

Parshat HaShavuah

CHAYEI SARAH

Nov 19, 2011

חיי שרה
כ"ב חשוון תשע"ב

A PUBLICATION OF

The Weinbaum
Yeshiva
High School
INSPIRE & CHALLENGE



Ashreinu

חלקינו מה טוב

Candle Lighting

5:11

S"Z Kriat Shema

9:24

Sunset

5:29

Motzei
Shabbat

6:06



Enriching and Enhancing Your Study of the Weekly Torah Portion

RABBI NOAH ZISQUIT	1
MATTHEW SILKIN ('14)	2
MOSHE LEVENSON ('14)	2-3
DANIELLE SOBOL ('13)	3-4
YITZCHAK KAMINETSKY ('15)	4

IT'S TIME TO WAKE UP

RABBI NOAH ZISQUIT

In a classroom 2000 years ago, Rabbi Akiva was sitting and teaching his class when they began to doze off. Rabbi Akiva wanted to keep his students awake so he told them the following: "What did [Queen] Esther envision that enabled her to rule over 127 nations?... As a descendant of our matriarch Sarah, who lives for 127 years, Esther, in turn, will come and rule over 127 countries"(Midrash Rabba).

One must wonder, how was Rabbi Akiva's message supposed to awaken his slumbering students? On the surface, it seems that Rabbi Akiva wanted to engage his students by just changing the subject from whatever he was previously teaching. He wanted to share an interesting piece of information with his students like a joke or an interesting fact, in this case the fact that the number 127 was significant to both Sara and Esther. While a teacher is well aware of the importance of sometimes changing the subject in order to stir the students interest, this was not simply the case with Rabbi Akiva.

The Chidushei Harim (the first Gerrer Rebbe) explains that Rabbi Akiva was trying to teach his students the importance of making the most of one's time. Our matriarch Sarah uses every single day of her 127 year life span to its fullest, constantly doing good deeds, and as a result, her descendant Esther deserves to rule over 127 countries. To put this is into perspective, if one year of Sarah's action-packed life causes Esther to merit ruling one country, then one week of Sarah's life causes Esther to merit a city and one hour causes her to merit one town and so on.

Rabbi Akiva was trying to teach his students that when a person does not use his time properly, even for just a moment, there is so much that he can lose out on. This message, he hoped, would inspire his students to wake up and maximize their time. Not everyone lives 127 years like Sarah. Lets make every second count!





“GIFTED” ADVICE MATTHEW SILKIN (‘14)

I can remember off the top of my head who I have given a gift to in the past year, whether it be for a birthday, a Bar Mitzvah, or any other occasion. But one thing I have noticed about the art of gift giving is that people who would otherwise be concerned with slightly more important matters all of a sudden focus on the gift being given, as if they too deserve something free. As a result of this, I have learned to give someone a gift privy from prying eyes.

This week’s parsha, *Chayei Sarah*, recounts Eliezer’s journey in his search of a suitable wife for young Yitzchak. Over dinner with the family of the prospective bride, Eliezer recounts the story of when he learned Rivka’s name and gave her gifts. Rashi points out that he switches the order: in reality, he gave her presents first, and then asked her identity, since he does not want her family to analyze his giving of presents.

This presents a question: why switch the order anyways? Presents are presents– it does not matter when you give them.

Lavan is portrayed by the Torah as an extremely greedy person. For him to hear that his sister gets an abundance of presents while he did not get any– especially when Eliezer gives them to her even before he learns of her identity– would be extremely insulting, to both him and to his greedy conscience. Eliezer is aware of this and therefore switches the order, so that Lavan would not be jealous.

Jealousy is consuming. It starts as a spark when eyeing a friend’s new laptop, and can escalate into doing the unspeakable to get it. But jealousy can only exist when the person who receives something new CAUSES it to exist. We can learn from here that some things, such as gifts, should best be kept secret. We don’t want them falling into the wrong hands.

BE OUR GUEST MOSHE LEVENSON (‘14)


The fourth pasuk of *Parshat Chayei Sarah* states that “...גר ותושב אנכי עמכם...” – “I am an alien (stranger) and a resident amongst them,” regarding Avraham’s presence in the Hittite occupied territory of modern day Israel. Rashi comments on the seemingly contradictory statements that Avraham is both a stranger and a resident of the land. Rashi simply explains that Avraham is a stranger from another land, and a new resident who has settled among the land’s inhabitants.

This explanation of how Avraham is both a stranger and citizen of the land contains deeper meaning once you look past the first layer of the text. The Gemara in *Masechet Sanhedrin* (111a) explains that Avraham’s need to obtain a plot of land in which to bury his deceased wife, despite Hashem’s promise to hand over the land to Avraham’s descendants, is in fact one of the great test that Gd presents before Avraham. This idea suggests that Avraham himself is the stranger of the land, who had to become a resident of the land by his own will and actions, without seeking refuge in Hashem’s promises.

Avraham maintains his humility throughout the process of obtaining the land in which to bury his wife. The Gemara in *Masechet Bava Metzia* (87a) concludes that each of the 400 *shekalim* in which Avraham uses to purchase the grave is in fact worth the equivalent of 2,500 ordinary *shekalim* (1,000,000 *shekalim* total).

Continued page 3





Levenson continued

This enormous sum hints to Avraham's unconditional love and dedication to his wife Sarah at any cost. Despite his wealth and the numerous opportunities for which his ego could have sounded itself, Avraham's humility and sense of dedication to his wife enabled him to succeed. The Midrash Ha-Gadol notes that Hashem rewards Avraham's descendants with prominent positions in history for the humility Avraham displays.

Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik suggests that the charismatic characteristic of Avraham provides each and every Jew with their dual role. Every Jew must preserve these character traits in order to successfully serve Hashem. On the one hand, Avraham is a resident of his country, and therefore must work and pray for her welfare just as Yirmiyahu urges his people to do when they were on the verge of exile (Yirmiyahu 29:7). But on the other hand, the Jew in this world is always an alien, for his allegiance is to G-d and his goals are presented and predetermined by the Torah. A Jew must continuously be ready to be a lonely alien resisting the culture and other harmful distractions presented by society and by maintaining his unique responsibility and fulfilling his mission in this world he will ultimately succeed, just like our forefather Avraham.

NEVER REGRET

DANIELLE SOBOL ('13)

This week's parsha begins with the death of Sarah Imeinu. There is a midrash that explains that while Avraham and Yitzchak were off performing Akeidat Yitzchak, the Satan comes to Sarah and shows her an image of Yitzchak's coffin and tells her "Your son Yitzchak died...almost." The Satan includes the word "almost" because he does not have the ability to lie, but upon hearing the first few words of that sentence, Sarah is shocked and dies.

This is difficult for us to understand because we know that no one dies before the time Hashem has determined for them to return to Him, especially not someone as holy and righteous as Sarah. Surely she does nothing that would merit an early death! So why is it that the Satan would go through this trouble to make it seem as if Sarah died of shock from the news he gives her, if he knew she is going to die either way since it is her time?

Rabbi Frand explains that in Ma'ariv, in the bracha of "*Hashkievinu*," we ask Hashem to protect us from the Satan "*meifaneinu*" and "*meachareinu*," "from in front of us," and "from behind us." One interpretation of this is that we want Hashem to protect us from the Satan both before we do mitzvot, and after we do mitzvot. But what is the purpose of being protected from the Satan after the mitzvah is already done- what more damage could he do?

Sometimes, if the Satan can not tempt us and prevent us from doing a mitzvah, instead, he tries to plant a seed of regret in us after doing the mitzvah to detract from the great act that was just done. In that way, even if he cannot "get us" before hand, he can get us afterwards.

Avraham does a great mitzvah at Akeidat Yitzchak— he shows the ultimate sign of faith to Hashem by being willing to give up his only son simply because Hashem asks him to. So even though the Satan could not prevent him from showing this great emunah and doing this huge mitzvah, he wants to detract from the greatness of the act by making Avraham regret, if only for a second, what he has done. So by making Sarah's death look like the result of the Akeidah, he is hoping that he could elicit a regretful response from Avraham. But as we know, ultimately, his plan failed, because Avraham's mourning period for Sarah is brief and quiet with only three tears shed, since he knows it is all from Hashem and part of his ultimate plan.

Continued page 4



Sobol continued

This serves as a great lesson for us-- that after doing a mitzvah, we should be extra careful to make sure that we do not allow the Satan to enter our heads, and that we maintain pride over what we have done, never regretting following in the ways of Hashem.

IT'S ALL IN HOW WE SEE IT YITZCHAK KAMINETSKY ('15)

In this week's parsha we read of the ending of Sarah Imeinu's long, 127 year life. Why does the Torah need to conclude the pasuk with "shnei chayei Sarah"— "the years of Sarah's life"? The Torah does not have to say this because we are just told that her life spans 127 years. Rashi tells us that the Torah adds this phrase to teach us that all of Sarah's years were good.

However, was Sarah's life good? Although Sarah has a full, long life, it is not one to be characterized only as a good life.

Sarah's life is full of struggles. She travels far from her home, endures a famine, is kidnapped twice, and experiences years of childlessness. And finally, after she gives birth to her only child, her only son, her husband Avraham takes him to sacrifice him.

But, the reason why Rashi characterizes Sarah's life as "good" is because of the way she views her life— she views it as good.

From this we can learn a very valuable lesson. People face many different difficulties in life, whether they be financial, health, or any other problems. And despite this, some always have a smile on their face, are always there to help out, and are always nice to others.

All of the struggles we face in life can be viewed as an opportunity to grow. As we try to see the good in every experience, we must try and mirror the thoughts of Sarah Imeinu and find the positives in every moment of our life.

This week we read the way Sarah views her troubles, and how she responds to her hardships. To her, everything is for the best, and her life is therefore seen as good. We all have the potential to achieve this level, to be happy with our lives, but it is all about how we think of it.

Editor-in-Chief
Eliana Feldan ('13)

Final Editor
Leora Litwin ('12)

Editing
Hannah Baum ('13)
Cori Dennis ('13)
Elana Gelman ('12)
Zevi Litwin ('13)

Staff

Chaim Bitterman ('13)
Seth Fisher ('13)
Daniel Geller ('13)
Nechamie Saxon ('13)
Mathew Silkin ('14)
Gabriella Sobol ('13)
Sagiv Zehavi ('12)

Layout
Danielle Sobol ('13)

Proofreader
Saige Rosenberg ('13)

Senior Editor
Eram Zaghi ('12)

Faculty Advisor
Rabbi Avi Hochman

Interested in sponsoring Ashreinu?
Contact Rabbi Hochman at
RAVH@WYHS.NET

This publication contains Torah matters
Please treat it with respect



7902 Montoya Circle
Boca Raton, FL 33433
Phone: 561-417-7422
Fax: 561-417-7028
www.wyhs.net

