



RABBI AARON

Editor, Torah Tidbits

GOLDSCHIEDER

Aged, Adult, and Child - Concurrently

וַיְהִי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה, מֵאָה שָׁנָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וְשִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים--שָׁנֶי, חַיֵּי שָׂרָה (בראשית כג:א)

“And the life of Sarah was one hundred years and twenty years and seven years, [these were] the years of Sarah.” (Genesis 23:1).

Rashi’s query is well known: The word *shana*, years, is written after each digit in the verse; why was it necessary for the Torah to do so? It could have simply written 127 years. Rashi’s answer: There is a lesson to be learned from each number. Each is to be interpreted individually.

“...at one hundred she was like twenty as regards to sin...at twenty she was like seven in regards to beauty.” (Rashi, 23:1)

The closing phrase in this same verse is also puzzling. Why the redundancy, *shnei Chayei Sarah*, “these were the years of

Sarah?” Rashi comments, “All were equally good.” What does Rashi have in mind with these words?

Rabbi Soloveitchik suggested that the two explanations of Rashi be read together. In other words, throughout Sarah’s life she was a woman of hundred years, a woman of twenty, and a seven year old child. She was simultaneously very old and very young.

The Rav examines and expands on this intriguing idea:

In the physical sense there are undeniable changes in the different stages in life. However, in the spiritual realm it is possible to simultaneously amalgamate all three junctures, the aged - adult - and child.

Aged: The term *zaken* is employed when referring to the elder or sage. It connotes wisdom, maturity, and perspective. Among elders we often find the traits of cautiousness and sober judgment.

Adult: A twenty year old person displays idealism and a thirst for life, embarking on new ventures, and seizing new opportunities. For example, choosing a mate in marriage or launching a career, often characterize this period in life. This is a time in the cycle of life saturated with great energy, daring and idealism.

Dr. Eliezer Rosenblum

NYS Licensed and Board Certified

Chiropractor

Offices in Jerusalem, Ramat Beit Shemesh

052-662-4658

Child: A seven year old represents naivete; one who is a dreamer. A youngster who is filled with excitement and sincerity and sees the world through pure eyes and with simplicity.

The Rav suggested that the opening verse of parshat Chayei Sarah conveys the exquisite idea that Sarah was able to combine childhood, youth and old age concurrently. She exhibited the wisdom of an elder, vitality of a young adult, and purity of a youth - all at once.

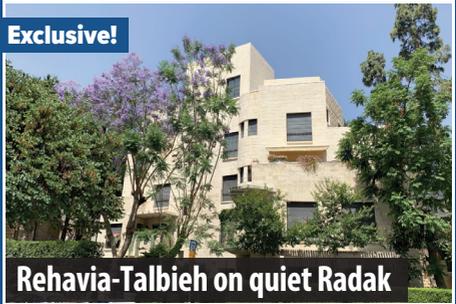
She maintained her child-like curiosity in her search for truth. She exhibited her youthful vigor in defying the society that surrounded her. She portrayed the wisdom of mature age when setting standards for her home and establishing its ethos.

This unique trait of amalgamating the various stages, said the Rav, is essential in Jewish life. Membership in the covenantal community requires mature wisdom, passionate idealism, and child-like naivete. At a moment we must be the mature and wise elder and the very next moment the excited youthful dreamer.

In what way does this notion inform a Jew's religious lives? Rabbi Soloveitchik identified three foundational areas which require these modes of thought and emotions: A Jew accesses childlike simplicity, youthful exuberance, and mature insight.

The Rav examined the following three areas: *Tefillah* (prayer), *Emunah* (faith) and *Talmud Torah* (Torah study).

Exclusive!



Rehavia-Talbieh on quiet Radak

Beautiful, spacious 4 room luxury unit, 2.5 baths, 2nd floor, Shabbat elevator, large succa terrace, storage + covered parking \$2.075 million



EVA AVIAD REALTY & SHELLY LANDAU PROPERTIES LTD
www.avidrealty.com
bayitsheli@gmail.com

054-499-9043 • 052-385-9944

Tefillah

Tefillah requires complete trust in the Holy One. Like a child who clutches on to her mother and yearns simply to be held and embraced by someone who loves them very much. The child pines to feel protection and their parents' presence. This feeling, said the Rav, is the root of prayer.

The Rav took note of the first words we recite when standing before God during the *Amida* is the request, "O Lord, open my lips," suggesting that we need God's help to formulate prayer. We begin prayer on a note of apprehension. In other words, only with the help of our Father in Heaven can we articulate our words correctly (*Mesorat HaRav Siddur*, p.306).

Emunah

A second area that also requires a child-like innocence is the area of *emunah*, faith in God.

The Rav offered the example of Avraham who suspends his judgement when called upon to sacrifice his son. Avraham does not say a single word of dissent. Not a single complaint. The Rav said, “An adult could not do that; only a child is capable of absolute, unconditional surrender...” (Abraham’s Journey, p. 190).

We might add another poignant example: Aharon, after the tragic death of two sons. This was his response: *Va’yidom Aharon*, ‘Aharon was silent’. Not only was he silent in words he also silenced his mind.

The Rav expanded on this idea and taught that beside the depth, scope and sharpness of thought needed to be a *talmid chacham*, Torah scholar, the truly great Jewish personality also possesses “the playfulness and innocence of a child, full of curiosity, enthusiasm and limitless faith.” He conveyed this idea in a eulogy he offered for his beloved mentor, the illustrious Rav Chayim Heller (1880-1960). The following are the Rav words:

“The adult is too clever. Utility is his guiding light. The experience of God is unavailable to those approaching it with a businesslike attitude. Only the child can breach the boundaries that segregate the finite from the infinite. Only the child with his simple faith and fiery enthusiasm can make the miraculous leap into the bosom of God... When it came to faith, the giants of

Torah, the geniuses of Israel, became little children, with all their ingenuousness, gracefulness, simplicity, their tremors of fear, their vivid experiences and their devotion to them... Whenever [Moshe] fell before God, he cried like a child. Who can fall before his father, raise his eyes to him alone, to seek consolation and salvation, if not the child! ... The mature, the adult, are not capable of the all-embracing and all-penetrating outpouring of the soul. The most sublime crown we can give a great man sparkles with the gems of childhood.” (*Divrei Hagut Ve-ha’arakha*, pp.159-160; in English: *Shiurei Harav*, pp.63-64)

Talmud Torah

Surely when we engage in study of the Torah the traits most associated with this task is the wisdom of adulthood and experience of years which garner good judgment and insight. These traits are acquired only with the passage of time and maturity. The adult and the trained mind is essential for the analysis and exploration required for *Talmud Torah*.

However, the Rav often emphasized that another component is essential when engaging in Talmud Torah. Employing the venerated ‘Brisker method’, The Rav examined a ruling of the Rambam’s in the laws of Talmud Torah in the *Mishne Torah* (3:13). Curiously, in this context, the Rambam spotlights the importance of learning Torah at night.

“Even though it is a mitzvah to study during the day and at night, it is only at

night that a person acquires most of his wisdom. Therefore, a person who desires to merit the crown of Torah should be careful with all his nights, not giving up even one to sleep, eating, drinking, talk, or the like. Rather, [they should be devoted to] the study of Torah and the words of wisdom. Our Sages declared: “The song of Torah can [be heard] only at night, as [Eichah 2:19] states: ‘Arise, sing out at night...’”

The Rav raised the following question concerning the Rambam’s formulation, “Why should the time of day make any difference?”. Secondly, “What is the Rambam alluding to when he speaks of the night time being a setting for ‘the song of Torah?’”

The Rav interpreted this passage to be describing the unique character of learning Torah in the night hours. This time period is most suitable to experience closeness to God. In the ambiance of the night one is more suited to feeling intimacy and closeness with the Giver of the Torah.

One final example of a Jew’s child-like relationship to Torah: It is a curious fact that the images which adorn the holy Aron in the Holy of Holies are the cherubim, child-like faces that are affixed to the ark which contains the Torah. He suggested that the childlike images are fitting in the sense that study of Torah requires the learner to be filled with purity, naivete and a child-like longing to feel God’s presence. (Rabbi Soloveitchik’s eulogy for Rabbi Joseph Shubow)



גולן נכסים
עוץ ושיווק נדל"ן
077-2050015
052-2678749
www.golan-realestate.net



Meir
Golan

Old Katamon: 4-room apartment on a small, quiet street, 101sqm, renovated, very bright and airy, master bedroom, Safe room (mamad), sukkah balcony, view, elevator, 3,400,000 NIS

Kiryat Shmuel: 4-room apartment, 90sqm, well split, bright, airy, sukkah balcony facing a magnificent panoramic view, 3 exp., Shabbat elevator, private parking, 3,290,000 NIS

German Colony: 4-room apartment, 90sqm, bright, airy, 2 balconies, 3 exposures, large storeroom with a window, shared parking, immediate, 2,650,000 NIS

Learning from the Rav

Faith, prayer and Torah study require adulthood and concomitantly call on us to access sentiments of dependency and emotions of longing for our Father in Heaven. A Jew must be eager and capable of assuming the identities of a *zaken*, adult and child - concurrently.

Finally, the Rav cited the Talmud which tells of a coin that was issued in the time of Avraham and Sarah. It decries the insignia etched in the coins: On the one side an image of an old man and woman and the image of a young boy and girl on the other side (Bava Kama 97b). Sarah and Avraham were able to heroically merge together the multifaceted stages of life. They were old and young at the same time. ■