve a state of purity. When necessary and the women requested it, our doctors were able to prescribe medicine.

Unfortunately, PUAH was not able to solve every case and the PUAH Rabbis and counselors were faced with extremely difficult cases. Couples were reunited for short periods but were not able to give each other physical support and comfort. The Rabbis supported and empowered the couples that were faced with these challenges, and were able to give emotional support and encouragement, even when they were not able to touch.

Such counseling sessions proved the true inner strength and resilience of Am Yisrael. Couples knew that following the halacha was the correct thing to do, even when it was not always the easiest thing to do. It was so inspiring for myself and the other PUAH Rabbis to hear the deep desire of Jews to get halachic guidance even in these most trying times and complex realities. It is also a source of strength to know that halacha and God's word guides us through these challenging times and difficult conditions.

We see every day how the claim Am Yisrael Chai is not just a pleasant slogan but a beautiful reality. ■



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Shabbat Sparks from People of the South

We spent Shabbat in the Neve Ilan Hotel in the Judean Hills with hundreds of residents from the Gaza periphery and other southern communities. On this memorable Shabbat, sparks of inspiration came from the following:

Prayer. Lighting Shabbat candles is always inspiring, but especially at this time. There is a sense that all of our private prayers are being combined into a single large collective prayer. Thanks to whoever composed a special prayer for the hostages that all of us recited with passionate longing.

History. On Shabbat I heard stories that will soon be written about as part of our history – how Moshav Shokeda and Kibbutz Zikim and Kibbutz Yad Mordechai were saved. Members of the rapid response team of Shokeda watched from their roofs in horror as the adjacent Kibbutz Be'eri was going up in flames. They feared that they could be next. What exactly happened there? This is a story that is yet to be told.

Hope. I asked the teenagers to describe their present feelings in one word. One said "process." One said "test." They understand that something extraordinary is happening in the here and now. One of the girls told me that the most difficult moment was when they

were told that they would be in the hotel until Hanukkah, but then her friend said that this was also the easiest moment since she now understood that she had to adapt, to step back, to take a breath. This morning, by the way, the kids will finally start to study in a classroom again. Where? In the school for instruction about the Holocaust at Yad Vashem.

Soul-searching. I was embarrassed when a resident father of Zikim told me about the routine messages he was getting on his cell phone: "The explosions that you heard are from Hamas training exercises. Continue with your routine as usual." Why exactly were they training? His children now have the ability to reach their safe room within 15 seconds. They were born under the threat of missile attack, but must they continue to live like this? Where have we been all these years?

Strength. I asked what gives them strength. One of the girls said: "My parents." I received many other answers and then another girl said that in the first days of the war the residents of her moshav went to live in Arad where a community of Gur Chasidim looked after them. Afterwards they stayed at the Sde Boker Field School where they got close to the local community. "I

am in great distress since I cannot be in my home," the girl admitted, "but exposure to the true people of Israel gives strength."

Future: On Shabbat afternoon, a boy sat and studied for his Bar Mitzvah. His Torah portion is Korach and it's half a year away. He does not know where he will celebrate this event but he diligently continues to practice for it all the same. ■



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DUDE, THIS VENTRILQUIST ACT OF YOURS WAS A COOL IDEA AT THE BEGINNING, THROWING YOUR VOICE TO ONE OF ELIEZER'S CAMELS, BUT... THIS IS JUST GETTING SILLY!

LESS COMPLAINING, MORE FILMING, IF YOU DON'T MIND. I'M JUST GETTING TO THE POINT...



REALLY? THAT'S A FIRST...

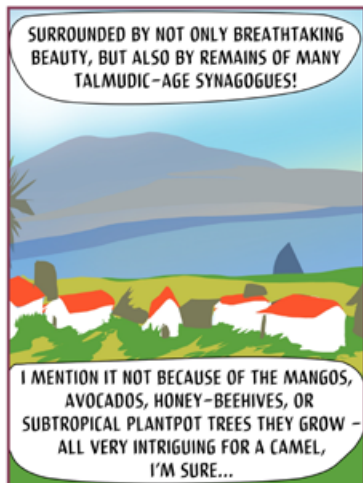
SHHH!!! ACTION!



...I MEAN, SURE, YERUSHALAYIM'S THE HOLY OF HOLIES, BUT IT'S NO PLACE FOR A CAMEL TO FIT IN, BELIEVE ME!

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A PLACE THAT REALLY RESPECTS CAMELS - YOU SHOULD TRY "MAALE GAMLA!"

FOUNDED IN... I MEAN, WILL BE FOUNDED IN 1979, THE MOSHAV IS - WILL BE - SITUATED HALFWAY UP THE INCLINE TO THE GOLAN HEIGHTS, OVERLOOKING THE KINNERET!



SURROUNDED BY NOT ONLY BREATHTAKING BEAUTY, BUT ALSO BY REMAINS OF MANY TALMUDIC-AGE SYNAGOGUES!

I MENTION IT NOT BECAUSE OF THE MANGOS, AVOCADOS, HONEY-BEEHIVES, OR SUBTROPICAL PLANTPOT TREES THEY GROW - ALL VERY INTRIGUING FOR A CAMEL, I'M SURE...



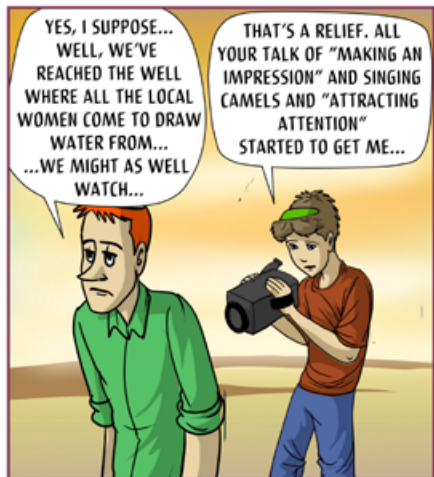
...BUT BECAUSE OF THE NAME! IT'S NAMED AFTER "ANCIENT GAMLA", A JEWISH TOWN FROM THE SECOND TEMPLE ERA THAT FELL IN THE GREAT JEWISH REVOLT AGAINST THE ROMANS...

...SO CALLED BECAUSE THE MOUNTAIN RIDGE REMINDED THEM OF A CAMEL'S HUMP! GET IT?!



OH, YOU'RE UNIMPRESSED BECAUSE THE SAME CAN BE SAID FOR "HAR GAMAL" (MOUNT CAMEL), NEXT TO KARMIEL? FINE, BE LIKE THAT!

OK, DUDE, NICE TRY. GUESS YOU SHOULD NEVER WORK WITH ANIMALS, EH?



YES, I SUPPOSE... WELL, WE'VE REACHED THE WELL WHERE ALL THE LOCAL WOMEN COME TO DRAW WATER FROM... ..WE MIGHT AS WELL WATCH...

THAT'S A RELIEF. ALL YOUR TALK OF "MAKING AN IMPRESSION" AND SINGING CAMELS AND "ATTRACTING ATTENTION" STARTED TO GET ME...



OH BUT NOW THAT WE'RE HERE, MAYBE I COULD JUST DROP A QUICK, MUSICAL HINT THAT THE CAMELS HERE MIGHT ALSO NEED A DRINK...?

NO, DUDE! YOU DON'T KNOW WHICH OF THE GIRLS HERE IS THE RIGHT ONE! BESIDES, THIS IS RIVKA IMMEINU WE'RE TALKING ABOUT! SHE REALLY DOESN'T NEED ANY OF YOURS HINTS...!



OKAY, SISTERS... SOMETHING SERIOUSLY WEIRD ABOUT THAT GUY THERE WITH THE LONG BEARD'S TEN CAMELS...

I'VE SEEN A MILLION CAMELS IN MY LIFE, BUT NEVER ONE THAT SINGS...

LET ALONE
"חַמַּת נֶפֶשׁ"
"חַמַּת נֶפֶשׁ"?



TORAH 4 TEENS

BY TEENS

NCSY ISRAEL



Rose Schwartz
Gush Etzion
Chapter Director

Fighting for our Values

In parshat Chayei Sarah, before sending her off to marry Yitzchak, Lavan gives his sister Rachel a bracha. He says:

אחתנו את ה"י לאלפי רבבה וירש זרעך את שער שנאי

Our sister, be the mother of thousands of ten thousands and may your offspring inherit the gate of their enemies. (24:60)

On this pasuk, Rashi asks why did Lavan not give Rivka a bracha that she should have no enemies at all? Rashi answers that having no enemies may not necessarily be a good sign. People who have and hold something of value are people who generally have enemies.

Lavan gives a bracha to Rivka that she should merit in having many descendants come from her who live rich lives filled with meaning and success knowing that it would bring upon them enemies. In that, he gives her a bracha that her descents should have the strength to overcome their enemies, and that their criticisms should be to no avail.

As Jews living in our homeland of Israel, we have built lives for ourselves full of Torah- lives full of happiness and success through our constant striving to create lives of Torah values.

We have enemies because as a people our lives are intertwined with the source of our great value, the Torah. May Am Yisrael have the strength and fortitude to overcome our

enemies, and may we return to building rich lives steeped in Torah values.



Ilana Weinberg
11th grade, Efrat
**Learning From
Avraham Avinu**

The beginning of Parshat חיי שרה is dedicated to Sarah Emainu. Everything that is being done is in the name of Sarah. We read in the first aliyah and the beginning of second aliyah how Avraham looks for the best place to bury Sarah. Then there is the negotiations to purchase the land and it ends off with him buying the land and burying her.

Avraham did all this after mourning the loss of his wife as we see in the end of Pasuk 2 and the beginning of Pasuk 3

“ויבא אברהם לספד לשרה ולבכותה: ויקם אברהם”

We learn from Avraham that even after we lose so much, we need to get up and do. Doing is part of the healing process.

In recent times, we as a nation have lost so much! We lost valuable people. People have lost their loved ones. Others have lost their homes and everything they had. We are all mourning that loss. This loss is only bringing us closer together. A feeling we haven't felt in a long time. Not that long ago, we felt the separation between us and now we see everyone going out of their way for others. Whether it is in donations, helping our soldiers, sending notes, food, gear, etc., hosting families and keeping them company... We are all working

together as a united nation. Everything we are doing now is dedicated to all those we are mourning and lost.

We need to take Avraham's strength and learn from him how to move forward. We need to continue building an even stronger nation. What the future holds for us is greater than anything we have been used to and we can only face it as a strong nation, together.

■ עם ישראל חי! שבת שלום ומבורך!

A Community Forum

Wednesday November 15th, 7:30pm
Address by: **Rabbi Dr. Alex Mondrow**

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To view the updated schedule of all OU Israel Virtual Programs, please visit <https://www.ouisrael.org/program/chizuk/>



In addition to a series of one-time special virtual events, we are offering two daily chizuk Zoom sessions. These daily opportunities to come together virtually feature words of chizuk and perspective from OU Israel faculty members as well as the opportunity to recite Tehilim together virtually.



1. DAILY MORNING CHIZUK ZOOM SESSIONS SUN.-THURS. @ 10:30 AM

Zoom details for morning sessions:
<https://bit.ly/OU-Morning-Chizuk>



2. DAILY AFTERNOON CHIZUK ZOOM SESSIONS SUN. -THURS. @ 5:00 PM

Zoom details for morning sessions:
<https://bit.ly/OU-Afternoon-Chizuk>

May HaKadosh Baruch Hu watch over and protect our chayalim, all those in harm's way, and all of Am Yisrael.



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