

Parshat HaShavuah

חיי שרה

Chayei Sarah

כ"ה חשוון תשע"ג

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The Weinbaum  
Yeshiva  
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INSPIRE & CHALLENGE

Ashreinu

חלקינו מה טוב

Enriching and Enhancing Your Study of the Weekly Torah Portion

Candle Lighting

5:15

S"Z Kriat Shema

8:44

Sunset

5:33

Motzei  
Shabbat

6:10

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This week's Ashreinu is generously sponsored by Steve and Roni Kurtz and Sam Leff in memory of Margery Leff's 10th yahrzeit grandmother of Ezra, Isaac, Aaron, and Yoni Kurtz

## GOOD THINGS COME TO THOSE WHO WAIT

RABBI AVI HOCHMAN

"How many extra words are there in the תורה? None!" This is something that I heard many times when I was a child and it could not be more true than in this week's פרשה. Immediately after אברהם completes his purchase of מערת המכפלה (בראשית כג:יז-יח), the תורה tells us: "ואַתֵּרֶי-כֵן קָבַר אַבְרָהָם אֶת-שָׂרָה אִשְׁתּוֹ" (כג:יט) "שרה" אברהם buried his wife שרה. Why does the תורה have to include this information? Is it not obvious that once אברהם purchased מערת המכפלה he would bury שרה? Was not that the whole reason he wanted to purchase מערת המכפלה in the first place?!

R' Chaim Dov Rabinowitz in his ספר, דעת סופרים, explains that originally שרה desired to purchase מערת המכפלה on her own, but she was not able to secure the purchase from the בני הת who were living there. However, when אברהם makes an attempt to purchase מערת המכפלה, he is successful. The תורה goes out of its way to tell us that now אברהם was able to make the purchase and bury her there, as opposed to שרה who was unsuccessful.

Every Friday night at our שבת tables we sing אשת חיל. Our Rabbis teach us that אשת חיל was written by אברהם as a eulogy for שרה. The פסוק says, "זממה שדה ותקחהו" – "She plans for a field, and buys it." R' Rabinowitz explains that this פסוק highlights the fact that שרה planned on buying it, but אברהם was the one who completed the purchase.

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## THE OTHER WOMAN MATTHEW SILKIN ('14)

As Avraham's life approaches its end, he decides to remarry. The Torah tells us that the woman who he marries is named Keturah, and that she and Avraham have six children together. Does it make sense that Avraham fathers six children at the ripe old age of 175? Furthermore, we are left wondering: Who is Keturah?

This is the one and only place in the Torah where she is mentioned, and without any background information. Indeed, Avraham seems to meet her and marry her almost instantaneously!

Rashi explains that Keturah is actually Hagar, who does teshuva and becomes "as pure as the *keto-ret* in the Beit Hamikdash." Rashi offers this explanation because of the amount of time it takes between Avraham meeting Keturah and marrying her — less than a *pasuk*! This shows that Avraham accepts Hagar's teshuva and he does not welcome her as the old Hagar, but rather as the new Keturah.

We all make mistakes. But, rather than defining someone based on his or her wrongdoings, we should strive to be like Avraham, who does not reject Hagar. Instead, he accepts her because she is willing to fix her mistake—something we should all aim to achieve.

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## SARAH IMEINU'S "GOOD LIFE" YITZCHAK KAMINETSKY ('16)

In this week's parsha, Sarah Imeinu's long 127 year life comes to an end. Right after we read of her death, the *pasuk* says that "Sarah's lifetime was one hundred years, twenty years, and seven years; these were the lives of Sarah" (23:1). What does the word "these" refer to? Rashi answers by saying "כולן שוין לטובה"—"All were equally good." When we think about Sarah's life, some of the things that come to mind are her incredible struggles—she is kidnapped twice and experiences years of infertility. As if that were not enough, once she finally gives birth to her son Yitzchak, Yishmael begins to have a bad influence on him, forcing Sarah to send both Yishmael and Hagar away.

Most people would consider this a difficult, troublesome life. Rashi, however, explains that that all of Sarah's days were equally good. But how can one compare the trauma of being kidnapped with the joy of having her first child after almost a century without one?

The answer is simple—the reason why the days of Sarah's life were equally good is because of the way Sarah looked at life.

There are people in this world who face many difficulties: financial problems, health problems, etc. Yet they still manage to have a constant smile on their faces and show kindness to others, despite their situations.

*Continued page 3*





*Kaminetsky continued*

The negative things that occur in our lives can either be seen as devastating or as opportunities to grow. We all believe that life has a higher purpose than just the here and now. We must strive to build a life like that of Sarah Imeinu and others who have struggled and yet have found the positives in life. This week's parsha demonstrates the way Sarah handled the hardships in her life. From her perspective, everything was for the best and she had a good life. We all have the potential to be happy and live great lives; it just depends on how we view our experiences and ourselves as a whole.

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## DEFINING MOMENTS

### EFRAIM SHACHTER ('16)

The cantillation mark called the *shalsholet* is one of the rarest *trup*s, as it appears only four times in the approximately 80,000 words in the Torah. One of the four times this *trup* appears is in this week's parsha. What does it mean? Is the *shalsholet* simply scattered throughout the Torah for purely musical purposes, or does it have some sort of significance?

A *shalsholet* also appears in Vayeira, last week's parsha. There it is used above the word "*vayitmahama*," meaning, "he hesitated." The effect of the *shalsholet* there is to draw out the word "hesitate" and emphasize the hesitation in the narrative. But the *shalsholet* in our parsha seems to do more than just emphasize the word.

We read in this week's parsha, "Vayomar, Hashem Elokei adoni Avraham..."—"And he said, 'Hashem, G-d of my master Avraham, may you arrange it for me this day and do kindness with my master Avraham'" (24:12). According to the midrash, Eliezer asks Hashem to help him find a suitable wife for Yitzchak. The *shalsholet* is above the least unusual word in this pasuk: "*vayomar*." Maybe it also signifies hesitation here just as in last week's parsha, but why would Eliezer be hesitating?

In Bereishit (24:8) Avraham tells Eliezer, "If the woman does not wish to follow you, you shall be absolved of this oath of mine." In his *Studies on the Weekly Parsha*, Yehuda Nachshoni writes that Eliezer has a personal interest in his task because he has a daughter of his own, and he wants Avraham to arrange a wedding between his daughter and Yitzchak. Eliezer could have just taken a quick look around Nachor and decided that his daughter was a much better match for Yitzchak. He would have then been able to connect his lineage with the holiest man on earth, Avraham.

But instead we see that Eliezer asks Hashem to help him find someone else for Yitzchak and even begs Hashem to do kindness for his master Avraham. This must have been a heart-wrenching moment for Eliezer. He gives up on the chance that his daughter might marry Yitzchak and has to go ahead and find a better match. "*Vayomar*": The word alone cannot capture the pain that Eliezer must have been feeling at this moment. The *shalsholet* calls our attention to Eliezer's tremendous sacrifice that might otherwise have gone unnoticed.

We are often faced with problematic situations in which our choices will define us. We learn from Eliezer and the *shalsholet* that hesitation in such situations is normal, but sometimes the hardest things and the right things are one and the same.



## MISSING IN ACTION ARIELLA MAMMAN ('16)

At the beginning of this week's parsha, Avraham mourns the death of his wife, Sarah. However, throughout this ordeal, there is no mention of Yitzchak's whereabouts. Rabbeinu Bachya, confused by how a son could miss his mother's funeral and not mourn alongside his father, shares an insightful explanation.

Yitzchak has just undergone the Akeida, a very traumatic experience, and to prevent more stress he has not yet been notified about the passing of his mother. The midrash adds that Sarah's death is caused because of the shock of hearing that her only son is about to be slaughtered, which might lead Yitzchak to believe that he is the cause of his mother's death.

To expound upon Yitzchak's possible whereabouts, Rabbeinu Bachya shares two suggestions. First, he states that during the three-year gap when Yitzchak does not know his mother had died, he stays at Har Hamoriah, until he leaves to marry Rivkah at the age of forty.

Second, Rabbeinu Bachya quotes the Zohar, which suggests that Yitzchak was injured at the Akeida and was therefore taken by angels to Gan Eden, where he stayed to regain his strength. This reason helps explain how Yitzchak is able to later identify the scent of Esav's coat as similar to the scent of Gan Eden.

*Rabbi Hochman continued*

Sometimes a person has an ambition to do something, but unfortunately, for whatever reason, he is not successful. A person may work hard and accomplish a lot, but he never wins the election, or he never makes the sports team, or she never gets that A+ on the test. Here the תורה is teaching us that in life there are times when we are going to put tremendous effort into something and we will not always reap the benefits right away. Sometimes it will take days, months, or even years until the time comes for us to benefit from all the hard work we put in.

A person should never think that all his efforts went to waste. We need to realize that this is a test of wills, and even though we do not always see the fruits of our labor right away, it is because the time has not yet come for those fruits to blossom. When the time is right and ready then our efforts will shine through.

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