

ב"ה *Torah* **Tidbits**

ISSUE 1492 NOV 19TH '22 כ"ה מרחשון תשפ"ג

פרשת חיי שרה

PARSHAT CHAYEI SARA - SHABBAT MEVARCHIM

OU
סו ישראל



**ויתן לי את-
מערת המכפלה**
בראשית כג: ט



Beginning Twice
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Faculty, OU Israel
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Simchat Shmuel
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Program Director,
OU Israel Center
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Remembering
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YERUSHALAYIM IN/OUT TIMES FOR SHABBAT PARSHAT CHAYEI SARA
CANDLES 4:03PM • HAVDALA 5:17PM • RABBEINU TAM 5:55PM

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Shabbat Mevarchim

מולד חודש כסלו יהיה בליל חמישי עשרים ושמונה דקות ושמונה חלקים אחרי עשר בלילה
ראש חדש כסלו יהיה ביום חמישי וביום ששי הבא עלינו ועל כל ישראל לטובה

Rosh Chodesh Kislev is on Thursday November 24 and Friday November 25



This week's Torah Tidbits cover image!

Photomontage by Josef Tocker, a retired graphic artist now living in Alon Shvut in Gush Etzion.

We have been here for almost 13 years, made aliyah in 2010.

"Avraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave of the field of Machpelah which is Hebron.

This is the first time that we actually paid to have a share in owning Land in Israel and passing it down for an everlasting heritage. I feel by making aliyah, I am continuing that heritage."

CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



OTHER Z'MANIM



CANDLES	CHAYEI SARA	HAVDALA	TOLDOT	
			Candles	Havdala
4:03	Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	5:17	4:00	5:15
4:21	Aza area (Netivot, S'derot, Et al)	5:20	4:18	5:18
4:21	Beit Shemesh / RBS	5:18	4:19	5:16
4:19	Gush Etzion	5:17	4:16	5:16
4:18	Raanana / Tel Mond / Herzliya / K. Saba	5:18	4:16	5:16
4:19	Modi'in / Chashmona'im	5:18	4:16	5:16
4:18	Netanya	5:18	4:16	5:16
4:21	Be'er Sheva	5:19	4:18	5:18
4:19	Rehovot	5:18	4:17	5:17
4:03	Petach Tikva	5:18	4:00	5:16
4:18	Ginot Shomron	5:17	4:15	5:15
4:07	Haifa / Zichron	5:16	4:04	5:14
4:17	Gush Shiloh	5:16	4:15	5:14
4:19	Tel Aviv / Giv'at Shmuel	5:18	4:17	5:16
4:18	Giv'at Ze'ev	5:17	4:15	5:15
4:19	Chevron / Kiryat Arba	5:18	4:16	5:16
4:21	Ashkelon	5:20	4:18	5:18
4:19	Yad Binyamin	5:18	4:17	5:17
4:10	Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden	5:14	4:07	5:12
4:15	Golan	5:14	4:12	5:12
Rabbeinu Tam (J'lem) • 5:55PM • next week - 5:53pm				

Times According to MyZmanim (20 min. before sundown in most cities,
40 min. in Yerushalayim and Petach Tikva, 30 min. in Tzfat/Haifa)

JERUSALEM

Ranges 11 days Wed - Shabbat

Nov. 16-26 / 22 Marcheshvan - 2 Kislev

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	5:15 - 5:23
Sunrise	6:08 - 6:17
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	8:46 - 8:51
Magen Avraham	8:08 - 8:13
Sof Zman Tefila	9:38 - 9:43

(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanaya)

Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	11:23 - 11:26
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	11:53 - 11:56
Plag Mincha	3:33 - 3:31
Sunset (Including Elevation)	4:44 - 4:40



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Torah Tidbits and many of the projects of OU Israel are assisted by grants from THE JERUSALEM MUNICIPALITY



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DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

RABBI AVI BERMAN

Executive Director, OU Israel



As part of my role as the Director of OU Israel, I regularly fly to the East Coast to participate in OU events throughout the year. While any time away from my family is difficult, I am continuously grateful for the experiences I am able to have which allow me to witness the beauty of *Am Yisrael* wherever I go. I am currently writing to you all from New York where I'll be for the remainder of the week. What is clear to me is that no matter the distance, Jews always find ways to connect with and learn from one another. I'd like to share some of the highlights I've experienced over the last few days. Perhaps they will prove meaningful to you as well.

Kosherfest: As members of *Klal Yisrael*, our *mitzvot* have the power to unite us. This past week, more than 6,000 industry professionals and 325 exhibitors of kosher-certified products and services joined together at *Kosherfest*, the world's largest kosher-certified products trade show that brings together businesses large and small - from chain supermarkets, to corner groceries, to food service establishments, to caterers and more.

As the largest global Kashrut agency, OU Kashrut attends Kosherfest every year. For our second year in a row, Rabbi Ezra Friedman, Director of The Gustave and Carol Jacobs Center for Kashrut Education, and I represented OU Israel at the event. Our goal was to connect OU-certified Israeli

importers and manufacturers with those in the US, such as Elad Charazi, the Purchasing Director of Yochananof and Yossi Strum from Rotem Mitro. Our discussions centered around expanding OU Kashrut certification in *Eretz Yisrael* and determining how best to import US products. As I found myself running between dozens of meetings set up for us throughout the event, I took a moment to appreciate the thousands of people who have dedicated themselves to upholding the *mitzvah* of *kashrut*, gathering together to determine how best to serve the needs of *Klal Yisrael* on a global scale.



I'll use this opportunity to thank OU Kashrut's CEO, Rabbi Menachem Genack, Rabbi Moshe Elefant, COO of OU Kashrut and Phyllis Koegel, Marketing Director for providing a space for so many Jews to gather and support one another. Evident by the meetings that took place, OU certification provides more than just the certification for vendors. Rather, OU certified vendors become part of the global OU Kashrut

network and are given the tools to be successful in their respective roles within the food industry - from promotion, to networking, to strategizing.

Bnot Sherut in Chutz La'aretz: Among the many elements that make Israel's National Service model unique, is that young women take time away from their studies to give back to *Am Yisrael* - even going beyond the borders of *Eretz Yisrael*. This year, over 115 young women are helping Jewish communities around the world as an extended year of their National Service. I had the *zechut* to spend this past *Shabbat* with 85 of the North American *Bnot Sherut* who gathered from their posts in Jewish communities spanning the US, Canada and Mexico, at the Young Israel of Teaneck.

We were joined by Reuven Pinsky, General Director of the National Civic Service and members of his staff, including Orit Lev Ran, who runs all programming for overseas *Bnot Sherut*. When I addressed the group of young women on Friday night, I felt compelled to acknowledge the opportunity *Bnot Sherut* in *chutz la'aretz* are given, to directly impact the development of North American Jewry.

I explained that while every person brings their own talents to their respective National Service positions, by simply growing up in *Eretz Yisrael*, they have a wealth of knowledge and experience to offer our brethren in the Diaspora. We can easily take for granted that...

Our children are taught about the *chagim* when they first enter *gan*...

Our youth are made aware of the concept of *Shabbat*, regardless of observance, simply by the fact that traffic patterns change

nisht on shabbos...

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before, during and after *Shabbat*...

Our Egged buses have signs pasted to the front row seats, "*Mipnei Seiva Takum*," reminding passengers of the *mitzvah* to stand before our elders and scholars...

The stories in *Tanach* come alive throughout the country as we gaze out of our windows during our daily travels...

Perhaps what is most palpable when our *Bnot Sherut* leave the embrace of *Eretz Yisrael* is the Jewish pride we are raised with that can be lost in *chutz la'aretz*. Molded by these experiences, our *Bnot Sherut* are imparting their love for this Holy Land, while connecting Jews of all backgrounds to one another.

Guzo - The Journey to the Land of Israel:

We have so much to learn from one another's journeys. During my trip I reconnected with my dear friend Aviv Abebe who served as the Director of our OU Israel Youth Center in Rehovot for many years. Just a few years ago, Aviv and his wife moved to New Jersey on *shlichut* to serve as educators at Ben Porat Yosef (BPY) *yeshiva* day school in Paramus, and at the Ahavath Torah Synagogue in Englewood. When Aviv heard about OU Israel's Guzo game, he asked that I bring as many as possible to the US on my next visit. Originally from Ethiopia, Aviv was particularly moved by the game and was eager to

share it with his family and students. For those who have yet to experience the game for yourselves, get a glimpse into the rich history of Ethiopian Jews. Find out more here:

<https://www.ouisrael.org/games/>

In the coming days I will be attending the



OU International Senior Staff Conference, where I will learn more about the programs my colleagues are running around the world. Stay tuned for more on that next week! In the meantime, while I continue to soak in the moments of meaning I'm experiencing here in New York, I cannot wait to return to our Homeland *b'karov*. May we continue to find opportunities to connect to one another and appreciate the *brachot* that surround us here in *Eretz Yisrael*.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,

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

The OU Israel family sends deepfelt condolences to Sara Kriss and family on the passing of her husband

Avraham Kriss z"l

A member and volunteer of the
OU Israel Center for many years

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FROM THE DESK OF RABBI MOSHE HAUER



OU Executive Vice President

Kiddush Hashem

A central mandate of the Jewish people is *Kiddush Hashem*, the sanctification of G-d's name by making His presence felt in our world. Avraham was the father of our people because he undertook this mandate, dedicating his life to delivering kindness and teaching people about G-d and His goodness, making the G-d of the heavens into the G-d of the earth as well (see Rashi 24:7). His impact was acknowledged by his contemporaries as he was referred to by them as a *Nesi Elokim*, a G-dly prince (23:5), representing all that is G-dly and good in the world.

The Midrash teaches that Avraham gained this title when he was greeted upon his victorious return from the battle against the four kings at “*Emek Shavei hu Emek Hamelech*.” It was then and there that the nations unanimously acknowledged Avraham as G-dly royalty (Rashi to 14:17).

What specifically had generated this acknowledgment? They were impressed by Avraham's loyalty to his estranged nephew Lot, expressed in his readiness to go to battle to save his life. They realized as well that Avraham had waged this war against Amraphel/Nimrod, his consistent nemesis who stood for paganism and rebellion against G-d, while Avraham continued to stand for faith in the one G-d. But they also celebrated the phenomenon of one man and

a small fighting force prevailing against the overwhelming power of four regional kings, recognizing that the usual metrics of numbers and physical strength were not decisive when G-d was brought into the equation. They witnessed how the spirit is mightier than the sword.

That same recognition is implicit here in our Parsha. When we read the exchange between Avraham and the leaders of Chevron, we recall that this was a city characterized by its population of *anakim*, people of unusual physical size and strength (Bamidbar 13:22; Yehoshua 14:12). It was these giants who looked at Avraham as the *adam hagadol ba'anakim*, the supreme giant amongst them, deferring to him as their G-dly prince (see Rashi to Yehoshua 14:15).

That kind of recognition represents the ultimate *kiddush Hashem*. In a world dominated by a variety of forms of material power – physical strength, wealth, prominence, or brilliance – G-d's presence is felt when those who exemplify His word and values garner the ultimate respect.

“Thus said Hashem: Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom; let not the mighty boast of his might; let not the wealthy boast of his wealth. For only in this may one be praised, in his conscious devotion to Me, for I, Hashem, act with loving-kindness, justice, and righteousness in the world, for it is these things that I desire, declares Hashem.” (Yirmiyahu 9:22-23) ■



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CHAYEI SARA



ALIYA-BY-ALIYA
SEDRA SUMMARY



**Rabbi Reuven
Tradburks**
Director of
RCA Israel Region

Our parsha is the transition from Avraham and Sarah to Yitzchak and Rivka; Sarah dies at the beginning of the parsha, Avraham toward the end. Avraham buys Ma'arat Hamachpela where Sarah 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.

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

on his 16th yahrtzeit - כ חשוון

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

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). Sarah 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) Sarah 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

Every person who was not born in Israel and lives in the Holy Land should celebrate his/her **ALIYANNIVERSARY** annually!
REMEMBER! WITH ALIYAH BLESSINGS!
The NEAMANS

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 Sarah. Sarah, 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 Sarah; Sarah sent Yishmael away, Rivka will in effect cause Esav to be sent away from the Jewish people.

לעילוי נשמה
and in loving memory of our beloved
אברהם בן צבי ז"ל
Avraham (Avi) Faier z"l
on his second yahrzeit
כ"ו מרחשוון
Chaya Faier and Family



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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 Sarah'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 Sarah'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. 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 comes 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

לע״י

דבורה בת פסח שמואל-ל הכהן (כץ) גורדון

Dora (Katz) Gordon a'h

on her 60th yearzeit

כ״ט מרחשון

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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 Sarah. 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. Sarah 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 Avra-

ham 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.

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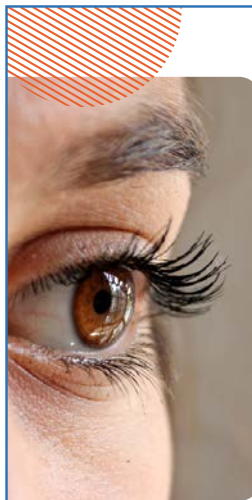
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7th **Aliya (25:12-18)** The generations of Yishmael are enumerated. Yishmael dies.

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.

May the Torah learned from this TT be לעיין and in loving memory of our dear brother

Rabbi Zvi (Howard) Rosner ז"ל

נלב"ע כ"ב מרחשון תשפ"א

Nechama and Elliot Rosner

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 Bat Sheva, mother of Shlomo, and conveyed to her the importance of approaching King

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A SHORT VORT | BY RABBI CHANOKH YERES

Rav, Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

After Sarah's death, Avraham felt the urge to find a wife for his son Yitzchak. Avraham appoints Eliezer, his servant to complete the task of finding a suitable mate for Yitzchak. He tells him where to look for her but then adds:

"And you shall take a wife for my son, for Yitzchak" (24:4)
 "ולקחת אשה לבני יצחק" (בד:)

Rabbi Shimshon Rafael Hirsch seems to ponder why Avraham needs to give such detailed instructions. If he is asking him to find a wife for "his son", is it not obvious that he was referring to Yitzchak? What was Avraham referring to when he emphasized "for Yitzchak"?

He answers that there were two issues Avraham was instructing Eliezer. Firstly, "for my son" - we must feel that she should be worthy to become my daughter as much as he is my son. Furthermore, the prospective bride and Yitzchak must also be suitable for each other. Therefore, "for Yitzchak" means that she connects with Yitzchak's personality, a modest, innocent girl for his son, who would bless his home with fine feelings and morals.

Shabbat Shalom

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.'"

STATS

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

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 B'reishit, 3 in Sh'mot, none in Vayikra, 2 in Bamidbar, and 3 in D'varim.

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IN THE PARSHA

To Eulogize and To Weep

Kindergarten children are delightfully oblivious to the distinction between what adults call reality and the imaginary world. For these young children, there is no difference between the people in their actual lives and the people they learn about in the stories they hear.

For most adults, the heroes of the Bible stories are historical figures, and although they exist in our imagination, we know that they are long gone. These heroes and heroines, however, are as real to kindergartners as their parents and siblings are.

This hit home with me many years ago when my oldest daughter was a kindergarten student. She is now herself a grandmother, so that tells you just how long ago this was.

As all children in a Jewish religious

kindergarten, by this time of year she had heard many stories about Sarah. She knew about Sarah's journey to the Promised Land, of her trials and tribulations in Egypt, of the fact that she was barren, and of the joy she experienced with the birth of Isaac.

On the Friday before the Shabbat of this week's Torah portion, *Chaye Sarah*, she came home from school distraught, with tears flowing down her little cheeks. "Mommy, daddy," she cried. "Did you hear? Sarah died, Sarah died!" She was in the grips of a sadness very close to real grief; for Sarah had become a living figure for her, much to the credit of the teacher who told her Sarah's story. Few of us adults will exhibit emotion this week as we read of Sarah's demise. But I wager there are numerous kindergarten age boys and girls in Jewish schools who will shed tears.

For those of us who study the Torah portion weekly, death and dying are not unfamiliar. From the first human being who died, ironically through murder, until



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the near death of Isaac of which we read last week, the Bible has reported dozens of deaths to us.

But there is something especially poignant and moving about Sarah's death, even to us jaded adults. This is partly because, for the first time in the Bible, we have the report of another person's reaction to the death of a loved one. We read of a bereaved Abraham, a loving husband who comes "to eulogize Sarah and to cry for her." (*Genesis 23:2*)

For the first time, we learn of the human capacity to express emotions through eulogy.

The Talmud has a fascinating discussion over the nature of eulogy, of *hesped*. "Is a eulogy designed to benefit the dead?" asks the Talmud. "Or is it for the benefit of the living survivors, the mourners?"

The Talmud has its own conclusion, but there can be no doubt that from a psychological perspective the eulogy does both. It honors the dead, and it provides the mourner with the opportunity to give vent to his grief and to achieve a degree of catharsis.

Perhaps this is why Abraham both "eulogizes" Sarah and "cries for her". In his "eulogy" he honors her person, her character, her achievements in life. By "crying for her," he gives voice to his profound sense of the loss of his life's partner.

I can never forget the powerful experience I had long ago in a workshop led by the famed psychologist, Virginia Satir. She asked us to each retreat to a private corner



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of the large room and to devote a quiet hour to meditate upon, and if we wished, to record in writing, the eulogy that we imagine would be written for us when we died. I remember silently adding to those instructions the words "...after 120 years."

This exercise forced us to look deeply within ourselves and to determine what was permanent and worthy in our lives, and how we wished to be remembered by others. After a few moments into the exercise, the initial silence was broken by sobs, by sighs, by weeping. After that hour, the group gathered and many shared extremely moving feelings, and reported much self-discovery and self-revelation.

I don't recommend this experience to you, dear reader, unless you can do so in the presence of a trusted friend, preferably a person trained in coping with the feelings that can possibly emerge from such an exercise. But I do draw upon the experience I had that day to understand what others go through in the inevitable process of grief and mourning. I do continually go back in my memory to that day to understand myself and to evaluate my own life and its successes and failures, accomplishments and frustrations.

And I do rely upon the reactions I witnessed and personally underwent that day to understand our patriarch Abraham and his need to both "eulogize Sarah, AND to cry for her." ■



Mazal Tov to
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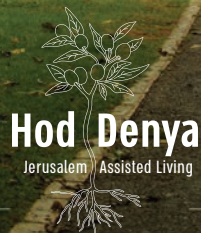
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MIDEI CHODESH B'CHODSHO

BY RABBI SHMUEL GOLDIN

Faculty, OU Israel

Rabbi Emeritus, Congregation Ahavath
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Beginning Twice

I invite you to step back for a moment- in the middle of the Torah's description of our earliest years- to consider a fundamental question: *Why does Jewish history begin twice?*

Our story first began, in Parshat Lech Lecha, with the opening of a pre-national period, the Patriarchal/Matriarchal Era. Launched by Avraham's journey to Canaan, this period comes to an end in Parshat Vayechi, with Yaakov's death.

But, then, our story begins all over again. We open the Book of Shmot, and read of the birth of the Jewish nation – of a journey that will take us from the cauldron of slavery, through the wrenching Exodus, to the dramatic Revelation at Sinai.

Why is all this necessary? Why is a

May the learning from this issue
of Torah Tidbits be
in loving memory of our father,
grandfather, great-grandfather

Alfred S. Cohen ז"ל
אבא שלום אהרון הכהן ז"ל
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pre-national period so critical to our people's development? Why doesn't our story begin, as the first Rashi on Bereishit suggests, with the birth of the Israelite nation?

On one level, this question is clearly rhetorical. This week's issue of Torah Tidbits, like all other issues, records numerous powerful lessons conveyed by the actions of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs. The Torah would be incomplete without these, and the innumerable other lessons taught by our ancestors; as relevant for us today as they were on the day the events occurred.

And yet, I have always thought that there is something more – something to be learned not only from the specific stories of the patriarchs and matriarchs but from the very existence of this introductory period itself. Over the years I have identified three global foundations, essential to our national character, that are laid during the patriarchal/matriarchal era. I believe that these underpinnings serve as the best arguments of all for the inclusion of this seminal period in the record of Jewish history.

1. *The patriarchal/matriarchal era establishes the significance of the yachid (the individual).*

God wanted there to be a time when the totality of our people's experience would be defined by the lives and dreams of individuals: Avraham, Sara, Yitzchak, Rivka, Yaakov, Rachel and Leah. Their stories

would serve to remind us, even after the dawn of the national era, of the continuing, inestimable importance of each individual.

Generations before Avraham begins his journey, the Torah records the stories of two failed civilizations. Personal greed dooms the generation of the flood, while societal tyranny seals the fate of the builders of the Tower of Babel. In the aftermath of these two catastrophic failures, HaShem commands Avraham and his descendants to model righteousness for the world. To fulfill this task, they will need to strike a healthy balance between individual and community.

With the birth of Jewish nationhood, the newly established *tzibur* (community) could not be allowed to overwhelm the individual or stifle individuality. Our nation's birth, therefore, had to wait until the patriarchal/matriarchal period fully established the importance of each person's unique contribution to the communal fabric.

2. *The patriarchal/matriarchal era establishes the primacy of the Jewish family and home.*

In a very real sense, this introductory period of Jewish history can be seen as a journey towards one specific moment, the moment when Yaakov lies on his deathbed surrounded by his children. Unlike Avraham and Yitzchak, each of whom had progeny who were lost to Jewish history,

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Yaakov now knows that all of his children intend to follow in his ways. After three generations of struggle with outside influences and internal turmoil, the Hebrew family is finally whole. The patriarchal era can now safely end.

The journey of the patriarchal household to that moment teaches us that: *before we could become a nation, we had to be a family.*

The significance of the home is underscored again when God delivers His preparatory instructions to Moshe at Sinai: “Thus shall you say to the House of Yaakov and speak to the People of Yisrael...” *Do not assume that, since you are now the “People of Yisrael,” you can, therefore, set the “House of Yaakov” aside. The family unit remains of primary importance.*

The Jewish home is and always has been the single most important educational unit in the perpetuation of our people. What our children learn at home, through example and word, shapes both their knowledge of and their attitude towards Jewish tradition and practice. The home’s centrality finds its roots in the earliest moments of our people’s story, in the journey of the patriarchal families, centuries before our nation is created.

3. The patriarchal/matriarchal era establishes a preexisting national legacy.

The value of our possessions, whether material or spiritual, increases exponentially when those possessions are perceived as a legacy from previous generations. A beautiful pearl necklace is infinitely more precious if it is an heirloom which belonged to a beloved mother or grandmother.

Because of the patriarchal/matriarchal

era, our nation is born with a preexisting legacy. By the time the Exodus and Revelation launch the national era, we already possess a history. Our dreams reflect the dreams of our forefathers and our goals represent the fulfillment of their hopes. The Land of Israel is not an unknown destination, but a cherished Land of which we have already heard countless tales, a Land promised to our ancestors centuries before. The Torah and its commandments are not foreign concepts, but the expected realization of covenants already contracted between God and those who preceded us.

The phenomenon of a pre-existing legacy lends a richness and depth to the moment of our nation’s birth that could not have been created in any other way. Even more, however, this phenomenon sets the initial paradigm for the ongoing process of *mesora*, the transmission of tradition from one generation to the next. From the very beginning, our mission is personal, a mission shaped not only by God’s will but also by the memories of people and ages gone by. Those warm memories, together with countless others created across the years, form the ever-growing human dimension of our heritage, a dimension essential to the *mesora* process, a dimension originating in the patriarchal/matriarchal era.

Three critical, pre-existing foundations shape our nation’s character from the moment of its birth. Perhaps that is why, with inestimable wisdom, God provides us with a history that begins twice. ■

Rabbi Goldin is the author of the OU Press volumes “Unlocking the Torah Text,” and “Unlocking the Haggada.”



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"And so the field of Ephron which was in Machpelah, facing Mamre, was established (as Abraham's possession). [This included] the field and the cave that was in it, and all the trees that were in the field, which were within its entire border around." (Genesis 23,17)

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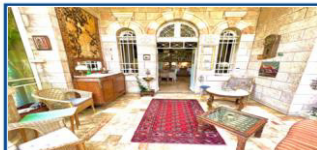
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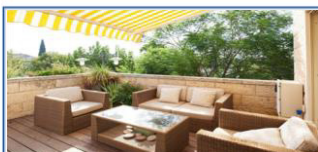
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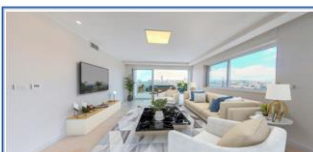
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COVENANT & CONVERSATION

Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from
RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS ZT"l

Former Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew
Congregations of the Commonwealth

May the learning of these Divrei Torah be לעילוי נשמות
HaRav Ya'akov Zvi ben David Ariele zt"l

לעילוי נשמות

פנחס בן יעקב אשר וגולדה בת ישראל דוד אייז ע"ה
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A Call From the Future

He was 137 years old. He had been through two traumatic events involving the people most precious to him in the world. The first involved the son for whom he had waited for a lifetime, Isaac. He and Sarah had given up hope, yet God told them both that they would have a son together, and it would be he who would continue the covenant. The years passed. Sarah did not conceive. She had grown old, yet God still insisted they would have a child.

Eventually it came. There was rejoicing. Sarah said: "God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me." (Gen. 21:6) Then came the terrifying moment when God said to Abraham: "Take your son, your only one, the one you love... and offer him as a sacrifice." (Gen. 21:6) Abraham did not dissent, protest or delay. Father and son travelled together, and only at the last moment did the

command come from heaven saying, "Stop!" How does a father, let alone a son, survive a trauma like that?

Then came grief. Sarah, Abraham's beloved wife, died. She had been his constant companion, sharing the journey with him as they left behind all they knew; their land, their birthplace, and their families. Twice she saved Abraham's life by pretending to be his sister.

What does a man of 137 do – the Torah calls him "old and advanced in years" (Gen. 24:1) – after such a trauma and such a bereavement? We would not be surprised to find that he spent the rest of his days in sadness and memory. He had done what God had asked of him. Yet he could hardly say that God's promises had been fulfilled. Seven times he had been promised the land of Canaan, yet when Sarah died he owned not one square inch of it, not even a place in which to bury his wife. God had promised him many children, a great nation, many nations, as many as the grains of sand in the seashore and the stars in the sky. Yet he had only one son of the covenant, Isaac, whom he had almost lost, and who was still unmarried at the age of thirty-seven. Abraham had every reason to sit and grieve.

Yet he did not. In one of the most extraordinary sequences of words in the Torah, his

grief is described in a mere five Hebrew words: in English, “Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.” (Gen. 23:2) Then immediately we read, “And Abraham rose from his grief.” From then on, he engaged in a flurry of activity with two aims in mind: first to buy a plot of land in which to bury Sarah, second to find a wife for his son. Note that these correspond precisely to the two Divine blessings: of land and descendants. Abraham did not wait for God to act. He understood one of the profoundest truths of Judaism: that *God is waiting for us to act*.

How did Abraham overcome the trauma and the grief? How do you survive almost losing your child and actually losing your life-partner, and still have the energy to keep going? What gave Abraham his resilience, his ability to survive, his spirit intact?

I learned the answer from the people who became my mentors in moral courage, namely the Holocaust survivors I had the privilege to know. How, I wondered, did they keep going, knowing what they knew, seeing what they saw? We know that the British and American soldiers who liberated the camps never forgot what they witnessed. According to Niall Fergusson's new biography of Henry Kissinger,¹ who entered the camps as an American soldier, the sight that met his eyes transformed his life. If this was true of those who merely saw Bergen-Belsen and the other camps, how almost infinitely more so, those who lived there and saw so many die there. Yet the survivors I knew had the most tenacious hold

¹ Niall Fergusson, *Kissinger: 1923–1968: The Idealist* (London: Penguin Books, 2015).



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on life. I wanted to understand how they kept going.

Eventually I discovered. Most of them did not talk about the past, even to their marriage partners, even to their children. Instead they set about creating a new life in a new land. They learned its language and customs. They found work. They built careers. They married and had children. Having lost their own families, the survivors became an extended family to one another. They looked forward, not back. First they built a future. Only then – sometimes forty or fifty years later – did they speak about the past. That was when they told their story, first to their families, then to the world. *First you have to build a future. Only then can you mourn the past.*

Two people in the Torah looked back, one explicitly, the other by implication. Noah, the most righteous man of his generation, ended his life by making wine and becoming drunk. The Torah does not say why, but we can guess. He had lost an entire world. While he and his family were safe on board the ark, everyone else – all his contemporaries – had drowned. It is not hard to imagine this righteous man overwhelmed by grief as he replayed in his mind all that had happened, wondering whether he

might have done something to save more lives or avert the catastrophe.

Lot's wife, against the instruction of the angels, actually did look back as the cities of the plain disappeared under fire and brimstone and the anger of God. Immediately she was turned into a pillar of salt, the Torah's graphic description of a woman so overwhelmed by shock and grief as to be unable to move on.

It is the background of these two stories that helps us understand Abraham after the death of Sarah. He set the precedent: first build the future, and only then can you mourn the past. If you reverse the order, you will be held captive by the past. You will be unable to move on. You will become like Lot's wife.

Something of this deep truth drove the work of one of the most remarkable survivors of the Holocaust, the psychotherapist Viktor Frankl. Frankl lived through Auschwitz, dedicating himself to giving other prisoners the will to live. He tells the story in several books, most famously in *Man's Search for Meaning*.² He did this by finding for each of them a task that was calling to them, something they had not yet done but that only they could do. In effect, he gave them a future. This allowed them to survive the present and turn their minds away from the past.

Frankl lived his teachings. After the liberation of Auschwitz he built a school of psychotherapy called Logotherapy, based

2 Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy*, translated by Ilse Lasch (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992).

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on the human search for meaning. It was almost an inversion of the work of Freud. Freudian psychoanalysis had encouraged people to think about their very early past. Frankl taught people to build a future, or more precisely, *to hear the future calling to them*. Like Abraham, Frankl lived a long and good life, gaining worldwide recognition and dying at the age of ninety-two.

Abraham heard the future calling to him. Sarah had died. Isaac was unmarried. Abraham had neither land nor grandchildren. He did not cry out, in anger or anguish, to God. Instead, he heard the still, small voice saying: *The next step depends on you*. You must create a future that I will fill with My spirit. That is how Abraham survived the shock and grief. God forbid that we experience any of this, but if we do, this is how to survive.

God enters our lives as a call from the future. It is as if we hear him beckoning to us from the far horizon of time, urging us to take a journey and undertake a task that, in ways we cannot fully understand, we were created for. That is the meaning of the word *vocation*, literally “a calling”, a mission, a task to which we are summoned.

We are not here by accident. We are here because God wanted us to be, and

because there is a task we were meant to fulfil. Discovering what that is, is not easy, and often takes many years and false starts. But for each of us there is something God is calling on us to do, a future not yet made that awaits our making. It is future-orientation that defines Judaism as a faith, as I explain in the last chapter of my book *Future Tense*.³

So much of the anger, hatred and resentments of this world are brought about by people obsessed by the past and who, like Lot's wife, are unable to move on. There is no good ending to this kind of story, only more tears and more tragedy. The way of Abraham in *Chayei Sarah* is different. First build the future. Only then can you mourn the past. ■

3 Jonathan Sacks, *Future Tense: Jews, Judaism, and Israel in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Schocken Books, 2012).

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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The rather well-known haftarah that we read this Shabbat is taken from the very first perek of Sefer M'lachm and describes the final days of King David's reign over Israel. It is, in truth, an introduction to the era of the kings, as the final half of this first chapter – the part that is not included in the haftarah itself – describes the coronation of Shlomo HaMelech, an act that, for the first time, creates a “dynasty” for Israel, with the son of the king succeeding to the throne (which is why the Book of “Kings” begins at this point).

The story included in the haftarah, however, focuses on the attempt of David's oldest surviving son, Adoniya, to gather public support for his “nomination” to the throne – an attempt that was thwarted by the actions of Bat Sheva (the mother of Shlomo) and the navi, Natan. Essential to the story as well, is the text's description of the elderly, weak monarch who was not aware of his son's machinations and who was so frail that he could not even keep

himself warm – a fitting explanation as to why Adoniya felt that he could undermine the sitting regent.

All of this is related in the haftarah and is, therefore, quite familiar to most.

But what most of us do not know is how the story of David's final days is related to us in “Chronicles” (Divrei HaYamim A). There (and I urge you to open the Tanach and read chapters 28-29 for yourself), we read of a leader who is vigorous, forceful and energetic. David HaMelech gathers all of the nation's leaders and proclaims that Hashem had chosen Shlomo to succeed him upon the throne of Israel and to build the Bet HaMikdash – something that he, David, was not allowed to do. He then gives Shlomo the blueprints for the construction of the First Temple, he divides the Kohen and Levi families and gives them each their respective responsibilities in the Temple service, and he then charges Shlomo to carry out the massive construction undertaking.

Now, if this were not enough, the text continues to explain how David had, in his lifetime, started gathering precious metals for the Bet HaMikdash and, during his final days, David starts a “Building Fund” to which many of the wealthy contributed! The Sefer concludes with the king's blessings given to all who gathered and with a description of the massive celebration of Shlomo's coronation – in which David

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participated as well.

So....(phew), where is the frail, weak king who could not warm himself nor even know what was transpiring outside of his palace? Where is the Melech David of Sefer M'lachim?

Will the real King David please stand up?

We could suggest that all of these details found in Divrei HaYamin happened earlier, when David was still strong and hearty. And that the different foci of the two books were based upon the different goals of each. Sefer M'lachim, written by Yirmiyahu HaNavi, was meant as a lesson to the newly exiles Judea to realize that their defeat was not the result of a more powerful Babylonian army or, chas v'shalom, a more powerful divinity (which is what many believed at the time), but their downfall was caused by their own sins and had been predicted and warned by Hashem. For this reason, the Sefer focuses on the succession of King Shlomo to David's throne in order to begin recording the people's corruption that would grow progressively from one king to the next; from one generation to the next.

Divrei HaYamin, however, was written some two generations later – after the Judeans returned to Tziyon – and had the goal of encouraging returnees to reestablish the leadership of the Davidic dynasty and to rebuild the Beit HaMikdash. For this reason, they emphasized the glory of the earlier kings and the magnificence of the Holy Temple. Hence, the focus on David's efforts in establishing Shlomo's throne and preparing the Beit HaMikdash.

The problem is that it seems clear in Sefer M'lachim that the people did NOT know of Hashem's choice of Shlomo as a

successor. That is precisely why Bat Sheva and Natan pleaded with David to make a public announcement that Shlomo was the future king!! So, the story, as told in Divrei HaYamin had to take place AFTER the description found in Sefer M'lachim – not BEFORE!!

I would suggest that, difficult as it might have been, David, realizing that the future of his dynasty was in jeopardy, got off his bed, left his palace, gathered as much strength as he could and accomplished what we read in Chronicles.

What human beings are capable of doing in times of emergency is what creates legends. At crucial times, people can accomplish the seemingly impossible.

Especially, when Hashem is behind you.

And, especially, when you're David HaMelech! ■



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Avraham's Minimized Grief

Following the Akeda we are told that Avraham arrives in Hebron and is informed of the loss of his wife Sara. Avraham, as would be expected, eulogizes his wife. The Torah states:

וַיְבָא אֲבְרָהָם לְסִפְדַּ לְשָׂרָה וּלְבָכָתָהּ:

*Abraham came to **eulogize** Sarah and to **bewail** her. (Bereshit 23:2).*

Eulogy then Crying

At first glance it seems like the actions listed in the pasuk are out of order. Typically, when being informed of a spouse's death one would first internalize the event, shed tears and then compose themselves to be able to properly eulogize the deceased. It seems that Avraham first provided a eulogy and only thereafter cried and engaged in personal bereavement.

Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (Family Redeemed) suggests that Avraham understood that Sara was respected by all and her absence was felt by many. He first sought to comfort others who had experienced deep sorrow upon hearing of the death of Sara and only later to consider his own grief. It highlights the impact Sara had on the community and Avraham's recognition of her

influence on so many others.

Minimizing Crying

The Ba'al Haturim explains that the word וּלְבָכָתָהּ has a small "כ" to symbolize that Avraham only cried briefly after learning of Sara's death, understanding that Sara died from old age. The Otzrot HaTorah inquires as to why the Torah needs to highlight that Avraham cried briefly? Is it praiseworthy that Avraham minimized his crying while mourning the loss of his wife Sara? Additionally, why is the reason offered for Avraham's minimal crying that Sara died of old age. Are people who lose an elderly relative discouraged from experiencing sadness? Sara had such a positive impact on so many people, that alone is cause for tremendous sorrow and grief. When Aharon and Moshe died the nation mourned for 30 days. Why would Avraham cut his grief short?

Perhaps we can learn a tremendous lesson from Avraham's conduct in this situation. Rashi explains that Sara's death appears following the Akeda because her having been informed that Avraham was about to sacrifice their child Yitzhak, caused her sudden death. The Yetzer Hara sought to implant doubt in Avraham: "Maybe I should not have been so quick to agree to sacrifice my son. Had I not obliged with God's request, Sara may still be alive."

When the yetzer hara is unsuccessful in preventing us from fulfilling a mitzva, it

seeks to *ex post facto* have us feel remorse over having performed the mitzva, thereby uprooting it retroactively. Avraham understood that Sara was old and her time would come shortly, even if his act may have triggered her death slightly pre-maturely. Therefore, he minimized his grief and attributed the main cause of her death to her old age. Had Avraham extended his grieving it may have been interpreted as having remorse for agreeing to sacrifice Yitzhak.

The Hafetz Hayim comments on a *pasuk* in Zechariah (3:1, from the *haftara* of Hanukka): “And he showed me Yehoshua the *kohen gadol* standing before the angel of Hashem, and the *satan* standing at his right hand to accuse him.” The Hafetz Hayim asks: Why is the *satan* standing on the right side? Usually, the right side is symbolic of good and the left symbolic of bad.

He explains that the *yetzer hara* often dresses up like a mitzva. The *yetzer hara* realizes that it can't cause us to sin in an obvious, direct way. Thus, he might tell a yeshiva boy to stay up late to learn, which seems like the righteous thing to do, all with the hope that the boy will oversleep and miss *minyan* the next morning.

Avraham was careful not to portray in any manner that he may regret fulfilling a mitzva. May we be careful in our performance of mitzvot and in our conduct so that we don't allow the *yetzer hara* to succeed retroactively and pervert our good deeds. ■

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Perfect Perspective

The Torah details the years of Sara Imeinu's life, concluding with, "*Shenei chayei Sarah* - These are the years of Sarah's life." This addendum is clearly meant to teach us something. Basing his commentary on Chazal, Rashi notes, "*kulan shavin letovah* - all her years were equally good." One obviously wonders what Chazal meant by this. Sara Imeinu's life was certainly not free of suffering, how can one say that all the years of her life were equally good?

Rav Scheinerman in *Ohel Moshe* notes that Chazal is referring to Sarah Imeinu's middah of *bitachon*. Objectively, barrenness, hunger, captivity and internal family strife, are difficult, stressful and painful situations. Nothing about any of it looks remotely good. However, when one understands that everything Hashem does is good, than suddenly, every situation is reframed to be perceived as good. The middah of *bitachon* allows us to recognize that every circumstance and

experience we have is uniquely designed for each one of us. Moreover, everything we encounter enables us to develop into the best people we can become. Sara Imeinu saw everything that transpired in her life as being good for her. "*Shavin letovah*", everything was equal in her eyes, the good and the challenging. Rav Schorr in *Halekach Vehalebuv* explains the verse, "*shiviti Hashem lenegdi tamid*" (Tehillim 16;9) in a similar fashion. "*Shiviti*" is generally translated as "I place" but it also shares a root with the word "*shaveh* – equal." "*Shiviti*" is the ability to equate everything, even those experiences that are '*lenegdi*', that feel like they are going against me, as always being exactly what Hashem wants for me. It is the understanding that the totality of our lives' conditions is exactly what is good for us.

In his book, "*Why Bad Things Don't Happen to Good People*," Rabbi Rosenblatt explains that "*gam zu letovah*" does not mean that this will ultimately lead to something good, rather, this in and of itself is good. He challenges his readers to see goodness in every situation. He further asserts that when one attempts to see things as good, one will be able to find goodness. Sara Imeinu's other name was *Yiska*, meaning "one who embodies a vision"; this was the greatness of her vision, to see goodness in everything that transpired.

The Slonimer Rebbe (*Netivot Shalom*) understands Chazal's interpretation with

Mazal Tov to

Rabbi Dave & Chani Felsenthal and family

on the birth of their granddaughter,
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a different approach. Midrash Rabbah teaches that the lives of righteous people begin with hardship and end with tranquility. Righteous people often have difficulties, tests and challenges that are painful, trying, even bewildering. Yet, once the test has passed and the growth is apparent, one can appreciate the great heights he has reached. Sara Imeinu had many crises and hardships in her life. However, at the end of her life, she was able to look back and see how all of them amounted to greatness and goodness. She was able to see how all she endured had purpose and contributed to her personal growth. In this sense, “*gam zu letovah*” means ultimately this too is for the good. When we understand that every detail is part of a larger picture to help us grow and develop, we appreciate every nuanced event more deeply. ■



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MONDAY NOVEMBER 21, 4:30-7:00

- ◆ Learn the Hebrew names of animals in a fun & interactive way
- ◆ Meet and connect with other new Olim families
- ◆ Take the Hebrew animal quiz challenge
- ◆ Pizza dinner!

Limited space available! Pre-registration required:
www.ouisrael.org/events/hebrewzoo2022

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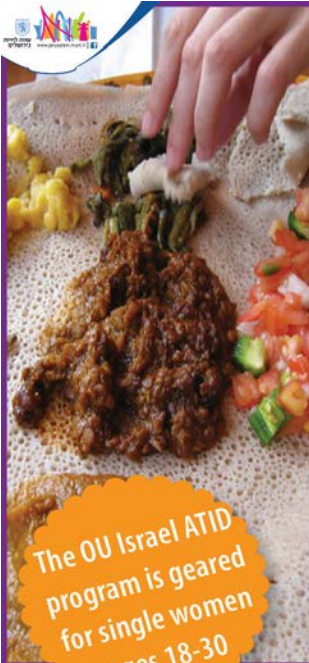
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SIGD

TUES. NOV. 22, 7:00PM

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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 7:45 PM

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INSPIRATIONAL TORAH LEARNING AT OU ISRAEL

SUN, NOV 20

9:15 AM

Journey Through the Siddur
Rabbi David Walk

10:20AM

Mishnah with Rambam's
commentary **Rabbi Dr.
Aaron Adler**

11:30 AM

Shivat Tzion in Tanach:
Daniel, Ezra, Nechemia
**Rabbi Yitzchak
Breitowitz**

2:00 PM

Men's Talmud-Mesechta
— Bava Basra **Rabbi Jeff
Bienenfeld**

7:30 PM

Hashkafa & Gemara in
Depth (The Bais) with
Rabbi Azarya Berzon

8:30 PM

Gemara B'Iyun (The Bais)
with **Rabbi Azarya Berzon**

MON, NOV 21

9:15 AM

Divre Hayamim
**Rebbetzin Pearl
Borow (L'Ayla)**

10:30 AM

The Thought of Rav Kook
on Eretz Yisrael: A study
of the sefer Eretz Chefetz
**Rabbi Aaron
Goldscheider**

11:45 AM

Halacha and Agada in
Contemporary Society
**Rabbi Shmuel
Herschler**

8:30 PM

Semichat Chaver
Program **Rabbi Elyada
Goldwicht (The Bais)**



SPECIAL EVENT

4:30-7:00PM

Hebrew on the Go
Zoo Trip

TUE, NOV 22

9:15 AM

Rebbetzin Smiles
Torah Tapestries (L'Ayla)

9:30AM

Minchat Chinuch-Meaning
in Mitzvot **Rabbi Yitzchak
Breitowitz**

10:30AM

Parshat HaShavua
Rabbi Shmuel Goldin

12:15 PM

Jewish National Revival:
The Infant State Matures
Dr. Deborah Polster

2:00 PM

Men's Talmud-Mesechta —
Bava Basra
Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld

7:30PM

Men's Safrus course with
Rabbi Tzvi Mauner
(The Bais)

8:00PM

Sefer Shmuel **Rabbi
Mordechai Machlis**

Schedule Subject to change, please check website for updates
ouisrael.org/events/

WED, NOV 23

9:00 AM

Medina and Halacha
Rabbi Shimshon Nadel

10:15 AM

Contemporary Issues in
Halacha and Hashkafa
**Rabbi Anthony
Manning**

11:30 AM

Great Jewish Thinkers
Rabbi Alan Kimche

12:30 PM- Trailblazing

the Text of Tanach-
Lunch and Learn

Rabbi Neil Winkler

8:30 PM

Halachic Controversies
Rabbi Aschi Dick
(The Bais)

***L'AYLA CLASSES
ARE FOR WOMEN ONLY**

THURS, NOV 24

9:00 AM

Parshat HaShavua
Rabbi Ari Kahn

10:15 am

Parshat HaShavua
Rabbi Baruch Taub
(Resumes Mon. January 12)

11:30 AM

Unlocking the Messages
of Chazal
**Rabbi Shai
Finkelstein**
(Resumes December 1)

2:00 PM

Men's Talmud-Mesechta –
Bava Basra
Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld

SPECIAL EVENT

4:30PM

Thanksgiving Keshet
Dinner

SPECIAL EVENT

9:15AM-1:00PM

Rosh Chodesh Kislev
Women's seminar



VIRTUAL SCHEDULE

(Zoom Only Classes):

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88363420460>

Password: OU Israel

Rabbi Taub

Parsha, 7:00PM Mon
Halacha, 7:00PM Wed
(Resumes Monday
January 9)

Rebbetzin Shatz

(L'Ayla)-Insights of
Chazal- Tues, 5:00PM

Rabbi Goldwicht

Parshat HaShavua
Wed. 8:30PM
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2244321902>
Password 18

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OU Israel invites senior women to join us for a weekly social hour

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Questions? Contact OU Israel Volunteer
Erika Braun 054-659-5418

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Real Life Rescues

After Nearly Being Declared Dead, 87-year-old Man In Ramat Hasharon Revived By EMTs

Ramat HaSharon - Last Sunday just after noon, an 87-year-old man had a cardiac arrest in his house on Harav Kook Street in Ramat HaSharon. The emergency was reported to United Hatzalah's Command and Dispatch center which immediately alerted nearby EMS first responders.

Shay Golan, a United Hatzalah volunteer EMT, was on Harav Kook Street when his proximity alert went off, and he rushed over to the incident. When Shay arrived at the scene a few moments later, a paramedic had just arrived and the pair of first responders found the man lying unconscious on a sofa. The paramedic and Shay moved the man to the floor to initiate CPR. Together they performed chest compressions and attached a bag valve mask device to the man's mouth in order to provide him with assisted ventilation.

Meir Mordechai Farkash, another United Hatzalah volunteer EMT, was at his work in a yeshiva when his communication device beeped, alerting him to the emergency. Meir rushed to his ambucycle and drove to the emergency. Arriving at the scene along with an intensive care ambulance crew, he joined the efforts to revive the man.

After approximately 30 minutes of CPR, one of the paramedics at the scene told the EMTs to stop in order to pronounce the man's death as he wasn't responsive to the rescue efforts. However, just as the team was about to comply, they suddenly noticed a slight change in the man's pulse, prompting them to continue their effort. Moments later, the group heaved a collective sigh of relief when the man's pulse was fully restored. The first responders then transferred him to the ambulance and he was transported to the nearest hospital for continued care and treatment.

Shay recounted after the incident: "It wasn't easy and the continued effort was uncertain, but I'm glad we ended up with a success like this. I wish for every CPR to end successfully. It can be very stressful to be an EMT, but I truly believe in saving lives and overcoming the extra stress it places on a volunteer first responder in order to help people. Today's CPR was the best example of that."



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Andrew Album, Senior Wealth Manager, Pioneer Wealth Management, Israel

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To reserve your place please contact
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Author of *Baderech: Along the Path of Tesuva* (Mosaica 2021)

Holy Shlepping

The holy Rav Yosef Chaim Zonnenfeld, zt'l, was one of the great tzadikim of Yerushalayim in the early part of the Twentieth Century. A talmid of the Ksav Sofer and one of the founders of the Eida Chareidis, he was respected as a scholar and *poseik*, as well as for his unwavering commitment to tradition during a turbulent time. An account of his life is told in the multi-volume sefer, *HaIsh al haChomah*. Rav Zonnenfeld's daughter, Rebbetzin Rochel Breindel Friedman, shared the following memory of her great father:

Once when she was a young girl, her father was particularly late in returning from the Beis Medrash. Concerned about his whereabouts, Rochel Breindel's mother sent

her to go and see if anything was wrong. On the way, she found her father filling up pails of water for two little children. "Tatty, what's going on? Are you the new *vasertreiger*, the new water-schlepper in town?"

"My dear," he replied, "as I was coming home I saw these two children standing dangerously close to the edge of the well trying to draw water; I admonished them to move away, that it was unsafe, and 'Let the water-boy bring it to your house!' The older of the children replied that they couldn't afford to have water delivered. I asked where their parents were. Their mother recently gave birth and their father is sick in bed with a fever and unable to leave the house. I've been drawing pails for them to bring home to fill the water tank...."

"But *Tatteh*, you're wearing a *kaftan* and are the Rav of the neighborhood, what will people say?" She asked her father. "It's not *kvodik*, it is below your dignity."

"What will *people* say? What would the *Ribbono Shel Olam* say if I didn't help these children? Could I go home and calmly eat my breakfast while these poor young children are endangering their lives in order to bring water for their incapacitated parents?"

Rav Zonnenfeld straightened up and looked his daughter lovingly in the eye. "Please remember, my child, there is nothing more *mechubad*, nothing more honorable, than helping other Yidden."

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Our sedra recounts Eliezer's mission to Aram Naharayim to find a wife suitable for Yitzchak Avinu. Eliezer davens that Hashem will perform a *chesed* for his master Avraham, namely a clear indicator that he has found the right match: a young woman among the maidens at the city's well, a central meeting spot, who would be forthcoming and gracious in offering water for him and his camels. Before even finishing his *tefillah*, Eliezer spots Rivka:

והנה רבקה יצאת... וכדה על־שכמה... ותִּרְדַּח הָעֵינָה וְתַמְלֵא כֶּדֶה וְתַעַל:

...And behold, Rivka came out... and her pitcher was on her shoulder; and she went down to the spring, and she filled her pitcher and ascended.

וַיֵּרַץ הַעֲבָד לִקְרֹאתָהּ וַיֹּאמֶר הַגִּמְיָאִינִי נָא מִעֵטְמִים מִכֶּדֶךָ:

The servant ran toward her and said, "Please, let me sip a little water from your pitcher."

וְתֹאמַר שְׂתֵתָה אֲדֹנָי וְתַמְהֵר וְתִרְדַּח כֶּדֶה עַל־יָדָהּ וְתַשְׁקֶהוּ:

"Drink, my lord," she said, and she quickly lowered her pitcher upon her hand and let him drink. (24:15-18)

Rashi explains why Eliezer was excited and ran toward Rivka: לְפִי שְׂרָאָה שָׁעֵלוּ הַמַּיִם: לִקְרֹאתָהּ, seeing that the water rose up from within the spring to greet her, he understood that she was a *tzadekes*, a righteous woman who merited a miraculous event. Witnessing this, Eliezer sensed it might be the answer to his prayer, and this was confirmed as Rivka generously offered him a drink and to fetch more water for his camels and entourage. This time however, there was something different as Rivka approached the spring:

וְתָרַץ עוֹד אֶל־הַבְּאֵר לְשֹׂאב וְתַשְׁאֵב לְכָל־גִּמְלֵיו



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...And she ran again to the well to draw water, and she drew for all his camels. (24:20)

Unlike the first time Rivka approached the wellspring and the water rose up to greet her, this time there was no supernatural event. In fact, she had to expend considerable effort, lowering the jug, filling it and then lifting the heavy vessel onto her shoulder.

The Kedushas Levi, Rebbe Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, zy'a, shares an important insight, suggesting why this is so:

ובפעם ראשונה דבדעתה היה לשאוב המים לצורכה
לל כן עלו המים לקראתה שלא תטריח עצמה, כיון
שכוונתה היה לשאוב לצרכה,

When Eliezer saw Rivka for the first time, she was simply getting herself a drink to quench her thirst. In order to honor the needs of the *tzadekes*, the Ribbono Shel Olam performed a miracle, and the water rose to greet her. The world is in service of the righteous....

מה שאין כן בפעם שניה, שכוונתה היה לגמול חסד
להשקות הגמלים של אליעזר עבד אברהם לא עלו המים
לקראתה,

However in her second trip to the spring, when Rivka's intention was to serve Eliezer, to draw water not for her own needs, but for him and the camels, no miracle was forthcoming and the water did not rise to greet her.

שכשאדם עושה מצוה יותר נחשב לעשות פעולה
שבכעשותו פעולה לשם מצוה נחשב לו יותר למצוה...

For what is most essential in a mitzvah — and in performing an act of *chesed* in particular — is the hard work, investment and effort we expend. There are no shortcuts in giving to others, because a shortcut might diminish the reward, as expressed

in the piyut *Yigdal*, recited in our daily prayers:

גומל לאיש חסד כמפעלו, נותן לרשע כע כרשעו:

“Hashem repays the righteous **for his actions**,

and punishes the wicked in proportion to their wickedness.”

While we are held accountable for the wrongdoings that we commit *k'rishaso*, “according to their negativity”, the acts of *chesed* and goodness that we have done are rewarded *k'mifalo*, “according to our action”. And the reward for this is generous, as it takes into account all of our intention, investment and effort.

.....

ויצא יצחק לשוח בשדה לפנות ערב וישא עיניו וירא

והנה גמלים באים

“Yitzhak went out to converse with God in the field at dusk, and he raised his eyes and saw, behold, camels were arriving...” (24:63)

The Torah's choice of language, that Yitzchak lifted up his eyes and saw גמלים, “camels”, is puzzling. One would expect more of an ‘uplifting vision’, for instance, seeing his wife-to-be, Rivka Imeinu! Rebbe Meir of Premishlan, zy'a, explains: Yitzchak did see Rivkah, and then “lifted his eyes”, looking into the future. He was ‘uplifted’ when he foresaw that their descendents would have the trait embodied by his bride — they would be גומלים, “givers”, actively generous and kind.

May we, the physical and spiritual descendents of our great-grandmother Rivka, continue her precious legacy. And may we merit to ‘uplift’ our great-grandfather Yitzchak by taking up the great honor of *‘shlepping water’* for one another. ■



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SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

This Shabbat marks the 64th *yahrtzeit* of the great *tzadik Rabbi Yaakov Friedman, the Admor of Hosiya*tin 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 Hosiya*tin 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 *Ma'arat 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 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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The Camels

Avraham's servant was dispatched to his former home in Aram Naharayim to secure a bride for Yitzchak. Without a reliable mode of transportation, this lengthy trip to modern-day Iraq would have been impossible. Fortunately, Avraham owned a team of able-bodied camels to facilitate this voyage.

Ten Camels, Three Stories

For some odd reason, the Torah mentions the camels ten times and, moreover, it spotlights these camels during the dramatic scene at the "well". Avraham's servant had declared that the first woman to both feed him and provide water for his thirsty camels, would be selected as a bride for Yitzchak. The Torah describes the servant's original pronouncement, the actual incident of Rivka offering water to the camels and, finally, the retelling of this whole story to Rivka's parents. Effectively, we read about the camels drinking water three times!

Rashi already sensed the disproportionate coverage given to the camels and claimed that Avraham's moral integrity was showcased by the honorable behavior

of his camels. Typically, animals in transit graze indiscriminately from whatever food lies along their path. Unlike most animals however, Avraham's camels were well-trained, only consuming food which belonged to their master. For this reason, they had eaten sparingly along the journey and were probably starving when they finally arrived at the watering hole. Avraham's moral code ran so deep that it even manifested itself in his camels!

Beyond Rashi's view that the camels signal Avraham's moral probity, there are additional reasons that these iconic animals are so prominently featured and so frequently mentioned. Apparently, they symbolize a deeper theme of this narrative.

Going International

In a career dedicated to disseminating knowledge of Hashem, Avraham had traveled extensively, yet, almost of all his travels, were local jaunts within the Land of Israel. He fulfilled the instruction of קום והתהלך בארץ לארכה ולרחבה and deeply impacted the residents of Israel, shaping both their religious views and their socio-political structures.

Avraham's impact, though, was barely noticed outside of Cana'an. His only excursion beyond the boundaries of Israel ended



poorly, as he was caught deceiving Pharo and promptly evicted from Egypt. The father of all nations had successfully influenced his local neighbors, but had yet to extend his reach beyond the Land of Israel.

This journey to his Homeland was his first, and also his final, opportunity to spread his message internationally. This expedition isn't just a quest for a bride for Yitzchak, but is also a cultural exchange, presenting Avraham's religious value system to a broader audience.

Each and every interaction between our Avot and their contemporaries was a multilayered encounter. When they negotiated for Land purchases, signed treaties, or went to war, they were also modeling moral behavior and disseminating religious ideas. This trip to Aram Naharayim is no different, and provides Avraham with an opportunity to influence the family he left behind decades ago.

Unfortunately, at this advanced age Avraham is too infirm to personally make the journey, so he dispatches his trusted servant instead. Avraham was capable of quick journeys, such as the trip from the *akeidah* in Yerushalayim to Chevron to bury Sarah, but lengthier trips to Iraq are simply out of the question. This trip to a distant land is vital to his mission of both inspiring monotheism and delivering prosperity to humanity. Avraham's influence is spread by his servant and for this reason, the name of the servant is suppressed. The servant's journey is, in reality, a migration of Avraham's influence.

Delivering Prosperity

The iconic camels embody both the *distance* of the journey and the *purpose* of the

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journey. Local travel within Israel, can be navigated by foot, or at most, by donkey, as witnessed during the *akeidah* outing. By contrast, traveling for weeks through a hot wilderness requires camels, whose bodies are uniquely suited for desert travel and for water retention. Without camels Avraham and his servant had little hope of reaching Aram Naharyaim. The camels underscore how far away this journey was.

The camels, though, also symbolize an essential *agenda* of this journey. Even if in theory, the trip can be managed on foot, camels are still necessary to carry goods and gifts. Some of this wealth laden upon the camels was intended as a wedding gift, but, in a larger sense, the fruit and goods are a manner of bestowing wealth and prosperity upon Avraham's former family. What better way to fulfill *ויהי ברכה* than to lavish blessing upon his own family.

The camels then symbolize the “behind-the-scenes” agenda of this shidduch mission. This long-distance trip afforded Avraham the opportunity to both spread his religious values beyond the borders of Israel and to extend prosperity and welfare to a broader audience. Without camels these important “concealed missions” would have been impossible.

The Next Generation

A generation later, Avraham's investment began to pay dividends. Lavan, despite his shadiness and deceit, constantly mentions the name of Hashem. Evidently, this pivotal visit of Avraham's servant augmented Lavan's religious awareness. By the time Ya'akov returns a generation later, Lavan has also established a large homestead with cattle and workmen. The arrival of

Avraham's servant a generation earlier, converted Avraham's former family into wealthy landowners with a budding sense of a Higher being. Without this journey, Avraham's influence would never have spread beyond Israel. Without the camels the trip would never have occurred.

Two Models of Exile

Every incident in Bereishit sets a template for Jewish history. Avraham's first departure from Israel was fraught with confrontation and struggle. His first journey from Israel established the paradigm for “exile as punishment” for our betrayal of Hashem. When we disobey Hashem, we are expelled from Israel and face hostile enemies, in the same manner as Avraham struggled with Pharo.

This second journey of Avraham – conducted by his servant riding upon his camels– constructs a different model of exile. As we pass through exile, we encounter and influence different cultures. Without question, exile is primarily a punishment, but it is also an opportunity for the people of G-d to pollinate the world with religious education and with moral sensibility. Perhaps, we could have better accomplished this by settling comfortably into our Homeland and broadcasting our global message from Israel. However, once we were forced into this historical journey, we capitalized upon the opportunity to spread our historic message.

Exile Isn't Shameful

Living in a redeemed stage of history shades our view of exile. Under the intoxicating spell of redemption, we often dismiss the past years of exile as an austere period of divine punishment in which we were subjected to endless suffering. Jewish

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history was stalled for 2000 years until we were finally resettled in our Land and historically re-empowered. Those “lost years” of exile provide little inspiration or meaning for our current redeemed state.

That view is both historically incorrect and religiously dangerous. If the past was pure futility and failure, there is little to learn from this “dark” period devoid of any national accomplishments. This simplistic and dismissive view of exile makes it challenging for a younger generation of Israelis to latch on to our masorah and traditions which developed in exile. Why be inspired by the past when it was all just divine suffering and unending persecution? It is crucial to take a dual view of exile, both as a punishment but also as an excursion into human history and an opportunity

to shape the human condition. Avraham provided two models of exile- one model of struggle and a second model of opportunity. The past 2000 years were a little of each.

Exile was a historical detour. We were never intended to leave Israel. However, once our fate was decided and we were cast out of Israel we delivered religion, culture, science, reason and civil society to humanity. We have much to be proud of over the past two thousand years of Jewish history. You can be exiled in chains or on the backs of camels. We traveled with both. ■

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REMEMBERING RABBI SACKS ZT'L

ON HIS SECOND YAHRZEIT

20 CHESHVAN



Benjy Singer, teacher and journalist, who runs the IsraelB online community, marks Rabbi Sacks' second yahrzeit.

The Jewish world marked the second yahrzeit of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks this week.



Benjy Singer

I interviewed Mr. Alan Sacks about his older brother, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, about his memories and reflections.

1) What do you miss most about your brother?

Rabbi Sacks and I were very close. What I miss most is the fact that I can no longer speak to him, or correspond with him on issues (social, moral, religious) that trouble me. And then, every so often to have fun with him, discussing music or film, which were very dear to his heart.

I never left a conversation with my brother without feeling somehow emotionally uplifted. In semi-humour, I could say that if I was feeling depressed about some state of affairs in the world, religious or otherwise, I could always feel reassured by the fact that my brother was even more depressed on the subject.

My brother had such a clear way of explaining issues of concern or contemporary relevance (that is of course why he was such a favorite of the BBC, the London Times and many other broadcasting outlets) that I left our discussions better able to face

the world.

2) Do you think Rabbi Sacks wanted to be a chief rabbi when he was younger?

As a teenager, I do not think that Rabbi Sacks had any dream of being a philosopher or a Rabbi. He was very interested in politics and debating and had originally planned to study Economics at University. The idea of philosophy came about when he was at Cambridge and the idea of pursuing a rabbinical career came later still.

His Jewish awakening was sparked (as it was for many) at around the time of the Six Day War, when Rabbi Sacks was at Cambridge University. And the story of his meeting with the Lubavicher Rebbe has been well publicised.

3) For you, what were the key characteristics of Rabbi Sacks?

There are too many character traits to remember here:

Giant intellect.

Master of Torah and Western culture, and an ability to view Western culture through the lens of Torah.

Enthusiasm.

Sense of humour.

Constant encouragement of others.

Willingness to let others take the limelight.

Endless pursuit of knowledge – the breadth of subjects that my brother studied was quite remarkable. If he had to speak with people from a particular field of activity or study, or if he had to lecture or write

on a subject, he wanted to know as much (or as much as possible) on that particular subject as those he was meeting with. These might be social workers, politicians, scientists, economists, politicians, religious leaders of other faiths, and so on.

4) What drove Rabbi Sacks?

Rabbi Sacks was quite remarkable in wanting each person with whom he came into contact to achieve his or her full potential. He was never condescending or patronising. For example, he always wanted to know from my children what they were doing, what they were studying.

Rabbi Sacks had an unparalleled ability to make those who listened to him or read him feel more intelligent than when they began listening or reading.

My brother would ask me regularly “What should I be doing next?” Always looking for ways to influence Jews and non-Jews to look for a higher moral principle, and not be self-centred.

Rabbi Sacks was never “superior”. He acted always with utmost dignity (even in private) and never suggested any superiority for himself over others or for the Jewish religion over other religions. He spoke a particular Jewish language that had universal appeal.

One thing that was unique about Rabbi Sacks as a Rabbi was the following. I have never encountered any rabbinical figure who at every possible opportunity singled out his wife for special mention and special

praise.

Rabbi Sacks was a Rabbi of “today”. He explained why the Torah was relevant for issues of today which on their face had nothing to do with religion or philosophy and helped countless people from every background, Jewish or otherwise, religious or secular, to understand and cope with the morally or emotionally challenging problems of today.

5) Do you think Rabbi Sacks was a real Zionist?

Even though I have lived in Israel for forty years and have six children who served in the IDF, I always maintain that Rabbi Sacks was a greater Zionist than I am.

I think that there is no doubt about Rabbi Sacks’ stance on Zionism and living in Israel. Rabbi Sacks was perhaps the greatest ambassador for the State of Israel in the world. Rabbi Sacks saw Israel as the living heartbeat of the Jewish people and encouraged anyone and everyone to live in Israel.

If Rabbi Sacks were here today, in the State of Israel, I have no doubt that would be his message:

Do not deny the Other.

Do not label the Other.

Do not delegitimize the Other.

Do not attempt to cancel the Other.

Make your argument, listen to the other side’s argument, discuss, find a compromise, and move on together for the greater good. ■



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Benjy Singer is a teacher and freelance writer and journalist. He also runs the IsraelB.org online community, an online portal, which provides useful information of events, shiurim and news for olim and Jews around the world.



DIVREI MENACHEM

BY MENACHEM PERSOFF

Special Projects Consultant, OU Israel Center
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To Whom Does the Legacy Belong?

In our Parsha, the Torah recalls that after Sarah's passing and Yitzchak's marriage to Rivka, Avraham again took a wife, and her name was Keturah, who bore him six children.

But who is Keturah? And why did Avraham marry her in his old age at that particular time?

For Rashi, Keturah is Hagar, an Egyptian woman (Bereishit 25:12) and daughter of Pharaoh. She had been Sarah's handmaid and Avraham's concubine who, at Sarah's bidding, consorted with Avraham and gave birth to Yishmael. But also, at Sarah's bidding – and Hashem's instruction to Avraham to listen to his wife – was sent away on account of Yishmael's insolent attitude and her lack of deference to the barren Sarah.

Rashi, however, adds that the handmaid was called Keturah because her deeds were as sweet as incense (*Ketoret*). Furthermore, her name also means “closed,” implying that Hagar did not give herself to any other man after her dismissal from Avraham's household.

Why, then, was a concubine who left in disgrace considered as sweet as incense?

The Midrash indicates that when the derisive concubine was abandoned with her son Yishmael in the desert, she was overwhelmed that an angel spoke with her. Moreover, she was led to a well, able to survive. At that point, Keturah did Teshuva and was clearly suitable to return to her former husband.

The timing of Avraham's reunion was interesting. Our rabbis taught that a widower should not remarry if he has grown, unmarried children (Bereshit Rabbah 60:16). But Avraham, it appears, was concerned with diligently observing the original command to humanity to “be fruitful and multiply” (ibid, 61:3). Consequently, he waited until Yitzchak brought Rivka into his mother Sarah's tent. Furthermore, Rashi indicates that it was Yitzchak who sought out Hagar and brought her back to his elderly father (Rashi, Bereishit, 24:62). What beautiful “*Kibbud Av Va ‘em!*”

Later, we are told that Avraham gave *all* he had to Yitzchak – material items, blessings, and the legacy of his traditions (Bereishit 25:5-6). But even though the offspring of the union with the (sweet) Keturah were “blessed” to become chieftains of many nations, “*to the sons of his concubines [including Hagar-Keturah], whom Avraham had, Avraham gave gifts and sent them away from Yitzchak, his son*” (ibid. 6:6).

So much for the declarations of “Yishmael” that they, too, have a claim on our land!

Shabbat Shalom. ■ Menachem Persoff



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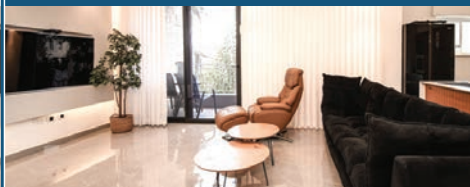
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RABBI AARON

GOLDSCHIEDER

Editor, Torah Tidbits

Why ‘A Land of Milk and Honey?’

The connection between ‘a Land flowing with milk and honey’ and the promise [of the Land] to the forefathers is intentional. For a lowly nation there is no need for an expansive life, and it [actually] can be harmful. When life is inundated with blessing one may be inclined to “sleep in the lap of laziness,” [in this circumstance] there is no need to be roused, or [even worse] brings one to a corrupt way of life.

However, a nation that is exalted and is a holy people, it is most fitting that they live a life of expansion of the mind, not by bread alone, rather, with God’s bountiful blessings. A life of pleasures which one engages in order to uplift the soul, this exalts the nation. Therefore, a sign of the noble quality of the nation, which the (nation) will ultimately attain, comes the promise that her Land will be blessed with bounty, ‘a Land flowing with milk and honey.’ And with this sign the forefathers were given tidings that among them will be people of lofty heights, namely, that spiritual blessing will be nourished through a life of serenity and comfort. (Eretz Cheftetz 1:9)

Rav Kook, in the exquisite excerpt above, offers a unique perspective why the Land

of Israel is accentuated by the honorific “flowing with milk and honey.” Rav Kook asserts that for other nations an abundance of material amenities will inevitably be distracting and potentially harmful to its character and aspirations. This is not so for the Jewish nation dwelling in Land. When the nation of Israel is spiritually sound, access to physical amenities actually serve to enhance their noble aspirations. In such an ideal state of perfection, positive values do not impede on one another but rather enhance one another.

Therefore, the promise of a Land flowing with milk and honey, which was first stated to Moshe standing at the burning bush and repeated an additional thirteen times throughout the Torah, reflects the virtuousness of a nation that is destined to achieve eminence when settled in their Homeland.

It is striking that Rav Kook develops a related theme in his commentary on the Haggadah regarding the unusual step of the *seder* of *Karpas* (eating the greens). According to the Talmud, vegetables before their meal were reserved for the wealthy. ‘A student who does not have much bread, should not eat vegetables because they whet the appetite’ (*Shabbat* 140b). A spiritual novice not far along the way will restrict his diet in an attempt to live a life of asceticism and purity. However, the Jewish nation aspires to reach the height of perfection, a state of divine harmony. It is an expansive state of

consciousness alluded to by the verse such as, "Without walls shall Jerusalem be inhabited" (*Zechariah* 2:8).

In other words, one of the first rituals of the Seder is intended to communicate that the ultimate goal of the redemption from Egypt will be realized when we enter the Land of Israel. Specifically on our holy soil where we attain our spiritual perfection, the Jew partakes of all of its bounty in service to God. (See also Passover Haggadah Springtime of the World, Naor, pp. 22-24).

Rav Kook, who explains the phrase "A Land flowing with milk and honey," in a spiritual sense, also observes the verse's literal meaning. The Talmud tells the story of Rami bar Ezekiel who happened to B'nei Berak and saw the following scene enacted before his eyes. Goats were eating under the fig trees. Honey was dripping from the fig trees, whole milk was dripping from the udders of the she-goats. The honey from the figs mixed with the goats' milk. He said this is the meaning of the verse concerning Eretz Yisrael, "a land flowing with milk and honey." (*Ketubot* 111b)

Rav Kook cites the above passage in his commentary on the Haggadah's description of the Sages who gathered in Rabbi Akiva's home for the Seder in Bnei Brak. Rav Kook suggested that these great sages were roused to learn through the night with loving verve as a result of witnessing first hand the promise of salvation from Egypt, "and I will bring you to the Land," having been actualized and alive. (Haggadah *Olat Reiyah*, Mossad HaRav Kook 1963, p.33).

During Rav Kook's fundraising mission to America in 1924 he carried with him pebbles from Eretz Yisrael, which he would sometimes

remove from his pocket and hold in his hand while conversing with people ('Springtime of the World,' Naor, p. 198, note #81).

Apparently, Rav Kook was unable to let a day pass in which he did not personally experience the intimate bond, the blessing and potency, which is inherent in every stone of "the Land of our yearnings." ■



Be'er Tziporah a'h - Bottled Water Gemach



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brought life and strength to so
many people, that she touched!
She was like Aron, who loved
peace and pursued peace.



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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הודו לה' כי טוב



Correcting Praise About Rain

Question: At a time of year when we do not mention rain in *Shemoneh Esrei's* second *beracha*, the *chazan* started saying “*Mashiv haruach ...*” People called out to him “*morid hatal*,” and right after he said “... *hagashem*,” he added “*morid hatal*” and continued. Was that valid?

Answer: One who says “*morid hagashem*” in the summer must go back (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 114:4), because we must not praise Hashem for rain when it is “a curse” (in Israel) (see Ta’anit 3b with Rashi). Although there are different opinions among *Rishonim* what the *gemara* means by making him go back (see Mordechai, Ta’anit 612; Rambam, Tefilla 10:8), we *pasken* that it means going to the beginning of the *beracha*. (If he went on to the next *beracha*, then it is to the beginning of *Shemoneh Esrei* (Shulchan Aruch *ibid.*)).

There are two explanations of why to return to the beginning of the *beracha*. 1) The incorrect *beracha* was valueless, making starting again fundamentally necessary (Korban Netanel, Ta’anit 1:1). 2) If one continues, there is no way of showing that he regrets mentioning rain;

by going back and omitting it where it is mentioned, he shows he takes back mentioning it (Mordechai *ibid.*; Ma’adanei Yom Tov, Berachot 4:14). One apparent *nafka mina* is whether it is enough to go back to the words before the place to mention rain (*rav l’hoshi’a*), where he can omit rain this time but it is not a full redoing of the *beracha*. Indeed, the Chayei Adam (I,24:6) says that while it is proper to go back to the beginning, it suffices to go back to “*rav l’hoshi’a*.” Your case is likely another *nafka mina* for those (Sephardim, Chassidim, as well as Ashkenazim in Israel) who say *morid hatal* in the summer. Although dew is not “rain negating” (after all, we ask for it along with rain in *Barech Aleinu* in the winter), the fact that it is the formula for the summer can make it sufficiently clear that he regrets mentioning rain. Therefore, Tehilla L’dovid (114:4) says it suffices (at least *b’dieved*) for such people to say *morid hatal* instead of going back to the beginning of the *beracha*. In fact, the Be’ur Halacha (to 117:3) says that one who said *v’ten tal u’matar* (in the ostensibly parallel *Barech Aleinu*; Shevet Halevi (VI:16) says they are not comparable in our context) in the summer and went back to say “*v’ten beracha*” fixed the *beracha*. Possible support for the position that the *beracha* is not inherently flawed is the fact that one does not need to go back to the beginning of *Shemoneh Esrei* (see Pri Megadim, Eshel

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.



Avraham 114:9).

Despite all of this, several *Acharonim* posit that if one only went back to “*morid hatal*,” he has not fulfilled his requirement. The Shevet Halevi (ibid.) says that going back, even right away, does not suffice to erase the damage done, and starting the *beracha* anew is necessary, and this is Ohr L’tzion’s (II:7:29) bottom line as well. L’horot Natan VI:6 questions some of our assumptions, such as that going back to the beginning requires the very first words, and that for those who say *morid hatal* it is an effective sign of retraction. Since there are formidable opinions on both sides, if one just added *morid hatal* and then finished the *beracha*, the matter is a doubt (Teshuvot V’hanhagot I:84). While generally it could be at least laudable to do another *Shemoneh Esrei*, with the intention that if it is unnecessary, it should be an optional *tefilla* (Shulchan Aruch, OC 107:1). One cannot use this ploy on Shabbat, as optional *tefillot* are not possible then (ibid.).

The above relates primarily to a mistake made in the silent *Shemoneh Esrei*. While fundamentally the same rules apply to *chazarat hashatz* (Mishna Berura 126:3), a few factors are impactful. It is a true *tircha d’tzibbura* and embarrassment to the *chazan* to repeat *chazarat hashatz* because of the improperly corrected mistake. Additionally, since you describe the people

calling out “*morid hatal*” as he started his mistake prompting the *chazan* to change course, it is clearer that he was taking back the mention of rain and one can rely on the opinions that *morid hatal* suffices. ■



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When Is It Permissible To Buy Vegetables in the Eighth Year Without Knowing Their Shemitah Status? #1

I want to explain the table we presented last week.

Rambam (*Shemitah* 4:6-7) writes as follows: Until when are the *sefichin* of the Sabbatical year forbidden in the eighth year? ... They should not be purchased in the eighth year until produce of that size could have grown in the eighth year. When, in the eighth year, the produce which grows rapidly reaches [the size of the produce which grew in the Sabbatical year], the prohibition is lifted from the produce that remains.” Why is this so? (see *Shabbat Ha’aretz* IV 7:2)

1. Relying on the fact that it may have been planted after *shemitah*
Chazal forbid only crops that are definitely *sefichin*. In cases where the vegetable may or may not be *sefichin*, if there are already ripe crops of a similar type available, it is possible to rely on the possibility that it is permissible. This is even though the permissible produce is the minority and the majority is still forbidden.

2. When the permissible part exceeds

the forbidden part in the vegetable itself

A vegetable that was planted during *shemitah*, continued to grow during the eighth year, and was then harvested: the forbidden part of the vegetables (that grew during *shemitah*) is nullified by the permitted part (that grew during the eighth year). Furthermore, even though the vegetable was definitely planted during *shemitah*, *Chazal* did not forbid it at a certain point in the eighth year.

3. We are not concerned that someone will plant clandestinely in the eighth year

Chazal were not concerned that people would plant in their fields during *shemitah* for the eighth year if they have a permissible alternative.

Rambam continues (4:7), citing the words of *Rebbi* in the *Mishnah* (*Shevi’it* 6:4): “And it is permissible to take a vegetable immediately following the seventh year.” The accepted explanation for this is vegetables that grow quickly within several days.

More next week. ■



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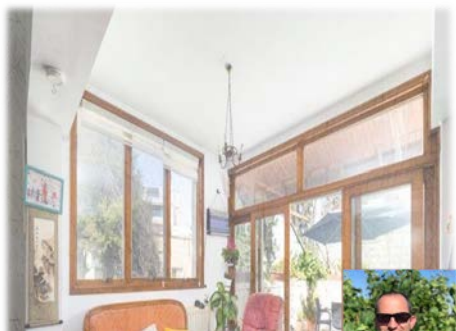
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RABBI GIDEON

**Machon Puah for Fertility and
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Future Fertility

Last time we presented the question as to whether a couple who get married in their mid-thirties should try to get pregnant immediately or should undergo fertility treatment in order to freeze embryos and extend their fertility.

On the one hand, it could be claimed that this is a distasteful suggestion, and should be condemned. If we believe, as religious Jews, that God has a hand in history and has empowered human beings to invent and develop fertility treatment, we can ask what is His desire? Is the Divine purpose of fertility treatment to enable couples facing fertility challenges to have children. These difficult procedures do not exist in order to allow anyone to have as many children as they desire.

But on the other hand, who are we to make such a decision? If God did allow fertility treatment to exist then why can they not be accessed by everyone who desires to use them? The treatments are expensive and uncomfortable, and if a couple are willing to undergo these difficult procedures in order to have more children, can we, or even society, prevent them from doing so? Society can choose not to pay for such treatments, but can society choose to disallow a couple to pay for and undergo

their own treatment?

On one hand, the couple's desire to have more children is perfectly understandable, and they are willing to go to great lengths to fulfill their yearning and not limit the size of their family. On the other hand, in order to freeze embryos the couple will have to push off having children, and opt for undergoing in-vitro fertilization a sufficient number of times to produce the required number of embryos. The best method of producing a pregnancy for most people in their mid-thirties would be trying to get pregnant naturally, without fertility treatment. The couple's desire to freeze embryos for later children may be a detrimental factor in achieving a pregnancy at all.

For most couples starting to have a family at that age they will be able to have children, and such couples will have an average of three children. The pursuit of fertility treatment, in such a case, attempts to ensure that there will be a fourth and fifth child. Should a couple compromise their chances of getting pregnant now in order to increase the chances of having a larger family later?

More on this next time. ■

The Puah Institute is based in Jerusalem and helps couples from all over the world who are experiencing fertility problems. Offices in Jerusalem, New York, Los Angeles & Paris. Contact (Isr) 02-651-5050 (US) 718-336-0603 www.puahonline.org

Rabbi Zemel served as the mora de'atra of the Talpiot, Jeruslaem community for half a century. We are honored to share in the pages of Torah Tidbits a few words of hesped after his recent passing.

HaGaon, HaRav Chaim Yehoshua Zemel ז"ל (1945-2022)



Rav Zemel, זצ"ל, was the Founding Rabbi of Beit Knesset Shai Agnon, and Mora D'Asra of the Talpiot-Arnona Community in Jerusalem from 1972-2022, until his unforeseen and cataclysmic פטירה on November 5, 2022, 12 MarCheshvan, the exact same tragic Yahrzeit date of his beloved married daughter, Rochel Roth, in 1995.

Rav Zemel had a uniquely paternal, insightful and dedicated relationship with the myriads of residents, both חילונים ודתיים of this community, as well as the several hundred families of the Shai Agnon Shul.

From only a sampling of his many attributes: Rav Zemel's Shiurim were captivating while encouraging full audience participation, the Rav's recital of תפילת נעילה was beyond comparison, and the Rav's exceptional ability to quote verbatim שלחן ערוך וש"ס, רמב"ם

Rav Zemel will be heartbrokenly missed, and leaves behind an illustrious Rabanit and noble daughters, gifted Rabbinic children and sons-in-law, and many cherished grand- and great-grandchildren.

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Dear OU parenting,

My 10-year-old son is very independent and goes to friends, the makolet, and after-school activities by himself. I worry about keeping him safe in general and specifically from predators/abusers. Do you have any advice that can calm my fears?

A.K.

Michal Silverstein, MS

Dear A.K.



We all want to keep our children safe and, with that, we want them to lead full, independent lives. So how is a parent supposed to resolve these two seemingly contradictory ideals?

I would begin by having some conversations with the child about safety and setting clear boundaries. It is all too easy to forget in this country that although children are given a lot of independence, they are still children. Parents still should provide supervision and children must be accountable. Parents should know where their child is going, who he will be with, and when he will be home. If he is going to a friend's house, parents should know if a responsible adult will be present and how to reach that person by phone. If your child is reluctant to share any information, you should explore why. If you build healthy communication and

trust now, it will serve you well as your child becomes increasingly more independent.

Talking about general safety consists of multiple conversations, not speeches. You also mentioned how fearful you are about his safety. Although it is a valid concern, children will pick up on their parent's anxiety and either become anxious or rebel and not share with their parent to avoid causing them stress. It's very important that when you discuss safety with your child you project calm with a touch of seriousness. If you are too preoccupied with your fear and anxiety, it may overpower your ability to actually keep him safe by sabotaging the whole conversation.

In regards to keeping your child safe from predators or abusive situations, take 4 main principles into account:

1) *No secrets from parents* - Share with your child that if someone tells him that he must keep a secret from his parents, it's a red flag and he must tell you right away.

2) *My body belongs to me* - Just as he is not supposed to touch others in private areas no one else should touch him there either.

3) *No one should make you feel uncomfortable* - Teach your child to trust his instincts. Tell him that he knows when something

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feels uncomfortable to him. A good touch will make a child feel secure, cared for, and happy and a bad touch makes a child feel threatened or violated.

4) *Saying “no”* - Your child has the right to say NO, even to an adult, if he feels uncomfortable.

When you discuss these points with your child, be sure to give examples and scenarios to make them more relevant.

In most cases, abuse doesn't come out of the blue. There is usually a grooming period. If your child can let you know when someone treats him in an unacceptable way, it's possible to prevent a situation from deteriorating.

You can go over these guidelines many times with your child, but unless you have a trusting relationship, your child may not come and tell you when he's concerned. The most important part of protecting your child and keeping him safe, now and through the teenage years, is to develop a relationship in which your child can tell you ANYTHING! This type of relationship is cultivated from a young age so be mindful of how you react to your child when he confides in you. Are you attentive? Do you overreact? Do you yell? As long as your child knows that you will listen and support him, he will feel comfortable coming to you if he's hurt, confused, or overwhelmed. And that is the ultimate goal. ■

Michal Silverstein has a MS in educational psychology and counseling. She facilitates parenting workshops in and around Jerusalem and maintains a private practice.

Feel free to send in any parenting questions you may have to parenting@ouisrael.org (Details will be changed to preserve anonymity).



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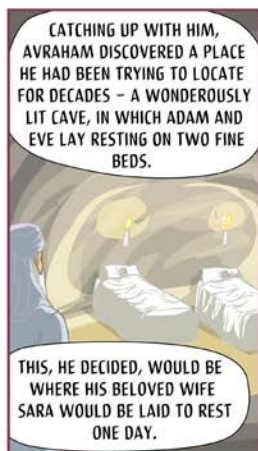
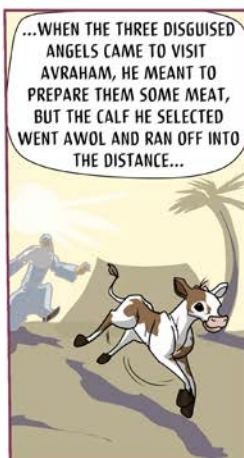
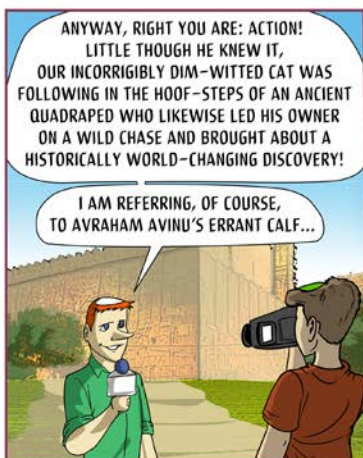
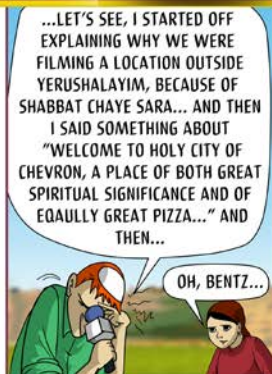
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... AS A YOUNG NEWLY-WED, I, FOR ONE, WAS GREATLY INSPIRED BY THIS STORY, AND FOR HER FIRST BIRTHDAY AFTER OUR WEDDING, I TRIED SURPRISING MY WIFE WITH A BURIAL PLACE OF HER OWN...

IT TOOK A WHILE FOR HER TO STOP SCREAMING, AND THEN I SPENT THE REST OF HER BIRTHDAY SHOUTING AT POLICE OFFICER KRUPKE FROM BEHIND BARS THAT "FOR GOODNESS SAKE, I WAS TRYING TO BE ROMANTIC, NOT THREATENING, ANY FOOL COULD SEE THAT..."

OK, BENTZ, WHY DON'T YOU STICK TO THE TOPIC...?

OF COURSE, OF COURSE...

IT APPEARS THAT ADAM DUG THIS CAVE HIMSELF WHEN HIS WIFE, CHAVA, PASSED AWAY. A MYSTERIOUS RAY OF LIGHT LED HIM TO THE OPENING OF GAN EDEN...

AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT THE ZOHAR SAYS, AND IN THE WORDS OF A MUCH LATER "ADAM"...

"YOU DON'T MESS WITH THE ZOHAR!"

URGH, HONEY... WHEN YOU'RE IN A HOLE - STOP DIGGING...

...WHICH APPARENTLY IS PRECISELY WHAT A HEAVENLY VOICE CALLED OUT TO ADAM WHEN HE TRIED EXCAVATING TOO FAR IN...

THIS PLACE HAS A HOLINESS TOO POWERFUL TO BEHOLD, IT SEEMS.

GOOD STUFF, NOW THE BUILDING...?

RIGHT, THE BUILDING - WHICH STANDS ON TOP OF THE ORIGINAL CAVE ENTRANCE WAS MOST LIKELY CONSTRUCTED BY KING HEROD, WHO AT THE SAME TIME BUILT THE SECOND BEIT HAMIKDASH. SIMILARITIES IN THE STONEMWORK AND DESIGN CAN BE FOUND BETWEEN THE "CAVE'S" OUTER WALLS AND, SAY, THE KOTEL, FOR EXAMPLE...

WHEN THE MAMLUK MUSLIMS TOOK OVER, THEY FORBODE ANY JEW TO ENTER THE SITE. JEWS WERE ALLOWED TO APPROACH ONLY THE SEVENTH STAIR OF THE OUTERMOST STAIRCASE.

FOR 700 YEARS, JEWS WET THE SEVENTH STAIR WITH THEIR TEARS OF LONGING, CRAVING TO APPROACH THEIR FOUR THREEFATHERS AND THREE FOREMOTHERS... I MEAN... FORTYTHREE FARMOTHERS... AND... ERM...

THREE FOREFATHERS AND THREE-OUT-OF-FOUR FOREMOTHERS, YES... MOVING ON...

...FROM WHOM WE DRAW OUR DEEPEST FAITH AND INNERMOST IDENTITY. THIS DECREE WAS AN UNBEARABLE DISGRACE FOR US.

THEN, DURING THE SIX-DAY WAR, ISRAEL RECLAIMED OUR AGE-OLD RIGHT TO CHEVRON. THE ARABS SURRENDERED AS SOON AS I.D.F CHIEF RABBI GOREN DROVE UP IN HIS JEEP, ON HIS OWN, AND HANDED HIM THE KEYS TO THE BUILDING.

LATER ON, MAJOR-GENERAL RECHAVAM ZE'EV HAD "THE SEVENTH STAIR" DEMOLISHED, TO MARK THE END OF THE JEW'S 700-YEAR DISGRACE THERE.

TODAY, THE CAVE OF MACHPELA IS A BUBBLING HIVE OF JEWISH ACTIVITY, WITH A FLOURISHING KOLLEL, A TALMUD-TORAH FOR SCHOOLCHILDREN WHO PRAY AND STUDY THERE DAILY, AND COUNTLESS MINYANIM...

NOT TO MENTION OVER 1.5 MILLION VISITORS PER YEAR, JEWS AND NON-JEWS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD, WHO FLOCK TO THE EMBRACE OF THE FATHERS AND MOTHERS, AND DRAW STRENGTH AND INSPIRATION FROM THEM.

AND CUT FOR LUNCH. NOT TOO BAD A JOB, DUDE.

GOOD THING YOU WERE HERE TO HELP HIM ALONG TODAY, MRS. YERUSHALMI...

WELL, IT WAS A BIT EMBARRASSING... SO I HOPE THIS PIZZA YOU MENTIONED REALLY IS AS GOOD AS YOU SAY IT IS...

"SIMBA, IT'S TO DIE FOR..."

WHAT?!

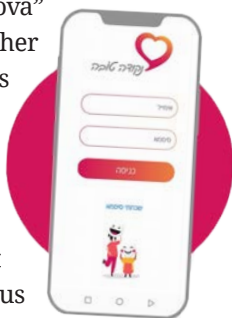
GEE, OFFICER KRUPKE, WE'RE MISUNDERSTOOD...

THAT'S WHAT THEY ALL SAY...



Sharing the Positive

“Shalom Sivan, my name is Chaim Nachman Kowalsky. I am privileged to teach in the Ort Pelech Banim school in Jerusalem. This year the principal, Yossi HersHKovitz, introduced something amazing: an app called “nekuda tova” (good point). Each teacher devotes a few minutes each day to writing good points about several students and the app immediately sends them as a gift – made more precious with emotive graphics – to the students and their parents.



It’s impossible to describe the positive spirit that this little innovation has brought to the school and how it has influenced the relationships between teachers and students and their parents. Generally, when a school contacts parents, parents ask themselves ‘What happened this time?’ Now they are made aware in the middle of the day that their child excelled in physics class or helped another student during break. When the student returns home, their parents already know about their good points for that day and we, the

teachers, appreciate that we are not only preoccupied with criticism, but with compliments too.

There is a lot of talk about the dangers of shaming and lashon hara (insulting or derogatory speech), but not much discussion about the obligation to increase uplifting speech and positive reinforcement. With this change in emphasis, there would no longer be any room for negative speech. As the Hasidim say: Darkness is not chased away with sticks, but pushed away with a little light.” ■

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Ahava Goldgrab
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Age: Nothing More than a Number?

The Parsha begins by telling us how long Sarah Imeinu lived “וַיְהִי חַיִּי שָׂרָה מֵאָה שָׁנָה” וַיָּשָׂרִים שָׁנָה וְשָׁבַע שָׁנִים...” What’s interesting here, is the Torah’s separation of the years: one hundred years, twenty years, and seven years. We see that this style of writing is not typical in other places in the Tanach; even just a few prakim earlier, it’s written, “וַאֲבָרְהָם בְּרִית־שָׁמַעִים וְחָשַׁע שָׁנָה...”. This unusual wording in our parsha seems to indicate that the Torah wishes to emphasize that Sarah’s age is very significant.

Rashi explains the special treatment- Sarah's years are comparable to each other. At 100, Sarah was as righteous as she was at 20, still welcoming strangers into her home and acting as the mother of a new nation. At age 20, she was beautiful and innocent as when she was 7.

Sarah Imeinu never fully left any stage of her life behind, so to speak. She held onto the positive parts of her youthful personality and kept growing, adding more depth.

According to our mesorah, Sarah was the first person to make a tikun in some way for the sin of Chava in Gan Eden. Sarah achieved this by leading a life filled

with happiness. Whereas Chava was told that she will bring children into the world through pain and suffering, Sarah named her son after joy and laughter. Chava distanced mankind from HaShem, whereas Sarah strived to inform her followers of HaShem's divine presence.

Perhaps the reason that Sarah's years are detailed in our parsha is to show how she fully lived each chapter, completed each aspect of a life well lived, and perhaps even completed HaShem's original goal for creation.



Shua Golubtchik
11th Grade,
Raanana

Thanksgiving

In this week's parsha, Chayei Sara, the Torah tells of the purchase of מערת המכפלה and Eliezer's quest for a wife for Yitzchak. In between the two stories the Torah tells us, "וְאֶבְרָהָם זָקֵן בָּא בַּיָּמִים ה' בְּכָךְ אֶת־", "אֶבְרָהָם בָּלָא", "and Avraham was old and advanced in years, and Hashem blessed Avraham with everything." Despite this incredible blessing, the Torah seems to jump to a new story without any further attention to Avraham's reaction. In contrast, whilst Eliezer is looking for a wife for Isaac, he finds Rivkah with G-d's help and in response prostrates himself before Hashem immediately.

I think the Torah's response to this

discrepancy can be found in a close examination of Avraham's speech when he sends his servant on a quest to find a wife for Yitzchak. Avraham makes Eliezer swear to him that he will find a wife among his father's family using the language "וְאֶשְׁכְּחַן בְּיָמֵיךָ לְקַיֵּם אֶת-לְקֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת-לְקֵי הָאָרֶץ". "I will make you swear by G-d, G-d of the Heavens and G-d of the Earth." But, a few verses later Avraham says, "הָאֵל-לְקֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם אֲשֶׁר לְקַחְתִּי מִבֵּיתִי". "G-d, the G-d of the Heavens, who took me from my father's house"

Rashi asks why during the second reference to G-d, Avraham doesn't say "G-d of the earth". He explains that originally, when Avraham left his father's house, no one knew about G-d on earth. Avraham therefore spread the Torah of Hashem and encouraged the recognition of G-d. Now, at this point in time, Hashem is recognized not only in the heavens, but also by mankind.

In contrast to Avraham, we see Eliezer, Avraham's servant, asking G-d for help finding a woman for Yitzchak, and then once he finds Rivkah, he immediately bows before Hashem. Despite Eliezer thanking Hashem, he's still not even named in our parsha and remains a background character throughout the Torah. Perhaps we can learn from this that thanking Hashem is of course necessary and commendable, but if we really want to acknowledge Hashem's blessings we should try our best to give back to Hashem whether by spreading G-d's name or doing mitzvot. ■

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