

ב"ה *Torah* **Tidbits**

ISSUE 1635

NOV. 15TH 2025
כ"ד מרחשון תשפ"ו

פרשת חיי שרה
PARSHAT CHAYEI SARA

SHABBAT MEVARCHIM

United
We Stand

ישראל



Simchat Shmuel
Rabbi Sam Shor
Page 50



Zeroing in on Zerizut
Rebbetzin Shira Smiles
Page 34



ויתן-לי את-מערת המכפלה

בראשית כ"ג:ט'

YERUSHALAYIM SHABBAT CHAYEI SARA ZMANIM

CANDLES 4:04 PM • HAVDALA 5:18 PM • RABBEINU TAM 6:01 PM



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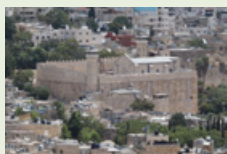
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COVER IMAGE Photographed by Ariel Krycer


Hi. I am 14 years old and live in Jerusalem. I took this picture if Maarat Hamachpela a couple of months ago from the roof of Beit Menachem in Admot Yishai/Tel Romeda (where my Dad was in miluim). By the way, I love reading the comics!



We continue to pray for the return of all the kedoshim from Gaza.



IMPORTANT REMINDERS

 **Rosh Chodesh** Kislev is on Friday November 21st

מולד חודש כסלו יהיה ביום חמישי בשעה 13, 38 דקות ו 9 חלקים
ראש חודש כסלו יהיה ביום הששי הבא עלינו ועל כל ישראל לטובה

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OTHER Z'MANIM



JERUSALEM

Ranges 11 days Wednesday - Shabbat

Nov. 12 - 22 / 21 Marcheshvan - 2 Kislev

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	5:12-5:20
Sunrise	6:05-6:13
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	8:44-8:49
Magen Avraham	8:06-8:11
Sof Zman Tefila	9:37-9:41
(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanya)	
Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	11:23-11:25
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	11:53-11:55
Plag Mincha	3:34-3:31
Sunset (Including Elevation)	4:45-4:40



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	Chayei Sara		Toldot	
	Candles	Havdala	Candles	Havdala
Yerushalayim/Maale Adumim	4:04	5:18	4:01	5:16
Aza Area (Netivot, Sderot et al)	4:23	5:21	4:20	5:19
Beit Shemesh/RBS	4:23	5:19	4:20	5:17
Gush Etzion	4:20	5:19	4:17	5:16
Raanana/Tel Mond/Herzliya/K.Saba	4:20	5:19	4:17	5:17
Modiin/Chashmonaim	4:20	5:19	4:17	5:17
Netanya	4:20	5:19	4:17	5:16
Be'er Sheva	4:22	5:21	4:19	5:18
Rehovot	4:21	5:20	4:18	5:17
Petach Tikva	4:04	5:19	4:01	5:17
Ginot Shomron	4:20	5:18	4:16	5:16
Haifa / Zichron	4:09	5:18	4:05	5:15
Gush Shiloh	4:19	5:18	4:16	5:15
Tel Aviv / Givat Shmuel	4:21	5:20	4:18	5:17
Givat Ze'ev	4:24	5:18	4:21	5:16
Chevron / Kiryat Arba	4:21	5:19	4:18	5:17
Ashkelon	4:23	5:21	4:19	5:19
Yad Binyamin	4:21	5:20	4:18	5:17
Tzfat / Bikat HaYarden	4:11	5:16	4:07	5:13
Golan	4:17	5:16	4:13	5:13
Nahariya/Maalot	4:17	5:17	4:14	5:14
Afula	4:18	5:17	4:15	5:14

Rabbeinu Tam (Jerusalem): Chayei Sara - 5:57 PM • Toldot - 5:54 PM

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

Daf Yomi: Zevachim 62



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DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

RABBI AVI BERMAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OU ISRAEL
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When my family made *aliyah* to Israel over 40 years ago, the first thing my parents did was take us to some of the holiest places in Israel. The first was to the Kotel. The second was to *Kever Rachel*. And the third was to Chevron, to the *Maarat Hamachpelah*. We went to these places because my parents wanted us to understand why we were in Israel, and how important these places were to us not only in the past but in the present as well.

My parents are master educators, and I assume they knew what kind of effect this would have on their children. I can speak for all my siblings when I say that day is seared in our memories and in our hearts. The statement they made then couldn't be clearer. We are here in Israel, and we are connected to this Land in such a close way - to every single stone and piece of earth in this country. We understood in our bones that this is where Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Sarah, Rivka, Rachel, Leah, Yosef, and all the rest of the *shevatim*, walked and lived and acted. My

parents showed us that day why these places are so holy to us.

As a child, I was so excited to go to *Maarat HaMachpela* and to see our forefathers. These people we grow up hearing about and studying their stories but always as a far away tale, both in time and in space. I remember thinking about how impressive the building looked from the outside (and both the outside and inside have not changed much today from then). I remember going with my father and mother to look at all the signs pointing to the areas of each of the *Avot* and *Imahot*. As we stood and looked, my parents talked about each one.

Ever since that visit, the parsha of Chayei Sara has come to life for me. This was the place that Avraham Avinu himself chose when looking for a burial site for his beloved wife Sarah, buying it from Ephron Hachiti for 400 shekalim. From that day, I have the location, the scenery, ingrained in my memory. In my mind's eye, I can imagine what Avraham saw when he approached Ephron to buy it.

That is why it is so important to visit these sites. *Baruch Hashem*, Chevron this Shabbat, of Parshat Chayei Sara, is packed with tens of thousands of Jews that come from all over the world. Last week, in Toronto, I was fascinated to see many Jews preparing to get on a plane to Israel the following week to go to Shabbat Chayei Sara in Chevron, and then fly back afterward to Toronto. This is clearly an event that people really connect to.

My wife and I are proud of our children

ברוך ד"ר האמת

Chaim Avraham Fischer z"l

Passed away on

שבת ח' אב תשפ"ה (2025)

Missed by his wife Peshi,

5 children,

22 grandchildren,

23 great grandchildren,

and the community

of Mitzpe Yericho

learning in institutions all over the country. Our sixth son is learning in Kiryat Arba and goes down to *Maarat HaMachpela* every week, and the whole atmosphere of build-up for Shabbat Chayei Sara is coming into our house even more this year. To be honest, I have not been to Chevron for Shabbat Chayei Sara since I got married. But I look forward to hearing the stories and the excitement from my children, my friends and my relatives, who go there every year.

When so many people go to Chevron for Shabbat, it sends a message. Just like many of those who make *aliyah* have to get their documents apostilled to verify them before coming, so too these visits are our national apostille that verify that this land is ours and belongs to Avraham Avinu who purchased it. We are showing both *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* and the nations of the world that we stand behind this purchase and know it is ours. That we take it so seriously because it is our history, our origins.

A nice custom started in Elon Moreh a number of years ago to have over many families on Shabbat Lech Lecha. This is the Shabbat that we read about Avraham Avinu coming to the Land of Israel and going first to Elon Moreh. The goal of the custom is to help others relive this connection and be part of the story of Avraham.

Both in Elon Moreh and Chevron, going there is being part of our history. It's not just a story of the past, but it impacts and greatly influences who we are today, our connection to this beautiful land. And it is ingrained in the education that we are giving our children.

The first Rashi in the Torah asks why the Torah starts with Bereshit, the creation of heaven and earth, instead of starting with the



first law of the Torah? He answers, “*Sheyomru umot ha’olam listim atem*” - that people will one day say that this land isn’t ours, that we stole it. Therefore, Rashi says, we see that *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* created everything, “*et ha’shamayim v’et ha’aretz*,” and that He decided to give this land to us. The best way to represent this notion and send this message to ourselves, to the nations, and to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, is by living and visiting these places and showing how important they are to us.

Allow me to add to what Rashi is saying. The Torah could have been a very clear book of mitzvot. Do this, don’t do that. It could have been the stats section you can find in Torah

In loving memory of

Yaakov Fogelman ז"ל

יעקב בן אלחנן דוד ז"ל

on his 10th Yahrtzeit

כ"ב במרחשון

*Missed by his children,
grandchildren, family, friends
and students whose lives he touched*

Tidbits. Yet the whole book of Bereshit has very few mitzvot in it, but it is still important. Why? Because we learn so much about *why* the mitzvot are important, about who we are as a people, and the laws underneath laws such as *derech eretz* and *middot* learned from our forefathers and foremothers. We learn why the Land in which we do so many mitzvot is valuable and crucial to our identity. If the Torah was just a book of rules, we would lose all of that. And we need that to live our lives as Jews and to tell the world who we are and what is important to us. Understanding this and teaching it to our children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews, will create the change we need to see in Israel.

I want to give a tremendous *yashar koach* to the people of Chevron who put up tens of thousands of people every year. And, a tremendous *yashar koach* to the security forces that make sure that it happens every year and Baruch Hashem happens in the most organized fashion possible.

There's something special about the people of Chevron. On some of the many missions that we brought to Israel over the last two years, we made sure to meet up with Eliyahu Liebman, the father of Elyakim Shlomo Liebman hy"d, as well as Tzvika Mor, the father of

Eitan Mor, who, *Baruch Hashem*, just returned from captivity in Gaza. And whenever speaking to them and their incredible wives, you were able to see the passion, the love, the connection, and how being so close to *Maarat HaMachpelah* is impacting their entire being. It is with thanks to Jews living in these places that we are able to come visit in a safe way.

I make sure to go to *Maarat HaMachpelah* on a regular basis but a number of years ago, my family went back to *Maarat HaMachpelah*. We had two siblings who were born in Israel after we made *aliyah*. But we took a picture of our parents and the six of us at *Maarat HaMachpelah* to revisit that, to relive that experience of going to Chevron on the first day that we were in Israel. And *b'ezrat Hashem*, our children and grandchildren will be able to see our connection to this Land, which will pass on to the next generations who will see a built and thriving Jewish presence throughout our entire historic land, our homeland, and with the return of many Jews from around the exile, from around the world to the land of Israel. *Bimhera b'yameinu*, very soon with a rebuilt Yerushalayim and the ingathering of the exiles.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



Rabbi Avi Berman

Executive Director, OU Israel

aberman@ouisrael.org

לע"נ
ר' אפרים בן שמואל יעקב ז"ל
Fredrick Wartski ז"ל

On his *yahrzeit*
25th MarCheshvan 5778

by his son, grandchildren
and great grandchildren

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

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RABBI MOSHE HAUER ZT"l

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Rabbi Moshe Hauer's zt"l divrei Torah were enthusiastically read each week by tens of thousands of readers of Torah Tidbits. His sudden death this past *Shemini Atzeret* came as a shock to our community and to the Jewish world at large. In the coming weeks and months we will honor Rabbi Hauer's memory by publishing some of his most compelling and thought-provoking divrei Torah. May the study of his exquisite words of Torah be a source of *chizuk* and bring blessing to his memory.

Ensuring the United States Remains a Kingdom of Kindness

Written less than a month after October 7th, Rabbi Hauer zt"l gave voice to the shock that we all experienced during those dark weeks, a shock that still reverberates today. But he was not content with pointing fingers. Drawing on the lessons of our parsha, Rabbi Hauer zt"l left us with marching orders to help stem the tide of antisemitism.

There are events and moments that force us to reconsider our fundamental assumptions and relationships. This is true of the

tsunami of antisemitism that has surged in America in the aftermath of the Simchat Torah pogrom.

For decades, the Jewish community has experienced life in the United States virtually free of antisemitism. This was completely in character for a country that sought to create a "great society" that cared for its most vulnerable citizens and was fiercely committed to the protection of the rights of all people to live free from discrimination. It led the great rabbis of America to describe this country as a *malchut shel chessed*, a kingdom of kindness.

In this context, much of our Jewish government advocacy work focused on getting our fair share of that kindness. As taxpayers, we sought government support for our secular education, as a faith community we pursued government partnership in our social programs, and as observant Jews we required

Dedicated L'iluy Nishmat

חיה בת ר' יצחק הכהן ע"ה

Helen Schiffmiller א"ה

whose 7th Yahrtzeit is on כ"ו מרחשון

protection of our religious liberty.

That dynamic has shifted. The schools and the streets of the *malchut shel chessed* do not feel exceptionally kind right now. While our elected officials have been steadfast in their support of Israel and their unequivocal condemnation of Hamas and of antisemitism, they have thus far been unable to curb the antisemitic bile that is exploding from a coalition of the vicious and the confused. The zealous protection of the right of free speech has enabled an environment in universities, schools, and streets, where the hateful are free to intimidate, demonize, and threaten without fear of consequence. Jewish students in the universities have discovered that higher education can be taught without basic values. All of us have been shocked to witness previously unimaginable expressions of Jew-hatred in the streets of the United States. In meeting after meeting in which we join with other Jewish organizational leaders to engage with government officials in pursuit of solutions, genuine tears are shed by officials who recognize the problem but have not yet found the solution. They, as we, feel that there are areas in the land of liberty where things are spiraling out of control, parts of American society where there is neither greatness nor goodness.

This change compels us to shift our own focus from pursuing our fair share of the country's kindness to ensuring that it endures as a kingdom of kindness. Instead

of considering only what our country can do for us, we need to use our presence, our values, and our voice to uplift our country and help it find its way.


In our parsha, we read of Avraham approaching the local authorities for his fair share as a resident and citizen, seeking a simple burial plot for his beloved wife Sarah. He was lobbying the government for something that he needed, but they did not respond to him as someone making a pitch. Avraham's life was defined by giving and generosity to others. They addressed him as *nesi Elokim*, a G-dly prince, a person whose presence in their midst uplifted them and brought out the divine image within themselves. Avraham elevated the society around him in a way that ultimately encouraged and elicited their kindness towards him as well.

That is where we need to be today. Our country needs more from us than we need from it. In our efforts for the foreseeable future, our task is not limited to protecting ourselves or to getting our fair share. We will do our part to uplift our country, to ensure the continuity of America as a truly great society and a kingdom of kindness. ■

**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
on his 17th yahrzeit - כ"ד מרחשון**

**by his daughters:
Janice Weinreb, Barbara Yasgur,
Benay Devorah Cohen-Nesher
and families**

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For decades, Torah Tidbits has inspired tens of thousands of English-speaking olim and visitors. Yet many smaller communities have limited access to consistent English-language Torah learning. Torah Tidbits Live helps bridge that gap by creating meaningful Shabbatot of Torah, connection, and unity.

After the first Torah Tidbits Live Shabbaton in Nahariya July 2025, this initiative is growing. In the coming months, two Shabbatonim are planned, one in Katzrin (Nov. 28-29) and one in Pardes Chana (Dec.12-13). This is part of OU Israel's wider commitment to strengthen Torah life, support English-speaking olim, and ensure that inspiring learning reaches every corner of the country.

If you are interested in bringing Torah Tidbits Live to your community, please email info@ouisrael.org.

Each week we will share one of OU Israel's impactful programs helping English speaking *olim* with their *klita* and impacting Israeli society.





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חיה פעסא בת אהרן זלמן הכהן ע"ה
Mother of Reuven Tradburks

CHAYEI SARA

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 Maarat 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 he and his animals. Rivka appears, does what he had hoped. He tells the story to her family. They agree that she is the one. Yitzchak greets them on their arrival and marries Rivka. Avraham's other children are listed. Avraham dies. Yishmael's descendants are listed.



1ST ALIYA (23:1-16)

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 Maarat Hamachpela.

Avraham is treated like a king. It appears that the entire city has come to comfort him in Sarah's death. The people bow to him and he to them.

Avraham was given 3 promises in Lech Lecha when he was told to journey to the Land of Israel: fame, fortune and family. All

have been granted. He clearly is famous. He has great wealth. And Yitzchak has been born.

The conspicuous exception is the 4th promise, repeated numerous times, that he would inherit the Land of Israel. He does not even have a place to bury Sarah.

Avraham says to the people, "I am a ger v'toshav, a foreigner albeit a resident". This is taken as a rich description of the persistent state of the Jew – we are never fully at home in exile, we are always foreigners, even in our home country.

However, the simply meaning of this statement is Avraham's explanation to the people as to why he has no burial plot. Burial was done by family. People would be buried and then their bones would be gathered to a family crypt.

But, Avraham says, I am not from here. I have no family crypt. We are just getting started in this Land; this is the first death in the family. So, I need a place that will become our family crypt.

This is an expression of Avraham's confidence in that fourth promise. Although Sarah has died with that promise of the Land unfulfilled. And I most likely will also die with the promise of the Land unfulfilled, knowing the prophecy that my children will be strangers in a strange Land. But, nonetheless, I want to express the confidence that this is the beginning of a long presence of my family in the Land. I have confidence in that Divine promise that we will be here for

a long time. So, I want a permanent burial site for my family.

Avraham insists on paying full price. This is not the first time he has refused gifts; he refused gifts from the King of Sodom when he rescued Lot.

What a lesson to the famous. Fame (and power) does not give license to gifts. There is no free lunch. This gift will come with some reciprocity or other. No. Not for me, says Avraham. I am not beholden to anyone.



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.

These are the last words of Avraham in the Torah. Though he will live many more years, we do not hear anything else from him. And as such, it serves as a poetic bookend. The first thing said by G-d to him: go from your Land, your birthplace. And the last thing said by Avraham to his servant: go to my Land, my birthplace to find a wife for Yitzchak.

Avraham is insistent that Yitzchak’s wife not be from the people of the Land. This may be, as in his insistence to pay full price to Efron, in order to avoid any confusion that the future settling of the Land of Israel by the Jewish people is due to some marriage of power. By marrying some woman of the Land, Yitzchak will gain influence in the Land. No. The Jewish people will possess the Land of Israel exclusively by Divine fiat.

Avraham seeks a woman who will need to leave her Land and her birthplace and come here. She will walk in my footsteps.

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 Esau to be sent away from the Jewish people.

Perhaps Avraham insists on choosing a wife for Yitzchak who not only follows in their footsteps in journeying to the Land, but experiences the experience of upheaval that moving to a new place entail.

All of the Torah is the story of moving to the Land of Israel from elsewhere. Avraham and Sarah journey to the Land. Rivka too. Yaakov leaves the Land, returning with his entire family, all newcomers to the Land. And the entire Jewish people leave Egypt to journey to the Land.

Journey to the Land is the story of the Torah. Except for Yitzchak. Yitzchak is the sole figure in the Torah to be born in and never leave Israel.



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

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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 – a camel can drink up to 100 liters. And she is drawing the water with the jug that she carries on her shoulder. But nary a peep of objection from Rivka. She is an enthusiastic and magnanimous woman of enormous 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.

This long narrative has many lessons. But one thing does jump out: 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".

Perhaps this is one reason for this very long recounting of the story. Rivka is stepping into a story of Divine partnership. She is stepping into the Jewish story. The Jewish story is the story of walking as partners with G-d, guided by Him. She has to know this. And want it.



5TH ALIYA (24:53-67)

The servant is ready to leave.

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

With the mission to find a wife for Yitzchak successful, someone is missing from this return: Avraham. They travel right to Yitzchak. Rivka and he marry. And Avraham is not heard from again. A true passing of the baton.

Why is it necessary to tell us Yitzchak was in Beer L'chai Roi? In fact, he returns there and resides there after Avraham's death. Why?

That is the place where Yishmael was saved from near death after being banished by Sarah and the place in which Yishmael settles. Perhaps Yitzchak regrets Yishmael's banishment and seeks to make peace with his brother. We will see that he does the same



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later with his own sons; he seems to want both Yaakov and Esav to continue his legacy.

Yitzchak is the reconciler, the includer.

The men seem to want reconciliation; the women see the need to exclude when excluding is necessary. 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 Avraham has he gives to Yitzchak; these are sent eastward with gifts. Avraham dies at age 175; he is buried by Yitzchak and Yishmael in Maarat Hamachpelah. 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 receive the Divine blessing; Yitzchak and not Yishmael.



7TH ALIYA (25:12-18)

The generations of Yishmael are enumerated. Yishmael dies. His progeny dwell from Egypt to Assyria.

Yishmael's story is brief. He has numerous and powerful offspring. But the genealogy here is intriguing. The last aliya last week enumerated Nachor's children: 12. This last aliya this week enumerates Yishmael's children: 12. In a few weeks we will enumerate Yaakov's. 12.

Perhaps, this nags at Yaakov. Why am I

following in the footsteps of those excluded from the Jewish people? Nachor had 12 children and was excluded from the Jewish people. Yishmael had 12 children and was excluded from the Jewish people. I have 12. Shall I choose just one, Yosef, and exclude the others, so I won't be amongst the excluded?

1 MELACHIM 1: 1-31

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

STATS

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

MITZVOT

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

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ויבא האיש הביתה ויפתח הגמלים (כד:לב)

"And the man came into the house, and he ungirded the camels." (24:32)

What did Eliezer do to his camels?

Rashi points out that he loosened their muzzles, which shut their mouths so that they should not feed on the way in the fields of others.

However, Ramban (Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman 1194-1270) relates to a Midrash Rabbah based on the Gemara Chulin 7a. Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair stayed at an inn. The innkeeper tried to give some barley to his donkey, but the donkey refused to eat the barley. Under further discussion, the innkeeper overlooked separating tithe from the barley. Upon separating the tithe, the donkey ate the barley. This teaches how the animals of the righteous adopt the traits of their masters. Rabbi Huna and Rabbi Chiya asked to compare the camels of Avraham to the donkeys of Rabbi Pinchas, thereby discounting any need to muzzle the camels of Avraham in the first place. There would be no fear of Avraham's camels feeding off fields of others. Therefore, the true meaning of "ungirded the camels" is simply that Eliezer untied the straps which had joined the camels between each other.

- Shabbat Shalom



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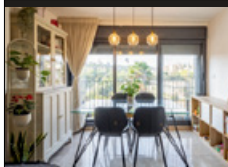
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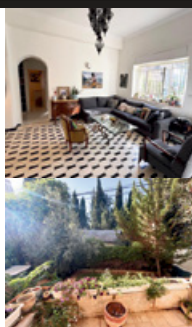
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Why Go Back?

The story has been with us since childhood.

As Avraham's life draws near its end, he turns to his trusted servant (identified by the Rabbis as Eliezer) and instructs him to return to Avraham's homeland, Aram Naharaim, to find a wife for Yitzchak. He specifies that he does not want Yitzchak to marry a woman from the surrounding Canaanite nations.

And yet, when we re-examine the story as adults, Avraham's decision seems completely counterintuitive.

Why send Eliezer back to Aram Naharaim to find a match for Yitzchak? After all, isn't this the very land from which Avraham was commanded to depart at the dawn of his career? The Patriarch's own journey was launched when God commanded him to separate himself from his homeland, his birthplace and the home of his father. What possible reason could there now be to return to that land?

When I learned this narrative as a child, it

seemed to make sense. Avraham, I reasoned, does not want his son to intermarry.

But that explanation doesn't work. After all, these events unfold centuries before the birth of the Jewish nation. There are no "Hebrews" in either location. There would seem to be no moral difference between the idolatrous inhabitants of Canaan and the Idolatrous inhabitants of Aram Naharaim!?

Some classical commentaries suggest that Avraham specifically wanted a wife to be chosen for Yitzchak from his own extended family in Aram Naharaim.

A careful review of the text, however, reveals that Avraham never clearly makes that request of his servant. He simply tells Eliezer to return to Avraham's land and birthplace and to search for a wife there.

Avraham's family first appears as a possible criterion when Eliezer veers from the exact text of his master's instructions during his bargaining with Rivka's father and brother, Betuel and Lavan. And while it is certainly possible that Avraham did issue an unrecorded request that a member of his family be chosen as Yitzchak's wife, it is equally possible that Eliezer fabricates the existence of such a request as part of a subtle ploy to curry favor across the bargaining table. Some commentaries note, in fact, that this is one of a number of variations between Avraham's actual instructions and Eliezer's repetition of those instructions. These alterations, they claim, demonstrate Eliezer's diplomatic skill as he tries to endear himself to Rivka's family.

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So, back to our initial question: Why does Avraham direct Eliezer to return to Aram Naharaim to find a match for Yitzchak?

While numerous answers have been proposed to this question, I'd like to suggest yet another. This approach depends upon seeing Parshat Chayei Sara as a cohesive whole with one overarching theme; a theme that marks the culmination of Avraham's career.

Parshat Chayei Sara can be neatly divided into two major sections: The purchase of the Cave of Machpela as a burial site for Sara and the selection of Rivka as Yitzchak's wife.

In the first of these sections, Avraham opens the critical negotiations for Ma'arat Ha-Machpela with a delineation of his own unique position in Hittite society.

"Ger V'toshav anochi imachem," the patriarch proclaims. *"I am a Stranger and a Citizen together with you."*

And, with that statement, a quiet battle is joined.

On one side, Avraham: Insistent upon maintaining his delicate position; simultaneously, *a part of and apart from* surrounding society.

On the opposing side, B'nei Het (the Hittites): Intent upon pulling Avraham completely into their world. *"Nesei Elohim ata b'tocheinu,* they argue. *"You are a prince of god in our midst" Why the need to maintain this delicate balance? You are welcome to become one of us!*

Back and forth the drama unfolds, with everything riding on the outcome.

If Avraham concedes, the story will be over. He and his descendants will become Hittites, and disappear into the mists of history. If he stands his ground, he will become the progenitor of a people who will define themselves across time by his own self-definition. They will survive as a nation only if they maintain

their posture as *Geirim V'toshavim*, Strangers and Citizens, in whichever society they will find themselves.

Now perhaps we can offer an answer to our original question emerging from the second half of Parshat Chayei Sara. Why does Avraham instruct his servant to return to the land that Hashem told Avraham to leave?

Perhaps, upon emerging whole from the struggle with the Hittites, Avraham is struck with a sudden fear:

I have been able to strike the balance necessary for my survival, because I began in this land as a stranger. I came from a foreign land, and have therefore always been able to maintain my distance from those within Canaan.

Yitzchak, however, is different. My son was born here. He is too close to those around him. He is familiar only with this culture, with this population and with this land. How do I know that he will learn to discern the dangers that surround him? How do I know that he will be able to distance himself from elements of this society counterproductive to his spiritual development? How do I know that he will maintain the appropriate balance and truly be a Ger V'Toshav?"

Avraham then sets about guaranteeing the continuation of his legacy. *He determines that at least one member of the next generation must make the same journey that he made, from Aram Naharaim to Canaan.*

More important than the physical journey, will be the philosophical journey. Yitzchak's wife will, hopefully, be able to see herself as "a Stranger and a Citizen." She will begin with a natural distance from the Canaanites surrounding her. Given her foreign background, she will have a head start in maintaining the perspective needed to discern and confront

the dangers around them.

In short, Avraham does have a deep ulterior motive for sending Eliezer back to his birthplace to find a wife for Yitzchak. The Patriarch hopes that Yitzchak's wife will ensure the survival of the Jewish people by maintaining the delicate balance of self-definition that he himself has achieved.

Avraham's decision ultimately proves to be on the mark. In the next generation it will be Rivka, not Yitzchak, who will see her surroundings

and its challenges clearly. It will be Rivka who will then act to ensure that Avraham's legacy is transmitted to the "right child."

Avraham, in his wisdom, recognized a fundamental truth. Every generation must continue to maintain the balance reached by our ancestors at the dawn of our history. But, at the same time, the task of preserving that balance is iterated differently to each generation, in a way that factors in that generation's world.

Today, monumental changes unfold around us at the speed of light. The world confronting our children is vastly different from the world in which we were shaped. And, the world that will face our grandchildren will differ greatly from the world of their parents, our children.

And yet, the underlying challenge remains the same. We must consciously teach our children and grandchildren to attain the delicate balance that has preserved us repeatedly in multiple turbulent worlds. Only if we actively train them to become "part of and apart from" the world around them will Avraham's legacy survive. ■

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

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Hopes and Fears

The sedra of Chayei Sara focuses on two episodes, both narrated at length and in intricate detail. Abraham buys a field with a cave as a burial place for Sarah, and he instructs his servant to find a wife for his son Isaac. Why these two events? The simple answer is because they happened. That, however, cannot be all. We misunderstand Torah if we think of it as a book that tells us what happened. That is a necessary but not sufficient explanation of biblical narrative. The Torah, by identifying itself as Torah, defines its own genre. It is not a history book. It is *Torah*, meaning “teaching.” It tells us what happened only when events that occurred then have a bearing on what we need to know now. What is the “teaching” in these two episodes? It is an unexpected one.

Abraham, the first bearer of the covenant, receives two promises – both stated five times. The first is of a land. Time and again he is told, by God, that the land to which he has travelled – Canaan – will one day be his:

(1) Then the Lord appeared to Abram and

said, “To your descendants I will give this land.” There he built an altar there to the Lord, who had appeared to him. (Gen. 12:7)

(2) After Lot had separated from him, the Lord said to Avram, “Raise your eyes and look around from where you are to the north, south, east, and west. All the land you see I will give to you and your descendants forever. . . Get up and walk through the length and breadth of the land, for to you shall I give it.” (Gen. 13:14-17)

(3) And He told him, “I am the Lord who brought you out from Ur Kasdim to give you this land to possess it.” (Gen. 15:7)

(4) On that day the Lord made a covenant with Avram: “To your descendants I will give this land, from the River of Egypt to the great river Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Refaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.” (Gen. 15:18-21)

(5) “I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout the generations: an eternal covenant. I will be God to you and your descendants after you, and I will give you and your descendants after you the land where you now live as strangers, the whole land of

Canaan, an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.” (Gen. 17:7-8)

The second was the promise of children, also stated five times:

(1) “I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great. You will become a blessing.” (Gen. 12:2)

(2) “I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth: if anyone could count the dust of the earth, only then could your offspring could be counted.” (Gen. 13:16)

(3) He took him outside and said, “Look at the heavens and count the stars – if indeed you can count them.” He said to him, “that is how your descendants will be.” (Gen. 15:5)

(4) “And God said to him, “As for Me – this is My covenant with you: you shall be father to a multitude of nations. No longer shall you be called Avram. Your name will be Avraham, for I have made you father to a multitude of nations. (Gen. 17:4-5)

(5) “I will bless you greatly and make your descendants as many as the stars of the heavens, as the sand on the seashore.” (Gen. 22:17)

These are remarkable promises. The land in its length and breadth will be Abraham’s and his children’s as “an everlasting possession.” Abraham will have as many children as the dust of the earth, the stars of the sky, and the sand on the seashore. He will be the father, not of one nation, but of many. What, though, is the reality by the time Sarah dies? Abraham owns no land and has only one son (he had another, Ishmael, but was told that he would not be the bearer of the covenant).

The significance of the two episodes is now clear. First, Abraham undergoes a lengthy bargaining process with the Hittites to buy a field with a cave in which to bury Sarah. It is a tense, even humiliating, encounter. The



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Hittites say one thing and mean another. As a group they say, “Sir, listen to us. You are a prince of God in our midst. Bury your dead in the choicest of our tombs.” Ephron, the owner of the field Abraham wishes to buy, says: “Listen to me, I give you the field, and I give you the cave that is in it. I give it to you in the presence of my people. Bury your dead.”

As the narrative makes clear, this elaborate generosity is a façade for some extremely hard bargaining. Abraham knows he is “an alien and a stranger among you,” meaning, among other things, that he has no right to own land. That is the force of their reply which, stripped of its overlay of courtesy, means: “Use one of our burial sites. You may not acquire your own.” Abraham is not deterred. He insists that he wants to buy his own. Ephron’s reply – “It is yours. I give it to you” – is in fact the prelude to a demand for an inflated price: four hundred silver shekels. At last, however, Abraham owns the land. The final transfer of ownership is recorded in precise legal prose (Gen. 23:17-20) to signal that, at last, Abraham owns part of the land. It is a small part: one field and a cave. A burial place, bought at great expense. That is the entirety of the Divine promise of the land that Abraham will see in his lifetime.

The next chapter, one of the longest in the Mosaic books, tells of Abraham’s concern that Isaac should have a wife. He is – we must assume – at least 37 years old (his age at Sarah’s death) and still unmarried. Abraham has a child but no grandchild —no posterity. As with the purchase of the cave, so here: acquiring a daughter-in-law will take much money and hard negotiation. The servant, on arriving in the vicinity of Abraham’s family, immediately finds the girl, Rebecca, before

he has even finished praying for God’s help to find her. Securing her release from her family is another matter. He brings out gold, silver, and clothing for the girl. He gives her brother and mother costly gifts. The family have a celebratory meal. But when the servant wants to leave, brother and mother say, “Let the girl stay with us for another year or ten [months].” Laban, Rebecca’s brother, plays a role not unlike that of Ephron: the show of generosity conceals a tough, even exploitative, determination to make a profitable deal. Eventually patience pays off. Rebecca leaves. Isaac marries her. The covenant will continue.

These are, then, no minor episodes. They tell a difficult story. Yes, Abraham will have a land. He will have countless children. But these things will not happen soon, or suddenly, or easily. Nor will they occur without human effort. To the contrary, only the most focused willpower will bring them about. The Divine promise is not what it first seemed: a statement that God will act. It is in fact a request, an invitation, from God to Abraham and his children that they should act. God will help them. The outcome will be what God said it would. But not without total commitment from Abraham’s family against what will sometimes seem to be insuperable obstacles.

A land: Israel. And children: Jewish continuity. The astonishing fact is that today, four thousand years later, they remain the dominant concerns of Jews throughout the world – the safety and security of Israel as the Jewish home, and the future of the Jewish people. Abraham’s hopes and fears are ours. (Is there any other people, I wonder, whose concerns today are what they were four millennia ago? The identity through time is

awe-inspiring.)

Now as then, the Divine promise does not mean that we can leave the future to God. That idea has no place in the imaginative world of the first book of the Torah. To the contrary: the covenant is God's challenge to us, not ours to God. The meaning of the events of Chayei Sara is that Abraham realised that God was depending on him. Faith does not mean passivity. It means the courage to act and never to be deterred. The future will happen, but it is we – inspired, empowered, given strength by the promise - who must bring it about. ■

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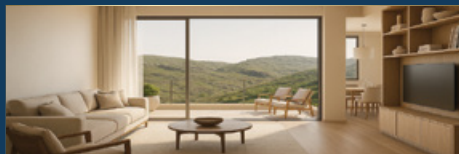
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PROBING THE PROPHETS

BY RABBI NACHMAN (NEIL) WINKLER
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“V’Hamelech David Zaken” – So what?

This week’s haftarah is divided into two separate events. The initial p’sukim of this first perek of Melachim A are dedicated to the failing physical state of David HaMelech. These four verses describe the King’s inability to stay warm – even when being covered by layers of clothes – a reflection of the aging process that had weakened of the great military hero of Israel. The text continues in describing the suggestion of David’s close attendants to find a young maiden who would tend to the ailing King and keep him warm.

It is a close-up depiction of these final days of the great monarch. But is it necessary, at all?

Consider: The bulk of the story – 27 of the 31 p’sukim in the haftarah – is focused upon the attempted coup to overthrow David’s rule by his oldest surviving son, Adoniya ben Chagit. The text elaborates on the growing support behind Adoniya that included some of the highest officers and military men of David. Indeed, the opposition to David was so powerful that Adoniya gathered his supporters and had them announce Adoniya as the new regent – proclaiming: “Yechi HaMelech Adoniyahu”, “Long Live King Adoniyahu”!

Furthermore, we are also told of the attempts of both the prophet, Natan and David’s wife, Bat Sheva (mother of future King-Shlomo), to convince David HaMelech to take the necessary steps requires to put down this mini-rebellion.

Given the weight and impact of these events that fill the bulk of the haftarah reading, we might rightfully wonder why these first verses telling of David’s “chilly” final days were so important as to be included at all!

Most of us, I’m sure, do realize that the very attempt to remove the King from his throne was fed by his obvious weakness. Would this youngest son have dared to raise any challenge to the powerful and well-liked monarch? Would he have succeeded in gathering a large – even massive - gathering of leaders and influencers to unseat the sitting regent? Certainty not! But the deteriorating physical state of David, combined by the loss of his awareness of what was happening outside of the royal palace (recall that both Natan and Bat Sheva had to inform David of the rebellion) were the encouragement needed for the power-hungry “king-in-waiting” to open his attempt to usurp the throne.

But what we might not realize is that these events impacted the very future of David’s successor, Shlomo. The text continues (beyond the haftarah’s conclusion) to tell of the collapse of the rebellion, with Adoniya and his supporters, submitting to the new King, Shlomo. Indeed, Adoniya pleads for his life with his brother and was

given a reprieve on the condition never to challenge the throne again. HOWEVER, soon after David's death, Adoniya approaches the newly crowned king with a request to take the hand of Avishag, the beautiful attendant of David (of whom we read in the beginning of the haftarah), in marriage. It was an innocent request – but not in the eyes of the wisest of kings. Shlomo understood that Adoniya's wish was but a way to overthrow the throne. Avishag, though never the wife of David (as clearly mentioned in the text), was seen by many as David's wife, having spent his last days with her alone. Marrying the wife of the former King was a clear statement that he was in line for Kingship. Adoniya's request was, in effect, his second attempt to claim the throne as "rightful" successor, being the oldest successor to the deceased Monarch.

The opening verses of or haftarah were, therefore, quite important, sharing with us better understanding of the fate of Adoniya – as well as that of Yoav ben Tzruya, commander and chief of David's army for many years – who had joined in the rebellion with Adoniya.

The haftarah is certainly a fascinating read for its connection to the last days of Avraham Avinu, of which we read in the parasha. But perhaps more than that, our deeper analysis of the story helps us comprehend those events that we might not have known.

"Hafoch Bah, Vahafoch Bah – d'Kulah Bah" – keep reviewing and studying our Torah- for all can be found in it!!! ■

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Sarah – A Youthful Adult

וַיְהִי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה מֵאָה שָׁנָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וְשִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים
שָׁנֵי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה:

Sarah's lifetime was one hundred years and twenty years and seven years; these were the years of Sarah's life. (Bereishit 23:1)

Many commentators notice the unusual repetition of the word שָׁנָה (years) after each number in this verse. Rashi explains that the Torah emphasizes each stage of Sarah's age to teach us something unique.

At one hundred, Sarah was as free of sin as a twenty-year-old — for until that age, one is not subject to Heavenly punishment.

At twenty, she was as beautiful as a seven-year-old child.

In other words, Sarah's life was not merely measured in years, but in qualities that

transcended time.

THE RAV'S PERSPECTIVE – MULTIPLE LIVES AT ONCE

Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (Masoret HaRav) offers a different insight. The



Rav Joseph B. Soloveitchik זצ"ל

phrase שָׁנֵי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה (“the years of Sarah's life”) can be read as “the *lives* of Sarah.” Sarah simultaneously embodied the traits of a mature adult, a vibrant young woman, and an innocent child.

Biologically, youth fades. But spiritually, one can experience the vigor of youth and the wisdom of age at the same time. Sarah never became complacent. Despite her years and

experiences, she remained agile, adaptable, and full of unwavering faith.

YEHOSHUA – FOREVER A LAD

We see a similar theme with Yehoshua. The Torah describes him:

וּמִשְׁפָּרְתּוֹ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־נוּן גֵּזֶר לֹא־יָמִישׁ מִתּוֹךְ הָאֹהֶל:

“His attendant, Yehoshua son of Nun, a lad, would not depart from the tent.” (Shemot 33:11)

Yet Yehoshua was no child at this point! If he died at 110, after leading Israel in 14 years of conquest and 40 years in the desert, he must have been in his mid-50s when called

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a na'ar ("lad"). Why? Because he lived with youthful eagerness — always learning, always serving, always striving for more.

AVRAHAM'S COIN

— YOUTH AND AGE TOGETHER

The Talmud teaches:

ואיזהו מטבע של אברהם אבינו - זקן וזקינה מצד אחד, ובחור ובתולה מצד אחר (Bava Kama 97b)
*What was the image on Avraham's coin?
An old man and woman on one side, and a young boy and girl on the other.*

Avraham and Sarah integrated both dimensions — the maturity of age with the freshness of youth.

A TIMELESS LESSON

Sarah teaches us that true greatness is not about clinging to youth or resigning to age. It is about weaving them together: the innocence of a child, the passion of a young adult, and the wisdom of maturity.

As the saying goes: *"You don't stop having fun when you get old; you get old when you stop having fun."*

May we, like Sarah and Yehoshua, nurture within ourselves the faith of a child, the excitement of youth, and the resilience of age. If we carry all three "lives" at once, then no matter our years, we remain eternally young in spirit — growing, learning, and shining at every stage of life. ■

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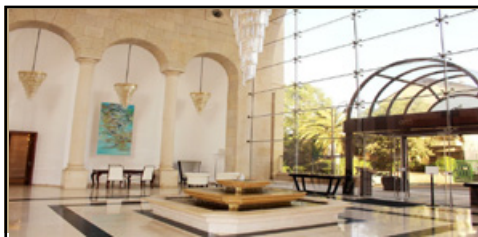
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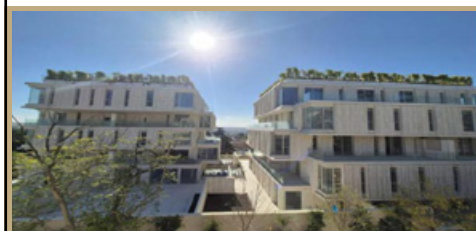
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Zeroing in on Zerizut

In our *parashah* this week, as Eliezer sets out on his mission to find a wife for his master's son, we are introduced to Rivka Imeinu. The Torah describes how Rivka responds to Eliezer's request for water with alacrity, "**vatemaher vetored kadah**—and she **quickly** lowered her jug." (*Bereisheet* 25:18) As no word in Torah is superfluous, we can understand that *zerizut*—acting quickly and promptly, was a trait at which Rivka excelled. How can we emulate Rivka Imeinu and improve this middah in our everyday interactions?

Rav Shalom Hakohen Schwadron *zt"l* comments that the difference between lowering a jug and lowering it with speed is a mere few seconds. Yet, lest we think a few seconds are insignificant, that very act, done *l'sheim shamayim*, is recorded in the Torah for eternity. Every deed, no matter how grand or slight,

is aptly noted Above.

The Brisker Rav offers an astute insight here. Eliezer arrived at the well towards evening, when the women went out to draw water. He then prays, "*Hashem...hakreh na lifanai hayom...*" (*Bereisheet* 24:12), asking Hashem to show him a sign to identify the girl for Yitzchak, **hayom, today!** It was therefore an imperative for the details to unfold with speed in order for Eliezer's tefillah to be fulfilled! The word "*vatemaher*," reflects the precision with which Hashem orchestrates every event in this world.

There are two components in the act of *zerizut*, notes Rav Yitzchak Isaac Sher *zt"l*. One aspect focuses on the ability to immediately grab an opportunity to do a mitzvah. The second aspect accentuates how the mitzvah is executed, i.e. in the fastest way possible. The mashgiach of Yeshivat Mir, Rav Yerucham Levovitz *zt"l* explains that one who acts without delay to seize an opportunity to do a mitzvah is one who will merit a special Divine energy as he does the mitzvah. One who tarries, although he eventually does the mitzvah, loses this special component. Rav Levovitz describes the middah of *zerizut* as having the Divine Presence rest upon a person as he does an act with swiftness and zeal.

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In his seminal work, *Alei Shur*, Rav Shlomo Wolbe *zt"l* offers a recommendation how one can develop and refine this middah. Our sages teach, *"hevei... kal kanesher... la'asot retzon avicha shebashamayim* —be...light as an eagle... to do the will of of your Father in Heaven." (Avot 5:20) We know however, that the eagle is not a "light" bird at all, it is quite formidable, even heavy. What is the Mishnah conveying here? Although the eagle may be a large bird, it possesses strong wings that allow it to lift off quickly and soar higher than other feathered creatures. Humans too, are "heavy;" we originate from the ground and tend to be lazy and sluggish. We also need "wings" that will allow us to act with *zerizut* and seize opportunities to rise above the mundane. The middah of *simchah*, teaches Rav Wolbe, acts as our "wings." Moreover, Rav Chaim Vital *zt"l* teaches that being happy and satisfied with what we have is what counteracts our "earthiness," and allows us to rejoice in the opportunities to do mitzvot.

When we can perceive everything in our lives as being perfectly crafted to our needs and recognize that each situation is specifically suited to our growth, we will be able to embrace each mitzvah with joy and alacrity. ■



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Chayei Sara: Steps

When Jewish life in Europe was teetering on the edge of existence, Reb Avraham Mordechai Alter, the 'Imrei Emes' of Gur, zy'a, transplanted seeds of the nearly decimated Chasidic community of his father (the Sefas Emes) and his grandfather (the Chidushei haRim) in Eretz Yisrael. Having survived the war, the Imrei Emes escaped Poland, and he arrived in Yerushalayim in 1940. There, in the holy city, he continued to stand as a towering presence of faith, stability and leadership. Three of his sons also survived and ultimately succeeded the Imrei Emes as Gerrer Rebbes, while most of the rest of his family was murdered in the Shoah. Even while carrying the crushing weight of the suffering of the remnants and shepherding the shattered, the Imrei Emes was actively planting new seeds of

Torah and Chassidus. With gentle resolve, he rebuilt Ger in Eretz Yisrael, ensuring that the chain of generations would continue.

Remarkably, even before his miraculous escape from the clutches of the Germans, the Imrei Emes visited Eretz Yisrael seven times, the first being in 1921. On the ship home after that first visit, he composed a moving letter to his family, later known as *Iggeres Al HaSefinah*, "A Letter From Aboard the Ship". After describing his time in Yerushalayim, the Imrei Emes writes:

I didn't visit any additional cities or settlements other than the city of Chevron. In Chevron, I was broken-hearted to see how שפחה כי תירש גבירתה, "a maid servant, has supplanted her mistress" (Mishlei, 30:23). For at the site of Me'aras haMachpela, where we should be allowed to enter, we are only able to go up the steps until a certain point. Past there, the Arab youth jump and fool around and they won't let Jews approach.

This quote from Mishlei, "a maidservant supplanting her mistress", is a lament used by Chazal to describe the tragedy of our holy places under foreign control, *rachmana l'tzlan*. During the British Mandate period, Jews were only allowed to climb the steps outside Me'aras haMachpelah up to the seventh step; entry beyond that was strictly forbidden by the Arab guards. The Rebbe shares his heartbreak at the disgrace, that evil descendants of Yishmael (the lowly "maidservants") were mocking and 'jumping around' freely at the entrance, the very

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gateway to Gan Eden (*Zohar*, Bereishis, 127b), while dignified, devout Yidden were denied the ability to approach, let alone daven at the graves of their fathers and mothers.

In our generation, we are fortunate to be witness to — and to participate — in the open miracle of *Shivat Zion*, the great return to Eretz haKodesh. The extraordinary *mesirus nefesh* of the dwellers and builders of Chevron and Kiryat Arba shines as a living testimony of emunah, and that fact that Hashem is opening the gates of return for our nation. Their dedication and sacrifice to reclaim our birthright and *nachalah* enables us to climb upward step by step. We are awakening the *zechus* of our forefathers and mothers resting in Me'aras HaMachpelah, restoring Hashem's honor and the nobility of our nation. The holy stones of Chevron are rejoicing in our courage, and the light of Geulah is beginning to shine, broadcasting a signal of hope and redemption throughout the world. While this light stirs up angry opposition, this light is nevertheless shining into the hearts of righteous people everywhere.

On Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year, the Temple stood silent except for the Kohen Gadol preparing for the *Avodah*. Before he could begin the sacred service, there was a pause, a moment to clarify that the day and the time for the Divine service to commence had arrived. The Kohen Gadol would ask: “*Is the eastern sky illuminated until the city of Chevron?*” (Yoma, 28a).

Why did he need to mention Chevron? Why didn't he ask if the eastern sky was illuminated in Yerushalayim, over the Mount of Olives, or on the *Har haBayis* itself? The Talmud Yerushalmi explains: Chevron, the city of our

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forefathers, is where Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov rest. Their merit endures beyond time. Even as the sun rises, even as the day breaks, it is their merit that is called upon to illuminate the path for Am Yisrael.

The Kohen Gadol, looking eastward is not only measuring daylight, rather he is measuring the light of the Avos, the light that has been passed down through generations. He is invoking their *zechus* so that the prayers of the nation will find favor.

Chevron is a compass, a spiritual marker. When the Kohen asks about its illumination, he reminds himself — and all who witness the Avodah — that the merit of the past is inseparable from the present. Just as the sun's first rays reach the city of our fathers, so too does their merit reach us, shining on our Yom Kippur service, on our tefillos, and on the everyday choices of our lives.

When the world seems darkened by evil and uncertainty, we look toward the eastern sky and the light of Chevron. The Avos and Imahos illuminate our path, and the faith-filled dwellers of that holy city remind us that the chain of merit is unbroken, and that even in our smallest act of sacrifice, we are carried forward by a light far greater than our own.

May we cherish each step upward, moving beyond all the obstacles and limitations of the past, and restore the honor of Hashem, His beloved nation, and of all righteous people everywhere. And may we finally step through the gateway of Gan Eden, the *Geulah haSheleima v'haAmitis*. ■

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**SUNDAY
NOV 16**

7:30 PM

Men's Safrut (The Bais)
Rabbi Tzvi Mauner
7 Hartum Street, 2nd Floor



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**MONDAY
NOV 17**

8:30 PM

The Bais (for Men) - Semichat
Chaver Program Rav Elyada
Goldwicht@ **Bet Kneset**
Ohel Yitzchak
Keren Hayesod St.



OU Israel | Women's Division
2 Radak St., Rechavia

6:00-10:00PM

ATID Midrasha
(women in their 20's)

7:00-9:00PM

Dorot Choir Session with
Hadassah Jacob

8:00-10:00PM

SIGD Ethiopian Lecture and
Food Workshop (for all ages)

**TUESDAY
NOV 18**

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COMMUNITY BEIT MIDRASH IN BAKAA

Classes @ Bet Knesset Nitzanim, 3 Asher Street, Bakaa

9:20 AM

Understanding Tefila
Rabbi Yossi Goldin

11:25 AM

Pshat in the Parsha
Rabbi Shmuel Goldin

10:15 AM

Rambam: Letters & Introductions
Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz

12:20 PM

Unlocking the Messages of Chazal-
Rabbi Shai Finkelstein

TORAH TUESDAYS WITH THE WOMEN'S DIVISION

Classes @ Beit Knesset HaNassi, 24 Ussishkin St. Rechavia

9:15AM

Torah Tapestries Parsha Shiur
Mrs. Shira Smiles

Sefer Bereishit:

Exploring the Middot of the Avot
Mrs. Leah Feinberg

10:15AM

MODIIN-THE BAIS

Men's Programs in Modiin Yeshivat Hesder Meir Harel,
Emek Beit Shean 53, Modiin

10:00AM -2:00PM

Weekly Kollel Boker-Instructors include
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Rabbi Ian Shaffer

Rabbi Aschi Dick

Rabbi Avi Herzog

1:00PM- NEW!!!

Modiin Lunch and Learn with **Rabbi Aschi Dick** - Masamerica Offices,
28 Dam HaMacabbiim St, 3rd Floor, Shiur followed by mincha at 1:45pm

7:30 PM Men's Safrut in **MODIIN** Rabbi Phil Schajer

7:30 PM Men's Safrut in **BEIT SHEMESH** Rabbi Elie Levi

This Week's Inspirational Torah Learning with OU Israel

**WEDNESDAY
NOV 19**

COMMUNITY BEIT MIDRASH IN RECHAVIA

@ Bet Knesset HaNassi,
24 Ussishkin St., Rechavia

9:15AM

Holy Poetry

Rabbi Dr. Aaron Adler

10:20 AM

From Blindness to Vision: Yitzchak
Avinu's Glimpse of the Future-

Rabbi Joel Kenigsberg

(Rabbi Anthony Manning will
resume Dec. 3)

11:25 AM

Mussar and Self Improvement:
A Study of Rav Kook's sefer
Midot HaRaya

Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider

12:30PM

Jews in the Middle Ages:
External Threats and Internal
Development

Dr. Deborah Polster

**THURSDAY
NOV 20**

COMMUNITY BEIT MIDRASH IN ARNONA

Classes @ Bet Knesset Shai Agnon,
11 Rechov Leib Yaffe, Arnona

9:15 AM

Parshat HaShavua

Rabbi Ari Kahn

10:30AM

Parashat Hashavua

Rabbi Baruch Taub

11:20 AM

Modern Masters

Rabbi Sam Shor

(Rabbi Neil Winkler will resume
Dec. 25)

8:00 PM

Halachic Controversies. (the Bais)

Rabbi Aschi Dick @ Bet Knesset
Ohel Yitzchak, Keren Hayesod St.

8:30 PM

The Bais- Men's Chabura
in partnership with Kehilat
Hashiveinu

Rabbi Noam Koenigsberg

RAMOT



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FRIDAY:

4:20 pm Tefila @ The Patio, followed by Chicken Soup Kiddush

8:30 PM Oneg Shabbat-Tisch, niggunim, Torah at Janovsky
Residence, Rechov Avnei Eitan 7

SHABBAT DAY:

8:30 AM Tefila @ The Patio. Rabbi Shor will give the drasha
before Musaf

11:00AM Kiddush

12:00 PM Community Lunch followed by Shiur:
Chanuka: Kindling the Lights of Mashiach
Mincha will follow the shiur

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FRIDAY :

7:30 PM Oneg Shabbat - Welcoming Remarks
Aleeza Ben Shalom, Torah Tidbits contributor, followed by Tisch, Wine-Tasting, Niggunim & Shiur: *Noach, Yaakov and the Chashmonaim-The Backstory of the Nes Pach HaShemen.* @Ben Shalom Residence, Alon 33

SHABBAT DAY:

12:00 PM Community Kiddush and Shiur: *Sod HaSevivon*
Followed by Community Lunch @Heichal Yehudit, near 38 Hatzfira St.

MOTZA'EH:

7:30 PM Melava Malka and shiur: *Tashlich in Tevet: Unlocking the Spiritual Potential of Chanuka* @ Neve Michael, near Hadarim St. 43

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Kosher Ingredients and Transportation Standards

Kosher ingredients form the cornerstone of kosher certification. Because ingredients are sourced globally, extracted in various ways, and processed differently, determining whether a particular ingredient is kosher-compatible requires extensive expertise.

To navigate this complexity, OU Kosher has developed a classification system that divides ingredients into six numerical groups, ranging from Group 1 (least sensitive) to Group 6 (most sensitive). The lower the number, the less kosher-sensitive the ingredient, allowing companies and food-service providers greater flexibility in sourcing.

GROUP 5: TRANSPORT OF KOSHER LIQUIDS

Group 5 covers situations involving the transfer of kosher liquids in tankers that have previously carried non-kosher products, even when those tankers are clean. This classification is based on the halachic principle *kavush kemevushal* (“soaking is like cooking”).

According to *Shulchan Aruch* (YD105:1) if a kosher food remains in contact with a non-kosher liquid for 24 hours, flavor transfer occurs as if they were cooked together. In the case of sharp substances—such as pure lemon juice—this transfer can happen within minutes.

OU OVERSIGHT AND MAINTENANCE WASHES

In recent years, the OU has made significant

progress in ensuring that kosher products are transported exclusively in kosher-approved tanker trucks. To this end, the OU now certifies fleets of dedicated kosher tankers and operates a network of kosher truck wash stations across the country.

Mashgichim (kosher supervisors) audit truck depots to verify that:

- Dedicated trucks carry only kosher commodities, including on their return routes (backhauls).
- Tankers receive a kosher maintenance wash after each delivery.

A kosher maintenance wash preserves the kosher status of an already certified truck but does not constitute kashering. The process excludes the use of non-kosher recycled water. It is the responsibility of the on-site *Mashgiach* to confirm that each dedicated kosher tanker receives a proper maintenance wash.

Mashgichim at production plants only need to verify that the arriving tanker is kosher-certified; they are not required to confirm that a wash was performed.

KOSHER UPGRADE WASHES

If a tanker is not part of a certified fleet, it may still be permitted to transport kosher commodities if it undergoes a kosher upgrade wash.

A kosher upgrade wash involves an



extended cleaning with *Rotchim* (boiling water), performed in the presence of a *Mashgiach*, and deemed sufficient for kashering. The *Mashgiach* must obtain a kosher upgrade wash ticket before loading any product.

Group 5, therefore, includes tankers that are not certified fleets but have documentation from a *Mashgiach* confirming that a kosherization was properly performed.

SEA TRANSPORT AND KASHRUT CONCERNS

Maritime transport presents additional kashrut challenges, particularly with liquid products. This issue first gained attention among Israeli certification agencies over 15 years ago concerning Passover-approved ingredients (However North American kosher certification were dealing with the issue over half a century ago).

For example, palm oil—a key ingredient in Israel during Passover—often congeals, requiring continuous heating during transport. Because heating can cause flavor transfer, tankers used for such shipments must be certified to ensure they have not carried any non-Passover-compatible materials.

The OU Kosher division maintains close relationships with numerous international shipping companies to guarantee the kosher integrity of storage tanks on vessels. To prevent complications that might render a product Group 5, the OU recommends using brand-new, smaller plastic tankers for maritime transport whenever possible.

GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN CHALLENGES

Global crises can significantly impact kosher

certification and logistics. During the COVID-19 pandemic and more recently amid Houthis attacks in the Red Sea, the kosher industry faced disruptions in global shipping routes.

Stolt Shipping, one of the largest owners of ISO (International Organization for Standardization) tankers used to transport bulk liquids worldwide, warned customers that instability in the Red Sea and Suez Canal region could delay shipments and disrupt supply chains.

Such disruptions affect global kosher operations—particularly in Europe, the U.S., and Israel—as many kosher-certified liquids are transported in these tankers. Potential shortages may force companies to switch suppliers or adjust their operations.

To address these issues, OU Kosher established a special rabbinic task force dedicated to monitoring and managing the Suez Canal situation to ensure the continued integrity of kosher supply lines.

CONCLUSION

Ensuring the kosher status of ingredients extends far beyond sourcing and production—it also encompasses every stage of transport. Through rigorous supervision, detailed protocols, and global collaboration, the OU continues to uphold the highest standards of kosher compliance in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. ■

Kashrut Questions in Israel?

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SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR
DIRECTOR, TORAH INITIATIVES,
OU ISRAEL

This past week, we commemorated the 68th *yahrtzeit* of the great *tzadik* **Rabbi Yaakov Friedman, the Admor of Husiyatin zy'a**. A descendant of the illustrious *Reb Yisrael Friedman*, the *Rizhiner Rebbe*, z'ya, Rav Yaakov made aliya to *Eretz Yisrael* in the late 1930's, and succeeded his father-in-law as the *Admor of Husiyatin* in Tel Aviv. His *drashot* and teachings are recorded in a beautiful *sefer* known as *Ohalei Yaakov*. The Rebbe lived through the formative years of the establishment of the State of Israel, during the turbulent times of both the days leading up to the Declaration of Independence, the subsequent war, and the earliest days of our fledgling state, and was a powerful voice for the importance and significance of the return of the Jewish People to the Land.

Our *Sedra* this week of course opens with the passing of *Sara Imeinu*, and *Avraham's* purchase of *Maarat HaMachpela* in *Chevron*. The *pasuk* tells us:

"V'Tamat Sara B'Kiryat Arba, Hee Chevron... And Sara died in Kiryat Arba, which is Chevron...."

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

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

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

The Rebbe, in explaining this *Midrash*, points to a teaching from the great *Mekubal*, **Rav Chaim Vital 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 *daled* in the word *echad* in the first verse of the *Shema*, represents *Hashem's* four letter name..."

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

Throughout our history, the Rebbe explained, and especially during the turbulent early years of *Medinat Yisrael*, which the Rebbe merited to experience, *Am Yisrael*

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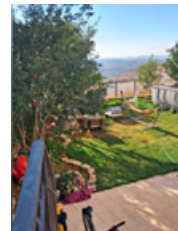
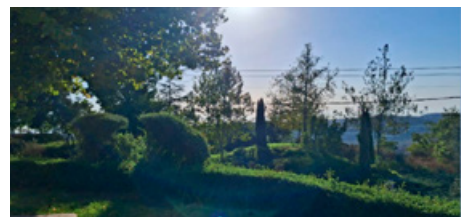
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has been willing to risk their lives for the gift that is *Artzeinu HaKedosha*. May we always remember and hold dear, the many *neshamot* who have enabled us the *zechut* to build our lives in our sacred, eternal home.

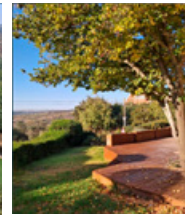
Another great contemporary of the *Ohalei Yaakov*, was the **Avodat Elazar, Rabbi Yisrael Elazar Hopshtein of Koshnitz zy'a**, who also arrived on *aliya* to Israel in the 1930's, and settled in *Tel Aviv*, where his grandson continues to preside over the Koshnitzer Chasidut today. In a moving and powerful teaching, the *Avodat Yisrael* also wrote that when *Am Yisrael* first entered *Eretz Yisrael* it was fortunate to inherit the land due to the merit of the many *korbanot* that were to be offered in the *mishkan*, and subsequently in the *Beit HaMikdash*. Now, however, when we do not have a *Beit HaMikdash* to offer the *Korbanot* upon the *mizbeach*, ***it is in the merit of the many korbanot, the many neshamot who have made the ultimate sacrifice, of giving their lives al kiddush Hashem, that we continue to merit to inherit the land.***

Perhaps, more than ever, the Rebbe's words resonate with each of us so strongly. *Yehi Ratzon*, may all those working to protect us, continue to be safe, and may we soon be blessed to live here in *Artzeinu HaKedosha* in complete peace and tranquility. ■



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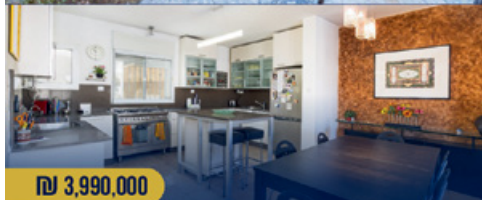
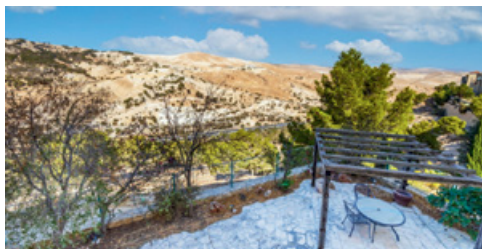
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Chayei Sara — The Moral Architecture of Our Nation

Every year at the Seder, we begin the section of *Tzei U'lemad* by recalling that Pharaoh was not the first to seek our annihilation, nor was he the worst. Pharaoh targeted the males, but Lavan sought to uproot everything — *la'akor et hakol*. On Pesach night, Lavan is portrayed as the super-villain of Jewish history.

Yet Avraham preferred that Yitzchak marry Lavan's sister rather than a local Canaanite woman. He was so adamant that he made his trusted servant swear not to choose a wife for Yitzchak from among the daughters of Canaan. This choice is striking. After all, Avraham had spent many years among the Canaanites, forming alliances with Aner, Eshkol, and Mamre — described as *ba'alei brit*, partners in covenant. He had also forged treaties with Avimelech. Why, then, was he unwilling to join his family to theirs?

Evidently, there was something in the Canaanite spirit that Avraham would not allow to enter the bloodstream of his family — an influence that could erode the purity and moral strength he hoped to preserve.

To understand why he turned away from Canaan, we must first examine the moral landscape in which he lived.

THE LAND THAT FORGOT CHESED

We have previously encountered the people

of Canaan — skilled in warfare and diplomacy, yet impoverished in morality. They are guided by calculation and self-gain, but they have not discovered the value of *chesed*.

After Avraham rescued the kingdom of Sedom from four tyrants, one might have expected the king of Sedom to respond with gratitude, or at least a gesture of kindness. Instead, he engaged Avraham in routine post-war negotiations — population exchanges and payment for military aid — as though nothing extraordinary had occurred. Gratitude and compassion were foreign to his world.

Only Malki-Tzedek — a solitary spiritual figure whom Chazal identify as Shem, the son of Noach — greets Avraham with bread and wine after the wearying battle. One act of *chesed* shining in a moral wasteland.

Sedom, in particular, would become infamous for its hostility to generosity, embracing a doctrine described by Chazal as *sheli sheli v'shelcha shelach* — “what's mine is mine and what's yours is yours.” They revered law and property rights but lacked the courage to transcend legality for compassion. A society unable to act beyond justice toward kindness is doomed to decay.

Similarly, Avimelech, king of the Plishtim

and Avraham's newfound ally, boasts that the financial payment he offered Avraham was "the *chesed* I performed for you." His gesture was no act of kindness, only restitution for abducting Sarah. *Chesed* means meeting another's needs, not balancing accounts. Avimelech never grasped that distinction.

Subsequently, Avraham encounters the same moral emptiness in Chevron when seeking a burial place for Sarah. This was a humanitarian need — simple human decency should have prompted an immediate offer of land. Yet Avraham is forced into three rounds of negotiations before he can secure a small plot to bury his wife.

Avraham gradually realizes that kindness is not part of the moral instinct of this land. There may be rare exceptions, such as his friends Aner, Eshkol, and Mamre, or Malki-Tzedek, but the moral landscape of Canaan is barren. Avraham now knows that the future of his family cannot be rooted in this society. He must seek a woman from a different world — one where compassion, not calculation, shapes the fabric of life.

Having witnessed a land bereft of compassion, Avraham now sends his servant to seek a home where kindness still lives.

HEART OF CHESED

Avraham dispatches his servant with this mission — to find a wife for Yitzchak from a culture that appreciates *chesed*. The servant therefore chooses his test carefully: the suitable woman will be the one who runs to perform an act of kindness. Rivka's *chesed* is so deeply ingrained that she doesn't merely offer water to a weary traveler; she insists on drawing water for his camels as well.

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recognizes that this society, though lacking in theological awareness and unable to fully perceive Hashem, nevertheless excels in *chesed*. They may not yet understand divine truth, but they understand human kindness. And that moral foundation — compassion for others — can become part of the spiritual DNA of the Jewish nation Avraham is constructing.

Yet kindness alone could not complete Avraham's vision. A people built on compassion must also rest upon the strength of family.

BROKEN HOMES

Avraham now recognizes another moral void in Canaan — the collapse of family life. Until this point, the Torah has not described a single functioning family among the peoples of Canaan. We have seen political structures — kings, priests, and civic elders. In Sedom, Avraham encounters Ephron, a local judge and public official. But there are no examples of enduring, loyal family relationships.

Egypt and the land of the Plishtim are moral free-for-alls, where every visiting woman becomes a target for manipulation. A society that preys on women cannot sustain trust, loyalty, or love — the foundations of family. Without dignity and restraint, family life collapses into chaos.

This depravity reaches its ugliest

expression in Sedom, when the mob gathers outside Lot's home, demanding that his guests be handed over to satisfy their desires.

Lot's own behavior is a microcosm of the moral decay of Canaanite family life — and a foil to the model Avraham is trying to create. At first, Lot appears to have learned from Avraham: he is married and has two married daughters who live under his roof. On the surface, there is a framework of family.

Yet as the story unfolds, it becomes clear that Lot sees his other daughters as bargaining tools to pacify the mob. Worse, after Sedom's destruction, he loses his wife and descends into the most shameful and tragic scene in *Sefer Bereishit* — one that exposes how the concept of family has lost all sanctity in his world.

THE FIRST FAMILY OF BELIEF

Avraham cannot allow his son Yitzchak to join a society that disregards the sanctity of family life. Avraham himself has already built a functioning family structure, most vividly displayed in the opening scene of *Parashat Vayeira*. The primary motif of that scene is Avraham's longing to perform *chesed*, yet it also highlights a family united in that mission. He instructs his household to prepare food quickly, urging Sarah to knead and bake bread, while he himself runs to prepare the meat. It is not merely Avraham's personal generosity on display, but a family mobilized for *chesed*.

Later in the parasha, we again encounter this sense of family cohesion. Though he has sent away Hagar and Yishmael by divine command, Avraham does not face the *Akeidah* in isolation; he travels with “two youths” at his side. These were servants, yet the Torah deliberately calls them *ne'arim*, presenting

the journey to Har HaMoriah as a family procession, not a solitary march.

Even the *brit milah*, a mitzvah addressed personally to Avraham, is framed as a commandment to be fulfilled by every member of his household. Avraham's covenant with Hashem is never private — it is always shared, always familial.

Avraham's strong and stable family becomes the vehicle through which he transmits the values he has discovered. When Hashem decides to destroy Sedom, He declares that He must first inform Avraham — “for he has trained his children and his household after him to follow the way of Hashem, to perform charity and uphold justice.” Avraham is not only a man of faith but a father who passes his beliefs to those who will carry them forward.

Avraham now seeks this second value — family integrity — in Aram Naharayim, a virtue completely missing from the culture of Canaan. At the end of *Parashat Vayeira*, following the *Akeidah*, the Torah lists the twelve children born to Nachor, Avraham's brother. Though distant from Avraham religiously, Nachor has managed to build a stable and functioning family. Avraham, who has seen the moral chaos of Canaanite society, now yearns to link his son to a family where loyalty, commitment, and structure still exist.

For this reason, Avraham's servant is not satisfied with identifying a woman of *chesed*; he must also learn about her family. When he discovers that Rivka's father, Betuel, and her brother, Lavan, have maintained a household of order and continuity, he understands why Avraham had chosen this land. Still, he does not rush to leave with Rivka. He waits to receive the family's consent, seeking their

blessing before departure. Avraham had chosen this culture because of its devotion to family. It would be hypocritical — and ultimately self-destructive — to found the next generation of *Am Yisrael* by undermining the very family harmony he sought to preserve.

FAMILY AND FAITH

We would expect *Sefer Bereishit* to be a book of theology and philosophy — a treatise on the creation of the world and Avraham's discovery of Hashem. Yet overwhelmingly, *Bereishit* is a book about family life: husbands and wives, parents and children, rivalries, and struggles over succession.

Bereishit teaches that healthy family life is the template for monotheism. Cultures that tolerate multiple spouses easily tolerate multiple gods. A society that preaches fidelity within the family — between husbands and wives, parents and children, and among siblings — is also capable of fidelity to one G-d.

Remarkably, the visit of Avraham's servant succeeds in planting the early seeds of monotheism within Lavan's family. Rashi notes that when the servant arrived, Lavan cleared his house of idols — perhaps out of respect for his distinguished guest, who would not lodge in a home filled with pagan symbols. Even if done out of courtesy, this act forced Lavan to distance himself, however briefly, from idolatry. Such gestures often leave a trace, softening the hold of pagan habit.

More significantly, Lavan and Betuel mention Hashem's name three times, acknowledging that Hashem has guided this emissary to bring Rivka to her destined role. No one in the mainstream culture of Canaan had yet uttered the name of Hashem with such recognition. Within a single day, Lavan sensed the presence of one G-d. Evidently, the path

toward faith in Hashem begins within the bonds of family — for loyalty to family is the first school of loyalty to Hashem.

Avraham seeks to build the foundation of his family — and ultimately, of his nation. The two traits he deems indispensable are an appreciation of *chesed* and a loyal commitment to family life. He knows that the societies of Canaan lack both qualities, and so he looks elsewhere. His relatives in Aram Naharayim may not be paragons of faith, but they embody these essential virtues.

These two traits — *chesed* and devotion to family — have become the enduring hallmarks of our people. They have carried us through the centuries of exile and ensured our survival under unthinkable conditions. We cared for one another, we nurtured families, and through those families we transmitted our timeless values. *Chesed* and family — Avraham's twin legacies — have preserved the moral and spiritual heartbeat of *Am Yisrael*. ■



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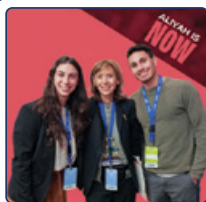
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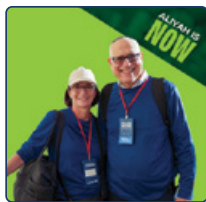
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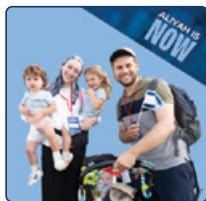
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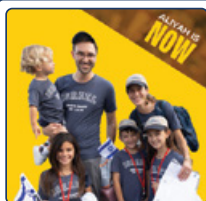


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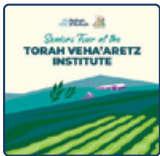
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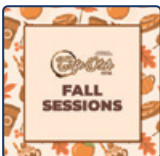
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MELACHIM 1 1:1-31

Our Haftorah opens with David HaMelech at the end of his life, זקן בא בימים. The Abarbanel asks a sharp question: why does this passage open Sefer Melachim? Wouldn't David's old age and final moments belong at the end of Sefer Shmuel — the sefer that chronicles David's life?

The Abarbanel answers: because this moment is not about David's end, it is about Shlomo's beginning. David's waning strength signals the transition into the next kingship. Once the question becomes "who will reign after David?" — we have already entered Melachim. The focus now is succession, continuity, future.

David's greatness here is not what he builds, conquers, or accomplishes. His greatness is what he secures for the next generation. Earlier in his life, David's leadership was

expressed through action while now his leadership is expressed through transmission. His most powerful act in his final year is to ensure that the next link of the chain is firmly set.

Batsheva and Natan step in respectfully to assure that confusion and instability don't fill the vacuum. Securing the future sometimes requires stepping forward with direct words, steady clarity, and a willingness to advocate for what is right.

This is the deeper meaning of זקן בא בימים — his days held weight, his years had substance. The message is not nostalgia, it is responsibility. Continuity is not automatic. It requires deliberate action, especially when strength is diminished.

So our Haftorah opens Melachim with a truth that is timeless: the future of Am Yisrael continues because someone made sure it would. The Jewish future depends on choices made with courage, clarity, and faith. That is the truest expression of Batsheva's words — וַתֹּאמֶר יְחִי אֲדֹנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד לְעֹלָם — David "lives forever" not because his life continued, but because he secured the future of Am Yisrael. ■

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RABBI AARON GOLDSCHIEDER

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Sarah's Outcry

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

The canister was miraculously unearthed by Polish construction workers after the war,



Piasetzner Rebbe Hy" d

and the book was first published in Israel in 1960.

In a remarkable teaching, written amidst unfathomable anguish, the Piasetzner Rebbe addressed the great challenge of continued faith in God's justice in the face of terrifying and agonizing adversity. He began with the opening verse of *Parashat Chayei Sara*: "The years of Sarah's life were one hundred and twenty-seven years, the years of Sarah's

life" (Genesis 23:1). Why the repetitive phrase "the years of Sarah's life" at the end of the verse?

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

were unparalleled, even in her final moments on this earth.¹

The Piasetzner Rebbe quoted Rebbe Menachem Mendel Torem of Rimanov (1745–1815)² on the comparison drawn in the Talmud between salt and suffering,

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

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

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

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

Our master Moshe, the faithful shepherd, juxtaposed the death of Sarah to *Akedat Yitzhak*, in order to advocate for us and to demonstrate what happens when there is too much suffering, God forbid: her soul departed. Furthermore, if this could happen to Sarah, so righteous a woman that when she was 100 she was like 20 with regard to sin..., and all of Sarah's years were equivalent for good, yet she could not bear such deep agony, how much more so is this true for all of us.⁶

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

The Piaseznar Rebbe then boldly claimed that Sarah's death, the result of overwhelming psychological trauma, was an act on behalf of all Jews, as a protest to God, a demonstration that the Jewish people cannot bear excessive



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suffering. She gave up her life, if you will, in order to "teach the Creator" the limits of human suffering. She *chose* to show God the effect of suffering when it is too much to bear.

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

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

This sermon was delivered orally on the Shabbat of *Parashat Chayei Sara*, November 4, 1939. Only two months earlier the Rebbe of Piaseznar had suffered one of the most excruciating blows of his life: the deaths of his only son, his daughter-in-law, and his sister-in-law, all killed by the Nazi aerial bombing of Warsaw in September 1939. In speaking of Sarah's loss, the rebbe's own tormented voice is audible.

In this gut-wrenching sermon, the rebbe

7. Ibid.

3. *Berachot* 5a.

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

5. Rashi on Genesis 23:2, s.v. התוכבלי הרשל דפסל, based on *Genesis Rabbah*, 58:4.

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

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

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

8. Ibid.



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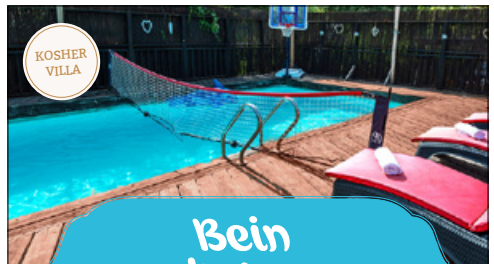


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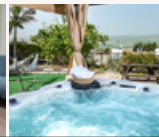
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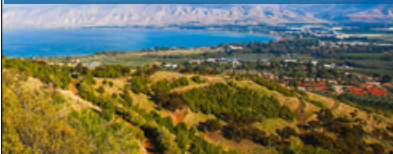
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With thanks and Toda. Love, Yoni

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Drawer with Aluminum Foil Roll

Question: In one of my kitchen cabinet drawers, I keep a roll of aluminum foil along with items I may use on Shabbat. May I open this drawer on Shabbat?

Answer: We will first identify a roll of aluminum foil's *muktzeh* status. An object that is not fit for use on the present Shabbat is *muktzeh*. If it is a usable "utensil," but its main use is for forbidden purposes, it is a relatively lenient form of *muktzeh* called *kli shemelachto l'issur*. If it is not yet a utensil (or a food) and making it one would require a Shabbat violation or a pre-Shabbat designation for permitted usage, it is the more severe *muktzeh machamat gufo* (intrinsic *muktzeh*) (see Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 308:38; Rama ad loc. 7).

Aluminum foil is not used when on its roll;

rather, one cuts a piece to size for its present purpose, which is then a usable utensil. Since it is forbidden to cut such a piece (see Orchot Shabbat 19:125), we view the roll according to its present stage – as an unusable object (ibid.). (A roll of toilet paper, though, is not *muktzeh* (ibid. 126) because when there are no viable alternatives, there are halachic ways to use the toilet paper (see Living the Halachic Process I, C-16)).

When a *muktzeh* item rests on an otherwise non-*muktzeh* object, the "base" can take on the *muktzeh* item's status, based on a concept called *basis l'davar ha'asur* (Shulchan Aruch, OC 310:7). There are several conditions for the status of *basis* to exist: 1) The *muktzeh* was on the base when Shabbat entered (ibid.; Mishna Berura 266:26). 2) The *muktzeh* was placed with the intention that it would remain there on Shabbat in a significant manner (Shulchan Aruch, OC 309:4; see Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata 20:520). 3) The *muktzeh* item(s) is more "important" than non-*muktzeh* items that also rest there (Shulchan Aruch, OC 310:8).

From your description, it sounds like conditions 1 and 2 are met, so the question depends on whether the aluminum foil (and other *muktzeh* items) is more important than the non-*muktzeh*. In this context, a *kli shemelachto l'issur* is treated as non-*muktzeh*. Since such items may be moved for usage purpose and when they are in the way (ibid. 308:3), the drawer may be opened to make available the objects you wish to use and then closed.

The individual homeowner's perspective

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on importance is the determinant (Mishna Berura 310:33). A prominent early source, the Magen Avraham (277:8), posits that *challa* is more important than the candles on the table. However, regarding more exact parameters, there are many opinions (see Orchot Shabbat 19:(414)). Some suggest that importance depends on overall value to the person (i.e., if he could choose what to hold on to, which would it be, so that price is crucial) (Q&A 14 of Rav S.Z. Auerbach in Tiltulei Shabbat). Other opinions stress functionally in the specific context (Igrot Moshe, OC V, 22.17 assumes that glasses are more important than a relatively large amount of money, but only if it is his only pair). Still others consider the relationship between the objects and the specific *bassiss* (Shevet Halevi VIII:52 says that a *challa* is more important than candles/candlesticks on a table where one eats). Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata (20:55) posits that it is crucial for the permitted object to be necessary for Shabbat. In any case, these parameters are unlikely to make a difference in a drawer

used for general storage, where many things could possibly be used at this time.

Usually, when a *muktzeh* item does not make the base a *bassiss*, we should still shake off the *muktzeh* before further moving the base, if this is feasible (Shulchan Aruch, OC 310:8). However, it is not feasible to simply shake out a cabinet drawer. While moving the *muktzeh* aluminum foil along with the drawer seems regrettable, no halachic construct forbids keeping it in the drawer when it does not create a *bassiss* (see Orchot Shabbat 19:(386)).

Therefore, if the aluminum foil and other fully *muktzeh* items are a minority in importance, you may pull out the drawer on Shabbat. ■

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Attraction, Expectations, and Opening the Heart

לעילוי נשמת
מאיר יצחק בן יוסף אליהו הכהן ז"ל

Yair asks:

My candidate is extremely particular about the external look of the person he's willing to date. It feels like he's dismissing wonderful people too quickly. Should I try to help him loosen up? Or maybe he just knows what's right for him?

Aleeza Answers:

This is such an important question, and not so easy to answer.

When someone is very fixed on a "look," it often comes from a deeper place. Maybe it's fear: *If I don't choose exactly what I want, I'll regret it. Maybe I won't be attracted to them for a lifetime.* Or maybe it's a belief: *I have to feel instant attraction or it's not real, I don't*

want to convince myself. And sometimes... it's just habit. They've trained their eyes to notice a certain "type," and everything else feels "off."

We know that looks don't truly sustain a relationship. And yet you can't marry someone you're not attracted to. So what degree of attraction does a person need? Looks change. Styles shift. But middot, kindness, faith, laughter, and shared values that's what builds a bayit ne'eman and only get better over time.

I do think it's valuable to gently open the conversation. Not to pressure or shame, but to invite curiosity. You can ask questions like:

- "What matters most to you long-term?"
- "How would it feel to meet someone amazing in almost every way...what could you get used to if it was different than you expected?"
- "Would you consider dating someone outside of your typical look preference?"

Sometimes, just *trying* a different experience opens the heart. I've seen people say "not my type" and then find love with somebody they almost walked past. But they had to be willing to *look again*.

You can still support them *and* challenge them to try outside their type, with love. But remember you won't have been the first one to request this. They have likely been asked this many times.



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4 spacious, sunlit bedrooms
3 modern bathrooms
Luxury kitchen
2 sukkah balconies
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Full of natural light
Secure parking for the entire building
Mamad (safe room)
Move-in ready



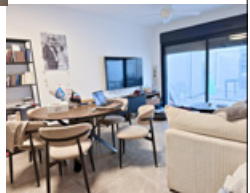
One-of-a-Kind Apartment in Prime Jerusalem Location

170 sqm
2 small balconies
Private land
Elevator
Building parking
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Price: 11,000,000 NIS



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60 sqm apartment
30 sqm terrace
Underfloor heating, Central A/C
Private parking, Storage room
Wheelchair accessible
Perfectly located right above the
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Reduced Price: 2,850,000 NIS



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95 sqm
3.5 rooms, 1.5 baths
Renovated, A/C & private heat
Upgraded kitchen
Mamad, Shabbat elevator
Balcony (not Succah)
Parking (1st come-1st serve, gated)
Private storage (could be used as a
separate unit)
Reduced Price: 4,900,000 NIS



Great Apartment in Old Katamon

76 sqm, 2 bedrooms, 2 baths
Architecturally renovated
Succah balcony, Mamad
Shabbat elevator
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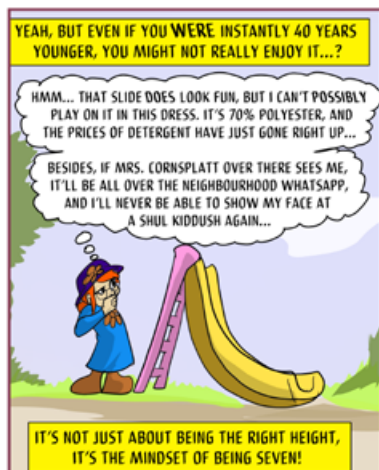
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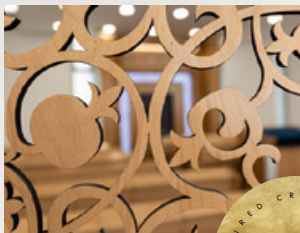
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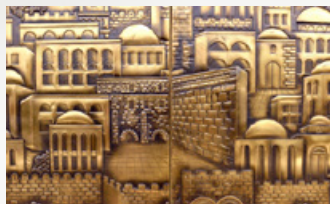
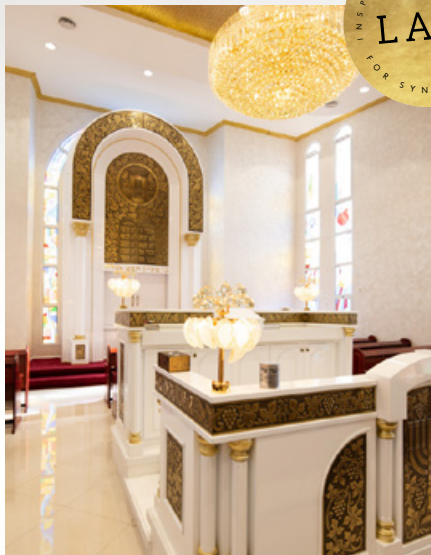
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TRU Trauma, Resilience & Unity Conference

TRAUMA, RESILIENCE & UNITY

Nefesh B'Nefesh Aliyah Campus, Jerusalem 25.11.2025

Trauma, Resilience & Unity Conference (TRU) is an event which brings together leading voices to share tools, evidence-based practices, and stories of hope.

Visit the website: tru-conference.com

Israel is hurting - and you can be part of the healing.

The day conference is for mental health professionals, and the evening is an event of inspiration for the community at large.

Mental Health Professionals (08:00-18:00)

A day program for mental-health practitioners

Theme: Resilience and Recovery

- Suicide Prevention and Resiliency Training
- When Soldiers Come Home: Reentry Issues
- Compassion Fatigue in Providers
- Resiliency Support for First Responders
- Spirituality and Resilience
- Dealing with Grief and Sudden Loss
- Innovative Techniques in Treating PTSD
- Integrative Resiliency Training
- Building Resilience through EMDR

Featured Speakers:

Rabbi Doron Perez | Professor Eyal Fruchter |
Dr. Sharon Slater | Dr. Naomi Baum |
Dr. Asher Siegelman | Dr. Batya Jaffe |
Rabbi Shalom Hammer | Jason Blankfield |
Dov Ben Yaakov Kurtzman | Dr. Tzachi Fried |
Jen Airley



Zoom services
will be available



Conference language: English



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Community Forum - Open to Public (19:30-22:00)

Public forum on post-traumatic growth.

Theme: Post Traumatic Growth

Greetings from Isaac and Michal Herzog, President and First Lady, State of Israel

Rabbi Hanoach Teller, Internationally Renowned Speaker, Author, and Film Producer

Dr. Norman Goldwasser, Trauma Psychologist, Miami Beach, Florida

Rom Elchai, Nova Survivor

Special Memorial of Rabbi Moshe Hauer zt"l by Rabbi Berman, Executive Director of OU Israel

Panel Discussion:

Dr. Shmuel Harris, Founder, Machon Dvir

Rabbi Yoni Rosenzweig, Author, Rabbi of Nezach Menashe, Bet Shemesh

Sherri Mandell, CEO, Koby Mandell Foundation

Orit Mark Ettinger, CEO Ohr Michael, Media Personality

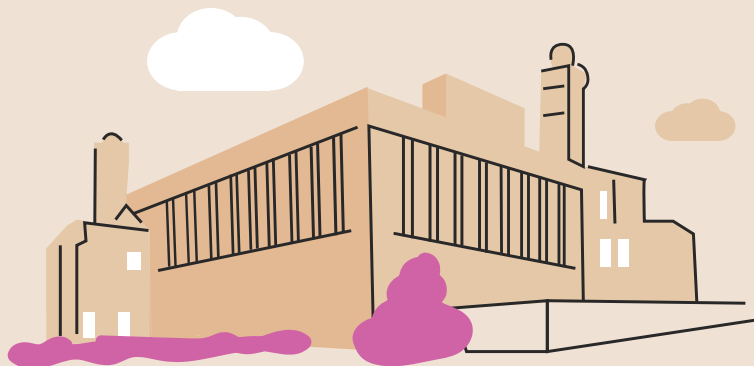
Honorees for Volunteer Service:

Terri Ackerman, **Yael Levy**, Terri's Angels

Susan Cohen, Tikvah Mental Health Support Programme

Dusia Etzman, Israel Support Group

Yocheved Ruttenberg, Swords of Iron Volunteer Corps



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