

SHABBAT PARSHAT CHAYEI SARAH · 25 CHESHVAN 5777 · NOV. 26, 2016 · VOL. 24 NO. 5

PARSHA INSIGHTS

THE KISS OF LIFE

“And Avraham rose from before the face of his dead (Sarah)” (23:2)

We tend to think Sarah’s burial in the Cave of Machpelah, the resting place of Adam and Chava, is a forgone conclusion, and all Avraham had to do was to pay — albeit vastly over the market value — for the right to bury her there.

However, someone whose life is taken by the Angel of Death may not be buried there, only someone who passes from this world by a Heavenly kiss.

“And Avraham rose from before the face of his dead.” (23:2)

The word “face” in this verse seems redundant. Why didn’t the Torah just say, “And Avraham rose from in front of his dead?”

In Sarah’s face, Avraham saw the story of her death.

The Talmud (Avoda Zara 20b) describes how the Angel of Death takes someone from this world: He hovers over the head of the dying person with his sword drawn. The dying person is so terrified by the sight of the Angel of Death that he involuntarily opens his mouth, into which the Angel of Death lets fall three drops from his sword; one drop kills the person, one causes his body to decay, and the other turns his face green.

Avraham was not present when Sarah died, but he could see that she was worthy to be buried in the Cave of Machpela because her face still had the unchanged natural color that it had during her life.

• Source: Rabbi Yonatan Eibeschitz

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Sarah, Mother of the Jewish People, passes on at age 127. After mourning and eulogizing her, Avraham seeks to bury her in the Cave of Machpela. As this is the burial place of Adam and Chava, Avraham pays its owner, Ephron the Hittite, an exorbitant sum. Avraham sends his faithful servant Eliezer to find a suitable wife for his son Yitzchak, making him swear to choose a wife only from among Avraham’s family. Eliezer travels to Aram Naharaim and prays for a sign. Providentially, Rivka appears. Eliezer asks for water. Not only does she give him water, but she draws water for all 10 of his thirsty camels. (Some 140 gal-

lons!) This extreme kindness marks her as the right wife for Yitzchak and a suitable Mother of the Jewish People. Negotiations with Rivka’s father and her brother Lavan result in her leaving with Eliezer. Yitzchak brings Rivka into his mother Sarah’s tent, marries her and loves her. He is then consoled for the loss of his mother. Avraham remarries Hagar who is renamed Ketura to indicate her improved ways. Six children are born to them. After giving them gifts, Avraham sends them to the East. Avraham passes away at the age of 175 and is buried next to Sarah in the Cave of Machpela.

BAVA METZIA 58 - 64

A Talmudic Sage taught the following in the presence of Rabbi Nachman bar Yitzchak: "One who embarrasses another in public is as if he is committing murder."

Rav Nachman agreed with this teaching that he heard, and added a further explanation: "At first, the face of the embarrassed person turns red, and then it turns white, indicating a form of bloodshed. Tosefot notes that the victim's face first turns red since the person's blood gathers there in an attempt to "flee from the body of the person". Although this sounds like a physical change in the person that might be seen as causing him a type of death, the wording "as if he is committing murder" perhaps indicates that it is not to be judged as actual murder.

Our *sugya* (59a) also states that, "It is better for one to throw himself into a fiery furnace than to embarrass another person in public." This is learned from the willingness of Tamar to be killed rather than cause embarrassment to Yehuda, as explained in the *gemara*.

Nevertheless, the question of whether this comparison between homicide and public humiliation is literal or metaphorical is a subject of dispute among the *Rishonim*.

Tosefot in Tractate Sotah (10b) appears to take the equation of public humiliation with committing murder *literally*. Tosefot asks why this terrible act is not listed along with the three cardinal prohibitions for which one must choose martyrdom and give up one's life, rather than transgress. The difference, explains Tosefot, is that those other three prohibitions mentioned in the Talmud as a group that require martyrdom are explicitly mentioned in the Torah as requiring self-sacrifice. Public embarrassment of another person is not explicitly mentioned in the Torah as requiring martyrdom, despite its great seriousness and its being akin to murder.

The Meiri, however, in his commentary to the *gemara* in Sotah, disagrees with Tosafot on this point. He does not interpret the statement, "It is better for one to throw himself into a fiery furnace than to embarrass another person in public" as an obligation to martyrdom. Rather it is meant to stress the great severity of causing public embarrassment. I once heard from a great Rabbi in Jerusalem that this is hinted to by the words "It is better", rather than our Sages definitively stating that "It is required."

Many halachic authorities discuss the ramifications of this extremely serious prohibition in their *responsa* throughout the ages, and most agree that one is not required to give up his own life if faced with being forced to humiliate another person. (Of course, "Talmud Tips" is never meant to serve as a source for any halachic decision, and each person should approach his own Rav for any actual halachic ruling on any topic.)

• *Bava Metzia 58a*

LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

THE CAVE AND ITS OWNERS

The first of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs to be buried in the Cave of Machpelah was Sarah, about whose death and burial we read in this week's Torah portion.



It is important to make clear that, in light of modern Arab claims to the area, this burial site was in fact purchased by our forefather Avraham from Ephron the Hittite, and it is therefore indisputably the property of his descendants.

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Name the four couples buried in *Kiryat Arba*.
2. What did Sara hear that caused her death?
3. What title of honor did the *B'nei Chet* bestow upon Avraham?
4. Where was Avraham born?
5. How were Avraham's camels distinguished?
6. What is meant by "all the good of his master in his hand"?
7. What special character trait did Eliezer seek when choosing a wife for Yitzchak?
8. Why did Avraham's servant, Eliezer, run toward Rivka?
9. Why did Lavan run to greet Eliezer?
10. When Lavan told Eliezer that the house was cleared out, what did he remove?
11. Who did Eliezer want Yitzchak to marry?
12. Aside from Eliezer, to which other people did Rivka offer to give water?
13. Lavan answered Eliezer before his father, Betuel, had a chance. What does this indicate about Lavan's character?
14. What did Rivka mean when she said "I will go"?
15. What blessing did Rivka's family give her before she departed?
16. Who was *Ketura*?
17. What gift did Avraham give to Yitzchak?
18. How old was Avraham when he died?
19. For how many years did Yaakov attend the Yeshiva of *Ever*?
20. How many times is Eliezer's name mentioned in this week's Parsha?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 23:2 - Adam and Chava, Avraham and Sara, Yitzchak and Rivka, Yaakov and Leah.
2. 23:2 - That Yitzchak was almost slaughtered.
3. 23:6 - Prince of G-d.
4. 24:7 - Ur Kasdim.
5. 24:10 - They were muzzled, so they wouldn't graze in the fields of others.
6. 24:10 - Eliezer carried a document in which Avraham gave all he owned to Yitzchak so that people would want their daughter to marry him.
7. 24:14 - He sought someone who excelled in performing acts of kindness.
8. 24:17 - He saw that the waters of the well rose when she approached.
9. 24:29 - Lavan coveted his money.
10. 24:31 - Idols.
11. 24:39 - His own daughter.
12. 24:44 - To the men who accompanied Eliezer.
13. 24:50 - That he was wicked.
14. 24:58 - I will go even if you don't want me to go.
15. 24:60 - That the blessings given to Avraham would continue through her children.
16. 25:1 - Hagar.
17. 25:5 - The power of blessing.
18. 25:7 - 175 years old.
19. 25:17 - 14 years.
20. None!

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Chayei Sarah

In this week's Torah portion Avraham sends his servant Eliezer on a long journey with a large entourage of men and camels to his family's residence in Haran to find a wife for his son Yitzchak. In order to find the perfect young lady, Eliezer devises the following test:

He would stand by a well of water in such a way that it would be easy for him or his men to get water for themselves and their camels. He would then ask the first lady to come by to give him water even though it appeared that he could take care of himself. The normal response to such a request would be, "You are standing by the well. Go ahead and take water yourself." Eliezer, however, was looking for someone with extraordinary perception and generosity, one who would assume that there was some unusual reason for him to make such a request. Perhaps all of the men were totally exhausted or seriously ill, even though they appeared perfectly normal. If she passes this initial test, Eliezer intends to speak to her to find out if she has other necessary traits such as modesty, openness to hosting guests and roots in a G-d-fearing family.

Rivka immediately appears and goes quickly to the well

and Eliezer has to run to meet her. When he reaches her, she has already filled her pitcher and is on the way back to the city. She could have responded, "Why don't you just go to the well yourself?" or "Why didn't you ask me when I was at the well? Now I have to go all the way back to the well!" However, she doesn't question him at all. Rather, she says with great respect, "Drink, my Master." Also, rather than asking him to remove the heavy pitcher from her shoulder, she lowers the pitcher and gives him to drink. Then, completely unsolicited, she offers to take care of not just the camels' immediate thirst, but "until they have finished drinking", knowing full well that camels have an enormous capacity to store water. She was not at all concerned about the difficulty of the job, the delay, or the fact that apparently able-bodied men would sit idly by while she labored. Additionally, Rivka does not say, "I will water your camels." Rather, she says, "I will draw water for your camels." That is to say, "I don't know if the camels are thirsty or not, but I will nonetheless draw water for them and they will drink if they wish."

PLEASE JOIN US...

...in saying Tehillim/Psalms and a special prayer to G-d for the safety and security of all of Klal Yisrael in these times of conflict and conclude with the following special prayer:

אחינו כל בית ישראל

"Our brothers, the entire family of Israel, who are delivered into distress and captivity, whether they are on sea or dry land – may G-d have mercy on them and remove them from stress to relief, from darkness to light, from subjugation to redemption now, speedily and soon."

MITZVAH EXEMPTION

From: Edward

*Dear Rabbi,
There are many situations where one is in the midst of fulfilling one mitzvah, when another mitzvah then presents itself. For example, in the middle of prayer, someone asks for charity. Does one have to fulfill the second mitzvah, or is he exempt on account of being involved in the fulfillment of the first? Thanks for your very clear and detailed answers.*

Dear Edward,

There is indeed a general principle that one's being engaged in the performance of a mitzvah exempts one from needing to fulfill another mitzvah that comes his way.

The reasoning behind this is as follows: If one who is idle shuns the performance of a mitzvah it would be tantamount to denying G-d and His commandments. However, one who is actively engaged in performing G-d's will certainly can't be viewed as denying G-d and the *mitzvot* by continuing to perform that mitzvah, even though it's the cause of declining from fulfilling another.

However, based on this reasoning, there are several exceptions and qualifications.

If the mitzvah that he's currently engaged in can be done at a later time without diminishing it, and the other mitzvah that presents itself can only be done now, and afterward it will no longer be applicable, one should temporarily postpone his observance of the first in order to fulfill the other. In this way he fulfills both *mitzvot* as opposed to just one. And refraining from fulfilling the second mitzvah in this case is somewhat like disregarding the *mitzvot*, since doing so would be choosing to do one mitzvah when he could have done two.

Similarly, even if both *mitzvot* are time-limited and must be done now or never, but the person can actually do both simultaneously, he must not shun the later mitzvah because of his previous involvement in the former. And this is because his engagement in the first mitzvah is not so engaging as to preclude his ability to concurrently perform the other. The example you give

would fit this category since most people in most parts of prayer can give charity during prayer without distracting their intention. Exceptions to this would be during the first part of *Shema* or during the *Amida*. Since here one needs utmost intention, it would be forbidden to interrupt for charity.

Thus, only in a situation where one could not perform both *mitzvot*, neither at different times nor at the same time, would one's involvement in the one exempt him from the other. And in most cases, the mitzvah that he is already engaged in takes precedence over the other, even if the other is a "greater" mitzvah (except in a case of monetary loss or physical danger). But if one has not begun the performance of either, and both are presented simultaneously, the more "important" mitzvah takes precedence. An example would be when a Torah mitzvah conflicts with a Rabbinic mitzvah, and only one of them can be fulfilled to the exclusion of the other, the Torah mitzvah takes precedence.

One notable exception to this is the otherwise all-important mitzvah of Torah study, where even if one is currently engaged in this prime mitzvah he must suspend his learning in order to fulfill even the "least significant" of *mitzvot*.

The reason for this is that since the major purpose of Torah study is to learn how to perform G-d's commandments, that same Torah study cannot be used as a basis to exempt one from its practice. On the contrary, one's very Torah study requires one to interrupt his studies in order to practice what he learns!

That being said, there is an important qualification to this exception of suspending Torah study in order to fulfill another mitzvah which will pass if he continues to learn without fulfilling it. And that is when the mitzvah can be done only by him and no one else. For example, regarding his own mitzvah of prayer or *tefillin* which are limited in time and are incumbent solely on him. But if the mitzvah can be performed equally well by someone else who is not currently studying, here the primacy of Torah study over other *mitzvot* takes precedence, and he must continue studying and leave the performance of the mitzvah to others.

LAWS FOR MAKING UP FOR A MISSED PRAYER

When making up a missed prayer one must always pray the obligatory prayer first. For example, if one missed Shacharit he must first pray Mincha, and only afterwards make up the Shacharit that he missed. Therefore, if someone had in mind that he was praying the Shacharit that he missed before praying the obligatory Mincha, it does not count. He must still pray Mincha, and afterwards make up the missed Shacharit. If one prayed both the make-up Shacharit and obligatory Mincha (in that order), he only needs to pray again for the missed Shacharit. (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 108:1)

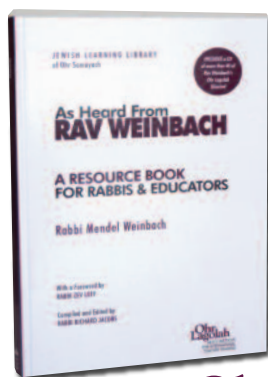
The Magen Avraham and Taz argue with the above ruling. They maintain that one only repeats the Shemoneh Esrei if he switches the order in a clear and overt way (not by having in mind he is praying the wrong one). An example would be after Shabbat (*motzei Shabbat*), where one omitted *havdala* in *atah chonen* in the first Shemoneh Esrei, and said it in the second. Such actions clearly indicate that the first Shemoneh Esrei was the make-up prayer, and he therefore must say it again.

The Mishneh Berurah writes in the name of the Pri Megadim that we follow the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch (108:1). However, he explains that it is better for one to say that if he is not obligated to pray again (in accordance with the Taz and Magen Avraham) then he is praying a voluntary prayer, thereby covering all possibilities. (Shulchan Aruch HaRav)

One can only make up a missed prayer during the following prayer. For example, if one missed both Shacharit and Mincha, in the evening he prays Arvit, then prays again to make up for Mincha — however Shacharit he can not make up.

The law of making up prayers does not apply to Musaf. Therefore, once the sun sets it can not be made up during the next prayer. Likewise, if one missed Shacharit and prayed Musaf, he can still make up Shacharit during the Mincha prayer.

Someone can make up a missed prayer by saying the repetition as the Shaliach Tzibur for Shacharit or Mincha. (Magen Avraham, Shulchan Aruch HaRav)



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AFFRAID OF FRIGHT OR READY TO FIGHT

The social sciences, like psychology and sociology, seek to quantify man's reactions to various types of hostile situations, and systemize a way of pre-determining such responses. These efforts have brought about such ideas as "Game Theory" and other theoretical ways of measuring dangerous situations and man's reactions. As we will see, the eternal wisdom of the Torah has already "contemplated" such matters, and the very language it uses exhibits an awareness of these nuances.

After the miraculous splitting of the Red Sea, Moshe and the Jews broke into song extolling G-d's greatness and praying for their future success. They said about their potential rival nations occupying the Holy Land, "May fear (*aimah*) and fright (*pachad*) befall them..." (Exodus 15:16). In this passage the Jews ask G-d to render their enemies too scared to fight, but they use two different words to refer to that frightfulness: *aimah* and *pachad*. What is the difference between these two types of fear? Furthermore, there are at least two more words used in the Bible to refer to "fear" (*morah/yirah* and *da'agah*); what do these words exactly mean and how do they differ from each other?

Rashi (to Exodus 15:16) explains that *aimah* and *pachad* denote different sorts of fear in that one refers to fear from a faraway threat and one refers to fear from something close-by. Which one is which is subject to dispute, as different versions of Rashi and other commentators cite this explanation in various ways. Either way, man reacts differently to hearing news of something threatening than he does to actually experiencing or encountering a threat. Those different fight-or-flight responses are reflected in the Hebrew language by these otherwise synonymous words. In another passage, Rashi (to Deuteronomy 11:25) repeats this distinction when delineating the difference between *pachad* and *morah*, but also adds that *pachad* refers to a sudden fear, while *morah* refers to a fear which has remained pent up for some time. This time factor features prominently even in contemporary thought.

Rabbi Shlomo Aharon Wertheimer explains that *morah* is a more intense type of fear because it is continual and builds on itself, while *pachad* is a less intense form of fear because it is sudden, but short-lived. He also notes that the word *pachad* can only be applied to humans, who have the intellectual capacity for understanding the implications of certain dangers, while other words for fear can also apply to animals, whose animalistic instincts react with fear even if the animals do not have the intelligence to fully comprehend their situation

Ibn Ezra (to Exodus 23:27) explains that *aimah* is the emotive feeling of being afraid, while *pachad* is the outward manifestations of one's fears.

Rashi (to Yoma 75a) defines *da'agah* as the fear of losing something which one has, while elsewhere (to Gittin 70a), he defines it as the fear of the arrival of a scary situation (like a famine or an enemy invasion).

King Solomon, in his great sagacity, offers the most practical advice in dealing with *da'agah*: "[When there is] *Da'agah* in one's heart, he shall converse with others" (Proverbs 12:25). *Da'agah* refers to a certain type of worrying which can be assuaged by simply speaking out one's fears (because constricting those immeasurable fears into finite words shows the worrier that his fears are not limitless). Another understanding of King Solomon's counsel is "*Da'agah* in one's heart, he shall distract himself with other [idea]s".

How does *da'agah* differ from *morah/yirah*? Rabbi Yosef Dov Solovetchik (1820-1892), author of *Beit HaLevi*, writes in *Parshat Vayigash* that *yirah* refers to fear from something which one anticipates *might* occur, while *da'agah* refers to worrying about that which one foresees *will* occur. Rabbi Shlomo Aharon Wertheimer explains that *da'agah* does not refer directly to worrying, but to the resulting despondency of someone steeped in anxious fright. This explanation echoes the famous words of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt at his inaugural speech, "Let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself..."

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BY RABBI SHLOMO SIMON

MORDECHAI BEN AVRAHAM

**Calabazas, California - UCLA - VP Warner Brothers, Inc.
Republican Candidate for US House of Representatives 2016 – 37th Congressional District, California
Student in the Mechina Program**

Mordechai's story is somewhat different than that of most students at Ohr Somayach — a Yeshiva which has very many interesting students and alumni. He was born in Springfield, Ohio, where his father had gone to University. His dad, from Cleveland, and mom from Meridian, Mississippi, had met while they were both in college. Two years after Mordechai's birth the family moved West to Calabazas, California — "The Valley" near LA — where his father started an insurance agency and his mother began her PhD studies at UCLA. (She is now a professor at USC). Although both were raised in the Christian church, his parents had serious questions about some of the basic foundations of Christianity, and raised the family (which eventually consisted of five children) without any formal religious training.

After graduating from Calabazas High School, Mordechai entered UCLA, but soon dropped out to start an internet / entertainment company. After raising millions of dollars for his business model he began to book tours for rap and hip hop stars. He eventually sold his interest to the venture capitalists that financed him. He then worked in marketing and then in film production, as an executive producer. He was also a creator of a television series and a television producer. By the age of 25 he had sold his interests in the TV production company, and he went on a "quest" to see the world and explore new business opportunities. One of the places he visited was Israel, which left an

indelible impression on him and played a role in his future direction.

Upon returning home, his parents, who had been getting involved in the spiritual side of Judaism, introduced him to their Rabbi-Mentor. Mordechai was intrigued. He studied very seriously, and eventually, after a number of years, converted.

His previous career — the Hollywood entertainment business — was not exactly conducive to a life as a religious Jew. So, he changed careers and got involved with



the Republican Party in California. This year he ran in the primaries for Congress as the Republican candidate for the 37th District, which includes the Jewish Pico-Robertson area as well as the ghetto of West LA. California has an unusual primary election system. Certain races, like the ones for US Congressional seats, are non-partisan, voter-nominated contests. All those who wish to run for the particular seat are listed on a ballot for the primary. The top two vote getters are then listed on the ballot for the general election in November, regardless of party affiliation. Although Mordechai

had the endorsement of all the Republican organizations in the State, he came in third in the primary, losing to two Democratic candidates by less than one percent.

Although beaten, Mordechai is not defeated. He plans to run again in 2018 for the Congressional seat, this time as Rabbi Mordechai Ben Avraham. Ohr Somayach will be supporting him all the way.

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