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The Everlasting Legacy of the Righteous

With this week's parsha, the lives of Avraham *Avinu* and Sarah *Imeinu* - the founders of the *Umah Yisraelis* - come to a close. The *parsha* begins with the death of Sarah at the age of one hundred and twenty seven, and towards the end of the parsha, closes with the death of Avraham at the age of one hundred and seventy five. Both are buried in the *Me'arat Ha'Machpela* that Avraham bought from Efron for four hundred silver shekels in common currency.

And yet, though Avraham and Sarah pass on to their eternal rest, the parsha is called "***Chayei** Sara*," ***the life** of Sarah*. For as the Sages teach: צַדִּיקִים שֶׁבְּמִיתָתָן נִקְרְאוּ חַיִּים, *the righteous, even in death, are called living* (Brachos 18a-b).

It is not, of course, that they are physically alive. But rather, through the deeds and the lives they lived, their legacies endure, and they continue to teach us after their demise.

And so, through learning - and journeying through - the *parshios* that narrate their lives, the legacy of Avraham and Sarah lives on well after their deaths, through the *derech Hashem* by which they lived. For not only did they live for themselves, but through their righteousness, they set the path for their descendants throughout time.

From them we learn about *ahavas Hashem*, *ahavas Eretz Yisrael*, *mesiras nefesh* (self-sacrifice) for Hashem by putting His will before our own, bringing others under the wings of the *Shechina* and raising awareness of the One True G-d Who created and sustains our world, taking responsibility for another, praying for the salvation of even sinners, living a life of chessed and doing for others, *shalom bayis* and respect for one's spouse, love and absolute commitment to the welfare - both physical and spiritual - of one's child, and living a life that is both *yoshor* and *kasher*.

When we emulate their ways, and cling to their path, "*the righteous, even in death, are considered living*."

Tuesday morning **25 Cheshvan** 5775 (November 18, 2014), Har Nof, Jerusalem. It was a sunny and bright morning when two terrorists - שֵׁם רְשָׁעִים יִרְקָב (*may the name of the wicked rot*, Mishlei 10:7) - entered the hallowed grounds of Kehilat

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Bnei Torah and began a murder spree of the holy and righteous Jews inside, while they were wrapped in טליתות and tefillin, davening *tefilas Shachris*.

The attack lasted all of seven minutes, and in those few minutes, a formerly sunny day became staggeringly, shockingly, searingly painfully, dark.


Rav Mosheh Twersky Hy"d

The *kedoshim*, Rabbi Mosheh Twersky, Rabbi Kalman Ze'ev Levine, Rabbi Aryeh Kupinsky, and Rabbi Avrohom Shmuel Goldberg HY"D, as well as responding police officer Master Sergeant (promoted posthumously to First Sergeant) Zidan Se'if, lay murdered. In addition, Rabbi Chaim Yechiel Rotman was mortally wounded and died from his wounds in October 2015 HY"D.

In regard to Rav Mosheh Twersky zt'l, Reb Danny Fast, a *talmid* related:

"*One time during shiur, Rebbi wanted to relate a chiddush of Reb Chaim on the sugya, and asked if anyone happened to have a copy of that sefer with them. No one had it there, but one bachur, whose dorm room was next door to the shiur room, jumped out of his seat and ran to retrieve a copy.* As I saw him running, I felt bad for him, knowing that in his room he had a Reb Chaim on the Rambam, whereas Rebbi was looking for a Reb Chaim on Shas. When he came back a minute later with the wrong sefer, Rebbi didn't bat an eyelash. He took the sefer, thanked the bachur for his effort, and flipped to the introduction where it speaks about how punctilious Reb Chaim was with every word he wrote, as if that was why he wanted the sefer.

"Unfortunately, though, even this posed a challenge, as the bachur's copy of Reb Chaim on the Rambam was a new printing that didn't retain the original page structure and layout. Therefore, Rebbi wasn't able to find the line he was looking for. He proceeded to quote that particular line by heart, and then continued with the chiddush he had originally intended to say from Reb Chaim on Shas. The lesson that stuck with me most from this story was how far Rebbi went out of his way not to embarrass someone" (A Malach in Our Midst, p.309-310).

וְהָאִישׁ **מֹשֶׁה** עָנָיו מְאֹד מִכֹּל הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר עַל-פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה - *and* ***the man Moshe*** *was very humble, more than any other man on the face of the earth* (Bamidbar 12:3).

In regard to her husband, Rav Kalman Ze'ev Levine zt'l, Rebbetzin Chaya Levine, *shetichyeh*, relates: "My husband never gave up - he just kept going. One of his friends said... 'We both sat in the same *beis medrash*. How did he get so far...?' He did it one step at a time, one *daf* at a time. If he wanted to change or improve... he would pick one thing to work on, such as davening or *brachos*; he broke it up into specific steps and then chose one small thing to work on for months until he got it right... He would supplement his efforts by learning about that *middah* or *brachah* from a sefer, as well as keeping a written record for himself. That way he could see how much he had improved and what to move on to next... When you get discouraged, just keep going - you'll get there in

the end" (Living On, compiled by Rabbi Daniel Yaakov Travis, p.75-76).

כִּי שֶׁבַע יִפּוֹל **צַדִּיק** וָקָם - *for **the righteous** fall seven times, and arise* (Mishlei 24:16).

Rabbi Aryeh Kupinsky z'l explained why he started, and ran, a freezer *gemach*. "People need to make a kiddush; catering events is expensive - most people cannot afford that. The solution is to bake a lot of cakes in advance; but then where do you store all that cake?"

Rabbi Daniel Yaakov Travis was *maspid* Rabbi Kupinsky and noted that, "There are many types of *gemachim* among Klal Yisrael - money, chairs, even pacifiers, but as far as I know, nowhere in the world is there another *gemach* for freezers that are delivered by the head of the *gemach* himself. It is too difficult and impractical. Each freezer costs a lot of money, and how will the freezers be brought from place to place? These considerations did not deter Rav Aryeh... He simply carried the freezers himself from place to place. Rav Aryeh personified the *middos* of Avraham and Rivka: chessed without limits... (which) is the goal for which we are all meant to strive" (Living On, p.68-69).

יתגבר **כארי** לעמוד בבוקר לעבודת בוראו שיהא הוא מעורר השחר - *One should rouse himself **like a lion** to awake in the morning for the service of his Creator, and he should arise early enough to welcome in the dawn* (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 1:1).

Rabbi Meir Salasnik - a cousin of Rabbi Avrohom Shmuel Goldberg z'l - related in his *hesped* that on one occasion, when he was visiting Har Nof, Rabbi Goldberg "pointed out to me a man sitting a couple of rows in front of him and said this was the grandson of the Tolner Rebbe and Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik [this was Rav Mosheh Twersky Hy"d]. I was taken aback that one who was both a descendant of Chassidish Rebbes and the Brisker dynasty was sitting in the back of the Shul, and then it occurred to me that this was part of his modesty. It was also part of Avrohom Shmuel's modesty that he sat at the back. Both of these modest men, with other *kedoshim*, entered *Olam Haba* together. Part of Avrohom Shmuel's modesty was that very few people knew he had *semichah*. Even many in his close family were unaware of this" (Living On, p.57-58).

וַיֹּאמֶר **אַבְרָם** אֶל מֶלֶךְ סְדֹם הֲרִמֹתִי יָדִי אֶל ה' אֵ-ל עֶלְיוֹן קֹנֵה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ - *and **Avram** said to the king of Sodom, I raise my hand to Hashem, the G-d Most High, Who possesses heaven and earth* (Bereishis 14:22).

Risa Rotman *shetichyeh* writes that, "Chaim was a very early riser and generally didn't get much sleep. He would often go to sleep at 2 a.m. and rise at 5:40. His Shachris started at 6:30 but he rose very early to prepare and give himself extra time to spend on the *tefillos*. Despite this no one ever saw him just walk to Shul. He ran. Always. But never because he was late. Did he run because he wanted to utilize every moment? Did he run because he wanted to serve his Creator with alacrity? Maybe both.

"Because he woke up so early, I rarely saw him in the morning before davening. That morning was no different than any other. Or so we thought" (Terror and Emunah in Har Nof, p.43-44).

חֲסִידִים הָרִאשׁוֹנִים **הָיוּ שׁוֹהִין שָׁעָה אַחַת וּמִתְפַּלְלִין**, כְּדֵי שֶׁיְּכַוְּונוּ לִבָּם לַאֲבִיהֶם שֶׁבַּשָּׁמַיִם - *the pious men of old **would wait one hour (to prepare themselves for prayer)**, and*

(only) then pray, so that they would focus their hearts toward their Father in Heaven (Brachos 30b).

צַדִּיקִים שֶׁבְּמִיתָתָן נִקְרְאוּ חַיִּים - through their actions and lives, their legacies live on and continue to teach us.

May we be sensitive to the feelings and *kavod* of every other person, may we never give up on improving ourselves in our *avodas Hashem*, may we think of ways to help our fellow Jews with humble kindness, may we live with humility before G-d and man, and may we recognize the power of potent *tefilla*, as we prepare to stand in prayer before the RS"O.

Chayei Sara... the parsha in which both Sarah and Avraham die, reminds us that the legacy of the righteous lives on forever.

בִּלַּע הַמָּוֶת לָנֶצַח וּמָחָה ה' אלקים דִּמְעָה מֵעַל כָּל־פָּנִים וְחֶרְפַּת עַמּוֹ יָסִיר מֵעַל כָּל־הָאָרֶץ כִּי ה' דִּבֵּר וְאָמַר בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא הִנֵּה אֱלֹקֵינוּ זֶה קִוִּינוּ לוֹ וְיוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ זֶה ה' קִוִּינוּ לוֹ נָגִילָה וְנִשְׂמְחָה בִּישׁוּעָתוֹ
(Yeshayahu 25:8-9)

בברכת בשורות טובות ושבת שלום,

It is important to note the bravery and courage of First Sergeant Zidan Se'if. He was the heroic Israeli Druze police officer who sacrificed his life to save Jewish lives during the attack. Se'if was a 30-year-old traffic control inspector from the Galilee town of Yanuh-Jat, and was one of the first two police officers to arrive at the scene of the attack. Though primarily assigned to traffic duty, Se'if did not hesitate; he immediately engaged the attackers from outside the building to draw their fire away from the congregants. He was shot in the head at close range and succumbed to his wounds later that evening.

המשכנות AMISHKENOT

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BAKA - New penthouse 180m² on one level, 20m² sukkah balcony, 40m² storeroom (office/clinic).
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ARNONA HATZEIRA - Large, 3 bedrooms, sukkah balcony, elevator, south facing, covered parking, storeroom.
3.900.000 NIS

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5.250.000 NIS

BAKA - Boutique building, Cheletz St., 5 rooms turned into 4, 1st floor, 135m², 2 balconies one sukkah 15m² each, store room, Shabbat elevator, safe room, parking.
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For his extraordinary bravery and for shielding both his partner and the worshippers with his body, Se'if was posthumously promoted and awarded Israel's third-highest police honor, The Medal of Distinguished Service.

His sacrifice deeply touched the community. In an unprecedented show of unity, thousands of Charedim traveled to the Galilee to attend his funeral, and the Shul's Rabbi Mordechai Rubin traveled to eulogize him, calling him a "wall" that stood to protect the souls inside.

May his memory be for a blessing. ■

Michal Horowitz is a Torah educator who lectures nationally throughout the United States, as well as internationally. Thousands of her shiur recordings are available online. She is a regular presenter for the OU Women's Initiative and the author of Abled: Living With a Disability, a Torah View (Mosaica Press). Michal lives in Woodmere, NY, with her family.