



OD YOSEF HAI NEWSLETTER

ROSH YESHIVAH AND COMMUNITY RABBI
DAYAN ABRAHAM DAVID SHLI"TA

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Thoughts on CHAYE SARA Year 24

by Dayan Abraham David

Rashi explains why *Chaye Sarah* the death of Sarah follows the Akeda of Yitzchak with a Midrash that when Sarah heard about the offering of her beloved son Yitzchak and his nearly being killed, she died from the shock of the news. But what is difficult in the words of Rashi is that he says when she heard he was to be slaughtered and almost not slaughtered – ‘*Nizdamen le shechita ve kimat she lo nishchat*’ it should have said ‘*kimat she nishchat*’, nearly slaughtered which would have given her a shock and not that he was almost not slaughtered. There are some miforshim who explain that when she was told about it, the one who told her delayed in saying ‘*She lo nishchat*’ that he was not slaughtered, ‘*Kimat she lo nishchat*’ to mean he almost told her that Yitzchak had not been slaughtered before she passed away from the sorrow and shock. The Yalkut Shimoni tells us in fact when the satan was not successful in deterring Abraham from his offering Yitzchak (until the Malach stopped him from harming Yitzchak). The satan went to Sarah it would seem to test her reaction he told her “have you not heard what has happened, Abraham has taken Yitzchak your son, slaughtered him and offered him as a burnt offering”. She cried and wailed

until her soul left her. It would seem from this that the satan had succeeded with Sarah who could not bear to have her son sacrificed. How do we understand this? We are told how great a *Tzadeket* Sarah was as indicated in the passuk, hundred years, twenty years and seven years of her life. We know Abraham eulogised her with the 22 letters of the alphabet from a (aleph) to (Taf), in the *Eshet Chayil*. There is a *Midrash Tanchumah* which might throw some light on this. It brings the Midrash a little differently that the satan came to Sarah looking like Yitzchak, telling her about Abraham wanting to sacrifice him and the Angel telling him not to, before he could finish what he was saying her soul left her because of her sorrow. Here we see there was no shock and she knew Yitzchak had not been killed as he in person was telling her, so why did her soul leave her? The Shem Mishmuel explains that what caused her pain and sorrow was to think that Abraham had made a great mistake in wanting to sacrifice Yitzchak and there could not have been a command for it, since she would have been told as she was also a *Neveiah* and she was sure Hashem would not have commanded a human sacrifice. She was shocked with pain and horror that Abraham could stray so far from the truth to want to offer Yitzchak as a sacrifice and that thought caused her to pass away. The satan had not finished the story, that G-d had only wanted Abraham to

understand it in that way so as to test him as the Malach said '*Ata yadati ki yare Elokim ata ve lo chasackta bincha.*' Now I know how G-d fearing you are for being willing to sacrifice your dear son, Yitzchak. With this we can understand the Rashi and the *Yalkut*, of course if Sarah had been commanded to offer her son, Yitzchak, she would willingly have done so. But she was sure Abraham had not been given such a command as G-d would have revealed it to her through prophecy. It could only have been that in his eagerness Abraham had misunderstood G-d's words and had mistakenly killed Yitzchak, that is why she died horrified at Abraham's mistake. She was right in her thinking as Rashi brings a Midrash in Vayera that G-d had never really told Abraham to *Shecht* Yitzchak only to bring him up on the Altar but Abraham had understood it was a test to offer his only son as a *Korban* as G-d had meant him to understand to prove his great love for G-d and to silence the mekatrigim. .

TORAH GEMS

This Parasha speaks at length about the praise of two of our mothers, '*Emaot HaKedoshot*' Sarah and Rifka, who were the building blocks of our people. They instilled in our people the qualities we needed to become '*Mamlechet Cohanim ve goy Kadosh*' a Holy nation of priests responsible for the spiritual and moral direction of this world.

Sarah together with Abraham brought recognition of G-d in this world. Before Abraham and Sarah, G-d was only acknowledged as

G-d of the Heavens, through great sacrifice and hard work they were able to convert idolaters to recognise G-d's involvement in our world and man's ability to communicate directly with Him; '*Eloke Shamayim ve Haaretz*'. Abraham eulogized her with the words

of the '*Eshet Chayil*'. '*Vayehu haye Sarah*', and this was the life of Sarah a hundred and twenty-seven years. The word '*Vayehu*' depicts sadness and pain that Sarah's was a difficult and sad life but adds on the extra words '*Shne Chaye Sarah*' the years Sarah lived, to tell us she lived all her life in goodness in spite of all the difficulties. When we read the story of her life with the revelations of our Rabbis of blessed memory in the Pasukim, we begin to appreciate her greatness and the inspirations she has bequeathed to her children. Sarah was ninety years old when Yitzhak was born, for many many years she suffered the pain of longing for a child which was denied to her. She could have sulked and withdrawn into herself, mourning her lot, but she joined her husband in his Holy work of '*chesed*', welcoming people and converting them. She converted the woman while Abraham converted the men. She joined these converts in their happiness and family '*Simachot*'. She prayed for a child with fervor but did not sit back, made her '*hishtadlut*' to the extent of bringing another wife, Hagar, for Abraham. She suffered at the hands her maidservant who taunted her that she was not the '*Tzadeket*' she pretended to be, since G-d had not blessed her with child, Hagar had become pregnant immediately. It did not stop her from preparing and welcoming guests at all times. Even when she had Yitzhak she had to deal with the taunts of Yishmael that he was not the son of Abraham but of '*Avimelech*'. '*Batach lev baalah*' her husband entrusted his life with her and could depend on her complete commitment, not just for the good times, but through all difficulties. Theirs was a marriage for all time not like our present '*throw away*' selfish society. When there is trust and commitment in the home then '*Shalal lo yechar*', then there is material blessings in the home. She followed her husband wherever he went like a

laden ship providing for him and his work; *'Haita ke oniyot socher'*. She was diligent to awake early in the mornings to provide for her household. *'VaTakom beod lilah ve titen teref le betah'*. She cared for her son not only physically but for his spiritual growth. She had the cleverness to spot the pitfall of the bad influence of Yishmael on Yitzhak and act upon it. A difficult decision against her husband, to send away a son and woman she had brought into her home. It hurt Abraham and G-d had to intervene to tell Abraham to follow Sarah's decision. She stood steadfast and did not take the easy and popular way out and Abraham praised her later for it with the words: *'Darsha tsemmer vu pishten'*, she separated the wool from the flax, referring to separating Yitzhak from Yishmael.

'Kaph parasa la oni', she opened the palm of her hand to give to the poor; *ve yadeah shelcha la ebyon'* she stretched out her hand to support the destitute so they should not give up in desperation. *'Pehah Patchah be chochmah'*, she spoke with wisdom and thought, not just spilling out words; *'ve Torat chesed al Leshonah'*, her words were words of *'chesed and hizuk'*. She made it possible for Abraham to have the time to spend with the learned and elders; *'Nodah beshearim Baalah beshivto im zekneh Haaretz'*. *'Oz vehadar lebushah'*, she dressed herself in modesty and respect and held herself in the background when her husband welcomed the strangers. Sarah *'imenu'* was the example of a Jewish mother overcoming all difficulties with faith and perseverance, qualities Jewish mother's have inherited.

Rifka was the example for Jewish mothers to fight against the bad influences of their surroundings to keep their purity and modesty as Rifka did even though she was brought up in the household of wicked people like Bethuel and Lavan. Yes, we too know

how difficult the battle is in our times to fight, not to succumb to the frivolous, lightheaded and corrupt society we live in. In Rifka we see her great ability to readjust herself to her new surroundings of Kedusha with its stringent rules and to excel in it to the level of our first matriarch Sarah. After the death of Sarah Yitzhak was only consoled when he took Rifka into the tent of his mother, and the light of Shabbath lasted all week; there was Beracha in the Challah and the cloud of the *'Shechinah'* returned above the tent as it had done when Sarah was alive. The Torah is not a story book but is informing us who we are and the wonderful characteristics we have inherited from our Holy Mothers.

STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

In one of the Synagogues in Jerusalem an esteemed member of the Kahal, who was loved and respected by the other *'Mitpallim'* was able to fulfil the mitzvah of writing a Sefer Torah himself just before he died. It was a great achievement since he was not a *'sofer'* and had no experience in *'safrut'*, but there were many mistakes in the Sefer Torah. Even so the members of the congregation decided to read from his Sefer Torah for the year in his honour. One of the *'Mitpallim'* who was worried that they would not be *'yotse'* reading from such a Sefer probably with many mistakes approached Rabbi Zaks for help and together they went to Rabbi Eliyahu to ask his opinion. They got to Rabbi Eliyahu's home quite late at 11:00 pm at night. The Rabbi received them warmly and listened to them with patience. He then asked: "have you got a car here with you?" They answered "yes." He said: "so let's go now to see the Sefer Torah in the Beth HaKnesset." And so in the middle of the night they went to check the *'kashrut'* of the Sefer, but when they

got there the Beth HaKnesset was locked, so they thought to return home, but Rabbi Eliyahu would not give up. "Check maybe a window is not locked," they did and found a window not locked. "Come, let's go in from the window" and they climbed through. They opened the Hechal and Rabbi Eliyahu checked the Sefer. He came to the conclusion there were mistakes and it could not be read from until corrected. He left a note in the Sefer: 'For the honour of the deceased we must not read from this Sefer until it has gone through a complete *'hagaha'* to correct mistakes in it' he signed his name, Mordecai Eliyahu. The next morning when they came to read from the Sefer, they found the note and did not read from it. It was given for *'hagaha'* and corrected and then read from.

The Talmud says in Baba Kama that on the coin Abraham Abinu minted, on one side was an old man and an old woman and on the other a young man and young woman. (*Tosafot* says it was not an engraving of the figure which is not allowed but just the wording). To teach us that even though Abraham and Sarah were old and behaved so with dignity but when it came to mitzvot they behaved with agility and speed like young people. And so it was with Rabbi Eliyahu when it came to mitzvot.

Shabbat Shalom

HALACHOT

- 1) Even though a mobile phone is not considered muktza machmat chisaron kees on Shabbat because of its value, one is not allowed to handle it to see the time because there is a good possibility we might switch it on or press the screen as we normally do.
- 2) If we set the alarm of an electric clock to awake us on Shabbat or set a mobile phone as an alarm, we must make sure we do not have it too near to

- our bed as we might come to turn it off in an automatic reaction when we awake. It should be placed some distance away.
- 3) Even though the Talmud says that uncooked meat is not muktza on Shabbat because people would chew it raw but nowadays we do not so it is considered muktza and cannot be handled on Shabbat.
 - 4) There are opinions who allow the handling of some raw fish like salmon or tuna since nowadays people eat them uncooked in sushi.

***Avot vu banim is one and a half hours after Shabbat
Please try to attend***

***If you wish to sponsor a Kiddush
Please contact
Nathaniel Bendayan 07825 871749
For Seuda Shlishit
or to rent the
Nancy Reuben Hall
for a Simcha
Please contact
Yanki David 07725 408724***

We have a regular Youth Minyan organised by Jason Ibrahim and Jordan Moses followed by a kiddush

SHABBAT TIMES

Shabbat commences	4:16 pm
Shabbat terminates	5:22 pm
Mincha Erev Shabbat	4:00 pm
Followed by Kabbalat Shabbat	
Shacharit	8:30 am
Mincha on Shabbat followed by Seuda Shlishit & Arbit	3:50 pm
Shacharit Weekdays	6:50 am
Shacharit Sundays	7:00 am
Mincha	1:30 pm
Arbit	7:30 pm