



**883**  
**חיי שרה**  
 כ"ז חשוון תש"ע • Nov. 13-14, '09



**This Shabbat is the 57th day (of 355), 9th Shabbat (of 51) of 5770**  
**TTiddle: Why?**  
**...וַיֹּאמְרוּ ה' הֲיֵאֱלֹהִים ה' הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים: מַלְכִים אֵי יֵחַלֵּט**

## Reminiscing about Sara Imeinu

It's a sneaky title, because it gives the impression that Parshat Chayei Sara will be the topic of this Lead Tidbit. It isn't. On the other hand, with the death of Sara Imeinu in the opening p'sukim of the sedra and the death of Avraham Avinu towards the end of the sedra, looking back a week's sedra is not really "off". We are going to go back to the beginning of Vayeira, because of some questions that came up this past Shabbat about the visit of the angels to Avraham. Chayei Sara will be covered in the Sedra Summary, so we aren't abandoning it.

One other word of introduction: There are questions that will be asked that seem better than the answers, even if we get to the answers. We might leave them unanswered to invite TReader feedback. To be sure, there are different ways these questions can be answered.

**Candle Lighting**  
**and Havdala times**  
 Israel Standard Time

**TT 883 • Rabbeinu Tam (J'm) - 5:55pm**

4:05pm	Yerushalayim	5:19pm
4:23pm	S'derot	5:22pm
4:21pm	Gush Etzion	5:19pm
4:21pm	Raanana	5:20pm
4:21pm	Beit Shemesh	5:20pm
4:22pm	Rehovot	5:20pm
4:21pm	Netanya	5:20pm
4:21pm	Be'er Sheva	5:21pm
4:21pm	Modi'in	5:20pm
4:05pm	Petach Tikva	5:20pm
4:05pm	Maale Adumim	5:19pm
4:20pm	Ginot Shomron	5:19pm
4:19pm	Gush Shiloh	5:18pm
4:21pm	K4 & Hevron	5:20pm
4:20pm	Giv'at Ze'ev	5:19pm
4:22pm	Yad Binyamin	5:20pm
4:23pm	Ashkelon	5:22pm
4:07pm	Tzfat	5:16pm

So here goes. On the very day that Avraham circumcised himself and the males of his household, G-d told him and assured him, that Sara would bear him a son, to be called Yitzchak, and that the birth would take place around a year from this time.

Just two days later - on the pain-filled third day since the Mila, G-d appears to Avraham - we are taught that is was a visit to the sick, Bikur Cholim, that G-d was doing and was teaching us to do. It's very hot - G-d make it so in order to allow Avraham some rest from

**Shabbat Shiur 3:00pm**  
**Rabbi Binyamin Wolff**  
**Mincha at 4:00pm**



his tent-hospitality program. But G-d sees that Avraham is troubled by the lack of wayfarers, so He sends three angels in the guise of travelers and Avraham enthusiastically greets them and invites them to lunch.

One of the people (angels) tells Avraham that Sara will bear him a son in a year's time. Avraham heard the same wonderful news from G-d two days earlier. Why did G-d send the angel to Avraham to announce the birth of Yitzchak?

Maybe for Sara's benefit? But she just overheard the announcement - it was told to Avraham.

Did Avraham share G-d's message with Sara? If no, why not? If yes, then what purpose did the angel serve?

Did Avraham know that these were angels or did he think they were merely travelers.

**OTHER Z'MANIM**  
 Correct for Jerusalem

**Ranges are 10 days. WED-FRI**  
**24 Cheshvan - 3 Kislev (Nov 11-20)**

Earliest Talit & T'filin	5:12-5:19am
Sunrise	6:05-6:12am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma	8:43-8:48am (Magen Avraham: 7:57-8:01am)
Sof Z'man T'fila	9:36-9:40am (Magen Avraham: 9:06-9:09am)
Chatzot (halachic noon)	11:23-11:24½am
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha)	11:54-11:55am
Plag Mincha	3:35½-3:32pm
Sunset (based on sea level: 4:41-4:37pm)	4:46-4:42pm

**Word of the Month**  
 This Shabbat we bench Rosh Chodesh Kislev, which will be on Tuesday and Wednesday, November 17 & 18. Cheshvan's Rosh Chodesh can be 1 or 2 days depending on whether Cheshvan has 29 (its regular number - 55% of the time) or 30 days (in a "full", SHALEIM, year - 45% of the time, incl. this year).

ראש חודש כסלו יהיה  
 ביום שלישי וביום רביעי  
 הבא עלינו ועל כל  
 ישראל לטובה:

The molad of Kislev is on  
 Tuesday, Nov. 17th  
 12h 15m 9p  
 which is approx.  
 11:54am IST

המולד יהיה ביום שלישי, בשעה  
 שתים-עשרה, חמש-עשרה דקות  
 ותשעה חלקים.

In Rambam notation:  
 ג' יח רצ"ט

Perhaps he first thought that they were regular people, but then figured out (or was told) that they were angels. Rashi seems to say that he believed them to be regular people throughout the visit, including when he escorted them upon their leaving. Are there other opinions among our sources? Apparently, yes.

Why did G-d send an angel to heal Avraham when He Himself was on the spot, so to speak? Were the angels originally supposed to identify themselves as angels, but came, instead, as people, to calm Avraham's disappointment that there were no travelers to greet?

What value would an announcement of the birth of Yitzchak to Avraham and Sara in a year's time, have, if the announcement came from one of three backpackers? Especially if Avraham thought that these were idolators who worshiped the dust on their feet (as indicated by the fact that the Torah tells us that Avraham told them to wash their feet and remain outside - not entering his tent).

Personal note (from me, Phil): You know what the most distressing question of all is? Why didn't I ask these questions during the last 50 years and countless reviews of this sedra?

And do you have any idea how many other questions we can ask from the rest of this sedra and from all of the Torah? Truly, countless.

I expressed doubt as to whether we would even get to any answers. We won't. Not in this week's TT, at least.

The beauty of these questions - any questions, that occur to us when we review Parshat HaShavua, is that we have so many commentaries to peruse, so many other people to share the questions with - with the result being different answers from different angles, all of which can enrich us.

Many years ago, during a break in a TARGIL in Milu'm, an army buddy saw me studying a pocket Chumash and asked me what I was doing. I told him that I was reviewing the weekly sedra. He apparently knew what that meant, but he asked if I hadn't done the same thing in past years.

The answer is clear to anyone who studies Torah. No, you didn't do the same thing in past years. Yes, you've gone over the sedra many times, but if you pay attention, each time is a new experience.

No point in kicking yourself for not having come up with the question before. This is just one indication that we can never FINISH learning the Torah, or any of Tanach, or Mishna or Gemara or...

If you ever review the weekly sedra and don't have a new question that is bothering you - that's when you should get a little worried.

Dov Lipman provides readers of Torah Tidbits with three Parsha Points to Ponder each week. Want more (and you should!)? Just open a Chumash and take a fresh look at the weekly parsha. You'll find many Points to Ponder. Happy pondering.

## Chayei Sara STATS

5th of the Torah's 54 sedras; 5th of 12 in B'reishit

Written on 171 lines in a Sefer Torah, rank 37th

4 Parshiyot; 3 open, 1 closed

105 p'sukim - ranks 32nd (11th in B'reishit)  
same as D'varim (which is longer)

1402 words - ranks 37th (11th in B'reishit)

5314 letters - ranks 36th (11th in B'reishit)

Shorter than average p'sukim in a sedra with  
slightly below average number of p'sukim means  
a smallish sedra

## MITZVOT

none of the 613 mitzvot are in Chayei Sara,  
however, as mentioned often, there are Midot  
and values and other lessons to be learned.

## Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

[P> X:Y (Z)] and [S> X:Y (Z)] indicate  
start of a parsha p'tucha or s'tuma  
respectively. X:Y is Perek:Pasuk of the  
beginning of the parsha; (Z) is the  
number of p'sukim in the parsha.

## Kohen - First Aliya 16 p'sukim - 23:1-16

[P> 23:1 (20)] The parsha begins  
by telling us that Sara died in Kiryat  
Arba, which is Hevron. But first it  
tells us that she lived a full, long life  
of 127 years.

**SDT:** With the last theme of Vayeira  
being the AKEIDA, the juxtaposition of

*Sara's death supports our Tradition that Sara died as a result of the Akeida. The Midrash says that the Satan informed Sara about what Avraham was intending to do with Yitzchak, when they went towards Har HaMoriah. The shock was too great for an old woman, and she died. Some commentaries give an interesting twist to this. They say that Sara died, not from fear that Avraham would offer Yitzchak as a Korban, but rather that he might not! She remembered Avraham's reaction when she told him to banish Yishmael (and Hagar). She was afraid that Avraham's love and kindness towards Yitzchak would prevent him from carrying out G-d's command, and that Avraham would thus fail this ultimate test of faith. When she saw (or heard) that Avraham was returning with Yitzchak still alive, she thought her fears were realized and she died.*

Avraham comes (some say from the Akeida, that is from Har HaMoriah; some say from Be'er Sheva; either way, it was apparently to Hevron that he came) to eulogize Sara and to cry for her.

**SDT:** V'LIVKOTAH, and to cry for her, is written with a small KAF. Some take this as a reminder that the crying was "small" since Sara had lived such a long life (Baal HaTurim). There is more crying when a person dies young.

*Some say that the KAF points to the 20 in the way that the Torah tells us how old she was when she died: 100 years and 20 years and 7 years.*

*Others say that the small KAF allows us to reread the word with regular-sized letters only to obtain a different understanding, on a REMEZ (hint) level. And Avraham came to eulogize Sara ULVITAH, and for her daughter. This correlates with the opinions*

that Avraham and Sara had a daughter, but she died when Sara did. (Some even say that her name was BAKOL.)

Avraham next makes the arrangements for providing a suitable place to bury Sara. (There is a Tradition that Avraham was aware of the burial place of Adam and Chava, and that is the piece of land he was interested in.) He turns to the people of CHEIT, one of whom is known as EFRON. They all exchange niceties and the people offer Avraham any land he wants. He insists on paying full price and that is what he does for the field and cave of Machpela.

**Pirkei Avot** made famous that Avraham was tested 10 times. But the mishna does not enumerate the ten tests. There are different opinions as to which of Avraham's experiences are considered tests of his faith. Most lists of the 10 end with the Akeida, as implied from the p'sukim themselves. Rabeinu Yona finds a test after the Akeida - Avraham's experience in providing a burial place for Sara. The question on this is obvious - What was so difficult about that, that it should qualify as a test of faith - especially after the Akeida? Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that after the Akeida, Avraham still had a couple of difficult things to go through. Wasn't the Akeida and everything that preceded it enough? No, not finished yet. This can test a person, sometimes, more than terrible trials and tribulations.

Surviving the Holocaust did not guarantee a person that he would have an easy life from then on.

Some were blessed with trouble-free lives after their terrible ordeals, but most had many more difficulties to face in the years to come.

We do not know how G-d works. Why must we suffer trials and tribulations in this world? It has something to do with making us better people. With challenging us. With testing us. With preparing our souls for the World of Truth. And probably a lot more.

There is another approach to answer the same question. Eulogizing his wife, acquiring a burial place, finding a "shiduch" for Yitzchak - even remarrying Hagar (Ketura) are all "regular", mundane experiences. Can one who spoke repeatedly to G-d, ascended Har HaMori'ah, had a special relationship with G-d - can such a person return to being a "normal" human being? This too is a test, and Avraham passed with flying colors. These commentaries point to the pasuk at the end of the Akeida portion, "And Avraham return to the lads..." as an indication that he was able to "come back down to earth".

**SDT:** *If a father insists that his son marry or not marry a particular woman, the son is not duty-bound to listen to his father. Meshech Chochma says that we learn this from the fact that Avraham gave instructions and administered an oath to Eliezer about a wife for Yitzchak, but did not command Yitzchak himself on the matter.*

Period is a **נקודה** • Comma is a **פסיק**  
Colon is **נקודתיים**. And a semi-colon  
is (disappointingly) **נקודה ופסיק**

## Levi - Second Aliya 13 p'sukim - 23:17-24:9

The field, cave, trees, etc. become the lawful possessions of Avraham, after which he buries Sara.

[S> 24:1 (67)] Avraham is now at an advanced age and has been blessed greatly by G-d. "And G-d blessed Avraham BAKOL", with everything.

The word **BAKOL** screams out for explanation. And, sure enough, there are many suggestions as to what this extra blessing of **BAKOL** is. (Every time we say Birkat HaMazon, we ask G-d to bless us as He blessed our forefathers - BAKOL... Mikol and Kol are terms associated with Yitzchak and Yaakov.)

The numeric value of **BAKOL** 52, the same as BEN, son. This alludes to the ultimate blessing that Avraham received - his son Yitzchak.

R. Meir says that Avraham was blessed by NOT having a daughter.

In Avraham's time and in his unique circumstances, who would she have married? What would have happened to her? In this case it was a bracha not to have had a daughter.

On the other hand... R. Yehuda says that Avraham's extra blessing was that he DID have a daughter. There is even an opinion that his daughter's name was BAKOL.

Rabbi Eliezer HaModai says that Avraham was blessed with the art/skill/power of astrology and that he was consulted by noblemen from far and wide. (Even when G-d told Avraham that he would have a child,

Avraham resisted because he had seen in the stars that he was not going to have children. G-d "explained" to Avraham that it is possible to rise above one's "mazel", and in fact, that is the special quality of the nation that will come from him. **אין מזל לישראל**. Ibn Ezra says in the name of our Sages z"l, true, but only as long as we keep the Torah.)

R. Shimon bar Yochai says that Avraham had a precious stone with curative powers that would heal all who gazed upon it.

These last two opinions identify BAKOL as Avraham's prominent position in the world. This fits with his role as "father of many nations".

Some suggest that Eisav's not sinning (until Avraham died) and Yishmael's repentance, both during Avraham's lifetime are the extra blessings.

There are still other explanations.

From the variety of explanations of BAKOL, it is quite clear that Avraham's unique status as the one who restored belief in One G-d to the world did not go unrewarded. We can see in this list of blessings, all the different kinds of blessings that can be ours, the spiritual heirs of Avraham Avinu.

The one major task remaining, which will forge the next vital link in what promises to be a great people and a great Chain of Tradition, is finding a suitable "shiduch" for Yitzchak. Everything now will depend upon Yitzchak. However great Avraham was, unless there is "solid" continuity, all will be lost. To this end, Avraham

calls upon Eliezer to swear that he will faithfully carry out his task, that he will return to Avraham's family and hometown, and find a wife for Yitzchak there. And that Yitzchak is not to leave Eretz Yisrael (having been consecrated on the Mizbei'-ach during the Akeida).

## **Shlishi** - Third Aliya 17 p'sukim - 24:10-26

Eliezer (who is exclusively referred to as "The Servant" or "The Man", as opposed to by name - his name never appears in Parshat Chayei Sara, where we would have expected to find it repeated over and over) takes ten camels laden with a splendid assortment of goods and travels to Avraham's hometown. Upon arrival, he ties the camels up near the well (and spring), towards evening, at the time that the local girls come to draw water. He asks G-d to be kind to his master Avraham. Eliezer asks for a sign - the girl who will offer him drink and also for his camels,

One is supposed to feed his animals before he himself eats. But with drinking (water), the person comes first. We learn this from at least two places in the Torah. Rivka gave water to Eliezer and afterwards drew water for the camels. Later in the Torah, we find that G-d gave His approval, so to speak, to Rivka's action, by telling Moshe that water would come from the rock to "give drink to the people and their animals".

she will be the one sent by G-d. Almost before he finished speaking, Rivka bat Betu'el of Avraham's family arrives on the scene with her water container on her shoulder. Eliezer runs to her and asks for a bit of water. She immediately gives him his fill and then draws water for his camels. Anxious to find out whether she was "the one", Eliezer waits until the camels have their drink and then presents Rivka with gifts of jewelry. (On the one hand, he has seen her kind nature and tireless act of chesed; on the other hand, he has not even asked her who she is.) When Rivka tells Eliezer that she is indeed from Avraham's family and invites him to stay at her home, he prostrates himself before G-d in grateful acknowledgment.

The Gemara in Taanit states that Eliezer servant of Avraham did not ask (something of G-d) properly, but he was nonetheless answered in a fine manner. His "sign" could have resulted in an unsuitable shidduch for Yitzchak, but G-d sent Rivka to him instead. Some sources fault Eliezer for relying on an omen or sign - especially (or specifically) because he did not ask who she was before giving her "gifts".

## **R'vi'i** - Fourth Aliya 26 p'sukim - 24:27-52

Eliezer also says a blessing to G-d for not abandoning Avraham or withholding Divine Kindness from him. Rivka runs home to tell her family what has happened. Lavan

(filled with ulterior motives, our sources tell us) runs to greet Eliezer. The gold jewelry adorning Rivka catches Lavan's eye, and he "graciously" offers Eliezer hospitality. Eliezer is served food but refuses to eat until his "business" is completed.

Eliezer proceeds to tell the story of his mission. He tells of Avraham and Yitzchak and of being sent to find a wife for Yitzchak. When he asks for Rivka's hand on behalf of his master, Lavan and Betu'el (commentaries point to Lavan's pushing himself before his father as an indication of a negative personality trait) accept all as G-d's will.

Eliezer again prostrates himself before G-d in grateful acknowledgment of the success of his mission.

## **Chamishi** - 5th Aliya 15 p'sukim - 24:53-67

Eliezer gives more gifts to Rivka and her mother and brother, then they all celebrate with food and drink, and Eliezer and his party stay overnight. In the morning, Eliezer asks his leave. Rivka's family asks that she remain for a year, or at least ten months (as was the custom in olden times) but Eliezer insists on leaving immediately. Rivka is consulted and she agrees to leave right away. They send her off with a "maid" (later identified as Devora) and bless her.

This blessing has been repeated countless times to Jewish brides throughout

the generations. Ironic, is it not, that we use Lavan's words for such a special occasion.

Finally the entourage leaves for Canaan.

Meanwhile, Yitzchak (having gone to bring Hagar back to Avraham) is in the Negev area and goes "into the field to commune, before evening". (This, we are taught, was the model for Mincha.) As the Rivka-Eliezer caravan approaches from a distance, Rivka sees Yitzchak, jumps down from her camel, and asks Eliezer who that man is. She covers her face with a veil when she is told that the man is her intended husband.

Eliezer tells Yitzchak everything that has occurred. Yitzchak takes Rivka as his wife and she becomes a comfort to him for the loss of his mother. For us, she later becomes Rivka Imeinu.

Rabbi Sholom Gold speculates as to how a girl growing up in the house of Betuel and Lavan can so quickly step into Sara Imeinu's shoes. His answer (beautifully developed in a shiur) is that it was D'vorah, Rivka's nursemaid, who was her teacher and influence in the ways of Sara. D'vorah was left behind when Avraham and Sara "made Aliya", for just this purpose.

## **Shishi** - Sixth Aliya 11 p'sukim - 25:1-11

[P> 25:1 (11)] Avraham, having successfully provided for the

continuity of what will become the Jewish Nation, now lives out the remainder of his life as a "private citizen", so to speak. He takes for himself a wife named KETURA (which we are taught was HAGAR) and fathers six more children. He gives them gifts, but Yitzchak remains Avraham's exclusive spiritual heir. (We can really say that in some ways, other peoples of the world followed Avraham's lead in living monotheistic lives, but the Torah's definition of Avraham's lineage is Yitzchak.)

On the question of the different treatment of Yishmael (banishment) and the children from Ketura (gifts), it can be explained that there was a crucial difference between Yishmael and Ketura's children. Yishmael challenged Yitzchak's inheritance. He claimed (and in some ways continues to claim) Avraham's legacy. When G-d told Avraham to listen to Sara, He told him to banish them, BECAUSE in Yitzchak will be called your offspring, your descendants. This point had to be made, and a farewell party and lavish provisions for the journey would not have made the point. No such problem with Ketura's children. They made no such claim. They did not dispute Yitzchak's role. They received gifts.

Avraham dies at the "ripe old age" of 175 (actually, this is 5 years short of the complete 180 that Yitzchak achieved - various reasons are given for the "lost" 5 years). His was a graceful, good, and fulfilling life (despite the tough times he had). He is buried in the Cave of

Machpela, where he had buried Sara. Both Yitzchak and Yishmael take care of the burial.

The Torah implies that Yishmael had repented his ways and had become righteous. What greater "nachas" for a father than that!

G-d blesses Yitzchak after Avraham's death.

From the fact that Avraham took Ketura only after Yitzchak was married, the Baal HaTurim says that this is the proper thing to do - Marry off your children, before you yourself remarry.

## **Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya** **7 p'sukim - 25:12-18**

[P> 25:12 (7)] The descendants of Yishmael are now enumerated. Yishmael is identified fully as the son of Avraham and Hagar the Egyptian maiden of Sara who bore Yishmael "to Avraham". (This is quite parallel to the description of Yitzchak's connection to Avraham as stated in the beginning of next week's sedra. This might further indicate Yishmael's T'shuva in his later years.) It is noteworthy that Yishmael fathered twelve sons, not like Yitzchak, but rather like Yaakov. Note that both Nachor and Yishmael had their 12 descendants before we did (so to speak). This indicates a tougher life for the Jewish people (something that has been borne out over and over again in the course of Jewish History, right up to current events).

Yishmael dies at the age of 100 and 30 and 7 years. The wording in the Torah (seems to) purposely parallels that which was used to describe Sara's lifespan, a further indication (perhaps) of the change for the better in Yishmael. Rashi says that the age of Yishmael is included to help us compute the chronology of Yaakov.

Last 3 p'sukim are reread for Maftir.

## **Haftara - 31 p'sukim** **Melachim Alef - 1:1-31**

The sedra tells of the aging Avraham and his task of providing for the continuity of his beliefs through his son Yitzchak (even though there were other potential heirs). The Haftara parallels this theme by telling us of the aging King David with many potential heirs, providing that it would be his son Shlomo who would be the next link in the Davidic line. This, fulfillment of a promise made to Shlomo's mother, Batsheva - similar to the promise made to Sara that her son would inherit. The starting points are Avraham Avinu and David Hamelech. But no matter how strong their personalities were, the chain ends with them unless the next generation is as strong as a Yitzchak Avinu and a Shlomo Hamelech.

## **DIVREI MENACHEM**

Parshat Chayei Sara introduces us to what might be described as the first matchmaking exercise described in the Torah. From the narrative, young men might learn much about how to look for their life-long partners.

Firstly, Avraham sets the goal. Eliezer is not to take a woman from among the Canaanites, for they are not only idol worshippers - an intellectual frailty that can be overcome - but, according to Rav Hirsch, they also display a blatant lack of ethics and morality that precludes any of their womenfolk as candidates for Yitzchak.

The Midrash describes the instant divine response to Eliezer's plea for a successful mission and the miracles at the well that occurred on Rivka's behalf. Yet it is neither wealth nor divine intervention that impresses Eliezer. For when Rivka attends to the servant, it is the plethora of actions attesting to her overriding kindness that overridingly determine her suitability for the marriage (Malbim).

Chizkuni remarks that away from home, one's true character emerges. Accordingly, Rivka's display of energy and eagerness to go beyond the regular norms of hospitality ("I will draw water even for your camels... So she hurried... and kept running") is clearly a supreme test of a sterling character (cf. Artscroll).

# Vebbe Rebbe

**Q** *What can I do when I take off my head covering on Shabbat and find hairs that are detached from my scalp and are lying on the rest of my hair? May I remove them by hand or in another manner?*

**A** Our response to this question is very uncharacteristic of our approach to halacha. We have been unable to find explicit reference to this issue. While there seem to be ample grounds to forbid it, our thought-out, researched, yet greatly intuitive, answer, despite the lack of a clear source or a clear reason, is that it is apparently permitted. Now, the explanation.

There seem to be two problems with removing the hair. Firstly, the loose hair is unwanted, and it is forbidden to remove an undesired object that is mixed in among the desired because of borer (selecting - see Orach Chayim 319). Secondly, detached hair is not part of the human body and has no clear purpose; therefore, it should be muktzeh and forbidden to handle directly.

Yet, there are strong indications (but not full proof) that neither of these issues will forbid removing the hair. The Shulchan Aruch (OC 303:27) forbids combing one's hair normally on Shabbat because of the certainty that some hair will be uprooted from the scalp (shearing). The poskim (see Mishna Berura ad loc.: 86-87) say that one may go over the hair gently with a soft brush because it is uncertain if any hair will thereby be uprooted and it is not his intention. Poskim do not forbid the latter out of concern that if there are

detached hairs on the hair, they will certainly be removed, which we hypothesized would be borer. The Shulchan Aruch (OC 316:9) also allows picking out lice or other insects from clothing or hair without the matter being considered borer. The Rama (OC 302:1), in discussing the prohibition of laundering, permits removing feathers stuck to clothes, which also would seem to be removing bad from the good and borer. Another indication is that women remove anything superfluous from the hair (including loose hairs) that could be a chatzitza before going to the mikveh, and the major sources do not limit how this should be done on Shabbat, except for the matter of combing the hair, which, as abovementioned, is a problem of "shearing."

It is harder to explain why there would not be borer. Possibly, some substances or circumstances are too distant from the classic cases of borer, which refer to separating different types of food. Perhaps, removing impurities from hair and fabrics fall under the categories of shearing and laundering, and when those do not apply, borer is not a factor. Similarly, Rav S.Z. Orbach (Minchat Shlomo I, 11) suggests that since it is normal for things to get on hair and fabrics, it is considered cleaning them rather than selecting. There may be other distinctions. The exact parameters of the explanation are important because there are likely test cases that can go either way depending on the explanation. However, our relatively strong halachic intuition, based on similar precedents, is that your case is permitted.

Regarding muktzeh, in some of the sources above (including Shulchan Aruch, OC 319:9), the poskim speak of removing the apparently unusable objects directly by hand. The most likely explanation is along the lines of the Chazon Ish (47:21) that when cleaning an object from unwanted "impurities" (e.g., washing dishes) the unwanted is subsumed under the non-muktzeh and we view the action as cleaning dealing with the useable object. So here you would be considered handling your head of hair rather than grabbing detached hairs. While apparently not everyone agrees with this thesis (see Shvut Yitzchak, Muktzeh, p. 308), this does seem to be a mainstream view (see Sh'mirat Shabbat K'hilchata 14:(149) and Orchot Shabbat, II, 19: 207) and other possible explanations may also cover your case.

In summary, while we can conclusively neither prove nor explain exactly why we believe one may reach into her hair and remove a detached hair, indications for permitting it far exceed those for forbidding it.

## G'ZEIRA SHAVA

Translated in the new OU-Koren siddur as, "An inference drawn from identical words in two passages", we have a classic example of this "Interpretive Principle of Rabbi Yishmael" (one of 13), in this week's sedra.

The mishna in Kiddushin teaches us that a man "acquires" (marries) a woman in one of three ways, the first of which is KESEF or SHAVEH KESEF, money or something of monetary value.

How do we know that this is so?

The mishna says so. That's enough to inform us of the Oral Law in this matter. But the Oral Law is very often linked to the Written Word. Sometimes, it is a straightforward connection which allows us to quote chapter and verse (as the expression goes).

Sometimes it is not so direct.

In the case of "marriage by money" (gold ring is something of monetary value and is the prevalent application of this rule of Jewish Law), the Gemara teaches us that we link the term "TO ACQUIRE", lakachat, known as KICHA (taking or acquiring), in the context of Avraham's acquisition of Me'arat HaMachpeila and its environs (which was done by the transfer of silver from Avraham to Efron, to the concept of KICHA in the context of KI YIKACH ISH ISHA..., when a man takes a woman (as his wife). The the marriage context, the use of money is not mentioned. But we are taught the G'zeira Shava of Kicha, Kicha, mis'dei Efron.

We do not make our own G'zeira Shava. They are part of the Oral Law. They point out the connections. The Sources fill in the rest of the details.

## Glimpses into the world of OU kashrut supervision

### Does it NEED a hechsher?

**Q.** Why do supervision agencies supervise products that do not need a hechsher?

**A.** If by "products that do not need a hechsher" you mean items that have no connection to food, such as bicycles, they don't certify such products. Otherwise, it is important to remember that there is no hard-and-fast category of products that do not need a hechsher. To say that a product does not need supervision is essentially to make a judgement-call: as far as we know the product is usually made in ways that pose no kosher concerns. Are these "as far as we know" assumptions fail-safe? By no means. Plants make products in unexpected ways all the time. Some products which now need supervision were possibly acceptable without a hechsher in the past. Many dairies, for instance, bottle water, and some of those have switched from filtering the water to pasteurizing it on the same equipment used for the milk. Additionally, by supervising these products, kashrus agencies are able to confirm that the current manufacturing processes used to manufacture them do not do not negatively effect the their kosher status. So the most you can say is that supervision agencies supervise some products that are pretty safe to buy without supervision.

### "Kosher gelatin"

**Q.** What does it mean when a product lists among its ingredients, "Kosher Gelatin"?

**A.** The gelatin probably came from a cow that was not kosher slaughtered or a pig. There are some opinions that allow for this - hence the designation, "kosher gelatin". But most halachic poskim rule that such gelatin is not kosher. There is gelatin available nowadays from kosher-slaughtered animals, but it is usually identified by something more than the mere phrase "kosher gelatin". Fish gelatin (which also requires a reliable hechsher) is usually identified as "fish gelatin". It is worth noting, also, that it is not a good idea to rely on an unfamiliar hechsher. When in doubt about a hashgacha, ask your Rav.

Ed. note: What you often want to know about a hashgacha is its "policy" concerning certain ingredients. In this case, what are its standards about gelatin. In other cases, you want to know where it stands on issues such as STAM CHALAV (not Chalav Yisrael - regular milk and milk powder are two different issues), SHMITA, BISHUL YISRAEL, and a host of other topics. Don't be afraid to ask. The internet is a good place to start looking for answers, and then the hashgacha people themselves.

## Rabbi Weinreb's Weekly Column: Parshat Chayei Sara Mourning Sarah

Grief is the most powerful and most painful of human emotions. Yet, it is an emotion which few human beings can avoid in their lifetime. We all face loss, and we all grieve.

Interestingly, the first death of which we read in detail in the Torah is a murder. And the reaction of the murderer is one of denial and, ultimately, guilt. I speak, of course, of Kayin's slaying of Hevel. We do not read of Kayin's grief, nor do we know at all of the reaction of Hevel's parents, Adam and Chava, to his death.

In this week's Torah portion, for the first time, we learn in detail of the reaction of a surviving relative to the death of a loved one. I speak, of course, of Avraham and his response to the death of his wife, Sarah.

Much has been written about the psychology of the emotion of grief. It is a complex emotion and is a very long, sometimes lifelong, process.

It seems that there are at least two components to normal grief. There is an emotional component, consisting of feelings of great sadness and pervasive melancholy. There is also an intellectual component, as the mourner seeks to make some sense of his or her loss and to find purpose and meaning in the death of the loved one, to thus be able to move on in life.

So it is not surprising that when Avraham learned of Sarah's death, and he apparently was not in the vicinity of where she died, he came rushing to make the arrangements for her burial.

We read that he "came to eulogize Sarah and to cry for her". Note the two components of his response. Crying, expressing feelings of loss through sobs and tears, BECHI, was one component. The other component was much more cerebral and consisted of a well thought-out and carefully composed eulogy. Avraham honored Sarah with his heart, his feelings, but also with his head, with his mind and intellect.

Both aspects of this dual response are necessary. Over the first, the emotional aspect, we have little control. Feelings burst forth even when we try to suppress them.

But the second aspect, the reasoned and verbally expressed eulogy, is one over which we have great control. We can plan intentionally what we will say and what we won't say in a eulogy, a HESPED.

There is a beautiful eulogy in the homiletic writings of the great 18th century sage, Rabbi Ezekiel Landau, author of the authoritative halachic work, Nodah B'Yehuda. In that eulogy, Rabbi Landau speaks about his wife, Leeba, and compares her to the matriarch Sarah.

He notes that in our text, Avraham cries "for her", the pronoun "her" being used instead of the proper name. However, he "eulogizes Sarah". No pronoun here, but her

personal name - the name by which she was known to him and to all of her acquaintances.

Rabbi Landau insists that Avraham was setting an example for all eulogies to follow, for all time and eternity. A eulogy must be specific and speak in detail about the particular and unique qualities of the deceased. One should not just eulogize "her", one must eulogize "Sarah". Those listening to the eulogy must come away with a better sense of who the deceased was, with some details about what made the deceased special.

Too often at funerals, we hear clergymen make very impersonal remarks about death and eternity, and they do not leave us with even an impression of the biographical details and significance of the life that was just lost.

Avraham set the tone for a proper eulogy. He eulogized the Sarah that he knew. Not some abstract description which could fit any woman, but an exquisitely detailed portrait of the real Sarah, from the perspective of one who shared his life with her.

There is so much that careful students of Torah have learned from the lives of Avraham and Sarah. One lesson that I personally cherish is the lesson of Avraham's eulogy for his life's companion. The actual words of this eulogy are not recorded, but the message is clear. It was not an anonymous "her" that he mourned, but a real, flesh and blood, deeply beloved lifelong spouse, Sarah.

## Parsha Points to Ponder **CHAYEI SARA**

1) Why does Avraham refer to G-D as G-D OF THE HEAVENS and not the Earth as well when he speaks to Eliezer (24:7)?

2) Why does the Torah emphasize that Rivka waited until SHE FINISHED GIVING HIM TO DRINK before offering the camels drink as well (24:19)?

3) Why does the Torah emphasize that Eliezer was STANDING WITH THE CAMELS BY THE WELL when Lavan ran to greet him (24:30)?

### Parsha Points to Ponder

is prepared by

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Answers are somewhere else in this issue. Look for them, but only after a good pondering

Bilingual lesson -

Shoelace is **שְׂרוּד נֶעַל**

But you knew that. Do you know what the plastic or metal tip at the end of a shoelace is called? In English or Hebrew? In English it is called an AGLET. (TAG is also used.)

In Hebrew, it's a **סַנְחַ הַשְּׂרוּד** NYK

# Sara Imeinu

Guest article by **Bonnie Linder**

in memory of Basha Liba bat Chasha ע"ה on her first yahrzeit, 23 Cheshvan

**כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־תֹּאמַר אֵלַיךָ שָׂרָה שְׂמִיעַ בְּקוֹלָהּ...**

"...Everything that Sara has said to you, hearken to her voice..." (B'reishit 21:12)

At first glance, this verse sounds like nice feminist propaganda. "See Honey, even G-d says that men should listen to their wives." It's worth looking deeper, examining the story more carefully.

Rashi says that Sara was superior to Avraham in prophecy. In another place, Rashi says that G-d is telling Avram to pay attention to the prophetic quality in his wife. The Rambam teaches us that prophecy is only given to people with exceptional character traits. Let's look at Sara's life story and see how she can teach us to build ourselves up.

First we'll take a few steps back in time to the first woman, Chava. Adam was told by G-d that he was punished "Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife..." (B'reishit 3:17)

Chava's downfall came because she abused the gift of speech. She was off doing her own thing and she chatted with the snake. That led her to tell her husband to do the one thing that was forbidden to them. To make a very complicated issue short, they got chucked out of Gan Eden because Chava didn't watch her mouth. She wasn't careful about what she said.

Sara was very different. She was primarily a spiritual partner to Avraham, sharing his life's mission in the world. All along, we see her idealism and

selflessness. When G-d told Avram to leave his home and go to some yet unknown place, Sarai (Sara) didn't hesitate to go along with him. It says there that they took with them "the souls that they made in Haran". Rashi points out that these were the converts that they attracted, "Avram was converting the men and Sarai was converting the women."

When they had to go down to Egypt because of a famine, Avram said to Sarai, "Now I know that you're a beautiful woman." The Midrash points out that Avram had never looked at Sarai in a physical way before. Only on the way down to Egypt, when his life depended on it, did he open his eyes and notice that his beloved Sarai was also physically beautiful. Avram saw her more like a sister (she was actually his niece, Haran's daughter).

Sarai selflessly gave Avram her maidservant as a second wife when it appeared that she was unable to bear children. (At that time it said that, "Avram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. it wasn't her idea but he did as he suggested). After <sup>next page</sup> that, Sara did give birth to her own son, Yitzchak.

It was only when Sara saw that her maidservant's son was a danger to Yitzchak (physical and/or spiritual), that she opened her mouth and insisted on

a position that was difficult for her husband to accept. G-d stepped in and admonished Avraham, "Everything that Sara tells you, hearken to her voice" (do as she says). She has proved herself worth listening to.

It says in the Talmud that the righteous women, with Sara first among them, weren't included in the edicts against Chava. G-d punished Chava's husband for listening to her. Avraham was commanded to listen to Sara, his wife. Because Sara was so careful about her speech and actions, she was given a level of prophecy. G-d helped her words make a difference. To the same degree that Chava's words came close to destroying the world. Sara's words had an important impact on our nation's history.

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After the Torah reading, find the filling in the BINAYAHU sandwich

The big roof celebrates the wheel holiday with a pair of fish

 It is curious that often, when we forget our anger, we forget our motive for being angry.

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## Hidden in the Sand

Here's a Gimatriya Match that insists that we say something about it - exactly what, we will leave up to you. (Well, we will say something about it.)

The opening pasuk in this week's sedra, B'reishit 23:1 says...

וַיְהִי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה בַּמָּאָה שָׁנָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וְשִׁבְעַת עָשָׂר שָׁנָה וְחָמֵשׁ עָשָׂר יָמִים שָׂרָה:

This pasuk sums up the life of Sara Imeinu and there are various D'RASHOT that explain the specific wording of the pasuk.

Here is another pasuk with the same Gimatriya. Actually, there are two identical p'sukim that match it. Vayikra 19:30 and 26:2.

אֶת־שַׁבְּתוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ  
וּבְמִקְדָּשַׁי תִּירְאוּ אֲנִי ה':

Keep My Shabbatot and revere My Mikdash are not just any two commands. They point to the concepts of Sanctity of Time (Shabbat) and the Sanctity of Place (Mikdash). And with that, the pasuk just about covers everything. This is what Jewish Life is all about. Sanctity. K'DOSHIM TIH-YU, Be holy!

On a REMEZ level, this Gimatriya Match adds to the DRASH on the pasuk and says: Sara Imeinu epitomizes the striving and challenge to sanctify our lives. She, with her husband, Avraham Avinu, sought to sanctify the mundane and purify the profane in all the people they met.

As we repeatedly say, these GMs don't prove anything, but they are nice.

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**WISDOM & WIT**  
by Shmuel Himelstein

In 1927, the President of Czechoslovakia, Dr. Masaryk, a friend of the Jews and for whom a street in Jerusalem was named, visited what was then Palestine. Among those present at one meeting were members of the Old Yishuv who had come from Czechoslovakia. After that meeting, Dr. Masaryk met privately with R' Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, the head of the Old Yishuv.

At that meeting, R' Yosef Chaim spoke with foreboding about the growth of technology and its unrestrained use in furthering the ambitions of governments and political leaders (this even before the Nazis had attained power).

Basing his words on the story in the Torah of the Tower of Babel, R' Yosef Chaim pointed out that before the tower was built the people said, "Come, let us make bricks" (B'reishit 11:3). Why did they need to make bricks, when they could more easily have built their tower from rocks? The answer is that they wanted to break away from Hashem, and to provide their own building materials, rather than using those provided by Him. That was what eventually led to "challenging" Hashem with their tower.

"It is this same idea," said R' Yosef Chaim, "that Man has unlimited power to do whatever he wants, that has led to the drastic decline in morals following the World War (World War One), and to the attempts to dominate the world."

## Yishmael's sharpest son

## And G-d

We've done this before; but it bears repeating.

G-d's name - either the ALEF-DALET-NUN-YUD name or the YUD-HEI-VAV-HEI name which is pronounced exactly as if it were spelled ALEF-DALET... have the same rule when prefixed by a VAV. Example, B'reishit 24:1 - Now Avraham was old, well on in years, AND HASHEM had blessed Avraham with everything. The ALEF (actual or virtual) of this name of HaShem is voweled with a CHATAF-PATACH. The VAV then, does not get its usual SH'VA or change into a SHURUK (as it does before certain letters), it gets a PATACH - VA, and the ALEF's vowel drops out completely, leaving it totally silent - as if it were not there. VA-DO-NAI (or NOI, but let's not get into that now). Not V'A-DO... VA-DO.

In pasuk 3 of the same Perek, we find BA-DO... Same rule for the BET - but not for now. What is for now is the next phrase in 24:3.

ELOKEI HASHAMAYIM and ELOKEI HA-ARETZ. The vowel under the ALEF of ELOKEI is a CHATAF-SEGOL. The conjunctive VAV that is prefixed to the word gets a TZEIREI and the ALEF loses its vowel completely. VEI-LO-KEI. Not V'ELO... As if the ALEF is not there.

The fact that the YUD-HEI-VAV-HEI name follows the same rules indicates that it must not be pronounced as written, but as we read it - just like ALEF-DALET-NUN-YUD. And, of course, Siddurim and Chumashim that use YUD-YUD - nothing changes.

## The Challenge of Aliya: Before and After

The Baal Haturim points out that the Torah writes a small "chof" in its description of Avraham's crying for Sarah after her passing. He says it was written this way to show that Avraham only cried "a little bit." This would seem not to be what we would expect from a husband whose wife was not only his lifelong partner in marriage but his lifelong partner in spreading the word of G-d throughout the world.

Moreover, the Torah describes Avraham as arriving "to eulogize Sara and cry for her". Usually one cries immediately after the occurrence of a tragedy out of grief and only later offers a eulogy. It would seem that Avraham did not cry for Sara until after he had first eulogized her. Why is the order reversed?

The Kehillas Yaakov answers the question. Rashi comments that the death of Sara is juxtaposed to the Akeida in order to show that Sara died as a result of hearing that her husband was going to kill her son. She was told of what was happening by the Satan who succeeded in causing her to die of grief. But his goal was not only to affect Sara, but Avraham as well. The midrashim recount that the Satan unsuccessfully tried to prevent Avraham from carrying out G-d's command to sacrifice his son. But the Satan never gives up easily. If he cannot succeed in preventing a person from performing a mitzva, at the very least, he will later try to make that person regret his having done so.

Although he failed at convincing Avraham to forego the Akeida, the Satan hoped that by Sara's death being linked to that event, Avraham would regret having gone through with it. By making Avraham feel guilty for Sara's death, he hoped to

stir up a feeling of regret on the part of Avraham for having obeyed G-d's command to sacrifice Yitzchak. If Avraham would have grieved excessively at the loss of Sara, people may have wrongly interpreted his sorrow. It would have appeared to others that indeed he regretted his involvement in the sacrifice of his son. That is why he only cried "a little bit". This also explains why he delayed his crying until after he first eulogized her. He wanted to make it absolutely clear that he was not crying tears of regret about having followed G-d's instructions regarding the Akeida.

In the evening tefilla of Maariv, this is the intent of our words in the prayer Hashkiveinu - "And remove the Satan from before us and after us." We pray to G-d that He stops the Satan whether he is trying to stop us from fulfilling a mitzva before we have done it or trying to cause us to regret over having performed it, after we have done it.

All of us Olim have successfully overcome the Satan's attempts to prevent us from making Aliya and fulfilling the mitzva of Yishuv Eretz Yisrael. However, as we mentioned earlier, the Satan never gives up easily and if he cannot succeed in preventing someone from making Aliya, at least he will later try to make that person regret having done so. The challenge of making Aliya is not just in moving to Israel but to make one's Aliya permanent.

Unfortunately, there are too many examples where the Satan has convinced Olim, even after being in Israel several years, that it is preferable to give up the Aliya dream and return to Chutz La'aretz. May the merit of Avraham Aveinu stand by our side to help us in our constant struggle to overcome the Satan's temptations to turn our backs on Eretz Yisrael.

Chaim Liberman, Michmas

*TORAH THOUGHTS as contributed by Aloh Naaleh members for publication in the Orthodox Union's 'Torah Insights', a weekly Torah publication on Parshat HaShavu'a*

## Spiritual and Ethical Issues in the Bamidbar Stories **I pray you, curse this people for me"** (Bamidbar 22:6){3} by **Dr. Meir Tamari**

Ever since Creation, G-d has revealed Himself in various ways to Mankind so that prophecy and spiritual elevation could flow through man created like His Image. "The nations of the world would have had justification for idolatry and immorality by saying to G-d, 'we would have kept Your Torah as does Israel, but You separated Yourself from us'; so G-d gave them kings and prophets just as He gave them to Israel" (Bamidbar Rabba 20). The greatest of their prophets was Bil'am. "There never did arise in Israel a prophet like Moshe' (D'varim 34:10). In Israel not, but amongst the nations of the world there has arisen one. Who? Bil'am" (Sifrei).

Why then was Bil'am the last of their prophets, whereas after Moshe prophecy continued in Israel for generations? We can see definite differences, both conceptual and behavioral, between the kings and prophets granted by G-d to the nations and those that He sent to Israel. These differences prevented the nations from bringing to fruition the promise and the potential of the spiritual greatness and religiosity revelation granted to them, while Israel became the embodiment of G-d's revealed Words and Laws in this world.

"See how the prophets of Israel differ from those of the nations: All the prophets of Israel cautioned Israel against sinning and urged them to repent and assured them of atonement; this gentile prophet, however,

sought out and found a means through which a nation could be led to immorality and sin. All the prophets of Israel were filled with love and kindness so they sought mercy and merit for the nation; this gentile prophet was filled with hatred and cruelty so he sought to destroy a whole nation without reason or fault. Even when he utters words of blessing he does so in spite of himself, against his will and struggles like a fish that is hooked; G-d had to twist his mouth and pierce it like a man drives a nail into a board" (Bamidbar Rabba 20:16).

Repeatedly, the prophets of Israel sought to refuse the role given to them, pleading imperfections and unworthiness. Moshe is the most humble of men, he argues that that he is unsuitable because he is heavy of speech, and pleads with G-d to send somebody else who is more qualified and suitable (Sh'mot 2). Yirmiyahu (Chapter 1) asks how he possibly can be sent as a prophet when he is merely young and does not know how to speak. Yeshayahu says of himself that he has uncircumcised lips and that should make him unacceptable as a prophet. All our prophets consistently and constantly make it known and obvious that the source of their words and prophecies is G-d Himself; they merely repeat and bring His Messages.

However, Bil'am, the Prophet of the Gentiles is totally different. He confidently and arrogantly accepts Balak's description of him as the one

who has the power to bless or curse, to, as it were, force Heaven to endorse his wish. Bil'am introduces his prophecies with proclamations of his personal greatness and spiritual importance; as, "the man whose eyes have been opened, who has fallen down yet has uncovered eyes" (Bamidbar 24:3-4). "In Israel altars and sacrifices are an invitation for mankind to draw close to G-d. Bil'am, however, uses them as a vehicle for debasing the Divine Will to his own evil purpose" (Ramban). "When Balak built the seven altars that Bil'am asked for, G-d asked Bil'am, 'what is this that you have done?' 'I have prepared them for You', was the reply. This is like a merchant who falsifies his weights and when found guilty by the officials of the Beit Din, says to them, 'I have already sent a gift to you'. G-d said to Bil'am, 'evil one, what are you thinking of doing to My People?' 'I have prepared seven altars in Your Honor', was Bil'am's reply" (Midrash HaGadol).

"G-d raised Shlomo as the king over the whole world and he built the Temple, wrote books of wisdom, of faith and of love between G-d and Israel. G-d raised up Nevuchadnetzar as king of the gentiles; he destroyed His Temple and His City, uttered words of curses and hatred, and sought to rise up above the heights of the clouds; he said, 'I will be like the Most High Himself' (Yeshayahu 14:14). G-d gave David great wealth that he used to build the Bet HaMikdash; He gave wealth to Haman who wanted to buy therewith the slaughter of a whole nation" (Tanchuma Yashan).

There must be a set of basic and

**The gamut of letters, 3 above, one in, two below**

fundamental thoughts and concepts that would explain these differences between the kings and prophets of Israel and those that G-d provided in a similar way and for a similar purpose to the nations of the world. This would help explain why the kings and prophets of the nations did not realize the spiritual and the religious potential and opportunity given to them.

"The people of Padan Aram were idolaters just as the people of Canaan were, yet Avraham sent Eliezer there to find a wife for Yitschak, while forbidding the daughters of Canaan as brides. This is because idolatry is an intellectual and mental sin, one that can be corrected by education and reason, whereas chesed, rachamim and midot tovoth have to be inculcated and bred into one's being. In Padan Aram, in the family of Avraham these merits were developed and inherited from one generation to the next, whereas the Canaanites had no such tradition and no such inheritance" (Shem MiShmuel).

It was this difference in merits rather than in intellect and wisdom between Avraham and Bil'am, that made it impossible for the gentile world to realize its spiritual potential and gifts. "Those who have a good eye, a humble modest spirit and a meek soul are amongst the talmidim of Avraham Avinu. Those who have an evil eye, an arrogant spirit and a greedy soul are from the disciples of the wicked Bil'am" (Avot 5:22).

**Czarist Russian Parliament  
or an Irish cemetery**

## THE JERUSALEM INSTITUTE OF JEWISH LAW

Rabbi Emanuel Quint, Dean

Lesson # 498

### CONSENT OF WOMAN REQUIRED

A woman cannot be betrothed without her consent. If a man were to betroth a woman against her will, it is not a valid betrothal. However, if a man was coerced into betrothing a woman the betrothal is valid. There is also an opinion that in the latter situation the betrothal is not valid. Therefore, there is a doubtful betrothal.

A woman said to a man betroth me and he threw an object into her lap and declared "you are betrothed unto me" and she immediately threw the object from her lap and said she was joking when she said to him betroth me, it is nevertheless a valid betrothal. As stated in Shulhan Aruch we cannot rely on the thoughts that a person may have in mind but rather on their actions and declarations.

A man took the hand of a woman with force and placed an object into her hand and said she was betrothed to him and she did not throw away the object when thrust into her hand, the betrothal is valid. This presupposes that when he took her hand and thrust the object there into it they were discussing becoming betrothed.

A man owed a woman money and she said to him give me the money and when he started to give her the money he said you are betrothed to me with this money and she threw the money out of her hand, there is no valid betrothal.

If a man betrothed a woman in front of only one witness, the betrothal is not

valid. This holds true even if both the man and woman stated that he gave her the money for betrothal. The betrothal is not valid if he betrothed her in front of one witness and thereafter betrothed her in front of a second witness, there is no valid betrothal.

There is an opinion that they may be betrothed if he betrothed her in the presence of one witness and both the man and wife state that he did and she accepted. This is a situation where we follow the most stringent view in the matter. But if either the man or woman contradicts the one witness, the betrothal is not valid. If there are serious consequences to the woman, we take the lenient view that she is not betrothed.

The single witness is not given credence even if he states that the betrothal took place in front of himself and another witness, and the other witness says he did not see the betrothal take place. The same holds true even if there were two witnesses, but one of the witnesses was a relative of one of the parties. The result is the same as if he betrothed her in the presence of only one witness.

The man and woman must see the witnesses and the witnesses must see the man and woman. If the man and woman saw one of the witnesses and not the second one there is no valid betrothal; for example they were outside the room where the betrothal was taking place and they could see in but the man and/or woman could not see out. If a woman agreed to accept betrothal from the man but she was not aware that there were two

witnesses watching them, it is not a valid betrothal. She claims that she was only joking with the man when she said she would accept the betrothal since she did not know there were witnesses who could see the transaction. However if she denies that she accepted any object from the man and the witnesses say they saw her accept the object she is betrothed since she is disputing two witnesses as to a fact.

If he betrothed her in the presence of two witnesses, she is betrothed although no one said to the two witnesses be witnesses in this matter. Even if there were witnesses who were designated to be the witnesses to the betrothal, any other men who were present and saw the betrothal can be the witnesses to the betrothal. It is necessary that the witnesses see the giving of the object into the hand of the woman or into her domain such as her yard near her house. But if they did not see the actual giving of the object from him to her, even if they heard the man say you are betrothed with this object and they thereafter see the object in her hand, it is not a valid betrothal. Assume that she is standing on one side of a fence and he is on the other side of the fence and there is a hole in the fence large enough to stick a hand through and a hand was thrust through the hole and he says he gave the object into the hand and said you are betrothed unto me and she says she did not hear him say the words of betrothal she is believed and there is no valid betrothal. She could have said it was not her hand. However, if witnesses testified in Beit Din that they were present and she heard and saw what was occurring, she is betrothed.

In the event of her stating she was not

betrothed and there are witnesses who contradict her, some of the situations are as follows:

If the witnesses outside of Beit Din stated that they saw the entire transaction that she was betrothed, they can recant their words when they come to Beit Din.

Or else they stated outside of Beit Din that there was no betrothal they can recant their words in Beit Din.

The witnesses to the betrothal are not subjected to vigorous cross examination as they would be in a civil trial; unless the Beit Din suspects that there is false testimony being given.

Assume a document was produced that this man betrothed that woman and there are witnesses' signatures on the document. Unless the document is authenticated in Beit Din it has no validity.

If the witnesses to the betrothal are not eligible to testify according to Torah law, the document is invalid. But if they are ineligible to be witnesses according to Rabbinic law or if they are of doubtful Torah ineligible, the betrothal is of doubtful nature and she requires a Get to be free to marry.

Or the couple can now get married with proper witnesses. Even if she says there was no betrothal, we compel the husband to give her a Get. The situation is the same in all of the circumstances if there is a doubt as to the legality of the betrothal he can betroth her a second time or give her a Get.

Rabbi Moshe Isserles has a paragraph regarding witnesses to the betrothal who lived in countries where they were compelled to openly reject their practice of Judaism. How should such witnesses be accepted in matrimonial matters?

to be continued

## TRIDDLES

Prizes for best solution sets (when awarded) are furnished by Noam Productions and/or Big Deal.

### Last issue's (Vayeira) TRIDDLES:

#### [1] How many tilapia in the sedra?

Tilapia is a spiny-finned freshwater fish... native chiefly to Africa and the Middle East... laterally compressed bodies like those of sunfish, are fast growing... economically important as food fishes... mild-tasting flesh, but the skin has a bitter flavor... In Hebrew - AMNON. Found in the Kinneret. Many Chumashim give the number of p'sukim in a sedra (printed in small letters right after the end of the sedra) and give a SIMAN, a word whose gimatriya equals the number of p'sukim. Vayeira has 147 p'sukim and the given SIMAN is AMNON, ALEF (1) + MEM (40) + NUN (50) + VAV (6) + NUN (50) = 147.

#### [2] See what she gave birth to

At the end of Vayeira, the Torah tells us that Avraham's brother (Nachor) had a pilegish and she bore him four sons. Her name is R'U-MA which breaks up to SEE + WHAT.

#### [3] Iris, Edith, Brina, Sally

In two variant midrashim, the name of Lot's wife is given as IDIT or IRIT. (Speculation: note that the DALET and the REISH are similar in the way they look; one could be her name and the other, the equivalent of a typo. Or not.) She could also have the nickname BRINA, as in brine (salty water), or maybe SALLY, since SAL means salt in a few languages, Portuguese and Spanish, to name two.

#### [4] Bargaining starts at 14 more than the wholeworld

Lamedvavnik is the Yiddish term for one of the 36 humble righteous ones or Tzadikim mentioned in

*He, his father, and his prophet - all pals*

### Endangered, etc.

It's sad enough to learn about animals that are extinct from prehistoric times. Their extinction is blamed on cataclysmic events such as comets striking Earth, Ice Ages, etc. Whether you accept the theories of extinction or attribute fossil finds to the Mabul, the pre-Mabul times, the "days" of Creation, or previous worlds that were created and destroyed - is not the point. Those extinctions were not our fault; we could do nothing about them.

Not so, the sorry state of affairs of the animal and plant kingdoms in our own time. Not so the long list of mammals and other animals and plants that have become extinct in the last few hundred years. The black rhino, Steller's Sea Cow, a gazelle here and a dwarf hippo there, Aurochs (large wild cattle)... to name just a few.

Many species today are categorized as near threatened, vulnerable, endangered, critically endangered, extinct in the wild (meaning some specimens still exist in captivity - zoo, etc.), and EXTINCT. Most of these animals and plant species that face extinction or are extinct, as that way because of us. Human beings. Who don't treat nature the way we are supposed to.

If we are to marvel at the variety of G-d's creations, as several p'sukim in Tanch teach us, and many sources confirm, then we should be sensitive to the terrible mistreatment of nature that many of our co-inhabitants of the planet are guilty of, be upset by it, and perhaps even DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

Humanity, through Adam HaRishon, was given many privileges over Nature, but many responsibilities, too. An extinct species is BAL TASHCHIT in the extreme

kabbalah or Jewish mysticism. According to this teaching, at any given time there are at least 36 holy Jews in the world who are Tzadikim. These holy people are hidden; i.e., nobody knows who they are. According to some versions of the story, they themselves may not know who they are. For the sake of these 36 hidden righteous people, God preserves the world even if the rest of humanity was degenerated to the level of total barbarism... Avraham's attempt to "convince" G-d to spare S'dom and its sister cities began with 50 tzadikim, 14 more than would preserve the whole world. This was just a TTriddle, but some sources consider the dialogue between Avraham and G-d to be the origin of the concept of the 36 tzadikim.

#### [5] first successful modern typewriter and an angelic meal

That title goes to UNDERWOOD. The angels were served their meal by Avraham TACHAT HA-EITZ, under the tree, with EITZ meaning both tree and wood.

#### [6] United Road Towing and who in Vayeira?

According to an internet search, URT is the largest towing company in the USA, making it the KING OF TOW. Avimelech was MELECH G'RAR, which would be a rough Hebrew translation of the same.

#### [7] Four are the mothers and three are the fathers... Sara, Rivka, Avraham, Rachel, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Leah. What kind of order is that?! And this? Avraham, Yaakov, Yitzchak, Leah, Rivka, Rachel, Sara.

The first list of the P/M/atriarchs is in order of the gimatriya of their names, with SARA at 505 down to LEAH at 36. The second list is alphabetical order (Hebrew names), from Avraham to Sara.

#### [8] George Bernard's son, Leonard Edward

George Bernard Shaw's son (made up for this

We do it 4 times, three of which on the word that thereby has a double meaning - except when done to camels

TTriddle), Leonard Edward, would be L.E. Shaw, just like the prophet in the haftara of Vayeira, ELISHA (especially in the Ashkenazic pronunciation).

#### [9] Biblical to modern: he's his own grandpa

"I'm My Own Grandpa" is a novelty song written (we've mentioned in TTriddles before) by Dwight Latham and Moe Jaffe, performed by Lonzo and Oscar in 1947, about a man who, through an unlikely (but legal) combination of marriages, becomes stepfather to his own stepmother - that is, tacitly dropping the "step-" modifiers, he becomes his own grandfather. It's an entertaining song which can be used when learning Masechet Yevamot. Its use here refers to the word NINI as in "my NIN", which in Biblical Hebrew means son and in modern Hebrew means great-grandson, making a NIN his own grandpa.

#### ParshaPix explanations

IY"H, B"N, we will restore the explanations to a sedra's ParshaPix in the same TT. Many people have expressed dismay concerning their absence these last several weeks.

Here is a quick rundown for Vayeira's PP and elsewhere, you should find this week's.

Thermometer with kipa, glasses, and stethoscope, wishing someone who is sick a REFU'A SH'LEIMA. This is one of the lessons we learn from G-d • UGOT that Sarah LUSHled - they look like matza because the angels' visit was on Pesach. And Lot made matzot for his visitors too • One of the three BEN BAKAR that Avraham ran to, in order to prepare the most sumptuous dish for the visitors, tongue in mustard sauce • Braille writing, for the angels' blinding the people of S'dom. The message is something the blinded S'domites might have graffitied on Lot's door (when they finally found it). It says: GUEST LOVER • The skull is the symbol of acid-rain, a good description of that which destroyed S'dom... • Wine that intoxicated Lot • The alarm clock for Avraham getting up early... (Avimelech too) • The baby in the cradle represents the birth of Yitzchak • Metal shield used by many mohalim in their set up for Mila • Father

and son walk hand in hand, VAYEILCHU SH'NEIHEM YACHDAV • Davka Akeida graphic and a Shofar that is connected to the story of the Akeida • Dorothy and Co. (UTZ, Hebrew version of OZ)... • the chef (TEVACH, TABACH)... the bottle of liquor (BUZ, BOOZE)... the sea cow (TACHASH) are for some of Yitzchak's cousins, mentioned at the end of the sedra • Donkey is mentioned in both the sedra and the haftara • Olive oil is from the haftara • And there is a column (or pillar) of salt - NaCl one on top of another, for Mrs. Lot • Binoculars are for VAYASHKIFU • Terem logo lying on its side for TEREM YISKAVU... • Mortar and pestle was for PILL-DASH but don't worry about it; it wasn't a good one.

## ParshaPix

- 👉 400 silver pieces that Avraham handed over to EFRON (pencil = IPARON, heteronym of EFRON)
- 👉 V'LIVKOTAH is written with a small KAF - under the pencil - a small kaf, a.k.a. a demitasse spoon
- 👉 G-d blessed Avraham BAKOL. There is an opinion that this blessing included a precious gem that had miraculous curative powers. That's it under the B'H
- 👉 There's a speech-bubble with a chain in it, standing for VAYOMAR, and he (Eliezer) said, which is read with a SHAL-SHELET (chain)
- 👉 BARUCH HASHEM was said by Eliezer (Others in Chumash who said B"H are No'ach and Yitro. Lavan got close, by using the phrase B'RUCH HASHEM. So did Avimelech to Yitzchak. Notice the common factor in those who said B"H).

- 👉 Dakva's scene of Rivka at the well (or was it a spring?)
- 👉 One of the gold rings Eliezer gave to Rivka
- 👉 The Xed out turkey platter is Eliezer's refusal to eat before he had completed "business."
- 👉 Good thing, too, because Lavan had poisoned the food (poison symbol)
- 👉 CHUPA is for Yitzchak's marriage to Rivka (also Avraham's to Ketura - unless a PILEGESH doesn't have a CHUPA)
- 👉 Gift for Rivka and her family, as well as the gifts Avraham gave to the children of the "PILAG-SHIM"
- 👉 The word TEREM appears eight times in the Torah, twice in Chayei Sara. That's the logo of Terem about half-way down the right side of the ParshaPix (it was in last week's ParshaPix too)
- 👉 NEVIOT water is for the sound-alike of the first born of Yishma'el
- 👉 There are two dots forming a SH'VA - this is a sound-alike for a grandson of Avraham's via Ketura
- 👉 The animals are mentioned in the haftara - In modern Hebrew, a M'RI is a buffalo (bison? or maybe water buffalo). Likely that the haftara is referring to a different member of the bovine family.
- 👉 The question-marked chair is from the haftara - who will sit on

- David's throne after his death
- The arrow is from CHAVILA to SHOR
- The badge is Agent 99's of

Control. She was a SOCHENET, a term describing Avishag in the haftara.  
Unexplaineds

## Word of the Month • Review of variable months

This review is NOT about the one or two Adar issue, NOR is it about which day of the week Rosh HaShana can or cannot begin. It IS about the third variable in the Jewish Calendar, the lengths of Cheshvan and Kislev.

All Jewish months have 29 or 30 days. Never fewer than 29 nor more than 30. In our fixed calendar, Tishrei, Sh'vat, the first of two Adars (when there are two), Nissan, Sivan, and Av ALWAYS have 30 days. Tevet, the Adar immediately preceding Nissan, Iyar, Tammuz, and Elul ALWAYS have 29 days.

Cheshvan and Kislev vary in length. Cheshvan's regular count is 29 days; Kislev is regularly 30.

It is sometimes necessary to add one day to a year (this is a result of the LO ADU ROSH rule that results in RH being pushed to a day later than it "should be"). When this happens, the extra day is 30 Cheshvan. Such years are called SHALEIM (complete or full). This is the most common of the three types of years, occurring 45% of years.

It is sometimes necessary (for the same reason) to take one day away from a year. That day is 30 Kislev. A year with only 29 days in Kislev is called CHASEIR (deficient or defective). Occurs 25½% of years.

Years with 29 days in Cheshvan and 30 in Kislev are called K'SEDER (in order). 29.5% Never will Cheshvan have 30 and Kislev 29 in the same year. The K'SEDER arrangement makes that unnecessary.

When Cheshvan has 29 days, Rosh Chodesh Kislev is one day. When it has 30 days, R"Ch Kislev is two days. When Kislev has 29 days, Rosh Chodesh Tevet is one day. When it has 30 days, R"Ch Tevet is two days.

The Gemara (Brachot 18.) teaches us that a person before whom is the body of one of the seven close relatives for whom one mourns lies, is exempt from all other mitzvot in the Torah. Furthermore, even if the deceased is not before him, if the person is responsible for the burial, it is considered as if the MEIT (dead body) is before him. This halacha is not restricted to the 7 relatives, but rather to whomever is involved in burying the dead. All of the above is linked to the wording in the pasuk (B'reishit 23:4) ...V'EKB'RA MEITI MIL'FANAI. So that I may bury "my dead" that is before me. Even though, at that moment, when Avraham was dealing with B'NEI CHEIT, Sara's body was not actually before Avraham, it is considered as if it were.

RAKEL BERENBAUM'S

## PORTION OF THE PORTION

FEEDback to berenbau@gmail.com

### THE LIFE OF SARAH

Chayei Sara - the Life of Sarah - seems to be a funny title for a portion in which we are told that Sarah dies. But the verse is trying to teach us things about how she lived her life so we can apply it to our own lives.

The verse says that the life of Sarah was 100 years, and 20 years and seven years. The word years is repeated each time. We are all familiar with the Rashi that at 100 years she was like a 20 year old who never sinned and at 20 years she was like a 7 year old for her beauty. There are positive aspects to old age such as wisdom and life experience. There are positive aspects to youth as well, such as excitement, strength, and energy. The Torah teaches us here, that throughout her life, Sarah had the positive qualities of the aged as well as of youth.

The Torah tells us that Sarah died but it doesn't tell us how? What would CNN have written about her death. The Midrash fills in these details.

Rashi says that she died when she received the news that her husband Avraham, had almost slaughtered her only son, Yitzchak, on Mt. Moriah. If we think of this simply we might assume that she, as Yitzchak's mother, had a heart attack from the shock of this news. How close she had been to losing the son that she had waited for so long.

But R' Chayim Shmuelevitch has a deeper understanding. He says that we know that Sarah had a strong faith in Hashem - so news such as the near death of her son wouldn't change her beliefs in G-d's goodness. Sarah knew that life on this earth is a mission given by Hashem. Yitzchak's mission was to listen to Hashem and that is exactly what he did. Yitzchak had reached such a high level of consciousness that he was ready to sacrifice his life in service of G-d. When Sarah realized that Yitzchak had reached this level she knew her job, as his mother, on earth was done. There was nothing more she could teach her son, so she had fulfilled her life's mission and her soul left her body and she died.

We all have many missions in this life. May we be successful in accomplishing them.

**One of a mother's** missions is to care for the health of her children. Here is a recipe for **Gogel Mogel**, a popular Eastern European egg-based dessert recipe that when served hot is considered a home remedy for sore throats. Research done in Israel suggests that it may really assist in the treatment of sore throats with an antibiotic effect. It can widen the blood vessels in the throat, allowing more blood and antigens to flow to the inflamed area, hastening recovery.

## GOGEL-MOGEL

2 egg yolks

2-3 tsp honey, sugar, molasses or maple syrup

milk

Raisins, chocolate, cream, nuts, (optional)

Beat yolks and milk with whisk or beater till creamy. Add sweetener and stir thoroughly. Eat immediately or chill and serve later. As a remedy a single raw egg is added to a cup of warm milk and mixed with a tablespoon of honey. This must be served warm or hot. For a low cholesterol remedy leave out the egg.

She'd lead off the third if her team went down in order in the first 2 innings

## Parsha Points to Ponder

### Suggested answers

1) Daát Zekainim MiBaalei HaTosfot answers that since Avraham speaks here of the time when he lived in his hometown when G-D was unknown on Earth, he only references Him as G-D of the realm where He was known, namely in the heavens.

2) The S'forno understands that the Torah seeks to teach that one should not speak while in middle of eating or drinking. That is why she waited for him to finish before engaging in further conversation.

3) The Ohr HaChayim explains that the Torah wants us to know that Eliezer was not pulled by all the family wealth which Rivka described and did not follow her to experience that. He waited patiently by the well with the animals instead.

## TTreader Feedback

*We've been calling the current month either Marcheshvan or Cheshvan, depending upon how much room we had. A couple of times we wrote MarCheshvan, prompting TTreader feedback from YMH who challenged breaking the name into Mar and Cheshvan, with or without a space. Then we received an email from Rabbi Dr. Ari Zivotofsky who attached an article he wrote for the OU's Jewish Action about 9 years ago. Here's an abridged version of that article.*

**Misconception:** The complete and correct name for the month following Tishrei is Cheshvan, and it is a quaint tradition to call it Mar Cheshvan because it is bitter (Hebrew: mar) due to its lack of holidays.

**Fact:** The correct name for this fall month is the one word Marcheshvan (actually, M'rach-sh'van is probably more authentic, but we'll suffice with Marcheshvan)...

The currently used Jewish names for the months were imported from Bavel and many of the names occur in Tanach. Marcheshvan is probably derived from its location in the calendar. Marcheshvan is from the two words "m'rach" and "shvan", corresponding to the Hebrew "yerech shmini", the 8th month...

In the Mishna and Gemara, the month is always called Marchesh- van...

There actually are sources that break the name into Mar and Cheshvan, but they seem to be based on the misconception or simply drashot on the way one could break the name down.

The Pri Chadash suggests that the name Mar Cheshvan is based on the fact that it is the beginning of the rainy season. The Targum translated mar as tipa, a drop, in the verse "Hen goyim k'mar midli - Behold, the nations are as a drop of [water from] a bucket" (Yeshayahu 40:15). As such, the name means the "rainy Cheshvan," and far from mar meaning bitter, it connotes a month of blessed rain.

Concerning the names we use for the months, as mentioned earlier, some are found in Tanach; others are not.

Nissan, Sivan, Tevet, and Adar are found in Megilat Esther (some elsewhere, too). Elul is found in Nechemia, Kislev in Zecharia and Nechemia, Sh'vat in Zecharia. Iyar, Tammuz, Av, Tishrei, and Marchesh- van are not found in Tanach.

Side point: If Marcheshvan means the eighth month, so does October, which was named when the year began with March, the spring month. With the switch to beginning the year with January, October is technically misnamed, being the 10th month.

**Bottom line:** The correct name for the month between Tishrei and Kislev is Marcheshvan.

**Thank you YMH and RAZ** for "keeping us honest". Any reference in this issue of TT to Cheshvan was written before the Jewish Action article was received and reviewed. B"N, it won't happen again.