



BS"D

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## INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON CHAYEI SARAH - 5764

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From: torahweb@zeus.host4u.net Sent: Nov. 19, 2003  
torahweb.org Subject: Rav Mordechai Willig - Choosing a Spouse  
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### RAV MORDECHAI WILLIG CHOOSING A SPOUSE

Parshas Chayei Sara records the first search for a marriage partner in Jewish history. The Ran (D'rasha 5) explains that Avraham sent Eliezer to his birthplace to search for a wife for Yitzchok from amongst his family (Braishis 24:3,4). Though Avraham's extended family worshipped idols, their character traits were still superior to those of the Cannanites. While a proper theological approach can be relatively easily acquired in adulthood, it is almost impossible to radically change one's character. Therefore, the test of a potential mate, both then and now, must emphasize middos.

Eliezer devised a method to test for the midda of chessed. The girl of whom he would ask for a drink, who would then respond - drink, and I will water your camels - would be a worthy wife for Yitzchok (24:14).

The Kli Yakar (24:12) states that the test was not only for chessed, but also for tsnius. He interprets "Hakrei na l'fanai hayom" ("Let it happen before me today") to mean that Eliezer prayed for an unusual occurrence, a mikre, in which a woman who did not ordinarily venture out would appear at the well. The Kli Yakar explains "V'ish lo y'da'a" ("and no man knew her") (24:16) literally - nobody knew who she was because she had never been seen at the well before. For this reason, Eliezer had to ask her directly who she was, as the more polite approach of asking others proved unsuccessful.

In fact, chessed and tsnius are related, as evidenced by a common expression, ayin yafa, quoted twice by the Kli Yakar (24:14,22). The phrase "Kala she'eineha yafos eina tsricha b'dika" ("a bride whose eyes are beautiful need not be investigated") (Ta'anis 24a) is explained as referring not to physical beauty, but to a woman who exhibits the midda of chessed. Ayin yafa describes the characteristic of giving more generously than the norm, while ayin ra'a means giving less than the norm (Terumos 4:3). A bride who is kind to others need not be examined since she possesses the trait which assures that she will treat her husband properly.

Rashi (24:22) comments that Eliezer's gifts to Rivka hinted at the shekalim, the coins offered by Klal Yisroel for a census, and the luchos, the tablets on which the Ten Commandments were written. The Kli Yakar points out that the shekalim were used to count the people in

order to avoid an ayin hara, and that the first luchos were broken because of the ayin hara caused by the publicity at Har Sinai. One who possesses an ayin yafa, concludes the Kli Yakar, is protected from ayin hara. Thus, ayin yafa, generosity, which is the opposite of ayin ra'a, stinginess, protects from ayin hara, and evil eye.

Ayin hara refers to publicly flaunted wealth (see Bava Basra 2b), explicit national census, and even a public Divine revelation. The evil eye caused the loss of wealth, a national plague, and the breaking of the luchos, respectively. The second luchos, which were given privately, lasted, proving that nothing is better than tsnius (Rashi, Shemos 34:3).

Hence, tsnius, the opposite of ayin hara, is related to chessed, the opposite of ayin ra'a. The connection between ayin ra'a and ayin hara is a psychological one. When one wishes to project his superiority, be it material, numerical, and even spiritual in nature, it usually involves putting others down and treating them poorly. The ayin hara of others observing one's public success is thereby related to the ayin ra'a of a publicly successful person towards others.

Of course, the opposite of these traits are tsnius and chessed, respectively, factors in the test of Rivka that continue to be critical in choosing a wife today. And while the specifics of tsnius are undoubtedly affected, within certain bounds, by time and place (see Rambam Hil. Ishus 13:11 and Minchas Shlomo 91, 23), the concept, as well as its particular application to women (see Rashi Braishis 1:28 and 18:9), is as timeless and universal as the Torah itself.

Arguably, the recent dramatic change in the role of women in America has made it more difficult, and more important, for a woman to pass Eliezer's test. When the woman's place was at home, her sense of tsnius was more readily achieved, and her schedule allowed for a greater focus on chessed. The working woman phenomenon makes tsnius more difficult to achieve, and yet more critical than ever to avoid the pritzus of the workplace. Chessed activity, a challenge to an already crowded schedule, is crucial to overcome the influence of the narcissistic society in which we find ourselves.

What middos should a woman look for in a husband? Precisely the same ones, i.e., chessed and tsnius. A man should view marriage as a giving relationship, a lifetime opportunity to shower loving-kindness on his wife (see Michtav Me'Eliyahu I:38,39). Only a ba'al chessed before marriage can be expected to be a proper Torah husband. He must also understand that Hashem demands of everyone both, tsnius, a universal prerequisite for wisdom (Mishle 11:2), along with chessed and its prerequisite, mishpat (Micha 6:8). Only then will he function in life, and in marriage, appropriately.

The twin evils of western society, self-centeredness and self-promotion, make chessed and tsnius difficult, yet critical, goals for a Torah personality. This is certainly true for men, who are even more involved than today's women in the modern workplace. In choosing a spouse, women, as well as men, should focus on chessed and tsnius.

Eliezer begins his fateful mission by praying to Hashem to do chessed and enable him to find the proper wife for Yitzchok (24:12). Every search for a marriage partner must be preceded by tefilla. The single most important decision in a person's life, deciding whom to marry, certainly needs divine assistance.

Indeed, the realization that one is dependent on siyata dishmaya is a humbling experience and makes a person more tzanua, and therefore a better marriage candidate. The request for Hashem's chessed is more appropriate and effective when one focuses on chessed in the choice of a spouse.

Hashem responded to Eliezer's tefilla, and the rest is history. May the tefillos of Am Yisroel for, and especially by, those seeking a marriage partner be answered as well.

From: Rafael Salasnik [rafi@brijnet.org] To: daf-hashavua@shamash.org Subject: daf-hashavua Chayei Sarah 5764/2003 Chayeisara-5764 U N I T E D S Y N A G O G U E - L O N D O N (O) Chayei Sarah Vol 16 No 9 22 November 2003 27 Cheshvan 5764 Shabbat ends in London at 4.54pm

## SIDRA INSIGHTS L'CHAYIM - TO LIFE!!

by RABBI ANDREW SHAW, Director of TRIBE

Several years ago on a return flight to London, I watched Ever After, a modern adaptation of the much loved fairy tale Cinderella. The film, far from being worthy of an Academy Award nomination, featured a poignant ending. In lieu of the typical carriage riding off into the sunset and the heroine living happily ever after, the final line was, "It was not so much that she lived happily ever after, but that she lived."

These sentiments are brought home beautifully in this week's Sidra with the life of our matriarch, Sarah. In the first verse of the Sidra, we read, 'Sarah's life was one hundred and twenty seven years, the years of Sarah's life'. The word chayei, life, is mentioned twice. Similarly, when Abraham's life is mentioned at the end of the Sidra we read, 'The days of the years of Abraham's life, which he lived'(25:7). Here, once again one notices the seeming redundancy.

R. Zalman Sorotzkin provides an insightful explanation. He says the Torah is highlighting that Abraham and Sarah were alive, in the Torah sense of the word, during all their years, using their time on earth to share their knowledge of G-d and to practice kindness at every opportunity. For them, each day was utilized for a sublime purpose.

The Gemara in Berachot tells us cryptically that the righteous are alive even when dead and conversely, the wicked are dead even when alive. The Gemara can be understood perfectly using the approach of R. Sorotzkin. Someone whose life is not contributing to the world may be physically alive but in Torah terms he is very much dead, while the imprint that a righteous person leaves on the world continues long after he or she has passed on.

I recall Rav Avigdor Nevenzhai, Rav of the Old City of Jerusalem, gave a shiur while I attended Yeshivat Hakotel some years ago. Although the shiur was in Hebrew he said to us in perfect English, 'The world says Time is money, the Torah says Time is life.'

Today, it is easy to allow the days to march on without maximising the time we have been granted. We frantically fill our days with a plethora of activities, but when we reflect on our personal time sheet we may well feel that we have not utilized our time as best we could.

That was not the case with Sarah. Her 127 years on this earth were extraordinary and we still learn from her and Abraham's legacy today. The seemingly redundant phrase teaches us simply that she did not merely live but lived her entire life on a glorious level of existence - she most certainly lived!

## JEWISH VALUES by CHIEF RABBI DR JONATHAN SACKS ON G-D AND GOOD

A scene engraved in the Jewish imagination: the aged Abraham, sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day, looks up and sees three passers-by. He rushes to greet them and urges them to eat, drink and rest.

"Let a little water be brought," he says, but then he and Sarah - despite the heat and their age - engage in a flurry of activity, Sarah baking bread, Abraham preparing a calf, offering their guests a lavish meal.

This is no mere story. It is a Biblical video of Jewish values in action. To be a Jew is to welcome strangers. The Sages went further. Immediately before the men pass by, the Torah tells us that "G-d appeared to Abraham," yet it is not until the visitors leave that G-d speaks. From this the Rabbis inferred that Abraham asked G-d to wait until he had seen to the needs of his guests. They drew the majestic

conclusion: "Hospitality is even greater than welcoming the Divine presence."

How can anything be greater than welcoming the Divine presence? Perhaps the meaning is this: in Tenakh angels often appear in the guise of human beings. The word "angel" - malakh - does not always mean what it does in the mystic visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel: an ethereal being next to the heavenly Throne of Glory. Often it means "a messenger," someone whose appearance is part of the Divine script.

By treating their visitors as if they were angels, Abraham and Sarah were in fact welcoming the Divine presence - not as did Isaiah and Ezekiel in a vision, but by responding to the image of G-d in the face of a stranger. To see G-d in heaven is one of the heights of religious experience, but to see the trace of G-d in human beings is even higher. It is what made Abraham and Sarah the grandparents of an utterly new kind of faith.

In the Synagogue where I first served as a Rabbi, there was a couple who sat near the back of the Shul and the ladies' gallery. They were quiet people. They sought no honour or recognition. But whenever a stranger appeared, they would welcome them, make them feel at home, and invite them to a meal. Through this simple and lovely act, they brought many people "under the wings of the Divine presence." I used to think of them as our Abraham and Sarah. It was a privilege to know them.

When the strangers first appeared to Abraham the Torah says that they were nitzavim alav, literally "standing above him." After all, they were angels; he was only a human being. But when he serves them food, the Torah says hu omed aleihem, "he stood above them" - for when we welcome strangers we are lifted even higher than angels.

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"Wasted on the Young" "...the years of the life of Sarah." (23:1)

Those of us who are old enough to have trouble recalling large areas of our youth will at least have no trouble remembering some standout moments of total irresponsibility: Like hitchhiking down a German autobahn at 100 miles an hour on the back of a BMW 900 in the dead of night in driving rain. Or going for a walk by yourself in a strange city and suddenly realizing that every face you see on the street and on the billboards is black.

"Youth is wasted on the young" runs the old adage. As our hair thins and our waistlines thicken we try to shed the immaturity of youth and improve our characters and our actions.

It comes out then that what we really can call our "life" - our arriving at some kind of perfection in this world - happens pretty close to our departure from this world. Viewed in this way, our "lives" are even shorter than we thought, and even without the help of lunatic escapades and motorcycle madness.

All the above is true of the average person. However, there are those special people whose entire lives are unspoiled. Such were "the years of the life of Sarah." As Rashi says "all of them were equal in their goodness." None of them were wasted or misspent. And even though, of course, Sarah's stature grew in old age, this was the dividend of a holy life spend in doing mitzvot and good deeds, rather than the necessity to

forsake the foolishness of youth - for "all of them were equal in their goodness."

Source: Based on the Sfat Emet

Written and compiled by RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR

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From: Shema Yisrael Torah Network [shemalist@shemayisrael.com] To: Peninim Parsha

PENINIM ON THE TORAH

BY RABBI A. LEIB SCHEINBAUM

Parshas Chayei Sora

Sarah's lifetime was...the years of Sarah's life. (23:1)

There is an element of redundancy in repeating the phrase, "the years of Sarah's life," at the end of the pasuk. Obviously, these are the years of Sarah's life; the pasuk began, "Sarah's lifetime was." In the sefer Shevus Yehudah, it is explained that since Chazal teach us that Sarah Imeinu's neshamah left her as a result of hearing the news of the Akeidas Yitzchak, one might think that Sarah died before her time. The Torah, therefore, reiterates that Sarah died at her predetermined time, the time of death that had been designated for her prior to her birth. In other words, Sarah would have passed away from this world when she did, regardless of Akeidas Yitzchak. Hashem provided her with a death integrated with a mitzvah: the seminal event of Akeidas Yitzchak.

This thesis can help a person who has caused harm - or even u"j death - to another - to cope with the experience and the feelings of guilt that are intrinsic to it. A person must recognize that all that occurs in this world is part of a Divine plan. The individual merely serves as a vehicle in the plan, an agent of the Almighty.

In the sefer Yeshuah u'Nechamah, the author cites an episode that occurred concerning one of the distinguished roshei yeshivah of our generation. When he was a young man, he heated up a large pot of water and carried it across the room. By tragic mistake, he spilled the burning contents on his young daughter. The child was burned over most of her body and, after a short while, she succumbed to her injuries and died.

One cannot imagine the grief and guilt sustained by the father. Overcome with depression, he could not function. He could not continue his studies. He drew into himself, as his deep melancholy prevented him from eating and sleeping. In short, he lost his will to go on. When word reached the Chazon Ish regarding the rosh yeshivah's condition, he immediately sent for him. He told him the following: "Man thinks that he is in control of the world. He is wrong. Chazal teach us in the Talmud Chullin 7b, "A person does not prick his finger in this world unless it has been originally decreed (to occur) in Heaven." Everything that happens is the result of a Heavenly decree. You should, therefore, forget everything that occurred. Remove it from your mind as if it never took place." The rosh yeshivah took heed of the Chazon Ish's words and went back to a life of normalcy.

We cannot go through life second-guessing everything that we do. The "what if I did not do that or go there" syndrome distresses people. We have to live our lives as it is handed to us. We all have our roles in the Heavenly script. Our problem is that we think that our roles go beyond merely being supportive roles.

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

Rashi explains why the term shanah, years, is written after each category: to teach that each one is expounded on its own. When Sarah was one hundred years, she was so pure that she was like twenty with respect to sin. When she was twenty years old, she was like seven years old with regard to beauty. Last, all of her years were equal for goodness. At the beginning of the pasuk, we establish some insight into the amazing personality of Sarah. The end of the pasuk, however, does not seem to be

conveying any significant message to us. What praiseworthy attribute do we find in the fact that all her years were equal for goodness?

Horav Sholom Schwadron, zl, explains that from an outsider's point of view, Sarah's life can be divided into two parts: before she conceived Yitzchak and after Yitzchak's birth. By her natural condition, Sarah Imeinu was not able to conceive. As she approached old age, the chances of her ever having a child became even more remote. At the age of ninety years, when she probably should have reached the point of depression and hopelessness, she conceived and gave birth to Yitzchak. Can we imagine the unparalleled joy and excitement that suddenly became a part of her life? Everything had changed. She was now like everyone else. She was a mother!

Two lives: before she was ninety and afterwards. That is what would be expected of a lesser person. Not so, Sarah - kulam shavin l'tovah, "they were all equal for goodness." Her entire life was filled with goodness and joy. There was no difference. There was no "before" and "after." She did not sense any deprivation before she became a mother, because she understood that the greatest tov, good, for a tzaddik in this world is the knowledge that he is fulfilling the ratzon, will, of Hashem. Sarah understood that if she was an akarah, a barren woman, it was Hashem's will that she be so. If this is what Hashem wanted for her, then so be it. She accepted His decree with joy. When Yitzchak was born, it was a continuation of her joy, because she was serving as a vehicle of Hashem's will. This, indeed, was the matarah, sole purpose, of each of the Imahos, Matriarchs: to serve Hashem in accordance with His will.

Rav Sholom points out that while Sarah accepted the Divine decree with complete equanimity, she nonetheless yearned for - and did everything possible to conceive - a child. Man's obligation in this world is to be mishtadel, endeavor, to act accordingly. At the same time, we are to accept that, at times, the answer is no. It is not that Hashem does not listen to our entreaty. He definitely does listen. The response does not always consist of what we would like to hear.

Sarah Imeinu exemplified greatness and perfection. On the one hand, she entreated Hashem, doing everything in her power to bring a child into this world. On the other hand, she acquiesced to Hashem's decree that she remain barren. It was His will, and she saw only goodness in Hashem's will. The years of her life were all on the same level of goodness, because she was always carrying out the will of Hashem.

Sarah, my master's wife, bore my master a son after she had grown old. (24:36)

Why was it necessary for Eliezer to add that Yitzchak was born to Sarah after she had aged way beyond her child-bearing years? Did it make a difference when Yitzchak was born? The Brisker Rav, zl, explains that Eliezer was alluding to the fact that in regard to Avraham, Sarah and Yitzchak, everything was carried out and lived l'maalah min ha'teva, above the course of nature. Their lives were conducted in such a manner that they transcended the laws of nature. Therefore, if Rivkah's family acquiesced to the shidduch, match, between Rivkah and Yitzchak, it would be good. If not, it would make no difference. She would become his wife in a manner outside of the laws of nature. In other words, it was not in their hands. Rivkah was going to marry Yitzchak whether they agreed to it or not, because Hashem wanted it so - and He had the only say in the matter. Rashi (24:55), implies that when Besuel, Rivkah's father, sought to interfere with the shidduch, Hashem dispatched an angel to kill him! Nothing stands in the way of Hashem's plan.

The Brisker Rav was wont to say that hishtadlus, endeavoring, does not really make a difference in regard to a shidduch. One's own effort only serves to calm his nerves so that he feels that he is taking action. In truth, the shidduch will take effect at its predetermined time.

The Steipler Rav, zl, posits that the fulfillment of bas ploni liploni, the predetermined decree that "the daughter of so and so will wed so and so," is basically in the hands of man. If he seeks those attributes and

virtues that will promote and enhance his ability to carry out Torah and mitzvos, then the decree will remain intact. If, however, he is foolish enough to make stipulations for the sole purpose of satisfying his own personal needs, such as money and other such superficial criteria, he may conceivably lose his predetermined match. Indeed, a young man once came to the Steipler and asked for a blessing to find his zivug, match. The Steipler told him, "You were once offered your correct zivug, but, regrettably, you pushed it aside, because the young lady did not meet your criteria." We must remember that in shidduchim, as well as in everything else, we must reckon with the "Hashem factor."

Sponsored in memory of Eliezer Chaim Binyamin ben Avrohom ZL Eliezer Adams Niftar Cheshvan 28 on the occasion of his seventh yearzeit

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From: HOWARD JACKSON howard.jackson@citigroup.com  
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Any regrets?  
Chayei Sarah

This week's Sidra begins: "VaYiheyu Chayei Sarah ... VaTamot Sarah BeKiryat Arba Hee Chevron BeEretz Canaan VaYavo Avraham Lispod LeSarah VeLivkotah." which means: "And Sarah lived ... And Sarah died in Kiryat Arba which is Chevron in the land of Canaan and Avraham came to mourn for Sarah and to cry for her." (Bereishit 23:1-2) Kohelet Yitzchak asks: The verse states that Avraham came but does not tell us where from? Since it is usual to cry before one mourns (hesped, i.e. telling stories about the departed's righteousness) why does the verse not state "Livkot LeSarah UleSofdah" i.e. "To cry for Sarah and to mourn for her"? Why is there a small letter Kaf in the word VeLivkotah meaning "and to cry for her"?

Satan's role We are familiar with the explanation of Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer (Chapter 32) that Satan informed Sarah that Avraham was sacrificing their son Yitzchak and Sarah then verified this with the local giants who could see Mount Moriah. Consequently, Sarah's soul left her. This presents a difficulty though, because Satan is an agent of G-d whose role is to try to prevent us from fulfilling Mitzvot; Satan's role is surely not to take revenge against Avraham for overcoming him!

Sincere regret G-d does not net Mitzvot against sins. Rather, each Mitzvah merits a reward and each sin a punishment. It is common knowledge that if we have sinned but admit and sincerely regret our misdeed accompanied by the resolve not to repeat the sin then we can actually remove the existence of the sin. What is less well known is that a similar scenario operates concerning Mitzvot. Gemara Kiddushin 40b teaches that if one performs a Mitzvah but then sincerely regrets doing that good deed, one loses the merit of the Mitzvah and it is treated as though the good deed was never performed!

Satan's strategy Satan first tries to prevent a person from observing a Mitzvah by placing obstacles in the way, e.g. "just another ten minutes in bed". If that fails, Satan will allow the Mitzvah to be performed but then try to cause the person to regret having performed the Mitzvah, e.g. "wishing we had not helped someone because we have now arrived late for a meeting".

With respect to Avraham, Satan soon realised he had met his match when Avraham traversed all the hurdles placed before him. For instance, the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni 1:99) relates that even the pool of water that Satan put in front of Avraham did not deter him from his mission of reaching Mount Moriah to enact the Akeidah.

Satan therefore decided the only way to challenge Avraham was to try to encourage him to sincerely regret the Akeidah (binding of Yitzchak) after the event. So, Satan went to Sarah and tricked her into believing that Avraham had sacrificed Yitzchak (Yalkut Reuveni). Sarah died and Satan's plan was that Avraham would then return from the Akeidah and realise that Sarah's death was due to the Akeidah. If Avraham would

then regret performing his Mitzvah he would lose the merit as we have explained. (Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky explains that the time had anyway arrived for Sarah's soul to depart from her but Satan ensured that her death had an association with the Akeidah.)

However, Avraham's greatness was such that he was able to publicly prove he did not regret the Akeidah at all when (1.) he came back, because (2.) he delayed crying until after the mourning (hesped) and even then (3.) cried a reduced amount.

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From: RABBI JONATHAN SCHWARTZ [jschwrtz@ymail.yu.edu] To: internetchaburah@yahoo.com Subject: [internetchaburah] Internet Chaburah -- Parsha Chayei Sarah

Prologue: The process of mourning and grieving is an arduous one. Parshas Chayei Sarah details two distinct different types of mourning. Avraham's active mourning is noted within the greater context of his preparations for Sarah's burial. The Torah describes the process including his Hespel (eulogy) for his wife. Later, the Torah details the search for Yitzchak's wife and upon discovery of, and marriage to Rivka, the Torah reminds us that Yitzchak was consoled (VaYeeNachem Yitzchak) of his mother's death. One must wonder how the consolation happened? How does one gain consolation after the loss of someone or something dear?

Rav Samson Rafael Hirsch and the Sfas Emes both note that true Nechama comes from the recognition and reconnection of the trauma brought from the loss of the deceased into the world of the living. It is not the forgetting or the getting past the loss that brings Nechama. Rather it is the ability to take the lessons of the deceased and show that the impact the deceased made continues to remain even after the deceased has departed. It is the legacy of the deceased that when maintained, allows those close to the deceased to experience a sense of closure following the loss.

Sarah's legacy was BaOhel (in the home). When Rivka re-entered the Ohel, she did not replace Sarah. In fact, her Midda and character traits were entirely different than that of Sarah. Still, she was able to maintain the legacy of the Ohel. This brought a sense of Nechama to Yitzchak. The feeling of loss was complete as was the sense of closure achieved when Sarah's legacy was maintained through Rivka -- not only in her similarity to Sarah but in the fact that she didn't replace her.

The Short Mincha: A Silent Killer??

The Talmud (Rosh Hashanna 34b) explains that the purpose of Chazarat HaShaatz is to help those who are not experts fulfill their obligation of prayer. The Rambam (Teshuvot Harambam, 37) notes that even if the entire community was to be filled with experts, we could still not abolish the Chazarat HaShaatz since it is a Takana Chazal and we worry "Shema Yachzir Davar L'Kilkulo (lest things return to the way they were)." The Rashba (Teshuvot 37 and 323) Ran (Pesachim 101a) and others also all support the importance of reciting Chazarat HaShaatz even today. Even the Shulchan Aruch stresses the importance of Chazarat HaShaatz (See O.C. 124:3).

However, it seems that the rules of Mincha are different. The Beis Yosef (O.C. 234) notes that the Ashkenazim also always practiced Chazarat HaShatz at mincha but that the Sefardim didn't. He adds that the Ashkenazim were right and quotes a Rambam (Hil. Tefillah 9) and a Tur in support. He adds that the community of France used to place a Cherem against anyone who didn't recite Chazarat HaShaatz in his community for Mincha. Others (Mishcha D'Rabbusa O.C. 112) used this Cherem to highlight the importance of Chazarat HaShaatz of Mincha and that it was more potent than the Tefilla B'lachash. Still others (Batei Kenessiyot, Kuntres Bayit Maleh, 124; Kaf Hachaim 28:67) went further to highlight that even if the Minhag was to daven only a

"Heicha Shmoneh Esrai" that custom should be abolished as it violates Halacha.

However, the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 232:1) notes that if it is getting late, one CAN utilize the Heicha Kedusha system. The Rema (124:2) and Mishna Berurah (124:6) stress that this is only a Heter for Shaas HaDechak which the Mishna Berurah (232:1) notes is usually due to the lateness of the hour and the fast approach of Shkiah. The Radvaz (IV:1165) adds that any other Ones would also be a cause for a Heicha-Shmoneh Esrai. One example often cited is the lack of people to answer Amen to the Chazarat HaShaatz. Indeed the Rambam (Maaseh Rokeach 1:6) allowed a Heicha Shmoneh Esrai for Tefillot when he could not guarantee that the Tzibbur would follow with the appropriate answering of Amen. The Mogen Gibborim (124) and Ben Ish Chai (Terumah II) support this view. Accordingly, the Shut Az Nidbiru (XII:23) is extremely critical of the Yeshivot that utilize a Heicha-Shmoneh Esrai format unless they are afraid that the Talmidim will not answer properly. Rav Ovadiah Yosef (Shut Yichaveh Daas III:16) encourages the teachers to castigate students and force them to learn to answer properly --- and not to cease reciting Chazaras HaShaatz. The Aruch Hashulchan (O.C. 232:7) concedes this point when Davening in a Shul or Beis HaMedrash but notes that if one is davening elsewhere and the integrity of the Chazaras HaShaatz is impossible to preserve, one should employ a Heicha Kedusha system for Mincha.

The ability to have others respond to the Berachos of Chazaras HaShaatz seems to be integral to the sanctity of the Tefillah. If it is not achieved, should one have Heicha Kedusha at other times? In a Shul with an unruly decorum problem, should one attempt Chazarat HaShaatz for Musaf on Shabbos?

It seems that this was not a foreign idea and according to many sources, was the prevailing Minhag in certain European communities. In fact Mishpitei Uziel (O.C. Tinyana, 6). Notes that he was present to observe such a practice but decried it as unacceptable and not in accord with the Talmud. Rav Kook (Orach Mishpat, 61) adds that anyone who knows how to Paskin a Shailaah would NEVER allow this practice in public.

L'Halacha, we have an obligation to daven appropriately. Allowing a Heicha-Kedusha into the Seder HaTefillah is precisely that: an allowance. L'Chatchila one should strive to pray appropriately - in the right time and fully, with a Chazarat Hashaatz.

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From: RABBIWEIN@jewishdestiny.com Subject: Rabbi Wein's Weekly Columns Parsha Archive November 21, 2003

CHAYEI SARAH

The city of Chevron is very prominent in our world and in the daily news reports. The news from Chevron is not always encouraging. It is a tough place, this Chevron of ours - a tough place to live and a tough place to leave. In the Torah we read of the purchase of the Cave of Machpela by our father Avraham. This purchase was supposed to eternally establish that holy place as being the property of the people of Israel. But it hasn't worked out that way. Over the long centuries, Yishmael and his descendants and Eisav and his descendants have successfully contested Israel for these premises innumerable times. For over a millennium Jews were not allowed to enter the building, which supposedly rests on the top of that burial cave. The right of Jews to live in Chevron is and has always been contested far more bitterly than even the right of Jews to live in Jerusalem. Why? What is the secret of Chevron that makes it so dangerous and so contested a place for Jewish settlement and security?

The Talmud mentions that there are three locations in the Land of Israel, which are indisputably the legal property of the Jewish people. They are the Cave of Machpela in Chevron, the field outside Shechem/Nablus in Samaria, and the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. All three locations were purchased by the leaders of Israel - Avraham, Yakov, David - for good and valuable consideration and for full, if not more than full, market

value. The purchases and the details of those purchases are all recorded in the Bible. Yet, over our long history, even till this very moment, our title to all three locations is in dispute. The insight into this paradoxical situation may be that the very reason these properties are contested - because our claim to them is based on man-made law, contracts and deeds and not on Divine promise.

All contracts, even all purchases in this world of ours, are always subject to review, revision and cancellation. Governments rise and fall, circumstances and situations change, the definition of "rights" is altered by fiat or common consent. In short, nothing ever remains the same. Nothing in the world created by man is permanent. Therefore, the general world, and certainly the Arab world, contests our claim of ownership to these parcels of land in Israel. Our deed is outdated and no longer valid, they say. We abandoned our claim long ago by not being present on those properties for long centuries. The Indian tribes in America also had signed and legal government deeds to large sections of the United States, but when the circumstances "changed," the deeds were abrogated, and the Indian tribes' claim to the land was disallowed. Claims to land are not very secure if they are based only upon legalities, purchases and contracts. The entire thrust of the book of Bereshith is that the world and its lands and properties belong not to man but to the Creator.

The claim of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel is not based on contracts and deeds. Indeed, it is not based even on Balfour Declarations and United Nations' resolutions. It is based upon the G-dly promise to our ancestors that the Land of Israel belongs, by right of G-dly fiat, to their descendants. Those Jews, who, for various personal and faith reasons, deny this G-dly promise, are very hard pressed to justify the existence of the state of Israel and the Jewish claim to Jerusalem. Without this justification of belief and Jewish tradition, the claim of the nations of the world that "you are thieves" sounds plausible and correct. The faith of Israel is based upon the revelation and will of our eternal Creator. We certainly have to do our part, for G-d certainly helps those who help themselves. But, in the final analysis, it is obvious that we derive our rights and claims not merely from current behavior, but rather from rights based upon ancient faith and religious tenets and beliefs. As Rabbi Saadya Gaon stated: "Our nationhood is based solely on the Torah." Chevron and the Cave of Machpela prove how right he is.

Shabat Shalom. Rabbi Berel Wein

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From: Rabbi Yisroel Belsky [rbelsky@torah.org] Sent: Thursday, November 20, 2003 5:07 PM To: honesty@torah.org Subject: Honesty - Downloading and Copying Music

HONESTY@TORAH.ORG

Exploring everyday honesty questions

QUESTION 76: DOWNLOADING AND COPYING MUSIC

I argue with people about the ethics of downloaded music files from the Internet. I say that downloading songs or copying your own songs to give to someone else, without a copyright owner's permission, or not compensating the owner, is stealing. What do you say about this?

RABBI BELSKY

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein ztl said that it's not permitted to copy any item that is being sold by the creator of that item. Every time you copy it, you're taking away sales from him. Anybody who downloads it, copies it, or does something else is really just turning someone else's money into ashes. And that's really the bottom line. It's taking something from someone else.

This is one of the areas where people say, "Everyone does it, and it really should be mutar (permitted)". People copy tapes and download from the

Internet. Everything becomes "public domain". There's nothing private. People just download it and copy it and they'll wipe the owner out.

But even if everyone does it, it's wrong. You're taking away something from someone and you're harming him.

Sometimes people object to this argument and say, "Well, in that case, I'm probably not even allowed to copy down a shtikel (piece of) Torah that I heard." But that's not true - the Shach says "Ein gezel b'divrei Torah (there's no stealing when it comes to Torah)", that is, if you copy it down for yourself.

The guideline here involves whether or not what you're doing is taking away a sale from the owner. One might say, if asked this question, "Oh, I would never have bought that anyway." But in fact you shouldn't say that. You do like it ... and you would have bought it.

However, if you buy one and make a copy for yourself so that you can have, say, one in the car and one at home - that kind of copying is permitted. No one buys two of something for such a purpose, so copying the merchandise in this case doesn't take the place of a sale. If you told a person who wanted one copy for the house and one for the car that he had to buy two, then he wouldn't buy two. He would figure a way to carry it back and forth each time.

Since buying two copies for such a purpose is never done, then making a copy for yourself for two locations is not taking away a sale.

#### QUESTIONER

Is copying music a different type of stealing than any other type of stealing? Or is it just like any kind of stealing? Is there a principal that stealing is stealing and there are no distinctions? Is it just like walking over to someone with a gun? In this case we're talking about intellectual property. So is that a lesser degree of stealing?

#### RABBI BELSKY

The concept of 'stealing' intellectual property has limitations because in certain cases it is permitted to copy an idea. For example, if someone comes up with some idea about how to sell something, that idea is probably not subject to being copyrighted or patented. But a song is copyrighted, and people do business by selling records or tapes with songs. This is an item that brings a livelihood to people. Therefore, if you're taking it, you're taking away the livelihood of a person.

That's very important to remember. Someone sweated nights and invested money and time in order to create a certain item that the public is interested in, and then he's ready to sell it. And then it turns out that some Napster type of enterprise gets its hands on it, and people end up paying zero for it.

Approximately each week we ask a question to Rabbi Yisroel Belsky, Rosh Yeshiva of Torah Vodaas, and present his answer.

You can contribute questions of your own by sending them to:

[rbelsky@torah.org](mailto:rbelsky@torah.org)

Or you can participate in the forum to discuss these questions. Visit the forum at: <http://torah.org/learning/phorum/list.php?f=35>

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Artscroll Parashah Talk

Parshas Chayei Sarah

Let it be that the girl to whom I will say, "Please tip over your jug so that I may drink," and who replies, "Drink, and I will also give your camels to drink" - it is her whom You have designated for Your servant, for Yitzchak (Genesis 24:14). It is clear that Eliezer meant this theoretical chain of events to be a sign from heaven that the girl who would respond in this manner would be Yitzchak's intended mate. Nevertheless, he did not choose a random sequence of events for this sign, but rather acted

with great wisdom. He wanted to test the girl whom he would meet at the well for several traits - generosity, wisdom, and sensitivity to the feelings of others.

Eliezer did not have a cup himself, and he planned to ask the girl to "tip over her jug" for him to drink from the jug itself. Would the girl accede to his request to give a total stranger a drink directly from a large jug, although this would render the jug's entire contents undesirable for other to drink, for esthetic and sanitary reasons? This would determine the extent of the girl's kindness and generosity.

After this Eliezer would watch to see what exactly the girl would do with the leftover water. If she would ignore the stranger's drink and bring the rest of the water home to her family, this would indicate a lack of wisdom, for how could she know that the man's mouth was not filthy or diseased? And if she would simply spill out the remainder of the water onto the ground, this would display a lack of sensitivity to the stranger, for it would be a demonstration that she suspected him of having contaminated the water by his drinking. The only reaction that would display both wisdom and sensitivity would be to pour out the rest of the water for the camels.

Nevertheless, even if a girl would come along who would pass all three character tests, it would not necessarily prove beyond a doubt that she would be the appropriate wife for the saintly Yitzchak and a suitable daughter-in-law for Avraham. Eliezer therefore had to introduce a fourth aspect to his words - his prayer to G-d that this particular reaction from the girl should be a sign from heaven that the girl was indeed Yitzchak's intended wife.

In fact, Rivkah passed the test with results far beyond Eliezer's expectations. She did not reply, as Eliezer has hoped, by saying, "Drink, and I will also give your camels to drink," meaning that she would pour out the remainder of the jug's contents into the camel trough. Rather, she responded, "Drink...and I will also draw water for your camels" (vv. 18-19). Rivkah apparently thought that simply spilling out the water into the trough might make it too obvious that she did not wish to use the leftover water for human drinking, so she immediately offered to draw additional water, enough to water all the camels "until they finish drinking" (ibid.). This showed an even greater measure of wisdom and sensitivity than expected.

— Beis HaLevi

Excerpt from Brisk on Chumash, by Rabbi Asher Bergman.

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[http://www.aish.com/literacy/jewishhistory/Crash\\_Course\\_in\\_Jewish\\_History\\_Part\\_6\\_Isaac\\_and\\_His\\_Sons.asp](http://www.aish.com/literacy/jewishhistory/Crash_Course_in_Jewish_History_Part_6_Isaac_and_His_Sons.asp)

Aish Hatorah Literacy Series

Crash Course in Jewish History Part 6

ISAAC AND HIS SONS

BY RABBI KEN SPIRO

We are continuing the story of the Jewish people, which at this point in our chronology is the story of a family, taking place in the 18th century BCE or 3,700 years ago.

We have so far covered the story of Abraham, the first Jew, who took upon himself the mission of spreading monotheism throughout the world. And his family is going to carry on this mission -- to bring the idea of G-d into the world and re-elevate humanity back to its ideal state.

Abraham had two sons by two different wives. Ishmael with Hagar, the Egyptian, and Isaac with Sarah, his wife who was supposed to be barren. It is Isaac who elects to follow his father's mission.

We will not take the time here to go through stories of Isaac's life as this is not a Bible series per se. What we want to focus on is the patterns that a set for the rest of Jewish history, because as we noted earlier, "the actions of the fathers are assigned to the children."

"The actions of the fathers are assigned to the children." The wheels of a wagon traveling on a dirt path -- or even on a stone road after a long-enough period of time -- make a groove or rut. And the problem with a rut is that once you get in it's hard to get out; we all know the expression "stuck in a rut." If you establish a good

pattern, you stay in it. You establish a bad pattern, the same thing, it's hard to break.

Whatever groove Abraham or Isaac or Jacob are going to carve, for better or for worse, their descendants are going to get stuck in it.

Unless they take the trouble to fill in the grooves, put some asphalt down there, dig up the paving stones, put new ones in, which is a lot of work, they're going to be haunted by the early patterns throughout history.

#### RE-RUNS

One of the great patterns we see with Isaac is a re-run of a situation that Abraham also confronted. The Book of Genesis (chapters 20 and 21) relates that Abraham went to the land of the Philistines and he lived among them for a while. But he had some problems -- for example, they tried to take his wife, Sarah.

A few years later, (Genesis, chapter 26) Isaac faces the same situation. He's living amongst the Philistines somewhere on the coastal area of Israel and they try to take his wife, Rebecca. Also his servants start to have problems with the servants of Abimelech, the King of the Philistines.

Once Isaac left things went downhill for the Philistines. Their economy collapsed.

And what happens eventually? The Philistines throw Isaac out, even though he's done nothing to deserve it as far as the Bible tells us. In addition, they plug up all the wells that Isaac has dug -- an illogical act given the value of water in the arid climate of the Middle East and the difficulty of digging wells. (This demonstrates an oft-repeated pattern of the anti-Semite who hurts himself in an effort to obliterate Jewish presence.)

But then something interesting happens -- Abimelech comes after Isaac and he says, "I see that we prospered because of you." Because once Isaac leaves, things go downhill for the Philistines. Their economy collapses. Nothing's going well, and the Philistines come to realize it's because of the Jews. So the king offers a treaty and asks Isaac to return.

This is the great pattern of Jewish interaction with non-Jews in history. The Jews are often invited in. The country does incredibly well because of their contribution. Then for no reason -- I'm aware of virtually no example in history of Jews ever doing anything that caused them to be hated the way we've been hated -- the country decides to throw the Jews out, undermining its own economy in the process. So the Jews are thrown out, the country suffers. This is what's going to happen over and over again. It's schizophrenia -- a love/hate relationship.

#### THE TWINS

Isaac is married to Rebecca. Rebecca is pregnant with twins, and the twins are fighting in the womb already -- it's a difficult pregnancy for Rebecca. When they're born there is a rivalry between them. And what are the twins' names? Jacob and Esau.

Although they are twins, Jacob and Esau have totally different personalities and they are also physically very different. The Bible describes Esau as hairy and Jacob as smooth-skinned. Esau is a hunter, a man of action. Jacob is a scholar; he's not a man of action.

It's also clear from the narrative that Isaac is favoring Esau who is the first-born of the twins. He's a couple of minutes older but that's significant when it comes to who will be the one to inherit the family mantle.

Rebecca is clearly favoring Jacob. The Bible says that women have binah yeserah, an added intuitive intelligence. Over and over again in the stories of the Bible, the men make the stupid mistakes, and the women do the right thing.

When a great man like an Isaac makes a blessing, that blessing affects spiritual forces and becomes a reality. When Isaac is old, he decides to give each of his sons a blessing, and, of course, he wants to give an extra-special blessing to the first-born, Esau.

When a great man like an Isaac makes a blessing, that blessing affects spiritual forces and becomes a reality.

Although Esau doesn't really want the blessing of the first-born with all the responsibility to carry on his father's mission, he does want the blessing of wealth and power which goes along with it. But Rebecca realizes that the blessing has to go to Jacob as he is the one who is willing and able to change the world in the manner of Abraham.

So while Esau is off hunting to catch something for his father's dinner so he'll bless him, what does Rebecca do? She covers Jacob's arms with a goat skin so they will feel hairy like Esau's. And Isaac, who is blind, is fooled.

#### THE SYMBOLS

It's a mistake to read the Bible stories on a simplistic, first-grade Sunday school level. This is not the story of some old, blind man who's confused by his wife and son. There are very profound things going on here.

When Isaac encounters Jacob pretending to be Esau, he remarks:

"The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." (Genesis 27:22)

This is because the voice symbolizes the power of the intellect, and the hands symbolize the power of action, of might and of sword.

Esau, who embodies the power of might and sword, will, through his descendants, give rise to the Roman Empire or "Edom" as the Bible calls it. And, of course, it is the Romans (as in Roman Catholic Church) that converted the world to Christianity, the other great monotheistic faith. (Later there was a split between the Roman Christians and the Eastern Orthodox Christians, and later still the Protestant Christians split off.)

So, in Esau, we see yet another example of an offshoot of the children of Abraham, who, like Ishmael, does not carry on the mission, yet becomes a great power.

This is nothing less than a cosmic struggle. Very interesting pattern going on here. This is nothing less than a cosmic struggle. These two -- Jacob and Esau -- started fighting in utero, and they're going to be fighting throughout history. Later, these powers coalesce; Rome gives rise to the Western culture and it continues to fight the Jewish people.

It's not an even battle ever. Rome will always be stronger in the physical sense, but the Jews will be stronger in the intellectual, spiritual sense. So we see that this is where the struggle begins and it's going to carry on throughout all of history.

#### AMALEK

The descendants of Abraham can't help but be great; even if they don't become Jews they become people who have a huge impact on the world. Indeed, the greatest enemies of the Jews come from within the family.

Who is the ultimate enemy of the Jewish people in history? The nation of Amalek. This is the people that symbolize evil, and there is a commandment in the Bible to wipe them off the face of the earth, because their pathological hatred for Jews is so great, if they have a chance they will wipe the Jews off the face of the earth.

The nation of Amalek, the Bible tells us, comes into being when a son of Esau takes for a concubine a woman named Timna, who may have been his daughter. (See Genesis 36:10-12.) From this union came Amalek, the patriarch of a nation with a pathological hatred of the Jew.

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, who wrote the chief work of the Kabbalah, the Zohar, some 2,000 years, said that "Esau hates Jacob is the way of the world." These are the laws of physics, so to speak, that describe the interaction between the Jews and descendants of Esau. No matter what happens, the descendants of Esau are going to hate the Jews.

So we have a confrontation between Esau and Jacob. Jacob steals the blessing and then Esau shows up and finds out what happened. And patriarch Isaac realizes that he's been tricked. He's not angry, however, because he sees now that Jacob is capable of action and can carry on the mission.

Now Rebecca, realizing that Esau's resentment will only grow until he going to want to kill his brother, sends Jacob away. She tells him to go to Haran where she tells Jacob to take a wife.

#### MR. WHITE

In Haran lives Laban -- Lavan, in Hebrew, meaning "white" -- Rebecca's ne'er-do-well brother. His name points up G-d's sense of humor -- Mr. White turns out to be one of the biggest crooks in the Bible. Jacob turns up penniless on his uncle's doorstep and falls in love with his cousin Rachel. He wants to marry her but Laban insists he work seven years for her hand. At the end of the seven years, Laban substitutes Rachel's older sister Leah and demands Jacob work another seven years to get Rachel. In the end, Jacob winds up with four wives -- Leah, Rachel, and their handmaidens Zilpah and Bilhah and he has 12 sons and 1 daughter.

Unlike previous generations, all the sons are going to be totally dedicated to the mission. They are the core group -- an extended family that is going to make the nation that is going to change the world.

Jacob then realizes that he has to go back to the Land of Israel because he has a mission. Despite Laban's attempts to keep him dependent and working for peanuts, Jacob manages to accumulate a big fortune, which becomes another great pattern in Jewish history. The Jew with his hands tied behind his back, when given the slightest opportunity will do remarkably well, even in a very hostile business environment.

Jacob then realizes that he has to go back to the Land of Israel because he has a mission. Just as Abraham knew that this was the only place where Jewish potential could be realized, so too Jacob realizes that this is the only place to be. So he gathers up all his belongings and he heads back.

#### REUNION

And this brings us to another scene which becomes a powerful pattern in Jewish history. The re-uniting of Jacob and Esau.

As he makes his way home, Jacob hears that Esau is coming out to meet him with an army of 400 men. In response, always using his brains, he sends gifts.

They meet. Esau doesn't try and kill Jacob although it's very clear that he still hates him. He says, "My brother, it's good to have you back. You come with me to Har

Sa'ir, where I live and we'll go into business together. With your brains and my brawn we'll dominate the whole Middle East."

There's no question, if these two had united as a team, what a force they would have had in human history. Imagine the physical power of the Romans linked with the spiritual and intellectual power of the Jews.

But Jacob says, "You go ahead of me. I'll catch up later." Now we know from the narrative Jacob never goes to Har Sa'ir to live with Esau.

The great biblical commentator Rashi explains, quoting the Prophet Ovadiah, that they will meet again -- at the end of days. In effect, Jacob, representing the great intellectual, spiritual force in human history, is saying to Esau, the great physical force: "I give you permission to go on ahead and dominate human history physically. But at the end of days, when the lion lies down with the lamb, then we'll get together. Then the Jews will be on top."

This doesn't mean in the end Jews are going to conquer the world and make a great empire. In the end, the whole world will come to recognize one G-d and live with one standard of morality in peace and brotherhood. The Jewish mission will be fulfilled then, but in the meantime, Esau is going to be on top.

Ultimately the struggle of history will be between Jewish ideas and the ideas of Esau and the culture that he's going to create in human history. That's the cosmic battle: good versus evil. This is a very powerful idea and the dominating pattern of Jewish history.

NEXT: JOSEPH

This overview of Jewish history is also available on audio cassette by Rabbi Spiro. It is entitled "A-Z Jewish History in 24 Hours". For more information visit the Aish HaTorah Audio Store.

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From: RAV KOOK List [RavKookList@hotmail.com]

Rav Kook Dvar Torah List

Chayei Sarah: The Burial of Sarah

The Torah does not tell us much about Sarah. In fact, more attention is given to the purchase of Sarah's burial plot than to her long, productive life of 127 years. What is so significant about this acquisition of land? And why was the city of Hebron chosen for Sarah's burial?

In the end of days, Isaiah prophesied, "Many nations will go and say, 'Let us go up to the mountain of G-d, to the house of the G-d of Jacob.'" [Is. 2:3] Why will the nations be drawn precisely to the G-d of Jacob, as opposed to the G-d of Abraham or the G-d of Isaac? The Sages gave a peculiar explanation, only adding to our bewilderment:

"Not like Abraham, who saw it as a 'mountain', nor like Isaac, for whom it was a 'field'; but like Jacob, who called it a 'house.'" [Pesachim 88a]

What does the Midrash mean by 'mountain', 'field', and 'house'? These are metaphors for different forms of serving G-d. The worship of Abraham and Isaac was a universalistic service of G-d, accessible to all. It was like a mountain or an open field; all were welcome to join in. Abraham, the "father of many nations", sought to correct the sin of Adam and help all mankind. His life's goal was to publicize the name of G-d among all peoples. Isaac similarly sanctified the name of Heaven throughout the entire world.

Jacob, on the other hand, referred to the holy place he encountered as "Beth El", "the house of G-d". Jacob limited the holiness of Israel to the framework of his twelve sons. Unlike the children of Abraham and Isaac, all of Jacob's sons remained within the Jewish people. Jacob's service of G-d was exclusive to Israel, like a covered and enclosed house. The sanctity of Israel is only safely protected when they are separate from the other nations. "Israel shall dwell securely, alone." [Deut 33:28]

Why must Israel be distanced from the other nations? This isolation has a two-fold purpose. Firstly, it separates the Jewish people for their holy mission. Secondly, it allows them to demonstrate the correct path for the nations of the world - "nations will walk by your light". [Is. 60:3] When the nations will aspire to connect to holiness, they will recognize that the sanctity of Israel is separate and distinct. "Let

us go up to the house of Jacob", they will say. Let us go and connect with the unique holiness of Jacob.

Like Jacob, Sarah recognized the need for this insulated holiness. She was the one who demanded, "The son of this maid-servant (Ishmael) will not inherit with my son Isaac." [Gen 21:10] And Sarah began the process of separating and designating the Land of Israel to the Jewish people - through her burial in Hebron.

With the burial of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs in the Machpela cave, Hebron came to symbolize the initial acquisition of the Land of Israel. Similarly, we find that Hebron was never the permanent capital of Israel; yet the reign of King David - expressing full Jewish sovereignty over the Land of Israel - started in Hebron. Hebron signifies the future ownership, and potential holiness, of the Land of Israel. When Abraham was commanded "Rise, walk the land, through its length and breadth" [Gen 13:17], where did he go? He immediately settled in Hebron. Hebron, where the potential sanctity of the Land of Israel was concentrated. Hebron is where those living in the future receive their inheritance and realize their destiny, by virtue of those buried in the past.

The concept of future sanctity also found expression in the unusual method used to divide up the land in the time of Joshua. According to one opinion in the Talmud, the Land of Israel was divided up according to the Jews who left Egypt - even though they had died in the desert and never made it to Israel. [Baba Batra 117a] Usually, it is the living who inherit the dead; an inheritance is divided up according to the number of living descendants. Here though, it was the dead who dictated how the land should be inherited!

So too, the first Jewish burial in the Land of Israel, that of Sarah, determined the future inheritance and sanctity of the Land. Sarah designated this portion for her descendants. She separated "Eretz Yisrael" from other parts of the world, just as she separated her son from Ishmael. Sarah initiated the distinct heritage of the Land and the people of Israel.

[Shemuot Ri'ya 9: Chayei Sarah 5690 (1929)]

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From: Yeshivat Har Etzion Office [office@etzion.org.il] To: yehsichot@etzion.org.il Subject: SICHOT64 - 05: Chayei Sara Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash (Vbm) Student Summaries Of Sichot Of The Roshei Yeshiva Parashat Chayei Sara SICHA OF HARAV YEHUDA AMITAL SHLIT"A WHO WAS RIVKA?

Summarized by Matan Glidai Translated by Kaeren Fish

We learn something of Rivka's character from a number of Biblical verses and midrashim: 1. "And the girl to whom I shall say, 'Please let down your pitcher, that I may drink,' and she will say, 'Drink, and I shall also give the camels to drink' - it shall be she that You have appointed for Your servant, for Yitzchak..." (24:14). Rashi comments: "She (such a girl) would be worthy of him, for she would perform kindness, and therefore would be worthy of entering Avraham's household." The text describes Rivka's beauty, but makes no mention of Eliezer paying attention to this quality. He sought a woman who was kindhearted, and that is what he found. 2. "And Yitzchak went out to meditate in the field... and Rivka lifted her eyes and she saw Yitzchak, and she descended from the camel, and she said to the servant: 'Who is this man in the field approaching us?'" (24:63-64). Midrash Bereishit Rabba (60:14) teaches: "She saw that his hands were outstretched in prayer, and she said, 'Surely, this is a great man,' therefore she inquired concerning him." This teaches us three things: i. A person's greatness becomes visible when he prays.

A person's prayer indicates his spiritual level. ii. Rivka recognized the value of prayer, and was able to perceive Yitzchak's greatness through his prayer. In the next parasha we see how she, too, prays in order to have children. iii. "And Yitzchak brought her to the tent of Sara, his mother" (24:67). Rashi explains, "He brought her to the tent and she became like his mother Sara - in other words, she veritably WAS Sara his mother, for so long as Sara lived a light remained kindled from one Shabbat eve to the next, and the dough

(in the household) was blessed, and a cloud remained attached to the tent. When she died, these ceased – and when Rivka came they returned." The Midrash Rabba (60:15) describes the miraculous phenomenon slightly differently: "So long as Sara was alive a cloud was present at the entrance to her tent... the doors were open wide to invite all... there was a blessing given to the dough... there was a light that remained kindled from one Shabbat eve to the next. And when she died, these disappeared..."

We may ask the following three questions:

1. What is the significance of these phenomena? Is the Midrash simply telling us about miracles that took place when Rivka arrived?
2. Why does Rashi mention only three miracles, omitting the fact that the tent doors were opened wide, as recounted in the Midrash?
3. Why does Rashi change the order of the miracles, mentioning first the light, then the blessing of the dough and lastly the cloud – in contrast to the Midrash, which lists them in the opposite order? Each of the three miracles mentioned by Rashi has profound significance: "A light that remained kindled from one Shabbat eve to the next" – If there is real holiness in the home on Shabbat, then Shabbat influences the whole week. If no holiness can be felt during the week, this indicates that Shabbat is not being imbued with the proper celebration and sanctity. The light that remained kindled from one Shabbat to the next symbolized how the holiness that existed in Rivka's home on Shabbat continued throughout the week.

"A blessing sent to the dough" – This is not a miracle, but rather a matter of psychology. There are some people who turn away those who come to their homes, claiming that they have nothing to give their guests to eat. Someone who truly wants to show hospitality will demonstrate how, even when it seems that there is nothing to eat, somehow there is enough for everyone, and no-one remains hungry. The "blessing in the dough" does not depend on wealth, but rather on good will. Therefore, Rashi fails to mention "the doors opened wide," for this and the blessing in the dough represent the same quality.

"A cloud attached to the tent" – Each household needs to have a spiritual purpose, something beyond the basic maintenance of the household, some spiritual goal to which it can aspire. On this point, it is worth noting the Midrash Rabba on the akeida (56:2): "'And he saw the place from afar' – what did he see? He saw a cloud attached to the mountain. He said to Yitzchak, 'My son, do you see what I see?' He answered, 'Yes.' He said to his two servants, 'Do you see what I see?' They answered, 'No.' He said, 'Since the donkey does not see and you do not see either, remain here with the donkey.'" This midrash indicates the need to cultivate a spiritual view of the world, one which looks beyond the merely physical aspects of life.

Rashi, adopting an educational approach, lists the miracles from the smallest to the greatest. First, one has to observe the basic mitzvot such as Shabbat. Then one also must address the mitzvot pertaining to interpersonal relationships and kindness. Finally, it is important that there should be some lofty spiritual goal – a cloud attached to the tent. The Midrash, on the other hand, simply lists the miracles in the order of their actual realization in the case of Rivka: since she had a superior spiritual purpose, the other phenomena followed naturally.

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