

עֵפְרַת הַשָּׁבֻעַ

A Weekly Torah Publication from the Students of Mesivta Ateres Yaakov
Ruth & Hyman Simon High School

פרשת חיי שרה
כ"ב מרחשון תשס"ה
November 6, 2004

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THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

Rabbi Leibe Wolf, 10 Grade Rebbe

ויבא אברהם לספוד לשרה ולבכותה [וכג:ב]

AND AVRAHAM CAME TO EULOGIZE SARAH AND TO BEWAIL HER.

Our parsha begins by describing the death of our matriarch Sarah Imeinu, and how Avraham came to mourn and to cry over her death. These pesukim are written in the Torah immediately after the greatest of Avraham Avinu's ten tests, *akeidas Yitzchak*. This is because it was the Satan's report to Sarah about the *akeidah* which caused "פריחת נשמתה" and her subsequent death.

The Mephorshim comment that the level of Sarah's prophecy surpassed that of Avraham's, as it states in the *pasuk*, כל אשר תאמר אליך, שרה שמע בקולה. How then was Sarah "caught by surprise" so to speak, and *nifteres* upon hearing the report of the Satan?

Furthermore, why does Rashi say on the words at the end of the *pasuk*, ויבא אברהם לספוד לשרה, that the death of Sarah is juxtaposed to *akeidas Yitzchak*? Why is this connection not commented upon in the beginning of the *pasuk* - ותמת שרה -?

Perhaps the answer can be found in our understanding of the *pasuk* at the start of the *akeidah* - והאלקים נסה את אברהם.

Why does the *pasuk* state that Avraham was tested? Surely Yitzchak was the one who was tested? Yitzchak was ready to give up his life on the *mizbeach* completely *lishem shomayim*.

Avraham Avinu was the epitome of *chesed*. Every act Avraham performed was an expression of his great benevolence. The *akeidah* however was contrary to this *midah*. Binding his son Yitzchak on

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A LIFE WELL DONE

Moshe Dovid Katz, 12th Grade

ויהיו חיי שרה . . . שני חיי שרה

AND SARAH'S LIFE WAS. . . THE YEARS OF SARAH'S LIFETIME

In the first *pasuk* of this week's *parsha*, the Torah describes to us the life of Sarah Imeinu. This seems to be a very simple *pasuk*. However, the Or Hachaim is bothered by the language of the *pasuk*. Why is the Torah describing to us the life of Sarah with the strange *lashon* of 'vayihu', while in most other places the Torah uses the word 'vayichi'?

The Or Hachaim brings down two answers. One answer is that Sarah died because she was unable to accept the fact that her son Yitzchak was spared at the last moment. She was happy that he was willing to go as the *korban* – it was a commandment of Hashem. However, when she found out that he didn't end up going, she thought that he backed out and refused to go as the sacrifice. Sarah, unable to make peace with this, died.

We see here that Sarah died due to the state of a painful experience. The word 'vayihu' alludes to this fact of Sarah's death, whereas the word 'vayichi' does not.

The second answer is based on *Pirke deRabbi Eliezer* [32]. It explains there that Sarah died because the *Satan* had informed her that Yitzchak would die in the very near future. Due to these circumstances, Sarah's life was cut short. This is implied by the word 'vayihu', which reflects "a new existence – *havaya*." This means that Sarah was given a certain number of years, but the *Satan*'s information cut her life short.

In addition we can say that this is the implication of the word *shnei* at the end of the *pasuk*. Although her life was cut short, Hashem still gave her credit as if she had completed all that she needed to complete in her entire life.

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LEIBE WOLF
לע"נ שרה שיינדל
בת ארי' משה נ"י
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the *mizbeach* and being fully prepared to *shecht* him was certainly an act of *gevurah* (strength). The *midah* of Yitzchak was *gevurah* - as we know he is described as *Pachad Yitzchak*. This *nisayon* was performed in accordance with Yitzchak's innate character. Avraham, however, triumphed over his *midah* of *chesed* and the greatest of his tests was performed with *gevurah*! Therefore the *malach* said to Avraham after the *akeidah*, **עַתָּה יָדַעְתִּי כִּי יִרָא אֱלֹקִים, אַתָּה כִּי** *Now I know that you fear Hashem.*

Not only did Avraham serve Hashem with *ahava*, but he overcame his innate character and did an act of *din*, which stems from *yiras Hashem* and not *ahavas Hashem*. Therefore in the *pasuk* the *malach* states, "Now I know that you are a *yorei Elokim*."

The Orach Chaim explains "שני חיי שרה"- Sarah completed all the years of her life. However, the *akeidah* was the cause of *פריחה נשמתה* - why, if her years were completed, was her death brought about *davkah* through the *akeidah*?

The Chasam Sofer explains that even when

a *tzaddik* completes his days and years, at times he is given extra life to help be *mikarev* others and bring them closer to their goals.

Sarah *Imeinu* completed her work, but she was given an extension in order to complement what Avraham *Avinu* lacked. Avraham was the epitome of kindness, and there are times when one must deal with others with the *midah* of *gevurah*. Avraham was tested by having the influence of Yishmael on Yitzchak. Sarah, who realized the evil influence of Yishmael, asked Avraham to send Yishmael away. However, Avraham *Avinu* with his whole essence being that of *chesed* - had *rachmonus* on Yishmael, as the *pasuk* states - **וַיִּרַע הַדָּבָר מֵאֵד בְּעֵינָי** - *אברהם על אודת בנו*. Hashem commanded Avraham to listen to Sarah because he was secondary to Sarah in prophecy - she knew how to use her *midas hadin*. To counter Yishmael's evil influence on her son Yitzchak required the *midah* of justice. Therefore, Hashem allowed Sarah to live and aid Avraham in his *nisayon* which required the *midah* of *gevurah*.

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by Tzadok Picker

שִׁים נֹא יִדָּךְ תַּחַת יְרֵכֵי [כַּדָּבָר]



When explaining to his servant Eliezer the guidelines for finding a wife for Yitzchak, Avraham *Avinu* tells him to place his hands on his circumcision. The *Baal HaTurim* points out that the words, "נֹא יִדָּךְ" has the same *gematria* as the word *מילה*. Rashi explains that Avraham had Eliezer place his hands on his *bris mila* because not only did he have to make a *shevuah* (promise) on a *mitzvah*, but he also picked this specific thing because it was so dear to him.

The *Kli Yakar* however brings a different reason, and explains that the *mitzvah* of *mila* represents a *geder* (protection) from *arayus* (immoral behavior). The father of the *Canaanim*, Cham, acted immorally with his own father Noach. Therefore, Avraham knew that Yitzchak, who was blessed through his *bris mila* and protected because of it, could not possibly live with someone cursed as a result of such immoral acts. This is what Avraham was stressing by declaring a *shevuah* through his *bris mila*. . . through his protection against *arayus* - that a *bracha* cannot join with a curse. May our own connection to Hashem protect us and guide us against such cursed people and immoral societies as well.

STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

by Avi Lieberman

The *yeshiva* world was engulfed and left in awe from the integrity and compassion with which *HaGaon Rav Aryeh Leib Steinman shlit"a* took upon himself his recent trip from *Eretz Yisroel* to America. This journey around America was not simply a pleasant expedition; rather it was his response to the pleas of those who asked for his words of *chizuk* and encouragement through the treacherous times we face in exile. A man who for the first seventy years of his life was hidden from the world and engulfed in the *Beis Medrash*, is now at the helm of *Torah* in *Eretz Yisroel* and beyond since the passing of *HaRav Menachem Mann Shach zt'l*. This is the true *gadlus* of *Rav Steinman*; that his insights and *chizuk* which apply so vehemently to our present lives come from the essence of a man who is steeped in *Torah* and was until recently hidden from the world. His *chizuk* come solely from *Torah*!



HoRav Aryeh Leib Steinman shlit"a

During his stay in America, many stories came forth about this *gadol biTorah* which until recently were hidden along with his *tzidkus*. *Rav Steinman* made his first visit to America in the spring of 1998 along with the *Gerer Rebbe shlit"a*. It is told that after his return to *Eretz Yisroel*, *Rav Steinman* fasted for many weeks, in order to counter all the honor that was presented to him on his visit to America.

A story is told about *Rav Steinman* when he was a young teenager learning in *yeshiva*, there were a few *talmidim* who didn't like that this younger *bachur* was considered such a *masmid*. They therefore placed a doll in his bed one day, to present the message that, "This is you compared to the

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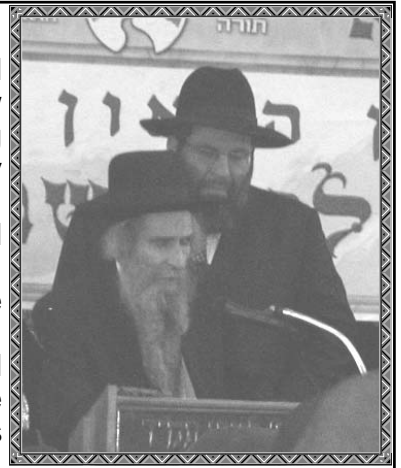
STORIES OF TZADDIKIM (continued from page 2)

other bachurim in the yeshiva; small and unworthy of the titles you receive!"

A few months later around Chanukah time, these bachurim realized that the doll hasn't been touched from where they placed it on the bed a few months ago! They investigated and were shocked at their findings – young Aryeh Leib doesn't sleep in his bed. He learns all day and falls asleep by his spot in the Beis Medrash, never sleeping on his comfortable mattress. They thus realized that the *gadlus* of this bachur far outweighed his age and adolescence.

A final anecdote brings to attention the disheveled state of the gadol's beard. It is told that many years ago while stroking his beard on Shabbos, Rav Steinman accidentally pulled out a hair. He was so grieved and distressed by the fact he inadvertently was *michalel Shabbos*, that he took upon himself never to stroke his beard again. He has kept this *shemirah* up to this present day.

Through these small sketches that are insufficient to fully define the *tzidkus* of Rav Aryeh Leib Steinman, may we truly appreciate his selfless journey that he carried out for the sake of Klal Yisroel. May we be *zoche* to his continued guidance and leadership, and be led to the ultimate redemption through the exertion of such leaders of Klal Yisroel, *bimheirah bivameinu*.



HoRav Steinman speaking at Yeshiva Darchei Torah in Far Rockaway, NY. In background is the Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Yaakov Bender

MOSHE DOVID KATZ (continued from page 1)

While this is very admirable, these answers seem to be problematic considering what is found by Yaakov Avinu. At the beginning of Parshas Vayichi, the Torah uses both terms, *Vayichi* and *Vayihu* to describe his end of days. The term *vayichi* makes sense since we know Yaakov didn't die in a state of pain. Yet the *pasuk* also says *vayihu* which would imply that he did! Why is this? How come the term *vayihu* is over there also? It must be because *vayihu* doesn't imply a state of pain, which raises a problem with the Or Hachaim's first answer!

The following answer can be given. The Torah says *vayichi* by Yaakov when talking about his seventeen years in *Mitzraim*. Those years were good; he was with his family, the Egyptians respected him, and he died knowing when *Moshiach* would come and the suffering of his children would end. We see, however, that the Torah uses the term *vayihu* when referring to his *whole* life. Overall, his life was pain. He was always running, whether it was from his brother Eisav or his *shverer shver Lavan*. Then, of course, there were the years of his life spent in mourning over the "death" of his son. Therefore, the Torah writes *vayihu* by his entire life.

Yet by Sarah it was different. During her first ninety years of life, she was unable to have children. It was misery, and her slave woman Hagar bore a son before her. Furthermore, she had her experiences with Pharaoh and Avimelech, where

she was unwillingly taken from her husband. To top it all off, she died in pain. This is why the Torah uses the word *vayihu* and not *Vayichi* to describe her life.

Another point we can add is that Yaakov had a whole life of misery – but only until a certain point. This is why the different *lishonos* are used when referring to each part of his life. By Sarah, however, there is no point at which you could differentiate between her good times and bad times. So where does the Torah show her good times? It is implied in the word '*chayei*'. The Torah first says, "*This is the life of Sarah*", and then at the end of the *pasuk* it again says "*and this was the life of Sarah*." Why does the Torah say it twice? The reason is to tell us about the good events in Sarah's life, and that through all the hardships she truly did have good experiences.

There is an important lesson to be learned from this. This can teach us that no matter how bad things are you have to look at them for the good. You have to look at the good times in your life and gain the strength to succeed through the hard times. By doing this we'll be able to go to Olam Habbah with an accomplished life, and receive the benefits of our reward as if we had completed our goals. Sarah *Imeinu* used this to bring herself closer to Hashem and perform *mitzvos*. If we do this as well and apply it to our *mitzvos*, we too, *im yirtzeh Hashem*, will receive full benefits just as Sarah did.

RABBI WOLF (continued from page 2)

When Sarah heard that Avraham had bound his son Yitzchak as a korban and was prepared to *shecht* him, she realized that Avraham had brought forth *מכח אל הפועל* - his own *midas hagevurah*. Once this strength had flourished, Avraham no longer needed Sarah's assistance, and therefore "פרחה נשמתה" - her soul departed.

We can now understand why Rashi states that the juxtaposition of the *akeidah* to the death of Sarah *Imeinu* is on the words 'ויבא אברהם וכו'. Avraham was coming straight from the *akeidah* where he had exhibited his own *gevurah*, to Chevron where he heard the report of the death of Sarah, his helpmate in *gevurah* throughout his entire life. Let us hope that each of us will use our attributes, as Sarah did throughout her life, to achieve our greatest potential. We will then fulfill the words of the *pasuk* בלע המות לנצח and witness the *techiyas hameisim* of Sarah *Imeinu* together with all of our deceased relatives.

אמת ליעקב

Weekly Insights from *Moreinu HoRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l*

In this week's *parsha*, we read about Eliezer's mission to find a wife for Yitzchak. The Torah describes how Eliezer found Rivka, and convinced her father and brother to allow her to marry Yitzchak. As Eliezer neared Avraham's tent, Rivka saw Yitzchak from a distance. Having never seen Yitzchak, Rivka did not recognize him, and asked Eliezer who he was. Eliezer responded that he was his master, to whom Rivka was betrothed. There is a question asked by several of the *miforshim* concerning this dialogue. Why did Eliezer refer to Yitzchak as his master? Avraham was his master, and he should have referred to Yitzchak as his master's son. Based on a Rashi, the *miforshim* answer that in order to make Yitzchak a more appealing mate, Avraham had signed over to Yitzchak all his possessions, including Eliezer, and as such Eliezer now referred to Yitzchak as his master.

HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky *zt"l* asks a question on this *pshtat*. The document that gave Yitzchak all of Avraham's possessions was signed and given to Eliezer before he set out on his mission. Nevertheless, we still find that Eliezer referred to Avraham as his master, and Yitzchak as the son of his master, even after this. Why did Eliezer only start referring to Yitzchak as his master when he got back from his search? Rav Yaakov answers, that as the purpose of the contract was to help Yitzchak find a wife; the contract only came into effect after a wife had

been chosen. As such, Eliezer waited until Rivka consented to marrying Yitzchak before accepting Yitzchak as his master.

Rav Yaakov asks another question on this topic. While Eliezer was davening for success in finding a wife for Yitzchak, he referred to Avraham as his master. This seems to be somewhat inappropriate. The Gemara in Masseches Kidushin (ג"מ) tells us that Uriah HaChitti was considered to have rebelled against Dovid HaMelech, because he referred to Yoav as his master, while standing in front of David. This was considered to be a rebellion, as it is not appropriate to refer to a personal master in front of a king, who is a master over the entire kingdom. If this was considered as inappropriate, it was surely inappropriate to refer to a personal master while standing before Hashem, who is the Master of all masters?

Rav Yaakov answers that in this context, Eliezer was not referring to Avraham as his master, but rather as his rebbe. There is a halacha that if a rebbe honors one of his talmidim, it is then permitted to honor the talmid in front of the rebbe. Eliezer was not allowed to refer to Avraham by his first name, as he had learned Torah from him. As such, it was considered as if Hashem had given honor to Avraham. Therefore, Eliezer was allowed to refer to Avraham with the honorific title of "rebbe," even while talking to Hashem.

When Rabbi Leibe Wolf, now the tenth grade rebbe at Mesivta Ateres Yaakov was a talmid in Torah Vodaath, he posed the following question to the Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Avraham Pam *zt"l*. When yeshiva was in session, Rabbi Wolf resided in the Torah Vodaath dormitory, which is across the street from the yeshiva. He asked Rav Pam if he should recite Birchas HaTorah in his dorm room each morning, or would it be more proper to recite it in the beis medrash when he recited Birchos HaShachar?

Rav Pam responded with wonder: "If you don't say it in your room, what will you have to think about on your walk from the dormitory to the beis medrash?" To Rav Pam, it was taken for granted that a ben Torah's every available moment is spent pondering thoughts of Torah.

Rabbi Wolf commented, "So many times I watched as rebbe made his way to yeshiva, all the while his eyes focused on the ground, engrossed in Torah as he walked."

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