

LAMPLIGHTER

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Parshas Chayei Sara
Shabbos Mevorchim

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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In this week's Torah portion, Chayei Sara, we read of Sara's passing, Abraham's purchase of the Cave of the Machpela in Hebron for her burial place, and Abraham's dispatching of his trusted servant Eliezer to find a wife for Isaac. All of these events took place when Abraham was at a well-advanced age. In fact, the Torah tells us, "And Abraham was old (zakein), well endowed with days."

The Midrash comments: "Some people are old but not endowed with days; others are endowed with days but not old. In this instance we find a person possessing both qualities."

What does this tell us about our forefather Abraham's greatness?

A zakein, an elderly person, is defined as one who has acquired wisdom. By studying Torah he has learned a great deal. The zakein has achieved a high level of perfection of his soul.

"Endowed with days," however, refers to a person whose every day is perfect and whole. Not only does he perform the mitzvot (commandments) properly, but he does so every single day of his life. Through his actions, the days themselves are elevated. He illuminates his environment by the commandments he observes and he raises his surroundings to a higher state of perfection.

The terms "old" and "endowed with days" refer to two types of people, and specifically, to two types of tzadikim (righteous people). Some righteous people are concerned only with themselves and their own pursuit of excellence. By toiling greatly in the study of Torah they attain the level of zakein, but the people around them and the world at large are ignored. Time and effort are devoted solely to their own concerns.

Other tzadikim turn outward to disseminate their light upon their surroundings, devoting themselves to each and every person with whom they come in contact. These righteous people forget about themselves entirely, selflessly ignoring personal considerations for the sake of others.

Abraham, however, simultaneously embodied both of these qualities. "And Abraham was old, well endowed with days." While managing to achieve the highest level of personal perfection, Abraham sought to perfect his surroundings as well, thereby illuminating the entire world with holiness.

The Strangest Shidduch

By Naftali Silberberg

Imagine the holy son of a saintly Rebbe marrying the daughter of a renowned atheist, straight off a socialist commune. Pretty far-fetched, no?

This week's Torah portion talks of a very similar shidduch (match). We read the story of the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca -- the first Jewish wedding. The shadchan (matchmaker) who conjured this shidduch certainly had a very active imagination. It is difficult to find two people who stemmed from more different environments.

On one side there was Isaac, the first Jew who was "holy from birth," born to righteous parents and entered into the covenant with G-d when he was eight days old. He was raised in a home of holiness and purity, and was consecrated to G-d when he was "sacrificed" by his father on Mount Moriah. He was so holy, in fact, that he was forbidden to leave the sacred confines of the Land of Israel.

Rebecca, on the other hand, was "a rose amongst thorns." She was the daughter of the pagan Betuel and sister of Laban, who was notorious for his dishonorable character and his deceptive habits. She was raised in Charan, which due to the corruption of its inhabitants, was dubbed "the place of G-d's wrath." The culture clash must have been enormous.

Eliezer, Abraham's trusted servant, was charged with the mission of extracting Rebecca from her father's home and bringing her to her Isaac in the land of Canaan. Most of this week's portion is devoted to telling the story of Eliezer's mission in great detail.

We can bring together Mars and VenusThe first Jewish wedding -- and its inherent strangeness -- is so elaborately described in the Torah because it is a metaphor for our mission in life. We are all Eliezers. And our mission is to affect a shidduch even stranger than the one which Eliezer facilitated.

We are sent to this world to bring together in holy matrimony the eminent groom, G-d A-mighty, and the reluctant bride, this mundane world. Seemingly, no two greater opposites exist: G-d radiates selflessness and spirituality, while the world exudes egotism and the primacy of materialism. Yet, we are expected to unite the two in perfect harmony by living spiritual G-dly lives in this hostile environment, thus revealing within the world its truest, but deeply buried, nature -- its G-dly essence. We can infuse our every act, even the most mundane ones, with spirituality and meaning; we can bring together Mars and Venus.

The Jew is the perfect shadchan because he, too, is a juxtaposition of two opposites -- a corporeal body and its needs and desires, and a divine soul with a burning love for her Creator. The Jew who successfully synthesizes these two conflicting parts of his psyche by recognizing the body for what it really is -- an aircraft which when conditioned properly can lift its pilot, the soul, to dazzling heights -- is perfectly positioned to create the same fusion between the body of the world and its supernal soul.

The Midrash says that G-d betrothed us at Mount Sinai, and the date of the wedding is rapidly approaching; scheduled for when Moshiach comes. The collective efforts of all the shadchans throughout the generations will finally pay off -- when we will all rejoice at the greatest wedding of all time, to be celebrated with much pomp in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

Slice of LIFE

Thank You Gabi and Rivky by Mordechai Kaler

We are coming up to the yartzeit of my brother-in-law and sister-in-law - Rabbi Gabi and Rivky Holtzberg. It has taken me a long time to write the following story, but I feel that now is not only the right time, but the perfect time to do so.

Many have heard amazing stories of Gabi's and Rivky's work in Mumbai and the complete and utter self-sacrifice they lived with daily until their tragic murders. The story I am about to share though, is a very personal and miraculous story about how Gabi and Rivky continue to affect our lives and inspire us even after their passing.

My wife and I were married in the spring of 2005 and we were extremely excited to begin our life together. We eagerly anticipated, as most young Chasidic couples do, that fairly soon after our wedding we would be expecting a child.

It soon became apparent that our path to parenthood was not going to be as smooth as we had innocently imagined. After over a year of trying to conceive we were diagnosed with "unexplained infertility." To a young couple these words were incredibly scary. We were healthy and active people, how could this happen to us?

We went from doctor to doctor and were told the same exact thing after every visit. "We know there is a problem preventing you from conceiving, but we don't know why..."

A few years passed and the pain of being childless became deeper and stronger. We decided after going through emotionally, physically and financially draining unsuccessful fertility treatments, that we would take some time to recuperate before attempting anything else. A part of us, as difficult as it is to even write this, started to come to terms with the very brutal reality that we might never become parents.

Throughout this entire process there were always two people who knew exactly what and when to say something

comforting to us. After each Jewish or Chasidic holiday, we would speak with Gabi or Rivky to hear what happened at their Chabad House in Mumbai. We always found it inspirational and uplifting to hear their stories.

Two weeks before Rosh Hashana in 2008, we had one of these uplifting conversations. Gabi recapped the events of the previous night's gathering in honor of the Chasidic holiday of "Chai Elul." After we told him we planned to take time off from the fertility treatments, he spent an hour convincing us to do the opposite. "Now is the time to dive in without limitations," he said.

Gabi insisted we call Bonei Olam, an unbelievable organization in New York whose mission is to assist every Jewish couple overcome infertility and realize the dream of parenthood. We agreed to call them and Gabi ended by wishing us a good year, and telling us that this coming year we will be blessed with a child!

As promised we made the phone call to Bonei Olam and they quickly took us under their wing. I will never forget the compassion with which they handled every aspect of our situation. Not just from a financial perspective, although they were beyond generous in that regard as well, but we received random calls from our case manager just to see how we were feeling on a given day! Day or night, they were there for us. Throughout the entire process, Gabi and Rivky were cheering us on and continuously encouraging us to never give up.

Bonei Olam set us up with an incredible doctor and we immediately began treatments again. The first couple of treatments were unsuccessful. Our doctor sensed our despondency and reassured us. He recommended we take a more invasive approach. After a phone call with Gabi and Rivky, we advised our doctor we were ready to proceed with the next steps.

Our treatment was scheduled for November 26, 2008 - a date we will never forget. As we were driving to the appointment, we received a call - something was happening in Mumbai and no one could get in touch with Gabi or Rivky. We debated whether to continue to the appointment or head to New York. After much deliberation we decided to go to the appointment.

After we left and headed home we were in constant communication with

members of our family who kept us updated on the situation. Needless to say the stress on my wife, not knowing if her brother was alive, was unbearable. We were forced to travel to Israel on Thursday, and later heard the devastating news that they had been murdered literally minutes before Shabbat.

The turmoil and sadness that ensued is beyond description and I will not attempt to put it into words. In addition, when we returned home we were notified that the most recent treatment as well was unsuccessful. My wife and I couldn't find it in us to continue anymore. We spoke with our case manager from Bonei Olam and he made us realize that it was Gabi and Rivky who pushed us this far, we couldn't give up now on account of what happened to them. They would want us to continue! As unimaginably difficult as it was, we made our appointment for the next treatments. It took every ounce of faith and determination in my incredible wife to go to this appointment.

I can't help but cry as I write this... but I will never forget the phone call I received from our doctor's office a couple of weeks later. The nurse told me she had to pull herself together before calling to say, "Congratulations! Your test came back positive! Your wife is pregnant!" I was driving when she called and had to pull off to the side, trying very hard to control my emotions but I couldn't help myself from crying and smiling all at the same time. I immediately got in touch with my wife and we just couldn't believe the news!

Our daughter Rivky was born on Chai (18) Elul, exactly one year after Gabi blessed us. A year and a half ago, we were blessed again with our second daughter Malkah Raizel.

My hope in sharing this story is that if there is anyone who finds him/herself in a difficult situation, whatever it may be, never lose hope and never give up. Gabi and Rivky ingrained this life lesson into me and I am reminded each day of how powerful and rewarding it is when I see my beautiful children. Thank you, G-d for giving us the blessing of our children and for allowing us to be touched by these amazing people. Thank you Gabi and Rivky for everything.

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MOSHIACH MATTERS

When Isaac took Rebecca as his wife, the Torah writes that he took her "ha'ohela - into the tent." "Ha'ohela" is written eight times in the Torah. These eight times allude to the eight places where the Divine Presence was destined to rest among the Jewish people. The seven places where the Divine Presence already rested were: the sanctuary in the desert; Gilgal; Shilo; Nov; Givon; the First Holy Temple; and the Second Holy Temple. The eighth place will be the Third Holy Temple which will be built in the Messianic Era.



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

What's Wrong with Inter-marriage?

For a Jewish person to marry a non-Jew is one of the greatest calamities, and not only from the religious viewpoint. Nor is it entirely a personal matter affecting the person involved, for it concerns the whole Jewish people, and there are few transgressions which affect the whole Jewish people as intermarriage, G-d forbid. It is a transgression also against one's elementary honesty, for it is exceedingly unfair to the other party, from the viewpoint of each, and it is also unfair to the respective good friends, who wish to see their near and dear one lastingly happy, and not otherwise.

It has often been pointed out that marriage in general, even between two persons of similar background, entails a certain risk as to eventual adjustment and compatibility. Even if the two had been acquainted for some time, it is no sure criterion as to what the relationship will be when the acquaintance is turned into a marriage, where the two will be thrown together under one roof for 24 hours in the day, day after day, and week after week, etc. But when the background is entirely different, and where this difference dates back for scores of generations and consequently of a deep and lasting quality - the chances of adjustment and compatibility are negligible as to be non-existent. Especially where the difference is of a definitely antagonistic and hostile nature, as has been evidenced by the pogroms and persecutions of Jews in every land where Jews sojourned in the past 2000 years. Moreover, modern science recognizes the hereditary nature of character traits, particularly deep-rooted ones over generations.

Thus, if one is honest - in the plain sense of the word - one would not wish to drag another party into an alliance which is doomed from the start. And if one truly loves the other, and not in a selfish way, one would certainly not wish to involve the other into such a misfortune, and would readily forgo the prospect of immediate and short-lived pleasure in order to spare the other the inevitable result. Otherwise, the professed love is nothing but selfish and egotistic.

Should there be children from such a union, there is the added consideration of the tragedy of the children having to witness constant friction, and worse, between their parents, which are bound to follow in the natural course.

There is need to elaborate on this very painful subject.

Needless to say, I am aware of the "argument" that the percentage of intermarriage is a considerable one and many of them seem to last. But it is surely unnecessary to point out that married people try to put on the appearance of a "happy" marriage, being ashamed to confess failure, and to reveal the frictions and indignities, etc., suffered at home. In intermarriage the sense of shame is even greater, knowing that many friends had warned them against it, and they had maintained that their marriage would be different. But as a matter of fact and statistics, the percentage of separations and divorces are incomparably greater than in non-intermarriages.

And another point. In the vast majority of cases, those that enter into intermarriage are very emotionally involved. Were they themselves to be asked about others contemplating such a step, they would counsel against taking a step which would commit each other to possible lifelong misery. Indeed, they would consider it irresponsible to take such a step in an emotional state of mind.

As a postscript I wish to add that according to Jewish Law the child goes after the mother. Therefore where the mother is Jewish, even if the father is not, the child is Jewish and duty-bound to fulfill all the Mitzvoth, etc. Further details may be obtained from any Rov.

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

Men and Women

Question: Why aren't women and men treated the same in Judaism?

Answer: In Torah, a woman has every obligation of a man, and a man every obligation of a woman.

Torah doesn't know of man and woman as separate beings. They are a single whole, whether they are cognizant of one another or not. Each act is performed once through a single body. A body that in our world may appear as two, but to the Torah is seen as one.

This is actually a statement of Rabbi Isaac Luria, the greatest of the kaballists. He explains that the man and woman are a single body--and that is how they are considered in halacha, as well. So, for example, a woman also puts on tefillin--only that she puts them on with her male body. If everything is working right, that should be her husband.

A WORD

from the Director

In this week's Torah portion we read about the mission on which Abraham sent his servant, Eliezer, to choose a wife for Isaac. The Rebbe draws a parallel between the mission (shlichut) of Eliezer and the mission that every Jew is charged with. Each one of us is an emissary of G-d, and our mission is to make this world a dwelling place for Him. We accomplish this by elevating the material of our world to a spiritual level through utilizing the world for the fulfillment of mitzvot. How do we accomplish this? By always having in mind that it is not our individual talents and strengths enabling us to succeed, but the power of the One who sent us.

At a convention of the Rebbe's emissaries, the Rebbe discussed the essence of an emissary. He quoted the teaching that one who is specifically sent on a particular mission by another person is considered as if he is the person who appointed him. The Rebbe pointed out two seemingly opposite characteristics that are required of such an emissary. Firstly, he must be aware of his talents and strong points and use them to his fullest potential. At the same time, the emissary must always be totally devoted to whoever sent him, remembering that he is representing the one who sent him.

Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, used all of his talents and skills to find a wife for Isaac, but he never forgot that he was representing Abraham, and must fulfill his task according to Abraham's wishes.

The Rebbe's emissaries, the thousands of dedicated and enthusiastic individuals in over 3,500 Chabad Centers and institutions around the globe, have unique and personal talents which they use to fulfill their missions. But they always keep the Rebbe before them, garnering strength from his words and blessings.

In truth, each one of us is an emissary of G-d and each one of us possesses unique abilities that can be used to make this world a dwelling place for G-d. But we must always bear in mind that the strength we utilize is from G-d.

May we all find within ourselves these G-d-given powers that will imminently enable us to make this world a dwelling place for G-d.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED



Once the Rav of Brisk, Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveichik, was traveling and stopped at a Jewish-run inn in Benowitz. It was the Rav's custom to travel incognito, so when he knocked on the door of the inn he received no special treatment. The weather was frigid and when Rav Yosef Dov saw the lights of an inn he was relieved. Finally, he anticipated a warm fire and a bed on which to stretch out his very weary body.

He knocked expectantly on the heavy wooden door, but to his surprise, the Rav received an altogether different kind of greeting. When he opened the door, instead of welcoming the frozen man inside, the innkeeper brusquely said, "I am expecting a party of travelers to arrive any time now, and I have no room for you." Despite the bitter, biting cold, the innkeeper was about to slam the door in the face of the frozen Jew. Rav Yosef Dov began to plead with him. "Please, let me come in. I don't even need a bed. Just a warm spot on the floor will do. Please, don't turn me out on this terrible night. Why, it's possible I could even die in this cold." After a few moments of this kind of pleading the innkeeper couldn't refuse, and so, he admitted the Jew into his premises. He led the man through the brightly lit central room with its blazing fire and showed him to a cold, dark corner of the hallway. There the poor Jew was permitted to curl up on the floor and rest.

Once he was settled on that spot, the Rav Yosef Dov removed a candle from his pocket and began to study Torah by its light. It wasn't more than a few moments before the innkeeper came raging into the hall, crying, "You can't light a candle here! You are keeping the other guests awake! Put it out immediately!" Without a word, Yosef Dov obliged and put out the candle. Then he continued learning by heart. He was quickly immersed in his thoughts and the cold, hard floor ceased to bother him. Many hours went by and very late into the night the sound of horses and carriages could be heard approaching. The rumble stopped outside the inn door and the innkeeper ran out to greet his guests.

In came a group of Chasidim accompanying their Rebbe, Reb Aharon of Koidenov. Removing their coats, the men sat around the blazing fire, rubbing their hands together and warming themselves. Reb Aharon prepared to pray the evening service. As he stepped across the room to wash his hands he noticed a huddled figure lying in the dark hall. He studied the form for a moment and then cried out, "Reb Yosef Ber, is that you? What is the Rav of Brisk doing lying on the floor?!" When the innkeeper heard Reb Aharon's exclamation of horror, he began to tremble all over. His knees felt weak and he saw black before his eyes. Overcome with shame and remorse, he thought back to how he had treated this great man. After he recovered from his shock, he slowly approached the Rav. With downcast eyes, he said in a very small voice, "Rebbe, please

forgive me. I didn't know it was you or I would never have treated you in such a disgraceful manner." Reb Yosef Dov replied with a smile, "Of course, I forgive you. You needn't worry about that. However, I am making one stipulation." The innkeeper nodded his head vigorously. "Of course, Rebbe, anything you wish." He was ready to do any penance, give any sum to charity, anything to receive the forgiveness of the renowned Rav.

"I will forgive you on the condition that you travel to Brisk and spend two weeks as a guest in my home."

The innkeeper agreed at once. Within several weeks he arrived in Brisk and was warmly welcomed into the Rav's home. For two weeks the innkeeper observed the Rav's every movement. He watched the great care with which the Rav cared for each Jew who entered his study, burdened with questions and problems great and small. He took note of how gently the Rav treated the poor and despondent and he learned many a lesson about the art of hospitality.

When, after two weeks, the innkeeper returned to Benowitz, he had learned his lessons well. It wasn't long before his inn earned a well-deserved reputation. It became known far and wide as the place where every guest was treated with the greatest kindness and hospitality. The innkeeper never forgot the two weeks he spent as a guest of the Brisker Rav, Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveichik.

Thoughts THAT COUNT

And Sara lived...And Sara died. (Gen. 23:1-2)

Our Torah portion starts with the passing of Sara and her burial. Why then is the portion called "Chayei Sara," "the life of Sara," and not "the death of Sara?" "Chayei Sara," "the life of Sara," was focused on one goal and ideal: that her son, Isaac, should reach spiritual greatness. Our portion discusses the life of Isaac, who was the realization of Sara's spiritual dream. Though in this portion we read of her demise and burial, through Isaac her ideals were fulfilled - through him, she continued to live on. In actuality, "the life of Sara" was the righteous life of Isaac.

(The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

And Abraham was old, well on in days (Gen. 24:1)

In Hebrew, the phrase "well on in days" is "ba bayamim" - literally, "he had come with his days." Abraham's life was full, and he utilized every day to the fullest; he did not waste even one day. A hint as to how we can achieve this ourselves is found in the letters of the word "bayamim" - "ba" and "yamim." "Ba" is simply the Hebrew letter beit which has the numerical value of two; "yamim" means "days." Abraham always had the image of two days in his mind - the day of birth and the day of death. To utilize every day to its fullest we must keep in mind why we are born and the fact that we will ultimately be accountable for our deeds after we die.

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 25 - 26	
	November	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	8:03	9:07
Adelaide	7:51	8:53
Brisbane	6:07	7:04
Darwin	6:39	7:31
Gold Coast	6:06	7:04
Perth	6:45	7:45
Sydney	7:28	8:29
Canberra	7:40	8:42
Launceston	8:04	9:13
Auckland	8:01	9:05
Wellington	8:13	9:21
Hobart	8:08	9:18
Byron Bay	7:07	8:05

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS CHAYA SARA • 24 CHESHVAN • 25 NOVEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8.03 PM
	MINCHA:	8.10 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8.35 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.28 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	THE MOLAD FOR KISLEV IS ON TUESDAY 4.08(6 chalakim)	
	PM FARBRENGEN FOLLOWING DAVENING	
	MINCHA:	8.00 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9.07 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	8.00/9.15 AM
	MINCHA:	8.00 PM
	MAARIV:	8.50 PM