

# עטרת השבוע



## ATERES HASHAVUA

THE WEEKLY TORAH PUBLICATION FROM THE STUDENTS OF

MESIVTA ATERES YA'AKOV

The Ruth & Hyman Simon High School

לז"נ  
שרה שיינדל  
בת אריה משה

פרשת חיי שרה  
כ"ב חשוון תשע"ד  
October 26, 2013

Candle Lighting: 5:42

First זמן קריאת שמע: 9:17

Second זמן ק"ש: 9:53

Sunrise: 7:18

Latest זמן תפלה: 10:51

שקיעה: 5:58

Earliest Havdalah: 6:48

(50 minutes)

All times are for Lawrence, NY only

### THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

By Rabbi Leibe Wolf, 10th Grade Rebbi

“ויבא אברהם לספד לשרה ולבכתה” (בראשית כ"ג:ב)

“And Avraham came to eulogize Sarah and to bewail her.” (Beraishis, 23:2)

Our *parsha* begins by describing the death of our matriarch Sarah Imeinu, and how Avraham came to mourn and to cry over her death. These *pasukim* are written in the Torah immediately after the greatest of Avraham Avinu's tenth test, *akeidas* Yitzchak. This is because it was the Satan's report to Sarah about the *akeidah* which caused “פריחת נשמה” and her subsequent death.

The *Meforshim* comment that the level of Sarah's prophecy surpassed that of Avraham's, as it states in the *pasuk* in last week's *Parsha*, “כל אשר תאמר אילך שרה.”

”How then was Sarah “caught by surprise” so to speak, and was *nifteres* upon hearing the report of the Satan?

Furthermore, why does *Rashi* comment on the fact that the death of Sarah is juxtaposed to *Akeidas* Yitzchak on the words at the end of the *pasuk*, ויבא אברהם לספד לשרה? Why is this connection not commented upon in the beginning of the *pasuk* - ותמת שרה?

Perhaps the answer can be found in our understanding of the *pasuk* at the start of the *akeidah* “והאלקים נסה את אברהם.” Why does the *pasuk* state that Avraham was tested? Surely Yitzchak was the one who was tested! Yitzchak was ready to give up his life on the *mizbeach* completely *lishem shomayim*.

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### A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

By Yehudah Auerbach, 12th Grade

“ויקם אברהם וישתחו לעם הארץ לבני חת” (בראשית כ"ג:ז)

“And Avraham got up and bowed to the people of the land, the people of Cheis.” (Beraishis, 23:7)

Avraham had just lost the love of his life, his *eishes chayil*, Sarah Imeinu. After he says his *hesped* and cries for her, he travels to the land of the people of *cheis* and requests a burial spot for his beloved. The property he buys, of course, would soon become known as the famous *Ma'aras Hamachpela*. The people of *cheis* happily oblige him and Avraham proceeds to bow before the people as a show of his gratitude to them. However, this *pasuk* is seemingly extraneous. What is the Torah telling us by recounting Avraham's actions of bowing? We know that there isn't even an extra letter in our holy Torah, so what lesson is this seemingly extra *pasuk* coming to teach us?

Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein *shli"ta* offers a possible solution. As we mentioned previously, Avraham was in a state of unprecedented pain and suffering. Sarah was his life, she was an amazing saint, even gaining a higher level of prophecy than he. He took so much pride in his beloved wife and her *tzidkus*. Her death must have shattered Avraham. Yet, when he goes to ask the people of *cheis* to buy property, he acts with the utmost *Derech*

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Rabbi Leibe Wolf (continued from page 1)

Avraham Avinu was the epitome of *chesed*. Every action that Avraham performed was an expression of his great benevolence. The *akeidah* however, was contrary to this *middah*. Binding his son Yitzchak on the *mizbeach*, and being fully prepared to *shecht* him was certainly an act of *gevurah* (strength). The *middah* of Yitzchak was *gevurah* - as we know his relationship with Hashem is described as *Pachad Yitzchak*. This *nisayon* was performed in accordance with Yitzchak's innate character. Avraham, however, triumphed over his *middah* of *chesed*, and the greatest of his tests was performed with *gevurah*! Therefore the *malach* said to Avraham after the *akeidah*, "עתה ידעתי כי ירא אחוקים אתה," "Now I know that you fear Hashem." Not only did Avraham serve Hashem with *ahava*, but he overcame his innate character and performed an act of *din*, which stems from *yiras Hashem* and not *ahavas Hashem*. Therefore in the *pasuk*, the *malach* states, "Now I know that you are a *yorei Elokim*."

The *Ohr Hachaim* explains the phrase "שני חיי שרה" - Sarah completed all the years of her life. However, the *akeidah* was the cause of *פריחה נשמתה*. Why, if her years were completed was her death brought about *davkah* through the *akeidah*?

The *Chasam Sofer* explains that even when a *tzaddik* completes his days and years, at times he is given extra life to help be *mikarev* others and bring them closer to their goals.

Sarah Imeinu completed her work, and had reached the end of her life. However, she was given an extension in order to complement what Avraham Avinu lacked. Avraham was the epitome of kindness, and there are times when one must deal with others with the *middah* of *gevurah*. Avraham was tested by having the influence of Yishmael on Yitzchak. Sarah, who realized the evil influence of Yishmael, asked Avraham to send Yishmael away. However, Avraham Avinu with his whole essence being that of *chesed*, had *rachmanus* on Yishmael, as the *pasuk* states, "וירע הדבר מעד בעיני אברהם על אודות בנו." Hashem commanded Avraham to listen to Sarah because he was secondary to Sarah in prophecy, as she knew how to use her *midas hadin*. To counter Yishmael's evil influence on her son Yitzchak required the *middah* of justice. Therefore, Hashem allowed Sarah to live longer, and aid Avraham in his *nisayon* which required the *middah* of *gevurah*.

When Sarah heard that Avraham had bound his son Yitzchak as a *korban* and was prepared to *shecht* him, she realized that Avraham had brought forth, *מכח על הפועל*, his own *midas hagevurah*. Once this strength had flourished, Avraham no longer needed Sarah's assistance, and therefore "נשמתה פרה," her soul departed.

We can now understand why *Rashi's* comment on the juxtaposition of the *akeidah* to the death of Sarah Imeinu is on the words "ויבא אברהם." Avraham was coming straight from the *akeidah*, where he had exhibited his own *gevurah*, to Chevron where he heard the report of the death of Sarah, his helpmate in *gevurah* throughout his entire life.

Let us hope that each of us will use our attributes, as Sarah did throughout her life, to achieve our greatest potential. We will then fulfill the words of the *pasuk* "בלע המות לנצח," and witness the *techiyas hameisim* of Sarah Imeinu, together with all of our deceased relatives.

Yehudah Auerbach (continued from page 1)

*Eretz*. Avraham overcame his extreme emotional pain and acted towards the *B'nei Cheis* as if it were any other day, with the greatest manners, courtesy and *hakaras hatov* that we know Avraham had and that were always in effect.

So how can we apply this to our daily lives? Every day we may encounter some sort of trouble or hardship. We encounter people who give us trouble or something happens to us that we can't help. Yet there is a way that we can still act as if nothing happened and act with *Derech Eretz*. The *pasuk* in *parshas kedoshim* states "ואהבת לרעך כמוך", "Love your neighbor like yourself." Even if you are suffering hardships in your life, you would want someone to be nice to you, so do the same to them. Maybe this is what Avraham bowing is coming to teach us in this week's *parsha*.

This coming week marks the date of a storm that caused so many so much pain and suffering. But these same people braved this fearsome storm and did a lot much more than they were asked or expected to, helping others out constantly, even though they themselves were suffering. This is the living out of the lesson of Avraham in the beginning of this week's *parsha*, and this is something that we can inculcate into our daily lives.

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## STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

*Chezky Friedman, 12th Grade*

A *bachur* from a Yeshiva got a summons that he would be drafted into the army. Like every *bachur* in Yeshiva who receives a summons from the army he was very nervous. He needed a way to free himself from this order. He remembered hearing from his friend that there is person in a distant town who gives out exemption papers to *talmidim* in Yeshiva. There was only one catch: it cost an exorbitant amount of money. Left with no choice, he managed to gather just enough money to get the exemption papers. He nervously boarded a train to travel to the person who would hopefully free him from the summons. On the train he was extremely nervous, being that he was carrying so much money in his pocket. In the corner of his eye he caught sight of his *Rebbe*, Rav Chaim Solovetchik, the Brisker Rav. He calmed down, approached his *rebbe*, and they happily caught up on the last few years of each other's lives. The Brisker Rav, noticing that his *talmid* was very nervous, asked him, "Is everything okay?" The *talmid* reassuringly told his *Rebbe* that everything is okay, it was just that he is going to go get exemption papers from a certain person. The *Rebbe*, like a good father, asked his beloved *talmid*, "Is this person trustworthy, do you believe this person?" The *talmid* responded, "Of course he is trustworthy, it's my friend's friend- everything will be just fine." The *Rebbe* reluctantly told his *talmid*, "Okay, but if anything goes wrong I'll be at an Agudah Convention at this-and-this street." As the *Rebbe* finished speaking to the *talmid*, the *talmid* said goodbye to his beloved *rebbe* and proceeded to get off the train at his stop. The *bachur* then went to the person who would hopefully exempt him from army service. The *bachur* gave the person who was said to give exemption papers the exorbitant sum of money and before he asked for the papers in return the person was no longer there. After realizing what had just occurred the *bachur* was devastated. He started thinking to himself how could this happen to him after making such an effort to find this person. He was distraught and did not know what to do. He went to find his *Rebbe* at the Agudah Convention, as per his *Rebbe's* previous instructions. He reached the convention and due to the enormous crowd gathered there to catch a glimpse of the *Gedolei Hador* he was unable to make his way to the entrance of the building. After managing to squeeze through a guard stopped him at the entrance and told him, "You are not allowed to be here." The *bachur* responded, "What are you talking about? The *Brisker Rav* wants me here. He told me that I should be here." Still the guard did not listen and refused to let him in. The *Brisker Rav* who was sitting on the dais in the building saw his *talmid* trying to get into the convention to try to talk to him. The *Brisker Rav* told the guard to let the *talmid* in, sensing what had occurred by the look on the *talmid's* face. The *Rebbe* knowingly asked him what happened. The *talmid* related to his *Rebbe* all that had just occurred. The *Brisker Rav* knew what he had to do, so he yelled out to the crowd of *Rabbanim*, "There is *bachur* here who lost all his money, he was cheated... I am not continuing this Convention until everybody gives some *tzedakah* and we raise the amount of money he needs." Everyone quickly and excitedly helped the *bachur*. After the *bachur* left with his money, one of the *Rabbanim* in the Agudah Convention asked the *Brisker Rav* out loud, "We are all sitting here to discuss matters of *Klal Yisroel* and you are interrupting us about one Jew?!!" The *Brisker Rav* responded to the *Rav*, "What are you talking about?!! This Jew is *Klal Yisroel*. Every Yid is *Klal Yisroel*."

## ***B'DCHILU U'RECHIMU - WITH LOVE AND WITH AWE***

*Naftali Engel, 12th Grade*

*Chayei Sarah* means "The life of Sarah" – an inappropriate name for a *Parsha* that chronicles life **after** the passing of Sarah. How does this name reflect the theme of this *Parsha*?

Our sages teach that Sarah passed away when she heard that her son was almost slaughtered at the *Akeida*. Why is it that Sarah could not withstand the meaning behind the *Akeida* while Avraham was able to cope with it? This point reflects the different dispositions between Avraham and Sarah. Avraham was willing to slaughter his son, and he carried out the process with joy, since he knew that he was following Hashem's will. He was happy to negate the world, escape from normal existence and focus on spirituality. Sarah on the other hand, could not cope with this idea, since her focus was to serve G-d within the world. As far as Sarah was concerned, Yitzchak's soul needed to stay in his body, so he could make the world a better place.

Thus, Sarah's purpose in life was most aptly expressed by the events in this *Parsha*, when two fundamental elements of the Jewish nation are established in the world for the first time:

- A) The Jewish people. Yitzchak – the first person born Jewish – marries Rivkah, who matches his ethical and spiritual caliber; a woman who is an appropriate replacement for Sarah as a mother to The Nation of Israel.
- B) The Jewish land. In our *Parsha* we read how Avraham purchases the first plot of land in Israel, which is now indisputably under Jewish ownership. This was the first expression in the world of the Jewish right to the Land of Israel.

So, even though our *Parsha* describes events after Sarah's passing, it is nevertheless called "the life of Sarah", for in it we read how Sarah's true purpose in life begins to be fulfilled: the beginning of the Jewish Nation and their Land, here – in the physical world.



In this issue, we will briefly discuss the *halacha* of washing one's hands after touching a part of one's body that is normally covered as it relates to putting on *tefillin*.

If one touches a part of one's body that is normally covered, he must wash his hands before eating or davening. [*Shulchan Aruch* 4:21] Included in this category is the upper part of one's arm (his bicep area, between his elbow and his shoulder). Therefore, it would seem that if one inadvertently touched this section of his arm when putting on *tefillin*, one would have to wash his hands before *davening*.

However, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, *zt"l*, writes that since this area of the arm is uncovered daily in order to put on *tefillin*, it is not categorized as a part of the body that is normally covered and, therefore, if touched, would not require washing of the hands. [*Halichos Shlomo* 1:4(3)] This would be the *halacha* regardless of whether or not this part of the arm was touched while putting on *tefillin* or at any other time. [*Kaf HaChaim* 4:99]

However, this leniency is only applicable to the arm on which one normally places his *tefillin* (e.g., a right-handed person's left arm). If one touches the upper portion of his other arm, it is considered a part of the body that is normally covered and necessitates the washing of one's hands prior to eating or davening. [*Kaf HaChaim*, *ibid.*] It goes without saying that a woman, who obviously does not wear *tefillin* on either arm, must wash her hands after touching the upper portion of either arm.

Not to be relied upon for *p'sak halacha*.

## Geshmake Gemmatrios

Yehudah Auerbach, 12th Grade

- Avraham buys a piece of land from the *B'nei Cheis*. We know this portion of land to be called the *Ma'aras Hamachpela*, which was located in *Kiryas Arba*. *Rashi* comments that it is called "*Arba*" because it means pairs, representing the four pairs of people who were buried there: Adam and Chava, Avraham and Sarah, Yitzchak and Rivkah and Yaakov and Leah. Amazingly, the words *ובה הוא קברי אדם וחווה, אברהם ושרה, יצחק ורביקה* is equivalent to the words *ירבקה, יעקב ולא*.
- Avraham purchases the *Ma'aras Hamachpela* from Ephron, the *Chiti*. Efron named his price at 400 silver shekels. The *Ba'al Haturim* alludes to this using the name *עפרן*. The word Ephron is spelled without the "*vav*". This puts the numerical value of the word *עפרן* at 400 exactly. 400 is the same exact amount of shekels that Avraham had to pay to acquire the portion of land to bury Sarah. Amazingly, 400 is also equivalent to the words *רע עין*, literally translated as "evil eye", but also used as "the stingy one."
- When Avraham makes his faithful servant, Eliezer, swear to bring him back a wife for Yitzchak from the Canaanite women, the *pasuk* states that he made Eliezer put his hand under Avraham's thigh, which we know to mean the *מקום המילה*. The *pasuk* says: "שים נא ירך תחת ירכי". The *Ba'al Haturim* says that the words *נא ירך* are equal to 85. 85 is the same amount as the word *מילה* circumcision, thus bringing us a great hint to this.
- When Eliezer finds Rivkah and proposes to take her back to marry Yitzchak, Rivkah takes him to speak with her parents. Eliezer tells of his plan to take her back and if they do not let her the *pasuk* says: "ואפנה על ימין או על שמאל" meaning I will go to my left or my right. *Rashi* explains that this means that Eliezer would either go to the people of Yishmael or the people of Lot, Avraham's nephew, to find a wife for his master's son. The *Steipler Gaon* alludes to this. The words *ואפנה על ימין* are equivalent to the words "ואלכה לבן הגר" and the words *או על שמאל* are equivalent to those of "ואפנה לבן הרך."
- The end of the *parsha* lists the names of the children Avraham had from Keturah. *Rashi* elucidates that Keturah was really Hagar, the daughter of Paraoh. The *Steipler* gives a stunning allusion to this. The *pasuk* says "ויקה אשה ושמה קטורה." The words *אשה ושמה קטורה* are equal to the number 977, which is the same amount of the *gemmatria* of the words *וזהו הגר המצרית*, this is Hagar the Mitzris, or the Egyptian.



**MESIVTA ATERES YAAKOV  
OF GREATER LONG ISLAND**  
131 Washington Ave.  
Lawrence, N.Y. 11559  
(516) 374-6465  
[www.atereshashavua.com](http://www.atereshashavua.com)  
[atereshashavua@gmail.com](mailto:atereshashavua@gmail.com)

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