

THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



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This week's Parasha sheet is dedicated in memory of Samir Ben Yakov and Sabiha Tricot. Yehi Zichro Baruch.

RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
TAL



CONFUSING OUR MINDS!

Our Parsha begins on a sad note. Sarah the wife of Avraham and the Mother of the Jewish people passes away.

Rashi explains the reason for the juxtaposition of the death of Sarah to the Akeidat Yitzchak (sacrificing of Yitzchak) at the end of last week's Parsha, as, when Sarah heard the news that her only son Yitzchak had nearly been Shechted (slaughtered), her soul flew out and she died.

This is very difficult to understand. We read in Kohelet (8) Shomer Mitsvot Loh Yedah Davar Rah – someone who guards and performs the commandments of Hashem is protected from all evil. So how come, the cause of Sarah's death was the Akeidat Yitzchak?

Furthermore we know that Sarah was an even greater prophetess than Avraham, so how is it possible that upon receiving this news her soul could not cope and she seemingly died of shock?

Every day we pray to Hashem to get rid of the Yetzer Hara (evil inclination), Milfanenu UmeAcharenu – from before us

and from after us. What is the meaning of this?

The Yetzer Hara tries to prevent and delay us from carrying out any Mitzvot. Thus before we do a Mitzvah the Yetzer Hara is already at work to try and prevent our good deed. In addition, not only does he try before the deed, but even after the deed has been done, and we think that we are safe and home, the Yetzer Hara works hard to try and make us regret it, for if we regret a Mitzvah then it can be counted Chas Ve Shalom, as if we never really did it. Thus we pray to Hashem to protect us from this Yetzer Hara both before we perform His Mitzvot and after.

The Satan, knew that the days of Sarah in this world were coming to the end. He knew the exact time of her death; he therefore came to Sarah immediately before her death and reported the act of Akeidat Yitzchak to her. Her soul then departed and she died. The Satan's aim was to make people think, by what they could see that Sarah died because she heard about the Akeida. However, in reality this was not the case, she did not die because she heard the news, rather she died naturally, because that was her destined time to die. It is for this reason that the Torah emphasises in length at the beginning of the Parsha, the days of her life (she lived one hundred years and twenty years and seven years etc) to teach us that on that day her life was ended completely.

When Avraham came to eulogise Sarah the verse states VelivKota – (spelt with a small Chaf). The Ba'al Haturim explains that when Avraham cried over the death of his wife, it was a halfhearted cry. ►

> MAZAL TOV TO

Sally & Andrew Davis
on the Bar Mitzva of their son Gavriel

Rob & Natalie Hakim
on the Brit of their son

Yitschak & Elisheva Benshabbat
on the Brit of their son Yishai Shmuel

David Tovim & Aliza Amar
on their engagement

” THE WEEKLY QUOTE

"You can't change how people treat you or what they say about you. All you can do is change how you react to it."

> UPCOMING EVENTS

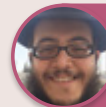
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DVAR TORAH

Confusing our minds!
RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

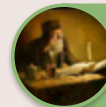
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This newsletter contains Divrei Torah and may contain Sheimot - Please dispose of accordingly

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The reason is that although he missed her sincerely, nevertheless he realised that she had died in good (old) age.

Avraham realised that the only reason she died, was that her time was up. He realised that the Satan was trying to attack and convince him, that the Akeida was a mistake, and it was the Akeida that caused Sarah's death. But he stood fast, and Hashem helped guard him from this Yetzer Harah that appeared even after the Mitzvah Akeida.

The Torah teaches us that in life, there are two stages to performing a Mitzvah. We might think it is difficult enough to persuade ourselves to perform the mitzvah, and once we have performed the Mitzvah, we have done our part. But we learn from this episode that the Yetzer

Harah never gives up, and even once we think we have succeeded in conquering him, and perfected ourselves in that Mitzvah, he comes again to revisit us, and try and dilute our strength, tries to convince us that the Mitzvah we did was a mistake. We have to stand fast, be strong, and pray to Hashem to constantly guard us from this Yetzer Harah. Just the other day I was sitting at a bus stop in Jerusalem, next to me was learned man, who took out a Chumash to read. Fifteen minutes past and every so often he would lift up his eyes to see if the bus had come. When the bus did finally come he was so engrossed in his leaning that he missed the bus. Imagine what a Yetzer Harah that man must have had, now he was going to have to wait at least another twenty minutes for the next bus. It is in these kind of cases that the Yetzer

Harah flourishes. It is our duty to know our Yetzer Harah, he is devious, crafty and knowledgeable. The Gemarah gives advice that when one feels the Yetzer Harah is dominating he should go and learn Torah. Torah is the source of life, it helps a person's merit, and can defend a person at a time of need. Our forefather Avraham Avinu showed us the way. He taught us how to conquer the Yetzer, perform the Commandment of G-d at the highest level, and never to regret a good deed. May Hashem bless us all Ushemor Tzeenu UvoENU, Viysalek Hasatan Milfanenu UmeAcharenu – and guard us from this evil inclination, so that we may perform His Commandments with Levav Shalem – a pure heart Amen. ■

RABBI AMOS AZIZOFF - CHABAD OF BOREHAMWOOD AND ELSTREE

DVAR
TORAH



PARASHA INSIGHTS

Our Torah is a Book of Commandments, yet Sefer Beraishit, the longest of the Five Books, deals mostly with the history of our Matriarchs and Patriarchs. It is through their lives that we learn proper conduct, morals, and values. It is they who impart to us the road map for our lives. It is they who teach us how to deal with our many challenges and respond with strength to the ups and downs of life.

In this Parashah we encounter the very first funeral mentioned in the Torah, with the death of Sarah Imenu. The sages tell us that Sarah died of grief upon hearing that Avraham Avinu had actually sacrificed their only son, Itzhak. After sacrificing a ram at the site of the Akeida, Avraham Avinu and Itzhak returned only to discover that their beloved Sarah was no longer alive. Sarah's death

was extremely painful to Avraham. In all such situations, so many thoughts could plague a mourner. Perhaps the death could have been prevented... perhaps something more could have been done... perhaps.... Nevertheless, we find that Avraham never resorted to this type of self-destructive speculation or grief. While he wept for his beloved wife, he did so with limitations. The Torah text testifies to this as the word "V'LIVkoTAH – to bewail her" is written with a small letter Kaf, teaching us that Avraham did not succumb to depression, but restrained his grief, mourned with dignity, and thus brought honour to the memory of his beloved wife.

Significantly, as soon as the time of mourning passed, Avraham resumed his responsibilities as a father and began the search for a bride for his son, Itzhak. The lesson to be drawn from this is obvious: no matter how trying and how sorrowful our lot may be, we must nevertheless pick ourselves up and continue to fulfil our life mission.

Ultimately, we have to understand that everything that occurs is in G-d's Hands, so to speak. It is He who determines the number of the days of our lives. Even if there had been no Akeida, Sarah would have passed

away on that very same day. To reinforce this teaching, the passage opens with "the lifetime of Sarah," and concludes with "(these are) the years of Sara's life," emphasizing that our years are designated by G-d. We should never berate ourselves by second-guessing: "If I had called a different doctor...." "If we had gone to a different hospital....." "If I had been more alert....." "If... if... if..." In fact half of the word life is the word IF! Know that there is a G-d above you. Do what is in your power, trust the One Above, and respond to the challenges of life with strength.

Two passages in the book of Breishit announce death, but, paradoxically, both convey death using the word "life." We are informed of Sarah's demise with the words "Chayei Sarah-the life of Sarah," while the death of Yaacov is prefaced by the words, "Vayechi Yaacov-and Jacob lived," to teach us that if people are truly righteous, even when they pass on, their legacy continues and they remain alive. Let us learn from this powerful message of life, and strengthen our Emuna-belief in Hakadosh Baruch Hu. ■

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OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI TZVI YECHESKEL MICHELSON

The Rabbinic Council of Warsaw counted about 20 rabbis in its ranks, all of them Torah greats. Among them was one rabbi who was known for being a very active scholar, one that the Jews of Warsaw called the "Rav of Plonsk". However outside of Warsaw people knew him by his actual name, Rabbi Tzvi Yechezkel Michelson.

Rabbi Tzvi Yechezkel was born on Shevat 9, 5623 (1863) in Bilgorei, in the province of Lublin. His father was Rabbi Avraham Chaim (from a family that included many rabbis and Torah greats), and his mother was Chana Beila.

His parents hired the best personal tutor for him, and they also purchased valuable books for the boy. The young Tzvi Yechezkel began to assemble a nice library for himself, studying Torah "as I poured out my soul with great effort" (which he recounts in the introduction to his book Pinot HaBayit). By the age of 12, he already knew several tractates along with Tosaphot and portions of the Shulchan Aruch by heart. It was also at that time that he began to write Torah commentaries and entered into correspondence with the greats of the generation. When he grew up, he was sent to study in the Biala yeshiva. There he became close friends with the Rosh Yeshiva and Rav, the Rebbe Zev Nachum, who after a certain time addressed him in his letters as "the one whom I cherish as the apple of my eye."

He organized a national assembly on the problems concerning Shabbat observance. The assembly's invitation was signed by such figures as the Chafetz Chaim and Rabbi Menachem Zemba. Rabbi Tzvi Yechezkel also established an organization devoted to the purity of Jewish women, and he worked for the construction of mikvaot and public bathhouses that were modern and hygienic. Even though he was extremely occupied with the needs of the community, he found time to study Torah and publish a number of books. Nevertheless, many of his writings remained in manuscript form and were lost during the Holocaust.

Rabbi Tzvi Yechezkel worked intensely for settlements in Eretz Israel, and he generated great interest for etrogim of the Holy Land.

The story of his long and active life ended in great tragedy. He spent his last days in the Warsaw ghetto under Nazi servitude.

When the time came for the Rav to be sent to Auschwitz, he enveloped himself in his Tallit and Tefillin, then went to his room to study Gemara. When a Nazi came into his apartment to check if he was there, he drew back upon seeing the noble face of the Rav, then 80 years old, and exclaimed before leaving, "It's Moses himself!" The Rav then went outside into the square and joined the ranks of his Jewish brothers. He wanted to be with his fellow Jews at that terrible time, a time in which they were going to sanctify G-d's Name in holiness and purity. The elderly Rav stood straight and was immersed in thought. He perished in August 1943, along with the glorious Judaism of Warsaw. May G-d avenge his blood. Amen. ■



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

CAN A MAN OR WOMAN EAT OR DRINK PRIOR TO KIDDUSH ON SHABBAT MORNING?

The obligation to recite Kiddush on Shabbat morning takes effect only after the recitation of Shacharit. Therefore, before one prays on Shabbat morning, he is permitted to drink tea, coffee and water – those beverages that are allowed to be drunk before the morning prayers. Since the Kiddush obligation descends upon a person only after Shacharit, the prohibition against eating or drinking before Kiddush does not apply before he prays; hence, he is allowed to drink whatever is permissible to be drunk before one prays in the morning generally.

The question arises as to whether or not this Halacha applies to women, as well. According to the Ben Ish Chai (Rabbi Yosef Chaim of Baghdad, 1833-1909), women become obligated to recite Kiddush immediately when they awaken Shabbat morning, and therefore they may not eat or drink anything until they recite Kiddush. Others, however, including the Kaf Ha'chayim (Rabbi Chayim Palachi, rabbi of Izmir, Turkey, 19th century) and Chacham Bentzion Abba Shaul (Israel, 1924-1998), distinguish between women who normally pray Shacharit in the morning, and those who do not. If a woman normally prays Shacharit, then here status is no different from that of a man with regard to this Halacha, and her obligation to recite Kiddush does not take effect until after she prays Shacharit. But if a woman does not normally recite Shacharit, and she recites only the morning blessings and the like, then her Kiddush obligation takes effect immediately when she arises in the morning, and therefore she may not eat or drink anything until she first recites Kiddush. In such a case, when a woman must recite Kiddush in the morning, if she finds it difficult to recite the entire text of Kiddush she may recite from "Ve'shamru," or even from "Al Ken" or just the Beracha itself.

Summary: On Shabbat morning, a man may drink water, tea or coffee before the morning prayers, since the Kiddush obligation has yet to take effect. This applies as well to women who are generally accustomed to reciting Shacharit every morning. Women who normally do not recite Shacharit, however, must recite Kiddush before they eat or drink anything on Shabbat morning, and in such a case they need not recite the entire text of Kiddush. ■



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Kids STORY

HUMILITY, BORUCH HASHEM

"Chaim, did you get your Chumash test back?"

"Yes I did, Avi."

"Do you mind if I ask you how you did on the test?"

"I don't mind at all Avi. I got a 95."

"Ninety-five. That's great Chaim. You are so smart."

"Boruch Hashem."

"You always say that when I compliment you, Chaim."

"Say what?"

"Boruch Hashem.' Why do you say it?"

"My parents say it. They are wonderful role models. I always try to do what they do. Now you've got my curiosity going. I want to ask them why they always say 'Boruch Hashem'."

"When you find out, please tell me."

"Sure, Avi."

A few minutes later ...

"Mom, I'm home."

"Great to see you, Chaim. How was school today?"

"Great. I got a 95 in my Chumash test."

"Boruch Hashem."

"I'm glad that you said that, Mom."

"So am I."

"I always wanted to know why you say 'Boruch Hashem' whenever you hear good news, or whenever someone gives you a compliment."

"Chaim, you always ask the most thoughtful questions."

"Boruch Hashem."

"A compliment is a very nice thing. It tells a person about his good qualities. Think about it for a minute. Who gave the person his talents?"

"Hashem."

"Who gave him the opportunities to develop his good qualities?"

"Hashem."

"Who keeps a person alive every minute of every day?"

"Hashem."

"Therefore, who deserves to be blessed when a person does something good?"

"Hashem."

"Right. That is why we say, Boruch Hashem. Do you know one of the places that we learn this from, Chaim?"

"Let me guess -- this week's parsha."

"Correct! Eliezer, the servant of Avraham was a very humble person. He had many accomplishments to be proud of. He was in charge of the household of Avraham Avinu, a very wealthy and influential man. He had a staff of hundreds of people under him. He could even be considered a prince, because Avraham was like a king. Eliezer was a learned man; he learned Torah from Avraham Avinu. He was deserving of having miracles done for him."

"Really? Which miracles, Mom?"

"Hashem miraculously transported him to Haran. And lastly, he overcame his personal interest to have his own daughter marry Yitzchok, in order to carry out the wishes of his master, Avraham."

"Wow."

"After all of this, he was still very humble. How did Eliezer refer to himself?"

"I know, Mom. He said, 'I am a servant of Avraham.'" (Bereshis 24:34)

"Exactly, Chaim. He gave all of the credit to his master. That is what we do when we say, 'Boruch Hashem.' We are giving all of the credit to Him."

"Mom, you and Dad are so humble."

"Boruch Hashem, Chaim. We are just trying to do the right thing, and give credit where it is due. We must even thank Him for our humility."

"Mom, I have only one thing to say to that."

"What, Chaim?"

"Boruch Hashem."

TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- 1 Name the four couples buried in Kiryat Arba.
- 2 Who did Eliezer want Yitzchak to marry?
- 3 Why did Lavan run to greet Eliezer?
- 4 For how many years did Yaakov attend the Yeshiva of Ever?
- 5 Where was Avraham born?

Answer

- 1 23:2 - Adam and Chava, Avraham and Sara, Yitzchak and Rivka, Yaakov and Leah.
- 2 24:39 - His own daughter.
- 3 24:29 - Lavan coveted his money.
- 4 25:17 - 14 years.
- 5 24:7 - Ur Kasdim.





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