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Shabbos Zmanim CANDLE LIGHTING 4:19 PM

EARLY FRIDAY MINCHA: 12:15 PM & every 15 minutes until 3:00 PM | 18 Main

FRIDAY NIGHT MINCHA/KABALLAS SHABBOS

18 Main 4:29 PM	20 Upstairs Chabad 4:24 PM	Shkiya 4:37 PM
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SHABBOS

SHACHRIS	20 Upstairs-Vasikin 6:04 AM	18 Main-Ashkenaz 8:00 AM	Tent א 9:15 AM	20 Upstairs - Chabad 10:00 AM	in 18 Main 10:30 AM
	MINCHA/MAARIV	Pirchei 2:00 PM	18 Main Mincha 4:15 PM	Shkiya 4:37 PM	Tent א Maariv :40 5:17 PM

LATE MAARIV MOTZEI SHABBOS: 6:00 PM & every 15 minutes until 8:30 PM | 18 Main

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from 6:15 AM until a half hour before chatzos

MINCHA: MINCHA GEDOLA

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12 MIN. before plag

12 MIN. before shkia

MAARIV: PLAG

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EVERY 10 MIN. From 72 until 11:00 P.M.

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RABBI DANIEL COREN

Politics, Providence, and the Path of Yitzchak Avinu



When the news of the new mayor came in, I was surprised to see messages circulating with words like “*Baruch Dayan HaEmes*” and other sorrowful reactions. It made me pause and think: how should a Jewish *neshamah* truly respond to politics — and to politicians?

We live in a world where politics dominates conversation, emotions, and even faith. But as Jews, our perspective must come from Torah, not from headlines.

This discussion connects deeply with the coming month of Kislev, the month of Chanukah, and with this week’s *parsha*, *Chayei Sarah*, which begins with the passing of Sarah Imeinu and continues with the destiny of her son, Yitzchak Avinu.

POLITICS AND AMALEK

Years ago, I once saw in a Chassidic *beis midrash* that the word “פוליטיק” (politics) has the same *gematria* as “עמלק.”

Whether or not this is exact, the idea is profound. Amalek represents confusion, doubt, and coldness — the force that tries to make us forget that Hashem is behind everything. When we get too caught up in political drama, anger, and sides, we fall into the trap of Amalek, who cools our faith and divides our people.

THE HEART OF THE KING

Shlomo HaMelech teaches us in *Mishlei* (21:1):

“פּלִגֵּי מַיִם לֵב מֶלֶךְ בַּיָּד ה', עַל כֹּל אֲשֶׁר יַחְפוּץ יִטְנֶה.”

“Like streams of water is the heart of the king in the hand of Hashem; He turns it wherever He wishes.”

This is the foundation of our outlook. Leaders are not independent powers; they are tools in the hands of the Ribbono Shel Olam. Whether it’s a king, president, or mayor, their decisions are directed by Hashem for the sake of His plan.

Our *hishtadlus*, our efforts, are necessary, but the results — the outcomes of elections, policies, and world events — are completely in Hashem’s control. Therefore, our reaction must always be with *simchah* and *emunah*. Whether we say *hatov vehemetiv* or *dayan haemes*, both come from the same source of goodness.

WHEN THE RING WAS REMOVED

When Achashverosh gave his ring to Haman (*Megillah* 14a), Chazal say: “גדולה הסרת הטבעת יותר: ממניח בבימים”

No prophet could awaken the Jewish people the way that crisis did. Sometimes, Hashem sends us leaders or decrees that shake us — but only so we wake up and return to Him. What seems harsh in the moment is actually Hashem’s merciful orchestration to bring us closer.

KISLEV AND CHANUKAH: LIGHT FROM DARKNESS

The *Bnei Yissaschar* explains that during the time of Chanukah, the Jewish people were almost spiritually extinguished. Hashem, in His infinite kindness, sent the miracle of light — a wake-up call in the darkness. Chanukah teaches us that when all seems lost politically or culturally, that’s exactly when Hashem reveals His presence through hidden miracles.

Our task is not to panic but to strengthen our *emunah*, to light our own menorah, and to remember that Hashem runs the show.

YITZCHAK AVINU: THE LAUGHTER OF FAITH

Finally, we learn from Yitzchak Avinu. His very name — Yitzchak, from *tzchok*, laughter — symbolizes the essence of Jewish history: the ability to laugh at the impossible.

The Jewish people make no sense according to natural logic. We survive against all odds, rise from every downfall, and remain eternal — because our existence is not governed by politics or power, but by Hashem’s direct providence.

CONCLUSION

So when a new leader takes office, whether we see it as good or bad, let us respond not with fear or cynicism but with *emunah* and joy.

Hashem alone guides the hearts of kings, and every turn of history is another step toward *geulah*.

May we soon merit to see that laughter — *tzchok* — of Yitzchak Avinu, the joy and clarity of redemption, shining like the light of Chanukah that dispels all darkness.

SHIUR
SCHEDULE

SEMICHAS CHAVER SHIUR
in R’ Coren’s office
every Wednesday at 8:00 PM

RABBI RAFI WOLFE



A Woman of Valor

The life of Sarah was 127 years... [These] were the years of Sarah’s life.

She would get up late in the night and provide nourishment for her household and food for her children.

When the Torah describes someone’s life, חַי, it often refers to their good deeds. A life full of good deeds can truly be called living. Furthermore, a righteous person is called living due to their good deeds. As such, when the Torah says that חַיִּי שָׂרָה, Sarah lived 127 years, it’s a bit perplexing. It would imply that every one of her 127 years was filled with good deeds. Is that something that can really be true? If we take into account her childhood, how can all her years be equal? Her youth couldn’t have been as full of good deeds as when she was an adult.

Shlomo HaMelech describes a woman of valor as one who gets up late at night to provide nourishment for her household and food for her children. Our Sages tell us that these praises can be referring to Sarah. However, what does the double expression mean? What’s the difference between providing nourishment for her household and food for her children?

The answer is that a truly righteous person will try all they can to rectify and perfect any defect from their earlier years. There may have been years lacking in good deeds, but those years can be fixed. How so? Sarah would stay up late at night, doing good deeds. When everyone was sleeping, she would make sure there would be delicious food waiting and ready for everyone in her household. She would withhold sleep from her eyes until all those years were rectified.

This is alluded to in Shlomo HaMelech’s praise. “She would get up at night” and withhold sleep. This was in order to “provide nourishment for her house.” The house here is a reference to the World to Come, which is a person’s main living space. Her good deeds were “building” the reward awaiting her in the future. She would also provide “food for her children.” The word used here is נַעֲרֹתֶיהָ, which could also be translated as her childhood, i.e., her years of נַעֲרֹת. She would use this time to perfect those years gone by, which weren’t as full of good deeds.



Rabbi Akiva's Class

The Midrash says:

Once, as Rabbi Akiva taught a class, he noticed that the audience began falling asleep. He wished to awaken them. Rabbi Akiva interrupted his lecture and said: Why did Esther, the queen of Achashverosh, the monarch of the Persian Empire, merit to reign over 127 countries? Because Esther was a granddaughter of Sarah, who lived for 127 years. Let the granddaughter of Sarah, who lived for 127 years, come and reign over 127 countries. This is how Rabbi Akiva got the audience to wake up. This is such a strange story. It evokes a number of questions. We will discuss one. Why did Rabbi Akiva choose this particular insight from all the endless ideas he could have shared as the way of waking up his drowsy crowd? And why did he think that this statement would awaken them? It does not seem to be such a humorous, dramatic, or exhilarating statement as to awaken a Jewish audience from their sleep during the rabbi's sermon. I mean, we all know that getting a Jew out of his slumber during a rabbi's sermon is a unique skill, unheard of as of yet in the an-

nals of Jewish history! [At least, I can speak for myself. In my years as a rabbi, I am still trying to master this skill, but to no avail.]

CHERISH THE SECOND

The question was answered by the first Rebbe of Ger, the *Chedushei Harim* (Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Alter, 1799–1866), in a rather creative way. Through this observation, Rabbi Akiva gently reprimanded his students for sleeping through the class. If Esther reigned over 127 countries, or provinces, in the large Persian Empire, corresponding to Sarah's 127 years of life, it follows that for each year of Sarah's life, Esther was granted kingship over an entire province or country. It follows then, that for each month of her life, she was given the gift of kingship over an entire city (a country contains at least 12 cities.) It follows then, that for each week of her life, she was rewarded with a town (a city has at least four towns). This would mean that for each day of her life, she was rewarded with a neighborhood or section of the town. If we break it down even further, we will find that for every second of her life, she was rewarded with an entire block, over which her descendant, Queen Esther, ruled!

Rabbi Akiva thus sought to impress upon his students the value, potential, and significance of every moment of life. Sarah received immense reward for each and every second of her life because she devoted all her time and energy to living an honest, meaningful, and good life. This was the subtle message that Rabbi Akiva, in his pedagogical brilliance, conveyed to his sleepy students. We cannot squander such a valuable resource as time—not even a minute! Each moment is precious and laden with great potential.

THE MURDEROUS TEACHER

Aristotle once asked his students: Who is the greatest teacher who kills all of his students? The answer: Time!

TIME IS LIFE

The Lubavitcher Rebbe once told my late father, Mr. Gershon Jacobson: "The world says, 'Time is money.' I say, 'Time is life!'" This is what Rabbi Akiva was telling his students: Don't sleep through your life. If you are sleeping in my class, you are sleeping through life. Look at Sarah, and see what she accomplished within one minute.

SHIUR SCHEDULE

MONDAY & THURSDAY Chassidus Shiur 7:45 AM (18 Main) • **TUESDAY** Womens Shiur 9:30 AM (84 Viola Rd)
SHABBOS Friday Night – before Barchu (20 Upstairs) • **Morning 8:40 AM** (20 Upstairs) | **After Davening 12:00 PM** (20 Upstairs)
 PLEASE NOTE: Rabbi Jacobson's Shabbos morning shiur will now begin at 8:40 AM, followed by the Minyan at 10:00 AM.



הרב בן ציון סנה

שימיו מבוצבים וריקים מתוקן אין לו אריכות ימים. אם הוא הגיע לזקנה, אפשר לומר עליו שזכה לאריכות שנים בלבד, ולכן כתוב בפסוק "שני חיי שרה" ללמדך שכולן שווין לטובה, היא מילאה את שנותיה כראוי וכיאות.

במדרש (בראשית רבה פ"ח) כתוב "יודע ד' ימי תמימים" וכו', כשם שהם תמימים, כך שנותם תמימים וכו'. יש לבאר דהנה ידוע דכתיב בתהלים (א) "יודע ד' דרך צדיקים ודרך רשעים תאבד." והפירוש יודע ד', כתב הרמב"ם שתכלית הידיעה היא שהוא יודע שאינו יודע, ורק ד' יודע, וזהו "יודע ד', דרך צדיקים". ואם אדם חושב שהוא יודע, זה "דורך רשעים תאבד". והנה על שרה אמנו אמרו שכל השנים היה לטובה, איך יכול להיות, אבל אם חיים עם מחשבה שאנחנו לא מבינים כלום, אז בוודאי החיים מאושרים, וזהו יודע ד', זוהי ימי תמימים..

ידועה הפליאה למה הפסוק מתחיל ב"ויהיו חיי שרה" ומסיים ב"שני חיי שרה". רש"י מתרץ שכולן שווין לטובה.

יש להבין דרך משל, באחת הערים היה בית קברות שגיל הנפטרים שהיה חקוק על המצבות היה נמוך. למשל על מצבה אחת היה חקוק נפטר בן עשרים שנה. על אחרת היה חקוק נפטר בן שלושים שנה, וכן הלאה. אדם אחד נכנס לבית הקברות והשתומם על הדבר, מדוע בני אדם נפטרים בעיר זו כה צעירים?

הסבירו לו שבמקום זה נוהגים לציין את רק את מידת אריכות הימים של הנפטרים, כלומר, את החיים שבהם האנשים פעלו פעולות טובות ומילאו את יעודם, בעיר מחשיבים רק את הימים המנוצלים. אמנם גם בעיר זו חיים האנשים שנים ארוכות, אבל שנים אינן נחשבות אלא אם כן עשו בהן מעשים טובים, לימוד תורה וקיום מצוות. שאר הימים אינם נחשבים כלל.

הנמשל הוא, קיימת אריכות ימים ושנים וקיימת אריכות שנים בלבד. אריכות שנים שיש בה גם אריכות ימים, כוונתה היא לשנים ארוכות אשר כל הימים שבהן היו מנוצלים, ולכן גם הם נחשבים לארוכים. לעומת זאת, אדם

SHIUR SCHEDULE

שיעור קצר בעניני דיומא
 באידיש ועברית אחר ותיקין ב20 upstairs

RABBI NACHUM SCHEINER



WHY A SHALIACH CAN RECITE THE BROCHA ON THE MILAH

As we previously discussed, the *mohel* – or any *shaliach* – can recite the *brochah* “*al hamilah*” when performing the mitzvah, as we also see in regard to *bedikas chametz*. We still need to understand the reason for this. How does someone else recite the *brochah*?

The *Yad Ephraim* explains that an emissary can recite the *brochah* based on the rule of *shlucho shel adam kimoso*, an emissary is like the person himself. Since a mitzvah performed by an emissary is akin to the person himself performing the mitzvah, an emissary can recite the *brochah*.

He then adds that this is not always the case. For example, in regard to lighting Chanukah candles, he quotes the *Magen Avraham*, who rules that one can appoint an emissary to kindle the lights, and the emissary can recite the *brochah* only if the owner of the house is present at the candle lighting. This would seem to be in conflict with the aforementioned notion, where we allow the emissary to recite the *brochah* even if the one who is fulfilling the mitzvah is not present.

The *Yad Ephraim* explains that whether an emissary can or cannot recite the *brochah* depends on the nature of each mitzvah. There is a fundamental difference between a mitzvah required of a person regardless of circumstances and one that is required of a person only in certain situations. If a mitzvah is incumbent on the person regardless of circumstances, an emissary cannot be used. But if the mitzvah must be performed only in a given situation, an emissary can do the mitzvah and recite the *brochah*.

For example, the mitzvah of wearing *tefillin* is something required of a person not depending on specific circumstances, and therefore, one cannot fulfill the mitzvah by way of an emissary. This is known as *mitzvah she'b'gufo*, a mitzvah that one must perform with his own body. Similarly,

the mitzvah of lighting Chanukah candles must be performed by the person in his own home. Consequently, the one lighting the candles is not really an emissary; he is the one kindling the lights, but the mitzvah, in actuality, is being done by the homeowner. Hence, the homeowner must be the one to recite the *brochos* or, at the very least, be present at the recital of the *brochah*.

However, a mitzvah such as separating *terumah* is something required of a person only in specific circumstances: if he has produce that is in need of separating *terumah*. Such mitzvos can be fulfilled through an emissary, and the emissary can be the one to recite the *brochah*. Similarly, the mitzvos of affixing a *mezuzah* or checking a house for *chametz* only apply if someone has a house. Hence, one can appoint an emissary to perform these mitzvos, and the person affixing the *mezuzah* or checking for *chametz* can, indeed, recite the *brochah*.

Coming back to our case of *milah*, since the requirement to perform a *bris* is contingent on having a baby boy who needs a *bris*, it can be performed via an emissary, and the emissary can recite the *brochah*. The *Yad Ephraim* marshals proof to this notion from the words of his illustrious grandfather, the *Tevuos Shor*, who rules that one can fulfill the mitzvah of *bris milah* through an emissary.

IN CONCLUSION

The *Yad Ephraim* establishes that using an emissary depends on whether the mitzvah is a requirement on the person regardless of circumstances, or if it is contingent on a given situation. If it is a mitzvah incumbent on the person regardless of circumstances, an emissary cannot be used. But if it is a mitzvah only in a given situation, an emissary can be used, and the emissary can recite the *brochah*.

UFARATZTA RABBI SHALOM BER MUNITZ

Shelichus

The Mittlerer Rebbe writes that the *Shofar Gadol* will be sounded at the advent of the coming of Moshiach. Many Jewish souls will hear the sound and will yearn to return to Hashem.

In the early years of *shlichus*, in the 1950s, the Rebbe said, “Many Jewish souls want to return to Hashem; we just have to be there to show them how.”

The Mittlerer Rebbe, Admor Dov Ber, the second Chabad Rebbe, was Rebbe from 5573/1813 to 5588/1827. So, this was written about 200 years ago.

The 20th of Cheshvan is the *yom huledes* of the RaShaB, Admor Shalom Dov Ber, the fifth Chabad Rebbe. He founded Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim, which prepared *talmidim* who would light up the world with Yiddishkeit.

This year, the *Kinus Hashluchim*, the National Shluchim Conference 5786/2025, is taking place in Crown Heights, from Wednesday the 21st of Cheshvan to Monday the 26th of Cheshvan/Nov. 12-17. This *Shabbos Mevarchim*, the *shluchim* get to *farbreng* together at *farbrengens*. Sunday, Nov. 16, is the Grand Banquet.



SHIUR SCHEDULE

KOLLEL BOKER 7:00-8:00AM

Chavrusa learning - Gemara
Currently: מסכת יומא
Friday - Shuirim Beinyonei
Dyoma and relevant topics

NIGHT KOLLEL 8:15-9:45PM

Chavrusa learning - Halacha
Currently : הלכות ניבוי אב ואם

SHIURIM BY ROSH KOLLEL & FEATURED GUEST SPEAKERS

Daf Yomi | 8:45-9:45 PM
Mishna Yomis | 8:45-9:00 PM
Zera Shimshon Shiur | 8:15-9:00 PM

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RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR



You Are the Man on the Moon!

“Sarah’s lifetime was one hundred years, twenty years... at one hundred, she was as free of sin as she was at twenty... (Rashi).” (23:1)

In 1967, Neil Armstrong, the first man to walk on the moon, was celebrated as a national hero. While he certainly was an extremely brave man, why was he a hero? Armstrong basically followed instructions. In fact, some speculate that it was exactly Armstrong’s down-to-earth – excuse the pun – prosaic nature that got him the job. The last thing NASA wanted was a romantic stargazer wandering around the moon, going off-script.

Can you imagine the feeling of walking on the moon?! *You* are walking on the moon! On the *moon*! The Earth is a

beautiful, enormous green/blue orb hanging in the sky above your head. *Your* head! *You’re* the man on the moon. You did it! You!

It’s much easier to get excited about fulfilling positive mitzvot than to refrain from violating negative commandments. We feel so much more accomplished when we perform a good deed — davening with proper intent or learning with exuberance — than we do when we merely refrain from doing what is wrong.

But feelings can be deceiving. The fulfillment of a positive mitzvah may feel more holy, but the Vilna Gaon writes that we are granted much more reward for refraining from sin. The Mishna teaches that Hashem grants each and every *tzaddik* 310 “worlds” of reward. The Gaon writes that a full 300 of these worlds are granted to him

because he turns away from evil, whereas “only” 10 worlds are given to him because of his doing good.

It may be easier to appreciate doing a mitzvah — celebrating Yom Tov, learning Torah, or praying a meaningful section — than refraining from transgressing. The feeling of spirituality, the “wow factor,” is indeed more readily accessible in the cases of actions and doing good. But the substance of a Jew, the foundation upon which all is built, is refraining from bad.

When we commit to being more careful with what we see, we are laying the foundation of our World to Come, and we are therefore rewarded with the bulk of our reward in *Olam Haba*. And that is infinitely more exhilarating than walking on the moon.

RABBI ELI MANSOUR



The Dangers of Vanity

The opening verse of *Parashat Chayei Sarah* tells us that our matriarch Sarah lived for “one hundred years, twenty years, and seven years.” This is an unusual way of telling us how long Sarah lived, as rather than simply stating that Sarah’s life spanned 127 years, the Torah speaks of three different units of time — one hundred years, twenty years, and seven years.

Rashi explains that the Torah presents the number this way to allude to the fact that Sarah’s life was consistent. She was as free of sin at 100 years old as she was when she was 20, Rashi writes, and she was as beautiful at 20 as she was when she was seven.

Many later commentators noted the difficulty in the second segment of Rashi’s comment, where he writes that Sarah’s beauty at age 20 equaled her beauty at age seven. The implication of this remark is that normally, a 20-year-old woman is less beautiful than a seven-year-old girl, and Sarah was unique in featuring the same beauty at age 20 that she had at age seven. Of course, we normally think of 20-year-old women as being far more beautiful than seven-year-old girls. Why, then, does Rashi imply that a girl is usually more beautiful at age seven than at age 20?

The answer, apparently, is that Rashi refers here not to the beauty of physical appearance but rather to the beauty of innocence. Twenty-year-olds are far more prone to paying an inordinate amount of attention to their appearance than seven-year-olds are. Unlike many 20-year-olds, seven-year-old girls do not generally spend a long time in front of the mirror before leaving the house and do not fuss over their clothes. They can enjoy life without feeling pressured about their physical appearance, without the vain obsession over their looks. Rashi here is telling us that although Sarah was an exceedingly beautiful woman, as the Torah itself mentions, nevertheless, she was not vain. She was not preoccupied with her looks. Even at age 20, the age when women tend to pay a great deal of attention to their appearance, she had the beautiful innocence of a seven-year-old and was not overly preoccupied with her looks.

This insight is especially relevant today, when, unfortunately, many even within our religious communities are preoccupied with vanity. Too many young women feel undue pressure to appear beautiful, and oftentimes, it is their parents who apply this pressure. The Torah does not frown upon beauty — indeed, Sarah, Rivkah, and Rachel are all described

as having been very beautiful — and it is certainly important to look presentable. However, there is a huge difference between ensuring to look presentable and preoccupation with one’s looks. The bulk of our attention should be focused on our inner selves, not our outer appearance. What we are inside is infinitely more important than the way we look outside. We need to redirect our priorities away from vanity and towards the truly significant areas of life.

It is no secret that vanity poses serious dangers. Girls and women who feel inordinate pressure to have the perfect appearance develop low self-esteem and insecurity as they helplessly compete against other girls and women. And tragically, many develop very dangerous eating disorders in their frantic attempt to look good. We must be extremely careful in the way we speak and think about physical appearance and see to it that physical beauty is never given higher priority than the beauty of character. As with most things in life, we need to apply common sense and moderation, ensuring to look respectable as befitting Torah Jews, without paying excessive attention to external beauty.

RABBI YAKOV YOSEF SCHECHTER



Gan HaTorah

WHY WOULD AVROHOM AVINU MARRY HAGAR?

“Avrohom proceeded and took a wife whose name was Keturah.” “And Yitzchok and Yishmael buried Avrohom in the Me’aras Hamachpeilah.”

Avrohom was living with Sarah and their child, Yitzchok, as well as with his maidservant, Hagar, and their child, Yishmael. Sarah wanted Avrohom to throw Hagar and Yishmael out of the house. Hakodosh Boruch Hu told Avrohom that he should listen to Sarah, so he did. Rashi says that “Keturah” was Hagar. Why did Avrohom marry Hagar, and why was Yishmael on the scene when Avrohom died, when he had previously thrown both of them out?

Avrohom did not marry Hagar in order to have a wife but rather, to demonstrate the greatness of Sarah Imeinu – her righteousness. Avrohom and Sarah were *zoche* to have an exceedingly righteous child, Yitzchok. In whose *zechus* were they *zoche* to have the righteous child: Avrohom’s or Sarah’s? Avrohom wanted it to be known that it was in the *zechus* of Sarah, and not his own *zechus*. He therefore married Hagar and had children with her. They were inferior children, not important individuals. This proved that it was not Avrohom who had the *zechus*, but it was the righteous Sarah. (חכמת התורה)

Sarah was exceedingly righteous. She did not have anything personal against Yishmael or Hagar. Rather, her only concern was for the *ruchniyos* of her son. She saw that their presence would hinder Yitzchok’s growth and was therefore compelled to send them away. Avrohom was truly humble, and he believed that everything he was and accomplished was all because of Sarah. He was concerned that people would say that Sarah was not only lacking in righteousness, but she was thoroughly evil. How could she have thrown Hagar and her child, Yishmael, out of her house with nowhere to go?

Avrohom wanted Yishmael to go with him to the *Akeidas Yitzchok*, and Yishmael acquiesced. Avrohom thought that he would be *shechting* Yitzchok at that point, and therefore, he no longer needed to protect him from Yishmael. As it turned out, Avrohom was not to *shecht* Yitzchok, and they returned home. When Avrohom revealed to Yitzchok that it would be he who would be *shechted*, Yitzchok did so willingly and joyfully. Avrohom saw the way Yitzchok had acted, and he knew that he no longer had to fear the influence of Yishmael. Obviously, Yitzchok had achieved great heights in *ruchniyos*, a place where Yishmael would no longer be able to influence him. Sarah Imeinu died at the time of the *Akeidah*, and afterward, Avrohom married Hagar. Although Hagar had done *teshuva*, she was not righteous like Sarah, perhaps because she became arrogant from marrying the great Avrohom, and she had inferior children.

We learn from this story a great lesson: the great humility with which Avrohom always acted and how he only thought of others. His concern was about Sarah Imeinu; what would others say about her? He therefore did all in his power to prove beyond a doubt that Sarah acted in the proper manner and was a truly righteous individual. May we be *zoche* to be humble in all that we do and truly care about the ones around us.

RABBI BEREL WEIN Z"l



Yitzchok and Rivka Build a Family

Death is not only tragic for those intimately affected. It also always poses problems of succession and reorganization of the family, company, or institution. Avraham and Sarah, the founders of the Jewish nation, pass from the scene in this week’s *parsha*. They are succeeded by Yitzchak and Rivka, and in fact, the majority of the *parsha* concerns itself with how Yitzchak marries Rivka and they establish their new home together.

In personality, temperament, and action, Yitzchak and Rivka differ markedly from Avraham and Sarah. Whereas Avraham and Sarah devoted themselves to reaching as many outsiders as they could and were actively engaged in spreading the idea of monotheism in the surrounding society, Yitzchak and Rivka seem to take a more conservative approach. They attempted to consolidate what they accomplished and build a family nation rather than try to attract more strangers to their cause.

As we will see in next week’s *parsha*, the struggle of Yitzchak and Rivka is an internal family struggle about how to raise Eisav and Yaakov and guarantee the continuity of the ideas and beliefs of Avraham and Sarah through their biological offspring. Eventually, it is only through Yaakov that Avraham and Sarah continue and become the blessing that the Lord promised that they would be. The world struggle that engaged Avraham and Sarah becomes a struggle within Avraham and Sarah’s family itself.

It becomes abundantly clear that the main struggle of the Jewish people will be to consolidate itself and thus influence the general world by osmosis, so to speak. The time of Avraham and Sarah has passed, and new times require different responses to the challenges of being a blessing to all of humankind.

There are those in the Jewish world who are committed to “fixing the world” at the expense of Jewish traditional life and Torah law. Yet the simple truth is that for the Jewish people to be effective in influencing the general society for good, there must be a strong and committed Jewish people. King Solomon in *Shir Hashirim* warns us that “I have watched the vineyards of others, but I have neglected guarding my own vineyard.”

The attempted destruction and delegitimization of the Jewish people or the State of Israel, G-d forbid, in order to further fuzzy, do-good, universal humanistic ideas, is a self-destructive viewpoint of the purpose of Judaism. Without Jews, there is no Judaism, and without Judaism, there is no true moral conscience left in the world. Therefore, it seems evident to me that the primary imperative of Jews today is to strengthen and support Jewish family life, Jewish Torah education, and the State of Israel.

We are in the generations of Yitzchak and Rivka, and therefore, we have to husband our resources and build ourselves first. We have as yet not made good the population losses of the Holocaust seventy years ago! If there will be a strong and numerous Jewish people, then the age of Avraham and Sarah will re-emerge. The tasks of consolidation of Jewish life, as represented by the lives of Yitzchak and Rivka, should be the hallmark of our generation as well.

Shkiya: 4:33 pm

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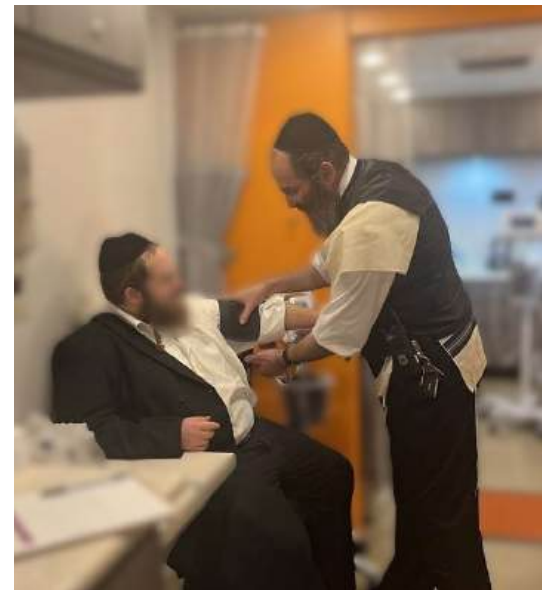


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RABBI JONATHAN SACKS Z"l



A Sense of Destiny

The first sentence of this week's *parsha* of *Chayei Sarah* is: "Sarah's lifetime was 127 years: the years of Sarah's life." Rashi makes a strange comment on the seemingly unnecessary and extra phrase "the years of Sarah's life." He says, "The word 'years' is repeated and without a number to indicate that all her years were equally good." How could anyone say that the years of Sarah's life were equally good? She had so many challenging episodes in her life.

Twice, first in Egypt, then in Gerar, she was asked by Avraham to say that she was his sister rather than his wife and was then taken into a royal harem, a very difficult and dangerous situation. There were many years when, despite G-d's repeated promise that she would have many children, she was infertile and couldn't have even a single child. There was the time when she persuaded Avraham to take her handmaid, Hagar, and have a child by her so that he could be a father, which caused her great emotional pain. Her life was one of uncertainty and decades of unfulfilled hopes. How can Rashi then say that all of Sarah's years were equally good?

The Torah is similarly puzzling with its description of Avraham. Immediately after he buys a burial plot for Sarah, the Torah says, "Avraham was old, well advanced in years, and G-d had blessed Avraham with everything." (*Bereishit* 24:1)

Seven times, G-d promised Avraham the land of Canaan. Yet when Sarah died, he did not own a single plot of land in which to bury her and had to go through an exhausting and humiliating negotiation with the Hittites to buy a small piece of the land. How can the Torah say that G-d had blessed Avraham with everything?

Equally confusing is the Torah's description of Avraham's death at the end of the *parsha*: "Avraham breathed his last and died at a good age, old and satisfied, and he was gathered to his people." Avraham had been promised that he would become the father of many nations and that he would inherit the land. But he did not live to see those promises fulfilled. So how can we imagine that he was "satisfied" at the end of his life?

The answer, for both Sarah and Avraham, is that to understand death, we have to understand life.

Friedrich Nietzsche (a nineteenth-century German philosopher) said: *He who has a why in life can bear almost any how.* It was Sarah and Avraham's sense of destiny and calling that gave their lives purpose and allowed them to survive the difficult times and even the unfulfilled goals at the end of their lives, because they had faith that the journey was not yet over. They died satisfied that they had played an important part and taken the first steps for their future family.

RABBI DR. ABRAHAM J. TWERSKY Z"l



Marriage that Endures

Historically, the family has been considered the basic unit of society. Certainly in Judaism, the strength of the *mishpacha* is said to be a major factor in Jewish survival. In the general population, the family has suffered serious casualties. One out of three children in the US lives in a single-parent home. The statistics in the Jewish population are not as grim, but whereas divorce used to be a rarity, it is now commonplace, and the fragility of the family unit certainly has an effect on the children.

Many relationships begin with two people falling in love. While this seems to be perfectly logical, listen to what George Bernard Shaw said: "When two people are under the influence of the most violent, most insane, most elusive, and most transient of passions, they are required to swear that they will remain in that excited, abnormal, and exhausting condition continuously until death do them part." Even if they do not take a formal oath to that effect, they probably believe that their passion will be eternal.

Of course, love is essential to a marriage, but see what the Torah says about the marriage of Yitzchak to Rivkah: "He married Rivkah, she became his wife, and he loved her." (*Breishis* 24:67) Look carefully at the sequence of the words. Yitzchak's love for Rivkah developed *after* the marriage rather than before it.

Abraham's servant, Eliezer, who was sent to find a wife for Yitzchak, watched for a young woman who championed *chesed* (acts of kindness). "Let it be the maiden to whom I shall say, 'Please tip over your jug so I may drink,' and who replies, 'Drink, and I will even water your camels,' her will You have designated for Yitzchak." The basis for the relationship was a commonality of values, not "the most violent, most insane, most elusive, and most transient of passions." This was a relationship in which true love could develop.

The Talmud says that the relationship of a husband to his wife should be "to love her as much as he loves himself and to respect her even more than he respects himself." (*Yevamos* 62b) It is of interest that Rambam, in citing the Talmud, reverses the order and places respect *before* love. Why? Because it is unrealistic to expect that one can have such intense love from day one. It takes time for true love to develop. However, respect is something that can begin on day one.

Of course, there is passion in a marriage, but Shaw was right. A marriage based on passion is on a fragile foundation. The mutual love and respect for one another that develops after the marriage is the cement that can bond the couple throughout their entire lives.

It is, of course, essential that each partner should behave in a manner that is conducive to the development of love and respect. The formula for this is simple, albeit not easy. It is Rambam's version of the Talmud, "to respect her even more than he respects himself and to love her as much as he loves himself." Rambam continues that the wife's attitude toward the husband should be similar, to honor him and fulfill his wishes. Having first established that the husband must respect his wife, it is obvious that his wishes will not encroach on his consideration of and respect for her.

The Jewish family is now at greater risk than ever before. The Torah teaching about marriage can be our salvation.

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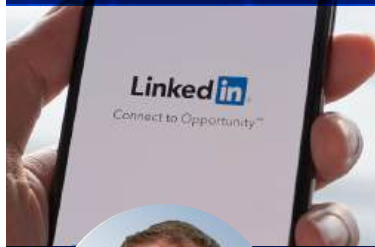
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RABBI YOCHANAN ZWEIG



The Strength of the Son

“Yitzchak went out to pray in the field towards evening.” (24:63)

Rashi translates *“lasu’ach,”* which generally means “to speak,” as “to pray.” This follows the Talmudic tradition that Yitzchak established *Tefillas Mincha*, the afternoon prayer. However, the *Ba’alei Hatosafos* point out an apparent contradiction. The Talmud in Tractate *Yoma* refers to the afternoon prayer as *“Tsilusa D’Avraham,”* “the prayer of Avraham,” which begins “when the walls cast shadows upon the ground.” If Yitzchak established the Mincha prayer, why is it referred to as the prayer of Avraham?

In *Hilchos Melachim*, the Rambam states that Yitzchak was the patriarch who established the notion of praying *“lifnos hayom,”* toward the end of the day. The Torah records that Yitzchak prayed *“lifnos erev,”* toward evening. What message is the Rambam conveying by changing the language of the verse?

In *Hilchos Tefillah*, the Rambam records that the Sages established the *tefillah* for *Mincha* *“bein ha’arbayim,”* in the afternoon, corresponding with the daily afternoon offering

in the Temple. The daily afternoon offering was brought nine and one-half hours into the day. On Erev Pesach, this offering was brought six and one-half hours into the day to accommodate the bringing of the *Korban Pesach*. These two time periods are known, respectively, as *“Mincha Gedolah,”* the “larger” Mincha (because the greater portion of the day remained), beginning six and one-half hours into the day, and *“Mincha Ketanah,”* the “smaller” Mincha (because the smaller portion of the day remained), beginning nine and one-half hours into the day. The Rambam rules that although the preferred time for Mincha is *Mincha Ketanah*, one may begin praying Mincha when *Mincha Gedolah* commences. The Rambam cites a custom that dates back to the period of the Ga’onim (seventh to ninth centuries) of praying both at *Mincha Gedolah* and *Mincha Ketanah*. What is the basis for this custom? Furthermore, whether the offering was brought six and one-half hours or nine and one-half hours into the day, should it not be viewed as one long period? Why do the Sages divide the time for praying Mincha into two periods?

The Talmud identifies the time to begin Avraham’s prayer as “when the walls cast shadows upon the ground.” This is immediately after noon, otherwise known as *Mincha Gedolah*. Yitzchak, the Torah relates, prayed Mincha toward the evening. The Rambam states that this was specifically at the end of the day, for Yitzchak was establishing the opportune time for Mincha as *Mincha Ketanah*. Although the parameters of the daily prayer times were set based upon the daily offering in the Temple, the channels of service were opened by our Patriarchs. Avraham was responsible for establishing the morning service for his progeny. His afternoon prayer was not intended to serve as a beacon for future generations. This undertaking he left to his son, Yitzchak. Yitzchak established the prayer of Mincha at a different time period than previously performed by his father. Although Yitzchak is the patriarch responsible for instituting the prayer of Mincha, Avraham’s personal prayer was effective in broadening the time period for which the channel of the afternoon service would be open.

RABBI YISSACHAR FRAND



Maintaining Equilibrium

The Medrash comments that the name change from Sarai to Sarah signified our Matriarch’s being given dominion over the entire world (from the word *sarah* — female officer or ruler). If one looks at Sarah’s life, however, one certainly does not get the impression that she ruled over the entire world and that she “called the shots.” In effect, she was dominated by events that surrounded her. For many years, she had no children. She was taken as a captive, first by the king of Egypt and then by Avimelech. And yet, we are taught that she was given the name Sarah (rather than Sarai) because she ruled over the entire world.

Rav Nissan Alpert z”l suggests that in spite of all that happened, Sarah did rule over the entire world. A person who can maintain her equilibrium, her serenity and faith, in spite of the events that surround and affect her, is indeed a person who “rules over the entire world.”

We cannot change the course of events.

There are things that will happen between nations, there are natural phenomena, there are things that will happen in a family. This is what life is all about. As anyone who has lived for any significant amount of time knows, life is a series of going from one crisis to another.

How does one rule over all that and manage to “dominate events”? Only by maintaining one’s serenity and equilibrium throughout it all. That is what the life of Sarah was. For a woman to remain barren for 90 years and experience so many trials and tribulations was not a simple matter. And yet we see the same *eishes chayil* [woman of valor], the same *ba’alas chessed* [personality of kindness], the same matriarch Sarah throughout. This is indeed a person who ruled over the entire world.

This, too, can be used to explain the continuation of the Medrash. The Medrash attaches symbolism to the 127 years that Sarah lived. “Let Esther, the granddaughter of Sarah who lived for 127 years, come and

rule over 127 provinces.” The commentaries are all perplexed by the apparently random equation of the number 127 appearing in two places in the Bible.

The explanation is that Esther also had a life of trials and tribulations. Esther had a life that could have been influenced by events that happened to her. She was an orphan. She was taken against her will to the palace of the king.

Esther could have forsaken her people in exchange for the success and the fame that she was receiving. However, Esther remained rock-solid in her faith. She did not let events shape her life. She maintained herself. Therefore, Esther could rule over 127 provinces, virtually the entire known world at that time.

If a person has learned the secret of not letting external events shape their life but rather maintains an internal serenity in spite of those events, that person has, in fact, achieved a great degree of control.

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JOKES

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What did the little cob of corn call his dad?

Pop corn!

What kind of shoes are made from banana peels?

Slippers!

Why did the mushroom get invited to lots of parties?

Because he was a fun guy.

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ZERA SHIMSHON

Crying and Eulogizing

And Avraham came to eulogize Sarah and to cry for her. (23:2)

The *passuk* describes that Avraham Avinu first eulogized Sarah and only then cried for her. This seems to contradict the normal occurrence of events. Usually, upon receiving the terrible news that a spouse has passed away, one cries first and then eulogizes them. As well, according to halachah, the period set aside for eulogies is longer than that set aside for crying, as the Gemara (*Moed Kattan* 27b) says, the first three days of *shiva* are for crying, and all seven are for eulogies. Based on this, the *mefarshim* ask: Why did Avraham Avinu first eulogize Sarah and only then cry for her?

The *Zera Shimshon* explains, based on the *Ma'avar Ya'abok*, that crying during the eulogy brings great benefit to the soul of the departed. This is because, by way of the tears, the gates of tears, which are never locked, will open up for the deceased to enter through. Thus, the attribute of judgment is greatly mitigated through tears. However, the *Ma'avar Ya'abok* cautions that this is only true if the crying is for the benefit of the soul of the departed and not over the physical loss.

This is why at first, Avraham Avinu eulogized Sarah, and only then began to cry for her; he wanted his crying to be during the eulogy in order to give Sarah this great benefit mentioned in the *Ma'avar Ya'abok*.

Another explanation is that the normal crying that one cries upon hearing or seeing bad news is a normal reaction and does not reflect the greatness of the loss. Even the lowest person's death naturally causes their relatives to shed tears. However, the passing of a truly great person causes one to cry over his loss long after the eulogies and natural crying are over. This was the case regarding Sarah. Therefore, even after the time for eulogizing Sarah was over, her greatness as a wife and a person brought Avraham Avinu to cry.

Eishes Chayil was said by Avraham Avinu about Sarah. The *Zera Shimshon* explains the entire *Eishes Chayil*. Here is a small excerpt:

עוז והדר לבושה ותשחק ליום אחרון (ל"א כ"ה)

Strength and majesty are her attire, and she joyfully awaits the last day. (*Mishlei* 31:25)

A woman who helps and enables her husband to learn Torah and keep the mitzvos merits reward for the Torah learning of her husband, as R' Akiva told his students (*Nedarim* 50a), "Mine and your (Torah) is hers" (referring to his wife, Rochel). As well, the Gemara (*Yoma* 77a) says that the wives of *talmidei chachonim* who lose sleep (to help their husbands learn) are rewarded greatly by Hashem in the World to Come.

The Zohar (*Vayechi* 226b) says that the mitzvos that a person does create spiritual clothing for his *neshamah* in the World to Come.

The *Zera Shimshon* says that the *passuk* refers to a woman who supports her husband in his Torah (*oz*) and mitzvos (*hadar*) in this world; through this, she merits a spiritual attire. And although she may endure difficulty in this world, *she joyfully awaits the last day*. In the World to Come, she will rejoice.

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WEDNESDAY NIGHTS

9:00–9:45 PM

20 Upstairs



Shiurim by:
Rabbi Simcha Bunim Berger,
Maggid Shiur BMOC



**For more info about Kedushas
Shabbos org call Shlomo Stavrach**



917-214-2849