



# TAL

## CHAYEI SARA 5775

### THE COMMUNITY PARASHA SHEET

Shabbat Begins 15:58 Shabbat Ends 17:02

#### Confusing Our Minds!

**Rabbi Jonathan Tawil**



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 Shecht-ed (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 Yetser Hara (evil inclination) Milfanenu UmeAcharenu – from before us and from after us. What is the meaning of this?

The Yetser Hara tries to prevent and delay us from carrying out any Mitzvot. Thus before we do a Mitzvah the Yetser 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 Yetser 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 Yetser 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 at length in 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

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wife, it was a half hearted cry. The reason is that although he missed her sincerely, nevertheless he realised that she had died in a 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 Hara that appeared even after the Mitsvah Akeida.

The Torah teaches us that in life, there are two stages to performing a Mitsvah. We might think it is difficult enough to persuade ourselves to perform the Mitsvah, and once we have performed the Mitsvah, we have done our part. But we learn from this episode that the Yetzer Hara never gives up, and even once we think we have succeeded in conquering him and perfected ourselves in that Mits-

vah, he comes again to revisit us and try and dilute our strength. He tries to convince us that the Mitsvah we did was a mistake. We have to stand fast, be strong, and pray to Hashem to constantly guard us from this Yetzer Hara.



A while ago, I was sitting at a bus stop in Jerusalem and next to me was a learned man, who took out a Chumash to read. Fifteen minutes passed 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 Hara 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 this kind of case that the Yetzer Hara flourishes. It is our duty to know our Yetzer Hara. He is devious, crafty and knowledgeable. The Gemarah gives advice that when one feels the Yetzer Hara is dominating namely that 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 commandments of G-d at the highest level and never to regret a good deed. May Hashem bless us all Ushemor Tzezeno 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.

This week's parasha discusses the purchase of a burial plot by Avraham Avinu for his wife Sarah. He buys the plot from the newly elected head of the Hittites, a scoundrel of a fellow by the name of Ephron.

The Medrash describes Ephron as a person who was "nivhal l'hon" – a person who became confused when he saw the money Avraham was prepared to give for the burial site.

However, something does not seem right. Avraham approached the sons of Chet. He told them that he needed a burial plot. Ephron got up in front of everyone and magnanimously told Avraham that he would GIVE him a burial plot, no charge what so ever. He offered it as an outright present, stating basically that it was a privilege to be able to give Avraham the land.

But Avraham insisted that he did not want the field as a gift. He wanted to pay for it. Ephron responded, "What is a mere 400 pieces of silver between friends. You don't have to pay me."

Suddenly, Ephron mentioned a price! What happened? Where is the transition? Why does Ephron suddenly switch from being the gracious generous giving person to 'What is 400 bucks between friends?'

Rav Simcha Zissel records an incident in the life of the Rambam. A group of wise men approached him and told him that they could change the nature of a cat, training it to be as gracious and polite

and as giving as a human being, making the cat into a servile butler. The Rambam argued that it was impossible to change the nature of a cat.

The group of 'wise men' set about for weeks and weeks to train a cat. They trained it to walk on its hind legs. They dressed the cat up in a little suit. It was trained that when people came into the room the cat would escort them to their seats. In fact, the cat acted just like a butler. They further trained the cat to hold a little cup and to serve the people when they got to their seats. They invited the Rambam to show him their accomplishment

p.t.o.

## Parasha Insights

**Rabbi Mashiach Kelaty**



and to prove to him that it is possible to train an animal to be just like a human being.

The cat greeted the Rambam and guided him to his seat. When the Rambam got to his seat he removed a box from his pocket. In the box was a little mouse. He dropped the mouse on the floor. The cat suddenly forgot that it was a butler and scampered after the mouse. The Rambam turned to the wise men and said, "A cat is a cat and will always be a cat."

Rav Simcha Zissel concluded that unless a human being learns to train himself, he will also be like a cat. There are times when he may act kind and gracious and cultured. But when his button gets pressed and he is no longer in control, he can lose it all - to his own equivalent of the mouse.

Avraham's words to Ephron: "I am prepared to give money for the field. Take it from me" pushed

**"But when his button gets pressed and he is no longer in control, he can lose it all"**

Ephron's button. Reaching into his pocket and taking out the shekels of silver was equivalent to the Rambam's dropping the mouse in front of the cat. Ephron lost it right there. The jingle of the money was all he needed to throw off his magnanimous show of generosity and become a greedy money-lusting estate agent.

Every human being potentially has his own 'mouse', whether it is a real mouse or money or food, or wheth-

er it is other physical lusts. We all have that thing that can reduce us from being a human being to just a two-legged animal.

A cat cannot become a 'mensch'. But a man CAN become a 'mensch'. A person can learn to control himself. That, in fact, is man's spiritual task in this world. The challenge of man is to not 'lose it' when confronted by all the potential lusts of this world. We don't want to become like the cat that chases after the mouse.

As Jews, we are built for better things. And that makes for a lot of happy mice.

When the Maharam Schick was 11 years old he went to learn in his uncle Rav Yitzchak Frenkel's yeshiva. At age 14 he entered Pressburg the prestigious yeshiva of the Chatam Sofer. When the Chatam Sofer asked a question that stumped all the older talmidim, the scrawny little 14 year old came up with an impressive answer. This impressed the Chatam Sofer, who then invited him to eat the Motza'ei Yom Kippur Seudah at his table. This was the first of many meals as for

the next years while in Pressburg Yeshiva, he ate at his Rebbe's table on Shabbos and Yom Tov. The Chatam Sofer affectionately referred to him as his "Seforim Shrank" since all the wisdom of Torah was to be found in him. When the town of Yeregin, near Pressburg, asked the Chatam Sofer for a recommendation for a Rav, the Chatam Sofer told them if they

took the young Moshe Schick they will not regret it and will be very content with their choice for many years. He remained Rav in Yeregin for 20 years and started a successful Yeshiva. From there he moved to the town of Chust, where his Yeshiva thrived with over 800 talmidim.

**Our Chachamim**



**Halachot Of Shemita**

**Rabbi Dov Levy**



Leniencies of Shemita Produce  
There are two main leniencies with respect to growing produce in Israel during Shemita. They are 'Heter Mechira' and 'Otzar Bet Din'. The principle of Heter Mechira is to sell the land to Non-Jews whereby, ac-

cording to this opinion, laws of Shemita are no longer applicable to it. Otzar Bet Din will be discussed

next week.  
**Is it okay to buy Israeli produce which relies on Heter Mechira?**

No, it should not be relied on in first instance as many dispute its validity. You should check the supervision of

all Israeli produce and whether it is reliant on Heter Mechira.

**My friend buys produce which relies on Heter Mechira. Do I have to consider his pots and pans non-kosher since he cooks these products in them?**

No it is acceptable to rely on Heter Mechira with respect to the Shemita produce absorbed in his pots. Being stringent in such a situation is forbidden.

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"And he spoke to the children of Cheit, 'I am an immigrant and a resident among you. Sell me a property for a burial place... Speak on my behalf to Efron to sell me the Cave of Machpeilah...' He weighed out for Efron 400 shekels of the best quality." (23:3-4,8,16)

**QUESTION:** If Avraham was interested in buying a piece of land from Efron, why did he talk to the children of Cheit and not with Efron directly?

**ANSWER:** There is a *halachah* known as "*bar metzra*" (*Choshen Mishpat* 175). When one wants to sell a field, one's neighbours have the right to purchase before anyone else. Avraham was afraid that if he dealt directly with Efron, the

neighbors might object to the sale and decide to purchase it. He, therefore, took a number of measures in order to make sure that the law of *bar metzra* should not apply.

1. When one sells a field back to its original owners, the law of *bar metzra* does not apply. Originally, *Eretz Yisrael* was the property of the children of Shem, Avraham's ancestor. Afterwards, Canaan, of whom the children of Cheit were descendants, took the land (Rashi 12:5).

Therefore, Avraham said "I am 'geir vetoshav' — 'an immigrant and resident among you.' Though I am now an immigrant in the country, I am really a full-fledged resident. Since my ancestors were the original owners, I have priority and nobody can object to the sale."

2. Concerned that the children of Cheit might still not agree, he asked them to speak to Efron on his behalf. This would remove any doubt that they all agreed to the sale.

3. Fearing that, at the last minute, they might decide to buy the land after all, Avraham made sure to use currency of a better quality. According to *halachah* when the buyer gives better quality money than the neighbours, they no longer have any rights to oppose the sale.



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**MAZAL TOV - Jeremy and Miriam Segal on the birth of their son**



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