



SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

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This past Motzai Shabbat marked the 64th *yahrtzeit* of the great *tzadik* Rabbi Yaakov Friedman, the *Admor of Hosiya* *tz'ya*. 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 Hosiya* *tz'ya* 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 daled(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 *z'ya*, 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 *daled* 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 explains, 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 HaKedosha*. 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. ■

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