

# THE Chabad WEEKLY

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The name of this week's Torah portion is Chayei Sarah, "Life of Sarah." This seems a strange title for a portion that tells of Sarah's demise and events connected with her passing.

The Torah portion speaks of three things: a) Avraham's purchase of the Me'aras HaMachpeilah and Sarah's internment there; b) Yitzchak's marriage; and c) Avraham's taking Keturah as his wife.

All these events are related to Sarah's passing:

Avraham purchased the Me'aras HaMachpeilah after Sarah's death so that she could be buried there; he made no effort to purchase the cave while his wife was alive.

Yitzchak's marriage came about as a result of the Akeidah, for it was then that Avraham realized that had anything untoward happened to the lad, he would have passed on without children. And it was the Akeidah that precipitated Sarah's passing. Avraham's marriage to Keturah was also connected to Sarah's demise.

Moreover, even the first verse of the portion - "Sarah lived 127 years..." - relates to her passing, as the years of one's life are counted after one has passed on. Since all the events in the Torah portion are related to Sarah's demise, why is it titled "Chayei Sarah," "Life of Sarah"?

In Iggeres HaKodesh, the Alter Rebbe quotes the Zohar: "When a tzaddik departs from the world, he is to be found in all worlds more than in his lifetime." He explains that the life of a truly righteous individual is a life of the spirit; filled with faith, awe and love of G-d. These three aspects are to be found to an even greater degree after a tzaddik's demise, since the limitations of the physical are then lifted.

The three events that highlight this Torah portion thus reflect its title, since they allude to aspects of Sarah's service that reached their culmination only after her departure: The Gemara notes that a man brings only raw food into the house; it is his wife who transforms it into tasty meals. Thus the wife is called the "mainstay of the house," for she refines that which her husband brings home.

The same was so with regard to Avraham and Sarah. Avraham was removed from worldly matters, for which reason he felt that it would be possible for Yishmael to be his heir - he saw Yishmael's potential rather than his actual state. It was Sarah who saw Yishmael for what he truly was. She was also able to convince Avraham that Yitzchak become his rightful heir.

So too, the three events described in the Torah portion came about through the influence of Sarah and constituted her true life: Although Avraham had the ability to use physicality for the sake of G-dliness, he limited his interaction with the physical either to that which was actually part of himself - the commandment of milah - or that which belonged to him. Through Sarah, however, sanctity was brought into a portion of the world that was external to her - it was because of Sarah that Avraham purchased (and thereby elevated) the Me'aras HaMachpeilah.

The second tale in the Torah portion, that of Yitzchak's marriage, is also connected to Sarah, for it was she who convinced Avraham that Yishmael could not be his heir. In order for Yitzchak to be considered the Patriarch's rightful heir, it was of course necessary that he marry and have children.

Moreover, while Avraham fathered Yishmael, and had children from Keturah as well, Sarah had only Yitzchak. She therefore felt the need for Yitzchak to marry and carry on the lineage more acutely.

So too with regard to Avraham's marriage to Keturah and his fathering of children with her. It was because of Sarah that "Avraham gave all that he had to Yitzchak," while to the other children "he gave presents and sent them away from his son Yitzchak." [Based on Likkutei Sichos, Vol. V, pp. 338-342, From; A Chassidic Dimension - Vol 4, sichosinenglish.org]

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*"And the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold"*

(Gen. 24:22) The gifts that Eliezer gave to Rebecca were fraught with meaning: the "half shekel" alluded to the half shekel the Jews would be required to contribute to the Sanctuary, while the "two bracelets" alluded to the Tablets of the Law. The half shekel is symbolic of tzedaka (charity), which is considered so great that it contains within it all the other commandments; the Tablets are symbolic of the entire Torah. The gifts were thus an allusion to the foundation of the Jewish home: the performance of mitzvot, and the study of Torah. (Likutei Sichot) (From: L'Chaim 5761, #645)

## A Limitless Treasure

*The disciples of the Maggid of Mezeritch had begged their master many times to show them Elijah the Prophet. Their persistence paid off; when a gathering of poritzim, wealthy Polish landowners, was being held the Maggid acceded to their request. The Maggid instructed his disciples to stand in a certain location and watch the poritzim ride by. The third poritz they would see, he informed them, would be Elijah the Prophet. "And if you are worthy," the Maggid added, "you will even merit to hear words of Torah from his lips."*

*The disciples followed the Maggid's instructions. They stood and waited in the exact spot the Maggid had indicated. When the third poritz rode by they hesitantly approached his carriage. True, he looked like an ordinary Polish poritz, but hadn't the Maggid declared that he was none other than Elijah the prophet? Addressing him in Polish, they deferentially asked if they could speak with his lordship as they had a very important matter to discuss. To their surprise the "poritz" responded by flinging sharp insults and curses at them, after which he rode off to join the other landowners.*

*The bewildered and heartbroken disciples returned to the Maggid and related what had happened. They told him that they had seen Elijah the Prophet, for they didn't doubt for a moment that the poritz was, in truth, the prophet. But when they asked to speak with him he responded with a barrage of deprecations.*

*The Maggid's response was unexpected. "You rightly deserved the treatment he gave you! You knew for certain, for I gave you all the signs, that you were standing in the very presence of Elijah the Prophet. You should have addressed him in the holy tongue! You should have said to him 'Bless us!' instead of speaking to him in Polish and timidly asking the 'poritz' for an audience. If you could still relate to him as a poritz after I told you that he is Elijah the Prophet, you deserve the treatment you received!"*

The Torah (in Deuteronomy) states, "You are a holy people to G-d your G-d." Every Jew is holy. Every Jew is, as the Baal Shem Tov taught, a trove of unlimited treasures. But it's not enough to know in our heads that a fellow Jew is holy, that he has a wealth of goodness and G-dliness within him. It's insufficient to believe with absolutely certainty that what the Torah and great Jewish teachers of all generations have said about the worth of every Jew is true.

We have to relate to our brother or sister not according to what appearances tell us. From the beginning our entire interaction has to be in accordance with his or her true, goodly and holy nature. Then, surely, we will merit to see Elijah the Prophet - the harbinger of the Messianic Era - and ask of him, "Bless us." (Rabbi Shmuel Butman L'Chaim 5761, #645)

IN MATERIAL MATTERS ONE SHOULD ALWAYS LOOK AT HE WHOSE SITUATION IS LOWER THAN ONE'S OWN, AND THANK THE GOOD G-D FOR HIS KINDNESS TO HIM.  
IN SPIRITUAL MATTERS ONE SHOULD ALWAYS LOOK AT HE WHO IS HIGHER THAN ONESELF, AND PLEAD WITH G-D TO GRANT HIM THE INTELLIGENCE TO LEARN FROM THE OTHER, AND THE ABILITY AND STRENGTH TO RISE HIGHER.(FROM REBBE'S HAYOM YOM, CHESHVAN 24)

***Opponents are evidence that you are moving forward. Their power comes from your fear of them.  
from a letter to a shliach (a representative of the Rebbe)***

Be Within, Stay Above by Tzvi Freeman