



Parshas Chayei Sarah

פרשת חיי שרה

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Avraham's Final Test

Meir Ness ('22)

As we all know, Avraham Avinu was tested with ten great tests. Although the tests each got increasingly more difficult, Avraham passed each one. Most commentaries are of the opinion that the final test for Avraham was at the end of last week's *parsha*, with the commandment to sacrifice his son. After all, what's a greater test than sacrificing your son, for whom you prayed to *Hashem* for so long? However, Rabbeinu Yonah, in his commentary to *Pirkei Avos*, says that the *akeidah* was only the ninth test. The tenth and hardest test, he writes, was buying the burial place for Sarah, his wife. The question here is clear: why was buying this land more of a test than offering his only son as a sacrifice? Sure, the land was expensive, but he was able to afford it, and surely he was willing to spend some money to bury his wife! So, how could this be the final and hardest test according to Rabbeinu Yonah?

Rabbi Yissocher Frand answers this question and says that normally in life, there's something called retirement, where one decides that they have had enough, where they stop working and step back to survey all that they have accomplished. In spirituality, however, the mindset is different; one is never done growing until the day they die. Avraham just did the most intense act of spirituality possible; he was willing to sacrifice his son with complete trust in *Hashem*, and the magnitude of his action still affects us to this day. Since Avraham had just passed this amazing test, one could be tempted to think that he was done - after all, he just reached the peak of human achievement! But when he gets home, he realizes his wife of a century had passed away, and that the owner of the place where he wanted to bury his wife had the nerve to extort him for an immensely high price. This

was a great test for Avraham. He could have just given up and walked away, complaining that after all that he had done, how could *Hashem* do this to him! Although Avraham would have been justified if he responded like this, he didn't. Instead, he kept his composure and moved on.

This final test of Avraham teaches us a very valuable lesson in *avodas Hashem*. Avraham taught us that your service to *Hashem* never ends. You need to always serve him every day of your life, and even when things get very hard and you want to give up, remember Avraham and his struggle, and keep moving on without complaining.

Get Out And Work

Yaakov Weinstock (22)

Throughout *Sefer Bereishis*, we encounter defining moments of Avraham Avinu's life. However, in *Parshas Chayei Sarah* we encounter one of those hidden moments that speak multitudes of Avraham Avinu's personality and his approach to *Torah*.

As Avraham is appointing Eliezer to take on the important mission of finding a wife for Yitzchak, he says, "*Hashem*, the God of the Heavens, that took me from my father's house and from my birthplace, He will send His angel before you, and you will take a wife for my son from there." Rashi contrasts this *possuk* to one earlier, in which Avraham calls *Hashem* "God of the Heavens and God of the Earth", as opposed to here, where Avraham only calls him "God of the Heavens". Rashi explains that this discrepancy is because when he was first taken from his father's house, *Hashem* was only the God of the Heavens, because His Name wasn't known to the world. How-

ever, in the earlier *possuk*, Avraham was speaking about the present, after Avraham had begun to spread *Hashem's* presence among the people of the world. At that point, *Hashem* was "God of the Heavens and God of the Earth."

Rav Moshe Feinstein asks a question based on this Rashi: why was *Hashem's* name not known to the world before Avraham left? Wasn't *Yeshivas Shem Viever* already established and spreading the Name of *Hashem* to the world? Rav Moshe answers that before Avraham, *Hashem's* name was only to those that independently wanted to seek *Hashem*. There was a minority of people who sought to seek *Hashem*, and travelled to the *yeshiva* to do so. But, there were also many people who could not go to the *yeshiva* for one reason or another, and were therefore unable to seek out *Hashem* in this way. This caused those people to return to and continue worshipping *avodah zarah*. Avraham Avinu resolved this problem by going out and actively trying to bring people towards *Hashem*. Instead of them having to go to his *yeshiva*, Avraham brought his *yeshiva* to them. This was a more effective tactic that brought more people *tachas kanfei hashechinah* - under the wings of the Divine Presence. This is a hidden aspect of Avraham Avinu; not only did he help those who had already accepted upon themselves to grow in *avodas Hashem*, but he even worked to help those people who were lost, by coming to them and taking the first proactive step to help them grow.

Rav Moshe explains at the end of his answer that this approach of Avraham Avinu is guaranteed to keep *Torah* in the world. Why is Rav Moshe so sure that this approach specifically would keep *Torah* in this world?

A SHORT VORT

Akiva Kra (21)

In this week's *parsha*, the *possuk* says:

וַתָּמָת שָׂרָה בְּקִרְיַת אַרְבַּע הוּא חֶבְרוֹן בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וַיְבֵא אַבְרָהָם לְסָפֵד לְשָׂרָה וּלְבִלְתָּהּ:

"Sarah died in Kirias Arba—now Chevron—in the land of Canaan; and Avraham came to mourn for Sarah and to bewail her."

The last word of the *possuk*, "*vilibkosah*" (to mourn for her), is written with a small letter *chaf*. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch suggests that this is intended to hint to us that the mourning of Avraham was kept private. While his pain and loss was huge, he kept it all to himself, in his own house.

Rabbi Yisroel Salanter would say, "Your face is a *reshus harabim* (public area), so you always have to smile; otherwise, it's a *bor bireshus harabim* (a pit in a public domain)". Avraham understood that the way he appeared in public could have wide-ranging effects on others. Therefore, even though he was mourning, he kept it to himself, so as not to worsen the mood of others. May we always be *zocheh* to happiness and to make others happy.

I believe the answer is that Avraham's approach shows an enthusiasm to spread *Torah* throughout the world. When one believes in a cause so strongly that he's willing to travel far to people he doesn't have any connection with and spread *Torah* to them, that passion is contagious, and makes others want to join as well.

This applies to us in our own lives in our own personal *avodas Hashem*. This passion that Avraham had in spreading *Torah* should be replicated as much as possible in our own lives, and through the *zechus* of our enthusiasm that we express towards *Torah*, the promise will ring true that *Torah* will never be forgotten among *Bnei Yisrael*.

5 Minute Lomdus

Shimi Kaufman (21)

ויהי כאשר כלו הגמלים לשתות ויקח האיש נזם זהב בקע משקלו ושני צמידים על-ידיה עשרה זהב משקלם

"When the camels finished drinking, the man took a gold nose ring weighing half a shekel, and two gold bracelets on her arms wearing ten shekalim" (Bereishis 24:22)

Q. The *Medrash Aggadah* on this *possuk* (22) explains that these gifts which Eliezer gave to Rivkah were intended to serve as *kiddushin*, the transaction which halachically affects a marriage. The minimum required amount of money to enact *kiddushin* is a *shaveh perutah*, the lowest value still deemed significant by *halachah* (roughly three cents). The *Gemara* (*Kiddushin* 12a) cites a statement of Shmuel that if someone attempts *kiddushin* with a date, we assume the *kiddushin* works even if the date is worth far less than a *shaveh perutah*, since in some other place, the date may be considered more expensive (a date being an example of something which changes value depending on the place). The Rosh on this *Gemara* (*Siman* 17) brings the opinion of the Ri, that even if you know that something has a higher value in another place, you may not perform *kiddushin* with it *midioraisa*, since on a strictly Biblical level, only the value in the current place and time matters. Shmuel's statement is merely a *dirabanan* enactment, as a *gezeirah* lest people accidentally be *mikadesh* in places where that item is worth more. Based on this, the *Beis Shmuel* (31:6) asks a question based on the *Gemara* later (53b), which brings up the case of one who attempted *kiddushin* with *ma'aser sheni*, a tithe which can only be eaten in Yerushalayim. Tosfos on that *Gemara* is of the opinion that such a *kiddushin* takes effect immediately, even outside of Yerushalayim, since even though the *ma'aser sheni* is worthless outside of Yerushalayim, once it arrives in Yerushalayim, it will be worth far more than a *shaveh perutah*. The *Beis Shmuel* then proves that the *kiddushin* referred to in the *Gemara* is of a *dioraisa* nature (the proof is far too long and complex to summarize here). We are therefore left with a question: according to the Ri as quoted by the Rosh, how could this *kiddushin* take effect on a *dioraisa* level, if the *ma'aser sheni* was not worth a *shaveh perutah* in that place, as the Ri believes it must be?

A. In regards to *ma'aser sheni*, the entire essence and purpose of the food is to be brought to Yerushalayim to be eaten ceremoniously. Thus, it is considered to be worth more than a *shaveh perutah* even outside of Yerushalayim, since inherent in the food is the premise that it will eventually be brought to Yerushalayim and eaten. Thus, *kiddushin* performed with *ma'aser sheni* is effective, since the *ma'aser sheni* is deemed to already possess the value it will have in Yerushalayim. However, by other food which changes value depending on the location, there is no guarantee that the food will be taken to the place where it is worth more. Thus, its value is judged by where it currently is, and since in this place, it is only worth less than a *shaveh perutah*, it cannot be used to enact *kiddushin* on a *dioraisa* level.

-Source: *Mishmeres Chayim Chelek III, "Kiddushin" 11*

CHUMASH B'YUN

Alien and (or) Resident

Rabbi Mayer Schiller

"Avraham rose up from the presence of his dead and spoke to the children of Cheis, saying, 'I am an alien and a resident among you; grant me a holding for a grave with you, that I may bury my dead from before me.'" (Bereishis 23:3-4)

I. Rashi

Rashi comments on Avraham's use of both the words alien and resident. He writes: "an alien from another land, and I have settled as a resident among you. And an *aggadic Midrash* explains: if you wish, I will be an alien, but if not, I will be a resident, and take it by rights, for *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* has said to me "to your offspring I will give this land."

The *Mizrachi* explains that the question which bothered Rashi was that it seems that one cannot be both "an alien and a resident", at the same time as is indicated by the word "and", which connects the two. In response to this, Rashi offers two explanations. First, he offers that Avrohom was initially an "alien" from another land, and only later was a settler "among them." He then relates a *Midrash* which pictures Avraham as saying, "If you wish I will be an alien, but if not I will be a resident and take it by rights, for the Holy One Blessed is He, has said to me, 'To your offspring I will give this land.'" It seems obvious, as noted by the *Mizrachi*, that this latter *peshat* sees "alien" and "resident" as mutually exclusive, and cannot simultaneously apply to one individual.

As is often the case, Rashi omits part of the *Midrash* and quotes a different *possuk* than that actually cited in the text. First, the *Midrash* (48: 6) adds the words "*dayyar*" (rendered "tenant" in the Soncino's *The Midrash Rabbah* translation) as an explanation of *ger* (alien), and "*marei baisa*," which translates as a "homeowner", as the explanation of "*toshav*" (resident). Rashi omits both of these definitions, although they appear in the same text he cites. (Incidentally, all the early Rashi manuscripts [Rome, Calabria, Chagira etc.] have this *lacuna*, so it is not likely to be a later scribal error.) Rashi then changes the quoted *possuk* from *Bereishis* 15:18, which says "the land I have given", to 12:7, where *Hashem* says "the land I will give." The *Ariel Rashi Hashalem* suggests that Rashi wanted a *possuk* where the promise was in the future tense, which is in better keeping with the fact that at the time of Avraham's discussion with the children of Cheis, it was not clear that the land already belonged to him. Thus, Avraham used the text of a future promise, not of a present reality which was far from obvious to the Gentile residents of the land.

We will return to more on Rashi's change of *possuk* later. As to the omission of the Midrashic definitions of *ger* and *toshav*, there might be several possibilities. On the basic *peshat* level, one cannot be a renter and homeowner simultaneously. Rashi converts this to a more readily understood meaning of "formerly a *ger*", in that he was from elsewhere, and now is a resident in that he lives there. Rashi is trying to avoid the implication that at some point Avraham was renter and now had a home. Thus, it seems that Rashi disagrees with the *Midrash*, but does not do so overtly. Homeownership thus plays no role in establishing residency status. It is only Avraham's desire to remain in the land which renders him a settler. (Further work may be done here after taking into account Rashi on *Vayikra* (25: 47) where he adopts a totally different approach to the phrase "*ger vtoshav*.")

II. Ramban

The Ramban (23: 40), who adopts a totally different understanding of the phrase *ger vtoshav*, may be seen in the light of the first part of the *Midrash* but not the second. He posits that Avraham's request was based on "what was customary, to have private burial sites, each person with his family." In addition, "there was one separate cemetery in which they would bury all strangers." Accordingly, he describes Avraham's request as saying, "I am a stranger from another land and was, therefore, not bequeathed a burial plot from my forefathers in this land. But, now I am a resident among you and desire to dwell in this land. Therefore, grant me a burial site to be for me an everlasting possession, as though I were one of you."

In this vein, the Ramban explains the reply of the children of Cheis (23: 6) as follows, "You are not regarded as a stranger and resident in our eyes. Rather, you are a king whom God has crowned over us. We and our land are in your service. So take any burial site that you desire and bury your dead there and it will be a burial site for you forever, for none of us will withhold it from you."

In sum, the Ramban is adding some logic to the bare bones of the *Midrash* by telling why being an "alien" and then a "resident" should create a special request for a burial plot. Here as well, the *Midrash* fits better if we leave out the notion of going from a renter to a homeowner, and leave things at the distinction between having been an

alien but now desiring ownership, or having begun the process thereof.

III. Ohr Hachayim

The *Ohr Hachayim* (23:4) offers a most novel reading of “alien and resident.” Although we will not deal, in this context, with the relevancy of his approach to a host of contemporary social issues and whether or not they can or should be applied, an analysis of his words and commentators on them, might yield much source material. He writes, “Now you should know that all of our Holy *Torah* is logical. This is especially so when it comes to issues of social interaction. Thus, just as we are commanded to act kindly to a stranger (*ger toshav*) who dwells among us, so are the inhabitants of the earth compelled by their intellect to act among themselves, sustaining the stranger who resides among them and giving him a gift. This, then, is what Avraham was contending: “I am an alien and a resident, grant me etc”. He was careful to mention that he was also a *ger* and he did not make do with just saying that he was a *toshav*.

In sum, *Ohr Hachayim* is saying that both being an “alien” and as well as a “resident” should produce kindness from Chevron's inhabitants. (A point of clarification, although not relevant to Avraham; the *Ohr Hachayim* also quotes the Rambam (*Hlichos Zechiyah Umatonah* 3: 11) who limits kindness to only the stranger, a legitimate *ger toshav*, not an idolater or otherwise violator of the seven *mitzvos* of Noach.

The *Ohr Hachayim* might also fit with the first *peshat* in Rashi, however, once again with the Midrashic definitions of *ger* and *toshav* left out.

IV. The Essence of Avrohom

According to all *peshatim*, there emerges a clear desire on Avraham's part to not only deal justly with the children of Cheis, but to do so in fashion that they could comprehend, carefully explaining his rights. Even in Rashi's second *peshat* where he informs them of his rights to seize the land if need be, he is still trying to do so in a peaceful manner. And, if we accept the *Ariel Rashi Hashalem* who offers that Rashi changed the *Midrash's possuk*, Avrohom is doing so in a fashion that will not appear odd to the town's inhabitants. The Ramban sees Avraham as deepening the ethical nature of his request and, last, the *Ohr Hachayim* ventures into the realm of trans-culture charity, albeit with certain limitations. In sum, we find the *possuk* of “*ger vitoshav*” brimming over with Avrohom as the incarnation of mercy (*midas hachessed*.)

FROM THE EDITORS' DESK

Fickle Generosity

The beginning of this week's *parsha* sees Avraham searching for a burial plot for his recently deceased wife, Sarah. Avraham is set on buying *Ma'aras Hamachpeilah*, the burial place of Adam Harishon and Chavah, so he begins to negotiate with the owner of the land, Ephron. At first, Ephron seems more than willing to allow Avraham to take the land for a reduced cost, or even for free. In the end, however, Avraham ends up paying 400 large *shekalim* for the land, far more than its actual value. Commenting on the *possuk* in which Avraham actually buys the land, Rashi (*Bereishis* 23:16) comments that in the phrase describing the actual transaction, Ephron's name is written with a letter *vav* missing. Making Ephron's name smaller, explains Rashi, is intended to hint that Ephron did less than he promised; he said that he would give Avraham the land essentially for free, but ended up hiking up the cost. The Ramban is unsure whether Ephron's initial generosity was in fact genuine, or if it was all simply a ploy to wrest more money out of Avraham. The Alter of Kelm seizes onto this first option - if Ephron's initial munificence was in fact authentic, then why did he shift at the last second to cheat Avraham? What changed that caused him to go back on his offer?

The Alter of Kelm answers this question with a story which is told about the Rambam. As the story goes, the scholars in the Rambam's day were convinced that animals were inherently no different than humans; all that was different was their social standings. As such, they argued that with proper education, an animal could be trained to act no differently from a human. Of course, the Rambam disagreed, so the scholars set out to prove their point. They worked for months to train a cat to be a waiter who would be capable of serving a large crowd of people. They taught the cat to stand on its hind legs, carry trays, set tables, and even to clean up afterwards. When the cat was sufficiently trained, the scholars threw a party, inviting the Rambam to come see the fruit of their labors. And indeed, it was true; the party had been set up and was being served entirely by the cat! The Rambam was duly impressed, and asked to see the cat in question. The scholars called the cat over to the table, and the Rambam asked to be excused for a moment. He came back holding a box, which he placed on the table. He opened the box, and a mouse scurried out. Immediately, the cat's entire fa-

cade dropped; it went rabid as it attempted to corner and eat the mouse. Months of training in etiquette and manners flew out the window as the cat reverted to its most basic instincts almost immediately. The scholars were forced to admit that the cat was not, and would never be, truly like a human being.

This, explained the Alter of Kelm, was what happened with Ephron. He was able to appear outwardly generous, but he never really fixed his most basic core instincts of greed. Ephron truly intended to give *Ma'aras Hamachpeilah* to Avraham as a gift, until he saw the money come out of Avraham's wallet. At that point, all bets were off, as Ephron immediately reverted back to his most selfish and ugly tendencies.

Perhaps this idea can explain a cryptic comment of the *Ba'al Haturim* on this *possuk*. The *Ba'al Haturim* points out that Ephron's name, written without the *vav*, has the same numerical value as the words "*ayin ra*", a bad eye. This could be an overt reference to the *possuk* which we recite every day in *krias Shema* - "and do not stray after your hearts and after your eyes." In other words, do not allow your eyes to cause your heart to stray from the changes you have made! Ephron had an "*ayin ra*", because the moment that he saw something which triggered his desires, all of his facades of change dropped, and he went back to his selfish ways.

The Piaseczna Rebbe, in his *sefer Chovos Hatalmidim*, writes "if you believe that you have identified a negative trait about yourself, and you work for a day or a week to fix it, and you believe that you have truly conquered it, *know that you are only fooling yourself.*" Very often, we assume that we have conquered a certain *midah ra'ah*, a bad trait, only to see it cropping up again when it is tested later. This is a common tactic of the *yetzer hara*, to make us believe that we have succeeded in working on ourselves, only for us to realize that we have not sufficiently uprooted that negative quality from within our hearts. Ephron truly believed that he had his lust for money under control, until he was tempted with the exorbitant sum he saw he could get from Avraham. When working on self-improvement, it is important to realize that refining one's *middos* is a lifelong process, one which cannot be completed hastily. If we recognize this, and adjust our self-improvement accordingly, we will be well on our way to truly purifying our *middos* and character traits.

Wishing everyone an amazing *Shabbos*,
- Shimi Kaufman

Sensitivity in Mourning

In this week's *parsha*, we see the end of Sarah Imeinu's life. It is certainly not a joyous event, and yet the *Torah* puts something of a positive spin on it, by calling the *parsha* after her life (*chayei Sarah*) rather than her death. This is made clear by the unusual method that the *Torah* uses to express Sarah's age when she died. The *possuk* says "one hundred years, twenty years and seven years". Rashi explains that each of these three numbers represents a time period of Sarah's life. At the age of one hundred, she was as free of sin as a twenty year old, who does not get punished *min hashamayim* (from Heaven). At twenty, she was as purely beautiful as a seven year old. Rav Moshe Feinstein adds to this point, saying that just like a child, her beauty was pure and not used for others to stray. Everyone who saw Sarah immediately recognized her purity and innocence throughout her life.

The *Torah* continues to serve as a tribute to Sarah's life, as is evidenced by the *Torah's* phrasing when Avraham eulogizes her. The *possuk* says that Avraham came "to eulogize and cry over her." This particular phrasing is noteworthy, because Avraham first eulogized before he cried. We must understand the sadness that he must have felt in that moment. He had just returned from the culmination of his life's work, *Akeidas Yitzchak*, where he had finally been able to show *Hashem* his true and complete loyalty with his willingness to sacrifice his beloved son. He returned home, hoping to share the amazing news with his wife, only to find out that she had passed away. He must have been overcome with sadness, but he was able to understand that his own, personal grieving would have to be put on hold in order for Sarah to be properly honored in the public setting. He understood that Sarah's life deserved to be honored before Avraham's personal grief should be expressed. Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch points out that there is a small letter in the word used by the *possuk* for "cry", which served to denote that most of the crying was done in private so that others would not also become inconsolable. The *Kli Yakar* adds here that the nuances in the phrase "eulogized and cry over" imply that the way that he eulogized her was by emphasizing her noble traits and how she became a princess for all mankind. Avraham in public dwelled not on the loss, but on what she meant to all of the world, and only once he was sure his grief would not cause pain to others did he allow himself to mourn her in his own personal way. From here we see the immense levels of love that Avraham felt for others; his ability to calculate the needs of others is something that we should all strive for.

Shabbot Shalom!
-Yisroel Hochman

HALACHA HASHAVUAH

Josef Weiner (23)

When Yitzchak meets Rivka in our *parsha*, the *possuk* states that he went “*lisiach basadeh*”, to converse [with *Hashem*] in the field, which is interpreted as the source for the afternoon *tefillah* of *mincha*. This article will discuss the concept of *hoicha kedushah*, when the congregation replaces the regular *chazaras hashatz* with an abbreviated one due to extenuating circumstances, which is usually employed at *mincha*. This article will discuss what an individual should do in such a case.

The Rema writes that in the case of *hoicha kedushah*, the congregation can begin their own individual *shemoneh esrei* with the *chazzan's* communal one, but that at least one person should wait until afterwards in order to answer *amen* to the *chazzan* (*Orach Chayim* 124:2). This Rema is understood to apply even in a case where reciting the individual *Shemoneh Esrei* after *hoicha kedushah* may cause the individual to miss the *zman tefillah*. However, if there would be enough time, the proper practice would be to wait until after *Hakel Hakadosh* to begin the personal *Shemoneh Esrei*. (*Mishnah Berurah* 124:8).

The *Kaf Hachayim* writes that if the *tzibbur* would listen to the *chazzan* without davening their personal *shemoneh esrei*, it would seem as if he were saying the *chazaras hashatz* for them. This is problematic, because *chazaras hashatz* is not supposed to be recited until after the *tzibbur* say their own personal *shemoneh esrei*. Therefore, the *Kaf Hachayim* says one should begin with the *chazzan* (O.C. 124:10). Furthermore, Rav Hershel Schachter writes that *kedushah* must be said in the proper place within one's *shemoneh esrei*. During a typical *chazaras hashatz*, it is considered as if the entire congregation is in the midst of their *shemoneh esrei*; thus, when *kedushah* is recited, it is in its proper place in the *tefillah*. However in the case of *hoicha kedushah*, if one does not begin *shemoneh esrei* with the *chazzan*, his *kedushah* will be out of place with his *tefillah*. Rav Yoshe Ber Soloveitchik would begin his *shemoneh esrei* with the *chazzan* when *hoicha kedushah* was recited (*Nefesh Harav* Page 126). Rav Ovadya Yosef also writes that it is preferable to begin one's *shemoneh esrei* with the *chazzan* when the *tzibbur* is reciting a *hoicha kedushah* (*Yalkut Yosef*, vol. I, pg. 279).

The *Toras Chayim* and *Chazon Ish* say one is permitted to raise their voice when answering *kedushah* even if they began with the *chazzan*, despite their being in the middle of *shemoneh esrei*. Rav Chaim Kanievsky, the *Prishah*, and the *Makor Chayim* all write that one may also rise on their toes (*Dirshu Mishna Berurah* footnote 109:19).

Lastly, the *Mishnah Berurah* writes that *hoicha kedushah* should not be used unless it is a time of need. Rav Dovid Zvi Hoffman, in his *Melamed Lehoyil*, writes that those who regularly recite a *hoicha kedushah* even when it is not a time of need are not acting properly, as they are stopping the *minhag* of our fathers in order to save a short amount of time (Vol. 1. 12). However, in defense of such places, Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky writes that the *chazaras hashatz* was instituted for places where some people did not know how to *daven* themselves, and not for a place where everyone knows how to *daven*. He adds that at *shacharis*, even when everyone knows how to *daven*, the *tzibbur* should recite the full *chazaras hashatz*, so that personal *shemoneh esrei* will be next to the *brachah* of *goall yisroel*, fulfilling the concept of being *so-maich geulah litefilah* (adjoining the prayers of *geulah* and *shemoneh esrei*). Rav Aharon Kotler writes that during *Chanukah*, *hoicha kedushah* should not be recited, so that *al hanissim* can be said with the congregation (*Dirshu Mishnah Berurah* footnote 124:13).

CHASIDUS ON THE PARSHA

Peshurin Gorscher (21)

This week's *sedra* opens up with a perplexing *possuk*: "These are the years of Sarah, one hundred years, 20 years, and seven years". Rashi is bothered by the question of why the *Torah* repeats the word "years" after each number, rather than just saying "one hundred and twenty seven years". Rashi quotes the *Midrash* which says that the reason why the *possuk* mentions the word "years" at each interval of time is to tell us that when Sarah was one hundred, she was like a twenty year old who has never sinned, and when she was twenty, she was like a seven year old in beauty. Each one of the separate 'years' connects the milestones together to paint a complete picture of our mother Sarah.

The *Noam Elimelech* asks a question on this Rashi. It is of course important to point out that Sarah was like a 20 year old in terms of purity from sin when she was 100, but why do we need to know that when she was twenty, she was still beautiful like a seven year old? How does knowing someone's beauty help us understand them better? He answers that there are two levels of a person's service of God. On the simple level, one can serve *Hashem* by not committing any sins and fulfilling all of the commandments. There is another higher level, where one uses all of his functions for *Hashem*. When he eats, drinks, sleeps, and talks, it is all for the purpose of serving *Hashem* to the best of his ability. This is what the *Midrash* means to tell us; when Sarah was one hundred years old, she was just like her twenty year old self who was fulfilling all the *mitzvos*, and staying away from all sin. When Sarah was twenty, at the height of her youthful desires, that's when she was like a seven year old in beauty. A seven year old does not really care how they look, as only grown-ups really care about their appearance. Thus, Sarah, at the time when most people give into their darkest tendencies, was able to retain her inner youthful beauty and use all of her faculties for *Hashem*.

The lesson for us is evident. How many times in our lives are we confronted by desire? How many times do we feel like we need to give in to what we want? In moments like these, we have to remember what really matters in life, and revert to our younger selves which possess a childish innocence. We must think to ourselves, "do we really need what we desire? When we were kids we were fine without it, so why should now be any different?" With *Hashem's* help, may we all be like our mother Sarah, who throughout her life served *Hashem* with all of her actions.

GEDOLIM GLIMPSE: BEN ISH CHAI

Emanuel Tzrailov (22)

Rav Yosef Haim *zt"l* was born in Baghdad, Iraq on the 21st of Av, in 5592/1832. Rav Yosef came from a lineage of great *talmidei chachamim*, and took after his father, Rav Moshe Haim, as chief rabbi of Baghdad. He is most notably known as the *Ben Ish Chai*, after the name of the famous *sefer* he wrote and published. After years of not having children, his parents went to the great Rav Yakov Abuchatzzeira (Abir Yakov) to ask for his blessing for children. Rav Yakov blessed the couple that they would have a son who would grow up to be a great *talmid chacham*, and the very next year Rav Yosef was born. At the age of 25, he took over after his father as the chief rabbi of Baghdad, and was already known for his great memory and wisdom. In addition to being a master of the *Talmud*, Rav Yosef was also a great kabbalist and wrote many *sefarim* on *kabbalah*. Rav Yosef had many students who would become great *chachamim*, and some of them would even go on to teach the great Rav Ovadia Yosef. He was also a visionary for *Yeshiva Porat Yosef* (where Rav Ovadia attended). A rich man once asked the famed *chacham* for his blessing to build a hospital in Jerusalem. Rav Yosef told him to build a *yeshiva* there instead, and it was finally established in 1923. Some of Rav Yosef's famous works include *Ben Yehoyada*, a commentary of the *Talmud* (the *aggados* in particular); *Ben Ish Chai*, a *sefer* of *halachah*; and *Torah Lishmah*, a collection of responsa. Rav Yosef passed away on the 15th of Elul, 5669/1909, at the age of 77. He was one of the greatest Sephardic rabbis of all time, and he continues to inspire the Jewish world with his *sefarim*.

Story:

The day after Rav Yosef passed away, his student, Rav Ben Tzion Hazan, had the following dream: An old man who was part of the *chevra kadisha* (the organization which buries the Jewish dead) requested payment for the burial of Rav Yosef, so Rav Ben Tzion payed the man. Afterwards, Rav Ben Tzion went to the spot where the old man claimed he had buried Rav Yosef (still in his dream). After seeing the grave of his Rebbe, he cried and cried until he finally woke up. Soon after this dream, the news reached Jerusalem that Rav Yosef had indeed, passed away. Rav Ben Tzion kept the dream to himself until he was captured by Arabs and told Rav Ephraim Menashe Hakohen, out of fear that he might never have the chance to tell it again.

WISDOM FROM THE HAFTORAH

ותקד בת־שבע אפים אָרץ ותִשְׁתַּחוּ לַמֶּלֶךְ וַתֹּאמֶר יְחִי אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד לְעֹלָם:

"And Bas-Sheva bowed low to the ground for the king and said "long live my master the king Dovid forever" (Melachim I43 1:30).

This week's *haftorah* sees Dovid *Hamelech's* wife, Bas-Sheva, and the prophet Natan attempting to have Dovid affirm Shlomo's status as the next in line, to prevent a rising coup from one of Dovid's other sons, Adoniyah. After Dovid grants his consent, Bas-Sheva thanks the king, saying "long live my master the king Dovid forever." The Brisker Rov, Rav Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik, points out that Bas-Sheva had prefaced her request to Dovid with various praises; why was this praise in particular reserved until after her request was granted? The Brisker Rov answers that while we are assured that the kingship of the Jewish people will remain with Dovid's family forever, this was only true once the lineage already started; if the wrong son of Dovid had become king at that point in time, the kingship of Dovid's family would have begun and ended with him. Thus, only after Dovid affirmed Shlomo's right to rule did Bas-Sheva declare "long live Dovid" - that is to say, that Dovid's line will continue forever. This begs the question: what would have been so bad if Adoniyah had become king instead of Dovid, that the line of kingship could not continue? There were evil kings later in Dovid's line, so why would it have ruined Dovid's right to the throne to have Adoniyah as his successor instead of Shlomo?

Perhaps we can answer based on a *yesod* which my 11th grade *rebbe*, Rabbi Baruch Pesach Mendelson *shlit"a*, developed in his *shiurim* on *Megillas Rus*. Rav Mendelson explained that the essential trait required for *malchus*, kingship, is *mesiras nefesh* (self sacrifice). This trait can be seen in most of the progenitors of the Davidic line: Yehudah, who was willing to risk his life to save Binyamin from the clutches of Mitzrayim; Nachshon Ben Aminadav, who jumped into the *Yam Suf* first and went up to his neck in water; Tamar, who was willing to be killed rather than publicly embarrass Yehudah - the examples go on. Adoniyah was fundamentally missing this trait, as rather than sacrificing to help others, he was self-obsessed and narcissistic. The *pesukim* and *meforshim* describe how Adoniyah was haughty and sought *kavod* (honor). He seized the throne for himself with an escort of men and animals, since he was only interested in increasing his own honor. In contrast, Shlomo was the exact opposite; he was self-effacing, humble, and willing to help others. The contrast could not be more clear, as a few *pesukim* later (1:38), Shlomo rides to his own coronation on a simple donkey. While there may have been evil kings in Dovid's progeny, for his line to begin with a king would completely contradict the essential characteristics of *malchus*. A leader must be concerned not with his own welfare and honor, but with his people's well-being, even at the expense of his own. Shlomo exemplified this *middah* of *mesiras nefesh*, while Adoniyah did not. Thus, only once Shlomo's kingship was confirmed did Bas-Sheva affirm the longevity of Dovid's line.

For more MTA Torah, join our WhatsApp group, where we share weekly recorded divrei Torah from our yeshiva community, shiur updates, and more! Use your phone camera to scan the QR code to join the chat, or to listen to this week's dvar Torah.





THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM: ANIMALS IN THE PARSHA

Camels and Caves

Yisroel David Rosenberg ('23)

“A cave” and “camels” are two nouns which aptly summarize *Parshas Chayei Sarah*. Since we discussed *Ma'aras Hamachpeila's* appearance in last week's *parsha*, let us discuss the camels. The *parsha* begins with Avraham's dealings with Efron to buy *Ma'aras Hamachpeilah* as the burial place of Sarah. The interaction is a sticky one on the part of Efron, but Avraham is set on purchasing the place properly and permanently. The *Midrash* says that Avraham knew of the cave previously, and chose this place because he saw that Adam and Chava had been buried there already.

Later, the *eved* of Avraham, identified as Eliezer by the *Midrash*, brings some camels along with him in his travels to find a wife for Yitzchak. Eliezer makes his way to Aram Naharayim with ten present-laden camels. These are the camels that, according to the *Midrash* as cited by Rashi, are muzzled for the journey so as not to graze and steal from the fields they pass. These are beasts of burden, and the concern is of material gifts and theft.

Upon arrival, these camels are given a true purpose, however. They are the key used to discern the virtue of the woman Eliezer is searching for to bring back to Yitzchak. Rivkah passes the test, as she immediately helps to bring water to Eliezer and all the camels. She has the prized trait of *chessed* in abundance.

Then, returning home, the camels swap the weight of the presents, left with Lavan in his greed, for Rivkah and her righteousness.

Avraham parts with his money for a holy cave, and with presents in exchange for Rivkah. This is a *parsha* of *gemalim* (camels) and *gemilas chassadim* (kindness), of trades of the material for a significantly more valuable and spiritual reward.



PARSHA PUZZLERS

Submit your answers to shemakoleinu@yuhsb.org along with your name and cell phone number to be entered into a raffle at the end of the sefer! 1 answer = 1 entry!

(Hint: Use the commentaries in the Mekraos Gedolos Chumashim, along with the Toldos Aharon on the side to find relevant Gemaras and Midrashim)

1. The *possuk* calls Rivkah an “*almah*”, meaning a young woman. Who else in the *Torah* is described using this word?
2. Where in this week's *parsha* do we see an example of a “*shailah shelo kihagon*” - an improper request? What two other people in Tanach have their request described in this manner by Chazal?
3. What two words in this week's *parsha* are written with a missing “*vav*”? What does each missing *vav* teach us?

REMEMBERING RAV DOVID FEINSTEIN ZT”L **AND RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS ZT”L**

This past erev Shabbos, on the 20th of Marcheshvan, the Torah world was shocked to learn of the passing of both Rav Dovid Feinstein zt”l, and Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt”l. The magnitude of the tragedies was only exacerbated by their juxtaposition, as within the span of 24 hours, we lost two giants of our people.

Rav Feinstein was the undisputed posek hador, who’s advice and counsel was sought in the most serious of cases. The breadth and depth of his knowledge was surpassed only by his humility, as he famously avoided lording above others with his stature. Nonetheless, his levels of Torah were indescribable; he had Shas and poskim on the tips of his fingers.

Rabbi Sacks was most well-known for his position as Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom, but he served a broader role, namely, of spreading the wisdom of Torah to unaffiliated Jews and to the world at large. His countless articles and books generated respect and admiration for the authentic Torah view as it pertained to societal issues.

Below, you will find short biographical snippets of both of these men, written by our Executive Editor Meir Morell (”22). In addition, talmidim of our yeshiva have written Divrei Torah from both Rav Feinstein and Rabbi Sacks. It is our hope that the content below will serve to emphasize the greatness of these man, and the enormity of the loss to the Jewish nation.

Yihiyeh Zichronam Librachah

- The Shema Koleinu Staff

Gedolim Gimpse: Rav Dovid Feinstein

Rabbi Dovid Feinstein (1929-2020) was born in Luban, in present-day Belarus, to *Hagaon Harav Moshe Feinstein ztv”l*, who at the time was the Rav in Luban, and Shima (Kustanovich) Feinstein. He was named after Reb Moshe’s father, Rav Dovid Feinstein, the Rav of Uzda. When he was eight, with much help from his uncle Rav Nechemia Katz, his family moved to the lower east side of Manhattan.

When Rabbi David Feinstein celebrated his *bar mitzvah*, he took on a practice which would change his entire life. He felt that since he was born during the week of *Parshas Behaaloscha*, he had come to the world to fix the sin of *lashon hara*, which is referenced in that *parsha’s haftorah*. From that time on, he took upon himself to speak sparsely, and would often shorten his discussions on general topics and would remain silent.

Rabbi Dovid devoted his life to *chinuch* (Jewish education), and spent many years working to obtain funds for proper Jewish education in France. He led the organization *Chinuch Atzmai* for many years. When Rabbi Feinstein was fundraising for another institution, he was careful not to involve his own institutions. On one occasion, he raised funds for a large *kollel* for which he served as president. The donor wanted to take half of his donation for Rabbi Dovid’s own institutions, but he refused and said that the entire sum belonged to the *kollel*.

He was the *Rosh Hayeshiva* of his father’s *yeshiva*, Mesivta Tifereth Jerusalem, from when his father passed until he passed this past Friday on 19 *Marcheshvan*.

At his funeral many of the speakers emphasized the tremendous *chessed* (kindness) which he did, as well as his other remarkable attributes.

“So what can I add?” Harav Chaim Ganzweig, the *Mashgiach* of MTJ asked the crowd of thousands mourning the loss of Rav Dovid. “The *possuk* in Yeshayah (55:3) states, ‘*chasdei Dovid hane’emanim*’ - the kindnesses of Dovid which are truthful. Although the *meforshim* explain it refers to the kindnesses that *Hashem* does, which are permanent, I would like to explain, *biderech drush* (allegorically), that it may be going on the *chessed* that



our Rav Dovid performed the entire day. He was not obligated to take responsibility for the *yeshiva*, nor for the *kollel*. And, indeed, all the *harbotzas haTorah* that he performed was entirely *chessed*. The way he interacted with people, regardless if they were rich or poor, wise or foolish, *talmid chacham* or *am ha'aretz* (ignoramus), great or small, all were recipients of his endless *chessed*. Most did not even realize the *chessed* he was doing for them, as he did a *tovah* for each person according to the individual's need."

Harav Shmuel Kamenetsky, *Rosh Yeshiva* of Yeshiva of Philadelphia, related: "*an oisnahm fuhn ah mentch* (an extraordinary person). It is especially hard to describe the many facets of his personality. He was *kulo tov*, *kulo geshmak* (wholly good, wholly enjoyable). He was a *chaver tov*, a good friend. He was a *min bifnei atzmo* (a breed unto himself). He understood everyone and what they needed, and he did whatever he could do to help."

In *sighs*, Rabbi Shmuel Fishelis, the son-in-law of Rav Dovid, exclaimed "Moshe Rabbeinu asked *Hashem* to appoint his successor as '*ish asher ruach bo*' (*Bamidbar* 27:18), which Rashi explains to mean a person who could deal with the spirit of each individual. Rav Dovid knew how to give *chizzuk* to each individual, how to give a smile and encouragement as the person needed".

Rabbi Shlomo Fishelis, his grandson, who served as his *gabbai* in recent years, described some of the personal attributes he was able to observe. "He was so consistent. He would sit for three or four hours saying *kinnos* (liturgical poems recited on *Tisha B'av*), and after three hours he was saying it exactly the same as he was at the beginning. His *hasmadah* (diligence) was indescribable. Even when his boisterous triplet grandchildren entered the room, he continued his learning as he was oblivious to everything while he learned. He walked the streets with such *hatzneia leches* (modesty), like he was one of us, while he was actually on a different plane. He once said that he was born during the week of *Behaaloscha*, where the *haftorah* speaks about *lashon hara*. He said it had an effect on him, as he was quiet by nature, which helped him keep out of trouble. Yet he knew how to speak when he had to, and he let his family know that the door was always open to speak to him whatever they felt the need to."

His brother-in-law, *Harav Hagaon* Rav Moshe Dovid Tendler, a *Rosh Yeshiva* in Yeshiva University, said "In each situation, he dealt with it as *Hashem* would want it to be dealt with. The informality of his smile belied the manner in which he spoke."

His brother, *Harav Hagaon* Rav Shmuel Feinstein, *Rosh Yeshiva* in the Yeshiva of Staten Island, said "The *gedolei hador* are called the *einei ha'eidah* — the eyes of the congregation. They have the ability to see the future ramifications of everything that is transpiring now. Rav Dovid was able to foresee what lies in store because he lived through so many difficult *tekufos* (periods). He saw the *yeridah* (downfall) of *Torah* when he lived under the Stalinist regime, when he was unable to learn *Torah* with his father, yet *er iz oisgeshtigen* — he grew in that time, and eventually saw the *Torah's* growth. He saw the *tzaros* of the world, and we need him so much now, to analyze and guide us in what is happening. If we do not understand that, then we should cry for that lack of understanding alone."

Yehi Zichro Baruch

Inspiration From Rav Dovid Feinstein ZT"L

The Death Of The Righteous

Meir Morell (22)

There is an idea that when *Torah* is said over in the name of one who is deceased their lips "*dovevos bakeve*" (move in the grave); in other words, that person gains merit from those words. This very fitting *dvar Torah* has been borrowed from Rav Dovid Feinstein's "Kol Dodi on the Torah", compiled by Pinchos Osher Rohr and published by Artscroll in 1992:

"*Vayavo Avraham lispod liSarah vilibkosah*" - and Avraham came to eulogize Sarah, and to cry for her (*Bereishis* 23:2). The *Ba'al Haturim* points out that the word "*vilibkosah*" is written with a small *chaf*, to indicate that Avraham did not weep excessively, because Sarah was already old and had led a full and holy life. Why, however, did the *Torah* choose to reduce the size of the letter *chaf*, and not one of the other letters? A small *beis* would seem more appropriate, since the root word of crying, *bachah*, begins with this letter.

Whenever a righteous person is taken from us, however old he is, we still cry. There are two reasons for this: For one thing, we cry because the departed has lost the ability to do *mitzvos* and add further to the abundant register of merits he accumulated in his lifetime. We also cry for our loss, because the righteous person is no longer available to suffuse the world with his holy influence. Thus, Avraham cried because Sarah could no longer grow to higher levels of

holiness.

How does this explain why the *chaf* was reduced in size? Rashi comments (23:1) that just as Sarah was without sin at the age of twenty, so too, even in her old age she remained sinless. (This Rashi was quoted by Rav Reuven Feinstein *shlit"á* in his *hesped* this week), Perhaps the small *chaf*, whose numerical value is twenty, is an allusion to the fact that until her death, Sarah remained as sinless as she had been at the age of twenty. Thus, the letter *chaf* alludes to Sarah's full lifetime of one hundred and twenty-seven righteous years. But since this "twenty-year" stage of her life lasted for more than one hundred years, the *chaf* is written small.

Hidden Torah

Shimi Kaufman (21)

This week, *Klal Yisroel* was shaken by the loss of the *gadol hador*, HaRav Dovid Feinstein *ztz"l*. Rav Dovid's name was perhaps not as ubiquitous in our community as it was in his *kehillah* in the Lower East Side; for the most part, if many knew of him, it was simply as "the son of Rav Moshe." Personally, I was in this latter camp - I knew that Rav Dovid was a *talmid chacham*, but I certainly had no idea to what extent he had refined his mind and heart through the *Torah* to become a true *Ish Hashem* (man of God). Perhaps a comment of Rav Dovid's father, HaRav Moshe Feinstein *ztz"l*, on this week's *parsha* can help us to comprehend Rav Dovid's greatness a bit more.

Parshas Chayei Sarah concludes with an accounting of Yishmael's age and descendants. Rashi (*Bereishis* 25:17) comments that Yishmael's age is only recounted here for us to figure out, by mathematical calculation, that there are fourteen years of Yaakov's life which are unaccounted for. Of course, if Yaakov had time in which he was not doing anything else, it can be assumed that he was learning! Thus, this *possuk* comes to teach us that Yaakov spent fourteen years learning in Yeshivas Shem ViEver, the foremost *yeshiva* at that time.

This comment of Rashi raises a question: why was this essential part of Yaakov's life left to be learned implicitly from a seemingly innocuous comment about Yishmael's age? If Yaakov spent fourteen years in *yeshiva*, why would the *Torah* not tell us that explicitly? Rav Moshe answers that this was in fulfillment of the dictum found in the *mishnah* (*Avos* 2:8): "If you have learned much *Torah*, do not attempt to brag or gain honor, since for this purpose you were created." The *Torah* did not wish to explicitly state how long Yaakov had spent learning, since to do so would be for him to curry favor through his *Torah* learning, thereby defeating the purpose of his stay in the *yeshiva* in the first place. As a result, the *Torah* only hints at this period of Yaakov's life.

The praises for Rav Dovid at his funeral were endless, but one thing which everyone kept coming back to was his humility and inconspicuousness. He never wore anything more than the standard hat and jacket, like many other *Roshei Yeshiva*; his *seforim* were not the detailed Talmudic analyses of which he was certainly capable, but instead English commentaries on *Chumash* or *hashkofah*; he even sat in the back of the *beis medrash* of his *yeshiva* for years, even after he had been appointed *rosh yeshiva*! Stories of Rav Dovid engaged in ostensibly mundane tasks abound; filling the soda machine in the *yeshiva*, doing his own grocery shopping, and many other examples of tasks which would not be assumed to be fitting of a *rosh yeshiva* of Rav Dovid's stature. All of this was despite the fact that Rav Dovid was often called upon to answer the most difficult *halachic* questions and dilemmas in the world! Rav Dovid never looked for honor or praise for his indescribable breadth of knowledge; he had *Shas* and *poskim* at his fingertips, but he would never demand respect for it. His loss is shattering, but his legacy should serve as an example for us.

Gedolim Glimpse: Rabbi Dr. Lord Jonathan Sacks

Yaakov Tzvi Jonathan Henry Sacks, Baron Sacks (1948-2020) was born in Lambeth, London on 8 March 1948, to textile seller Louis David and Louisa (Frumkin) Saks. Rabbi Sacks commenced his formal education at St Mary's Primary School and at Christ's College, Finchley. He completed his higher education at Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, where he gained a first-class honours degree (Master of Arts (Cambridge)) in Philosophy. While a student at Cambridge, Rabbi Sacks travelled to New York to meet Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the *Lubavitcher Rebbe*, to discuss a variety of issues relating to religion, faith and philosophy. The *Rebbe* urged Rabbi Sacks to seek *semichah* and to enter the rabbinate.

Rabbi Sacks subsequently continued postgraduate study at New College, Oxford, and at King's College London, completing a PhD which the University of London awarded in 1982. Rabbi Sacks received his rabbinic ordination from Jews' College and London's Eitz Chaim Yeshiva.

Rabbi Sacks's first rabbinic appointment (1978–1982) was as the Rabbi for the Golders Green synagogue in London.

In 1983, he became Rabbi of the prestigious Western Marble Arch Synagogue in Central London, a position he held until 1990. Between 1984 and 1990, Rabbi Sacks also served as Principal of Jews' College, the United Synagogue's rabbinical seminary. Rabbi Sacks was inducted to serve as Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth on September 1st, 1991, a position he held until September 1st, 2013.

Rabbi Sacks became a Knight Bachelor in the 2005 Birthday Honours "for services to the Community and to Inter-faith Relations". He was made an Honorary Freeman of the London Borough of Barnet in September 2006. On July 13th, 2009 the House of Lords Appointments Commission announced that Sacks was recommended for a life peerage with a seat in the House of Lords. He took the title "Baron Sacks, of Aldgate in the City of London", and sat as a crossbencher.



A visiting professor at several universities in Britain, the United States, and Israel, Rabbi Sacks held 16 honorary degrees, including a doctorate of divinity conferred on him in September 2001 by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, to mark his first ten years in office as Chief Rabbi. In recognition of his work, Rabbi Sacks won several international awards, including the Jerusalem Prize in 1995 for his contribution to diaspora Jewish life, and The Ladislaus Laszt Ecumenical and Social Concern Award from Ben Gurion University in Israel in 2011.

The author of 25 books, Rabbi Sacks published commentaries on the *siddur* and completed commentaries to the *Rosh Hashanah*, *Yom Kippur*, and *Pesach machzorim* as of 2017. His other books include, *Not in God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence*, and *The Great Partnership: God, Science and the Search for Meaning*. His books won literary awards, including the Grawemeyer Prize for Religion in 2004 for *The Dignity of Difference*, and a National Jewish Book Award in 2000 for *A Letter in the Scroll*. *Covenant & Conversation: Genesis* was also awarded a National Jewish Book Award in 2009, and his commentary to the *Pesach machzor* won the Modern Jewish Thought and Experience Dorot Foundation Award in the 2013 National Jewish Book Awards in the United States. His *Covenant & Conversation* commentaries on the weekly *parsha* are read by thousands of people in Jewish communities around the world.

Rabbi Sacks' contributions to wider British society have also been recognized. A regular contributor to national media, frequently appearing on BBC Radio 4's Thought for the Day or writing the Credo column or opinion pieces in The Times, Rabbi Sacks was awarded The Sanford St Martin's Trust Personal Award for 2013 for "his advocacy of Judaism and religion in general".

At a Gala Dinner held in Central London in May 2013 to mark the completion of the Chief Rabbi's time in office, the Prince of Wales called Sacks a "light unto this nation", "a steadfast friend" and "a valued adviser" whose "guidance on any given issue has never failed to be of practical value and deeply grounded in the kind of wisdom that is increasingly hard to come by".

Rabbi Sacks was world renowned for his philosophy, insight and political action. He spoke on universalism vs particularism, *torah vichochmah*, the notion that "no one creed has a monopoly on spiritual truth", relationship with the non-Orthodox denominations of Judaism, secularism and Europe's changing demographics, interfaith dialogue, anti-semitism, as well as many other topics.

Rabbi Sacks married Elaine Taylor in 1970, and together they had three children: Joshua, Dina and Gila.

Rabbi Sacks passed away on November 7th, 2020, the 20th of *Marcheshvan*, at age 72. He had been diagnosed with cancer in October 2020, having been twice previously treated for the disease. Sending tribute to Rabbi Sacks, the UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson said that his leadership had a "profound impact on our whole country and across the world".

Yehi Zichro Baruch

Inspiration From Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks ZT”L

Keep Looking Forward

Meir Nass (22)

This past *Shabbos*, the very prominent Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks passed away. Rabbi Sacks, who was a great *talmid chacham* and a very learned man, stood up for the Jewish people and traditional Judaism in the eyes of the world. He was the foremost Jewish voice on issues of war and peace, religious fundamentalism, and ethics, to name just a few. Rabbi Sacks wrote many books and *seforim*, and was knighted by the Queen of England herself. Although Rabbi Sacks was busy with his duties as Chief Rabbi Of England, he never neglected to learn *Torah*, and in this article, I would like to share one of Rabbi Sacks *divrei Torah* from this week's *parsha* of *Chayei Sarah*.

In this week's *parsha* we see Avraham go through one of his greatest trials, the death of his wife Sarah. Avraham went through so many traumas over the course of his life; he had to pretend his wife was his sister twice, he almost had to sacrifice his son, and now his wife of over a century died because of the test that *Hashem* gave him. It would make sense for Avraham to just sit and grieve, mourning the loss of his wife. Even more than this, *Hashem* promised Avraham a great nation and all of *Eretz Cana'an*, but at this point Avraham had none of that. The question here is, what made Avraham keep going? What made Avraham have the ability to overcome all his grief?

Rabbi Sacks answered this question by looking at the survivors of the Holocaust. He wondered, how could they keep going even after all that they had suffered? The answer he found was that they would never talk about their pasts; they wouldn't mention who they were before the war, not even to their immediate family. They would focus on what was going to come from their "new" lives; they would learn new languages, and would adapt to the new country they had moved to. Once these survivors were settled and many years passed, they would then talk about what went on during the war and who they were.

We see two people in the *Torah* looking back and suffering because of it. The first was Noach, and the second was Lot's wife. Noah, although it is implicit in the *Torah*, got drunk after the flood because of everything he saw happen and all the suffering he observed. The second one was Lot's wife. She turned around to view the destruction of Sodom, and became a pillar of salt. In both these cases, the person in question reflected on their past and suffered because of it.

This answers our question about Avraham's reaction towards all the pain that went on in his life. Although Avraham didn't have a wife, his son wasn't married and the land promised to him wasn't his yet. So instead, he looked towards the future to carry him through his pain. Rabbi Sacks writes: "First you have to build a future. Only then can you mourn the past." Avraham was building his future; he was growing greater in spirituality and *avodas Hashem*, and he didn't stop to be mad, because he focused on the future and all that it would bring.

Parental Authority

Avidan Loike (22)

The *Torah* in this week's *parsha* gives us the first detailed marriage arrangement, between Yitzchak and Rivkah. Avraham tells his servant Eliezer to go to Aram Nahariam and to pick out a wife for Yitzchak from there. As we all know, Eliezer then goes and finds Rivkah, brings her back for Yitzchak as a wife, and he marries her. This episode brings up a couple of halachic questions; namely, can a father force his son into a marriage, and by extension, can a father tell his child he can't marry someone. But halachically speaking, the Rama paskens that if a father protests his son's marriage, his son is still allowed to marry the woman he wants to, granted she is Jewish and there is no halachic reason why he wouldn't be allowed to marry the woman. What we learn from here is that even though the *Torah* makes it clear that it is very important to honor one's parents, parents have no authority when it comes to something that does not directly affect them, such as marriage. The reason that Avraham sent Eliezer to find Yitzchak a wife wasn't because Avraham was invoking his parental authority over who his son marries, but rather, because Yitzchak was not allowed to leave Canaan (because he was brought as a *korban* [Radak]).

There is much wisdom in the freedom given to the son that wants to marry someone his father objects to. It shows that Jewish families are not authoritarian, but rather, they are based on mutual respect; a child's respect for who brought them into this world, and the parents' respect over the fact their child is grown up and old enough to make their own decisions without parental interference. It is in this respect that as in many others, that Jewish law reflects Jewish philosophy. We find in the *Torah* a profound sense of power given to human beings by *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*, as reflected when *Hashem* says to Avraham "walk before me" (*Bereishis* 17:1) showing just how much respect *Hashem* instills in humanity. *Hashem* is not supposed to be reflected as an authoritarian personality, for if He was, humanity would not be granted the level of freedom and respectability which it is.

Parsha Summary

Sarah *Imeinu* passes away at the age of 127, and Avraham goes to buy *Ma'aras Hamachpeilah* as a burial place for her. The owner of the land, Efron, pretends to be generous in giving Avraham the land for free, but manipulates the situation to get even more money. After Avraham buys the land and buries Sarah, he decides that it is time to get Yitzchak married. He commands his servant, Eliezer, to travel to Cana'an, to find a suitable wife for his son. Eliezer travels, and *davens* that *Hashem* should cause the right girl to offer him and his camels water, to prove that she was the generous soul whom Yitzchak was destined to marry. Sure enough, Rivkah, daughter of Besuel, does just this, and Eliezer gives her jewelry as a gift. Eliezer convinces Besuel, along with Rivkah's brother Lavan, to allow her to come back, and Rivkah and Yitzchak get married. Avraham passes away at 175 years old, and both Yitzchak and Yishmael (who had since repented) bury him. The *parsha* concludes with a list of Yishmael's descendants.

Rosh Yeshiva: Rabbi Michael Taubes

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