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October 29, 2010 – 21 Cheshvan, 5771

1143: CHAYEI SARA

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Alan Welner, President

Living with the REBBE



The name of this week's Torah reading is Chayei Sara, literally the "life of Sara." As explained by Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad Chasidism, the Hebrew name of a particular object or creation is what gives it its vitality and sustains it. Thus we must conclude that the entire Torah portion is somehow connected with the "life of Sara."

This, however, appears difficult to understand at first glance. Only the first verse of the Torah portion relates to Sara's life, whereas the rest of it speaks of seemingly unrelated matters: the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca, and the passing of Abraham. Why then is the entire portion known as Chayei Sara?

The answer is that in truth, all of the events related in Chayei Sara - the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca, as well as the passing of Abraham - express the sum and substance of our Matriarch Sara's life.

Concerning the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca, the Torah tells us, "And Isaac brought her into the tent of Sara his mother, and took Rebecca, and she became his wife." When did Isaac agree to marry Rebecca? Only after he brought her into his mother's tent, and the miracles that used to occur during Sara's lifetime resumed.

Rashi, the foremost Torah commentator, explains that there were three specific miracles: 1) the Shabbat candles Sara kindled burned from one Friday afternoon till the next; 2) the dough she kneaded was specially blessed, and; 3) a cloud of holiness hovered over her tent. After Sara's death these miracles ceased; in the merit of Rebecca they returned.

This occurred three years after Sara passed away, yet we see in these miracles a continuation of her life.

A similar connection exists to the passing of our forefather Abraham. The Torah states, "His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him." Isaac is mentioned before Ishmael, for by the time Abraham died, Ishmael had already repented. By giving his younger brother precedence, Ishmael demonstrated that the birthright rightly belonged to him.

This development was in the sole merit of Sara, who when she saw that Ishmael was "mocking," i.e., not behaving properly, demanded that Abraham "cast him out...for he will not be heir." Sara's intent was for Ishmael to return to G-d in repentance, which indeed subsequently occurred. Many years later, after Sara was no longer alive, Ishmael allowed his younger brother to lead the way, again an expression of the continuation of Sara's life.

The entire Torah portion is therefore known as Chayei Sara, as all of the events it relates are connected to Sara's life. ■

Adapted from the Lubavitcher Rebbe's talk on Shabbat Chayei Sara, 1975

Baby Steps

Have you ever watched a baby as she works toward upward mobility? At just a few months old, she's squirming around inch by inch. Months later, she's raising herself onto her hands and knees, rocking back and forth as she gets used to the new position and height. But her arms and legs aren't very strong and she plops down every once in a while, bumping her little nose or chin. But, don't worry, she'll be up again soon to try it again.

Months pass. Tentatively, she pulls herself up to a standing position using furniture and other objects as leverage. Even more cautiously she lets go for a few seconds and smiles, as if saying, "Look, no hands!" Oops, there she goes, plopping down once more, only to stand up again a few minutes later and repeat the whole exercise.

Soon she'll be cruising along the furniture. Weeks later she'll be taking a step, unaided, from one piece of furniture to the next.

When she's much more confident, she'll try two and three steps, each time plopping down. But she'll get back up again. Then six or seven steps before plopping down. Then ten wobbly steps, then plop.

A baby's approach to learning a new skill, such as walking, is the approach Judaism demands of us when even we are learning a new mitzva-skill, whether a mitzva (commandment) between oneself and G-d or the interpersonal mitzvot between one person and another.

In general, we seek out experiences which enhance personal growth when there is a feeling of dissatisfaction with our present state. This is a good sign, for it indicates vitality and an urge to rise and improve oneself.

Unlike babies, however, many of us stop trying or slack off if we "fall," i.e., the attempt was not met with immediate success.

Today, when so much of our lives are measured in nanoseconds, we half expect to be able to eradicate a bad habit or master a new mitzva instantly. And when that doesn't happen, despondency or inertia can set in.

A little voice inside says, "Why bother, you'll fall back into your old routine anyway," or "You'll fall flat on your face trying and everyone will see." The little voice will use every means to prevent us from carrying out our good intentions of self-improvement and advancing in Jewish observance. An otherwise highly successful person can be paralyzed by that little voice, certain that he will fail miserably and that others will note his failure.

The misleading voice should be ignored. For, as Chasidism explains, the attempt itself is invaluable and esteemed by G-d. Only people who never try never make mistakes or fall short.

The next time we have the opportunity to learn something new or are presented with an obstacle that needs to be overcome, we should remind ourselves to take "baby steps." It's not just a matter of going slowly. More importantly, it means getting back up even if you've plopped down or fallen flat on your face. ■

**MEZUZAH
DID YOU
KNOW???**

A common misconception is that only the main entrance to the home requires a mezuzah. Of course, it is better to have one mezuzah on the front door than no mezuzahs, and if you only have one mezuzah, it should be placed on the home's main entrance. However, to properly fulfill the mitzvah, every room in the house or office should have its own mezuzah.

All rooms that are more than 4 cubits long and 4 cubits wide - approximately 6.5 feet by 6.5 feet (or its equivalent of 37 square feet) are required to have a mezuzah -- as long as they have a full "doorway." A blessing is not recited, however, if the room does not extend at least 6.5 feet in each direction.

**A WORD FROM
THE DIRECTOR**

Rabbi Shmuel M. Butman

In this week's Torah portion, Chayei Sara, we read of Sara's passing and Abraham's subsequent purchase of the Cave of Machpela as the place for her burial.

In addition to G-d's promise to Abraham that his descendants would eternally inherit the Land of Canaan (which included the land of the ten nations who lived there: Keini, Kenizi, Kadmoni, etc.) Avraham desired to actually purchase outright a portion of the land. The opportunity presented itself with Sara's passing when it was necessary to have a proper burial place for her. Abraham knew that the Cave of Machpela, located in Hebron, was the place where Adam and Eve had been buried, and chose to purchase the field in which that cave was located for his family.

Abraham's purchase of the field containing the Cave of Machpela represents the beginning of the general redemption of all Jews.

Our commentators explain that with the 400 silver shekels that Abraham paid, he purchased one square cubit of the Land of Israel for every one of the 600,000 root-souls of the Jewish people.

May we very soon merit not only the beginning of the Redemption of the Jewish people but the complete Redemption, when the entire Land of Israel will be in the possession of its rightful heirs - according to G-d and the Torah - in the Messianic Era. ■

The Rebbe Writes

14 Teves 5731 [1971]

Prof.¹ & Mrs. Abraham S. Luchins

Greeting & Blessing:

This is to thank you for Vols. II and III of Wertheimer's Seminars Revisited, which I have just received. While I have had no time as yet to look into them more closely, I have thumbed through the pages. In doing so, I was again reminded of the saying of our Sages to the effect that "if anyone says the nations of the world have a Torah, do not believe it; but if one says that they have science, do believe it."

In fact, I had occasion to discuss the subject at the farbrengen [Chasidic gathering]. The point of the said statement is that in the non-Jewish world it is possible to find outstanding thinkers and philosophers who might find solutions to the various problems confronting humanity, yet they can go through the process of thinking with complete detachment, so that the solutions which they come up with remains theoretical, and do not touch upon their own lives. Indeed, the thinker or philosopher or scientist might, in his personal life, act quite contrary to the high moral and ethical concepts which he expounds.

It is quite different in regard to our Torah, which is our wisdom and science in the eyes of the nations. For to us Torah means teaching and guidance (from the word horo'o), that is to say, that it penetrates and permeates our lives. This is because it has the power to compel, as it were, the Torah student and follower to translate the solution which it provides into practical deed. It gives the Torah Jew the strength to resist and subjugate the yetzer hara [evil inclination], as our Sages of blessed memory express it: barati yetzer hara, berati Torah tavlin ("I have created the yetzer hara, but I have also created the Torah as an antidote").

With all good wishes for your hatzlocho [success] in your work, as well as in your good influence to spread and strengthen the light of the Torah and mitzvot [commandments] to the utmost of your capacities.

With blessing,

P.S. I was pleasantly surprised to see in the press that your son actively participated in the Convention of the Union of Orthodox Congregations in Washington. ■

¹American Gestalt psychologist and pioneer of group therapy
Reprinted from portraitofaleader.blogspot.com, the Avner Institute

Rosh Chodesh Sivan, 5715 [1955]

You write that although you believe in G-d and His closeness, you are endeavoring to find your own way of serving Him. This is a long and round-about way. It is analogous to the person searching for the secrets of the functions of the physical body, e.g. how food is converted into blood, tissue, energy, and sustains life; it would surely not be the right approach to stop eating and drinking, pending his arrival at the conclusions of his study. Even a reduction in necessary calory intake would weaken his powers of reasoning and research and handicap him in his ever attaining his objective. Similarly, in an effort to find a way of serving G-d, one must not postpone such service until one has completed one's search, and, moreover, the absence of the religious practice itself handicaps the powers of the intellect to grasp the truth. Furthermore, since the human intellect is by its very nature limited, while the subject it desires to grapple with is related to the Unlimited, it is only with the aid of the Infinite G-d that one hopes to be lifted across the unbridgeable chasm separating the created and the Creator, and such Divine aid can come only through Divine service.

Finally, there is obviously no contradiction here to the principle of the freedom of personal choice. The real issue here is the proper approach and method to be undertaken now, until one has arrived at the stage where one's intellect becomes sufficiently clear to confirm the established truth. The key to the solution is "Na'aseh v'nishmah," ["We will do and then we will understand"] where "Na'aseh," practical religion in daily life, is the pre-requisitive condition for "Nishmah," study and understanding. ■

What's In A Name?

GEDALYA means "G-d is great." Gedalya (Zefaniah 1:1) was appointed governor of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar after the Babylonian ruler destroyed the Holy Temple and exiled the Jews. Under Gedalya's guidance, the land and the Jewish people began prospering again. However, Gedalya was assassinated by the treacherous Ishmael, a descendant of the royal house of Judah, who was jealous of his power and popularity. We commemorate Gedalya's death by fasting on the day following Rosh Hashana.

GOLDA is from the German-Yiddish, meaning "gold" or "golden." The Polish Yiddish version is Zlata and the Hebrew is Zahava.



SLICE OF LIFE

A Jewish Journey

by Yehudis Cohen

"My father, Albert Rubin, was fiercely proud of being a Jew," explains Howard Rubin, of S. Louis Park, Minnesota. "He had no involvement in organized religion or Jewish communal life, but he knew he was a Jew and he was proud of it."

"My dad was a first generation America. He tragically lost his mom when he was 14 months old. His dad remarried and when his stepmother had her own child, she told him she didn't need him anymore. He took refuge in the local library and became an avid reader. When his step-mom had a second child, things got even worse."

After his sophomore year in high school Mr. Rubin joined the Civilian Conservation Corps and eventually was drafted into the Navy. In the Navy, he was the only Jew on his ship. "Here comes the Heeb" became a common taunt. When the jibes got worse, Mr. Rubin and two friends went to the bunks of the ringleaders late one night and stealthily wrapped wire around each of them. They placed a battery at the end of the wire and hung a note: "Things can get even worse - the Heeb." There were no more problems after that.

"My father was released from the Navy in Long Beach, CA. He met and married our mom, Ada Wiseman, and I grew up with my siblings in LA. When I was approaching age 13, my mother's mother wanted me to have a Bar Mitzva. My father agreed. They found a rabbi to tutor me and he charged \$75. That really stuck in my father's craw. It reinforced in him the sentiment from his youth that all organized religion is a con-game. He didn't think about the fact that even rabbis need money to live.

"I became observant about 20 years ago," continues Howard. "Near the retirement village where my parents lived is Chabad of Camarillo. Whenever I visited my parents, I would go to the Chabad House to daven (pray). My father never came with me. It didn't mean anything to him. On Shabbat I would make Kiddush and Hamotzee; sometimes my father joined in and sometimes he

didn't. These were not meaningful rituals to him."

Howard's mother passed away four years ago. "Rabbi Aryeh Lang, of Chabad of Camarillo, was very helpful with the arrangements and he officiated at the burial. Rabbi Lang stayed in touch with my father and periodically visited him. "None of this religion stuff means anything to me. I appreciate your coming but you're wasting your time," my father would tell the rabbi forthrightly.

"Fast forward to a year ago," continues Howard. "My father was already 91. For some reason, he mentioned to his doctor, Daniel Tavari, a traditional Jew, about the rabbi charging \$75 for my Bar Mitzva lessons 50 years ago.

"The doctor asked my father, 'Of your kids, which one is the most likely to say Kaddish for you when you're not here?'

"Probably Howard,' my father responded.

"Let me get this straight,' the doctor continued. 'You have somebody to say Kaddish for you for the rest of his life and it was only a \$75 investment. That doesn't sound like such a big deal.' The doctor's words clicked with my father.

"My father contacted Rabbi Lang and told him that he wanted to learn to read Hebrew. He started spending time regularly with Rabbi Lang and he clearly wanted to grow Jewishly."

Mr. Rubin's health started to decline. Eventually he moved to an assisted living facility close to his daughter in the San Fernando Valley. It was around the corner from Chabad of Tarzana. "G-d's hand was definitely there, making sure my father would continue his learning," says Howard.

"Rabbi Lang introduced my father to Rabbi Yanky Kahn. He is the sweetest guy in the world. My dad's involvement in Judaism blossomed further with Rabbi Yanky. The rabbi started meeting with my dad, often three times a week. For the first time in his life, Dad put on tefilin. They studied alef-bet together and Rabbi Yanky taught my father a song to help him remember the letters. I'm not a mystical person, but in every Jew there is a spark, a flame, and when I would visit and see my dad singing the alef-bet song with Rabbi Yanky, there was incredible joy in him that I had never seen before."

Mr. Rubin was called to the Torah for the first time when he was 92. Four congregants lifted him in his wheelchair so he could go up on the bima. That year he also attended his first kosher Passover seder, at the home of Rabbi Mordy Enbinder, director of Chabad of Tarzana. "He went to his first Lag B'Omer celebration. He was enthralled like one of the kids," recalled Rabbi Mordy.

"When Dad's health deteriorated to the point of needing care 24/7, he started to say things like, 'Why doesn't G-d take me already. I feel degraded. It should end.' I would tell my father, 'It's not the time. When G-d is ready it will happen.' But Rabbi Yanky had a different answer.

"I know why you're still here and I'm here,' he told my father one day. 'You must have a Jewish burial!' My father's wishes were to be cremated, which is clearly against Jewish law and teachings. I had talked to my father about it many times but he was adamant. 'A traditional burial is okay for you and for your mom, but not for me,' he obstinately told me each time.

"When Rabbi Yanky told my father, 'You must have a Jewish burial,' my father thought for a few moments and said decisively, 'You're right.' Rabbi Yanky called the Jewish burial society and made the necessary arrangements. My father told me that he knew his mother would be proud of him. His decision made him feel more connected with her and that was meaningful to him even though he hadn't really known her.

"My father had a very significant Jewish journey in the last year of his life," concludes Howard. "Both rabbis' special abilities to nurture my father's Jewish spark with their insight, guidance and sweetness allowed him to know the extraordinary joy of Judaism. How very fortunate we all are that Chabad grows such talented individuals who, every day, impact all Jews in so many ways!"

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. ■

(Baal HaTurim as quoted in Discover Moshiach)

News

The Educator's Privilege

It is said that a teacher affects eternity, for his influence lasts forever. In *The Educator's Privilege*, compiled by Rabbi Eliyahu Friedman and translated by Rabbi Aryeh Leib Solomon, the reader is treated to a wealth of uplifting inspirational messages from the Lubavitcher Rebbe on the privileges of dedicating one's life to Jewish education. The Rebbe's teachings provide encouragement to educators, and inspire others to engage in educational activity, whether as teachers, parents, or supporters of authentic Jewish education. Published by Kehot Publication Society. ■

Important Times <i>Shacharis</i> 7:00am Sunday 8:00am Monday/Thursday 6:45am <i>Minchab/Maariv</i> 5:30pm Shabbos 5:10pm Friday November 5, 5:15pm <i>Shabbat</i> <u>Chassidus Club 8:15am</u> <u>Kabbalah of Cholent 9:05am</u> <u>Shacharit 9:30am</u> Light Candles 5:21pm Shabbat Ends 6:16pm	October 29 – November 5 Brought to you by: Chabad-Lubavitch in Cyberspace www.chabad.org Copyright © 2010 Lubavitch Youth Organization www.lchaimweekly.org	Re-printed by: Chabad of Scottsdale (480) 998-1410 chabadofscottsdale.org  The Jewish Learning Center of Scottsdale 480.443.5362
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It Once Happened

Avigdor, a rich merchant from Brod, once came to the Baal Shem Tov and brought with him a large sum of money for charity. The Baal Shem Tov accepted the money and asked Avigdor, "Do you have a request?"

"No," answered Avigdor.

"Perhaps you need a blessing for livelihood?" asked the Baal Shem Tov.

"No," said Avigdor. "I've been in business for many years and I have no worries about livelihood."

"Thank G-d," said the Baal Shem Tov with emphasis, for is not every success from G-d? The Baal Shem Tov then inquired as to the man's health and that of his wife and children, hoping to hear some expression of gratitude but again, no words of thanks to G-d were heard.

The Baal Shem Tov said to Avigdor: "There is a verse in the Book of Psalms that we repeat every day in our prayers: 'You, G-d, are enthroned upon the praises of the people Israel.' G-d waits for words of praise from Jews. When a Jew says 'thank G-d' or the like, it is dearer to G-d than the praises of the angels in heaven! Though G-d does not need us to praise Him or thank Him, we need to remember that everything we enjoy, good health, good fortune, good children, all come from G-d, the Source of all blessings.

"However," cautioned the Baal Shem Tov, "just when one is most successful and thinks that it is all due to his wisdom, or that he deserves it all, he may think that this is the way it is going to always be. He may forget altogether that it is all due to G-d who has been very kind to him.

"So, G-d waits to hear how people respond. If one asks the other, 'How are you, how is your family, how is business?' and the person answers, 'Thank G-d, well,' then G-d bestows even more generous blessings."

The Baal Shem Tov continued, "I would ask you to do me a favor since you come from Brod. Please deliver a letter to the president of the Jewish community." The Baal Shem Tov then wrote a letter, sealed it, and handed it to Avigdor. "Please deliver the letter personally into the hands of the community president and to no one else."

Avigdor took the letter, put it in his pocket, and took his leave of the Baal Shem Tov. On the way home, Avigdor thought about the Baal Shem Tov's words and resolved to be more aware of G-d's blessings in his life. When he returned home, he changed his traveling clothes and tucked the jacket he'd been wearing into his closet, forgetting about his resolution and the letter.

Years passed and the wheel of fortune turned for Avigdor. One deal after another went sour until he was left a virtual pauper. He even had to sell his household goods. Before long there was nothing more to sell, except an old used suit that hung in his closet. Avigdor went through the pockets before selling the suit. Suddenly, he came upon the letter which the Baal Shem Tov had asked him to deliver so many years ago!

Avigdor stared at the letter. He remembered the Baal Shem Tov's words about thanking G-d for all the good He bestows. "What a fool I was not to realize that the Baal Shem Tov was cautioning me," thought Avigdor sadly. He resolved to heed the Baal Shem Tov's words from then on.

The name of the addressee on the envelope was still clear. Reb Tzadok, the new President of Brod. Avigdor rushed out of his house and asked the first passerby, "Where can I find Reb Tzadok?"

"You mean, Reb Tzadok, the newly elected president?"

"Yes. This is the man," said Avigdor.

"You'll find him in the big study hall. Only this morning he was elected head of the community..."

Avigdor had been so immersed in his own worries he hadn't even known that there was an election for a new communal president. "Do you know anything about the new president?" asked Avigdor.

"He started as a tailor's apprentice. When he went out on his own, he struggled. But, he never complained. Whenever he was asked how business was, he always replied, 'Thank G-d, I'm making a living.' A few years ago, he began to prosper. But his success never turned his head. He gave charity generously and remained the same modest man. And, whenever people ask how's business, he still answers, 'Thank G-d, I'm making a living.'"

Avigdor hurried to the study hall and handed Reb Tzadok the letter, apologizing profusely for the delay. Reb Tzadok opened it; it was a personal request from the Baal Shem Tov who had passed on a number of years ago!

The Baal Shem Tov introduced the letter carrier as a once wealthy man who was now in need of financial help. He asked Reb Tzadok to help Avigdor get back on his feet. He added that in case Reb Tzadok doubted the authenticity of the letter, the following two "signs" should dispel his doubts: First, the letter would be delivered on the very first day he became president. Second, that on the same day he would become the father of a baby boy.

Reb Tzadok had just finished reading the letter when someone ran in, shouting, "Mazel Tov! Your wife just gave birth to a son!" For a moment Reb Tzadok was speechless. The saintly Baal Shem Tov had passed on several years ago, yet here was a letter he sent, which took so many years to deliver, yet was delivered just on time. Reb Tzadok turned to Avigdor and said, "I am very pleased to meet you. Be my guest this evening. We have some important business to discuss. I can use a man with your experience."

Avigdor stood there surprised and grateful. "Thank G-d! And, I will be at your house this evening, G-d willing!" ■

If you wish to deal kindly and truly with my master (Gen. 24:49)

Thoughts that Count

Why did Eliezer have to "beg" Rebecca's father Betuel and her brother Laban to agree to allow her to marry Isaac if Abraham was such a wealthy man? Wasn't it obvious that Rebecca would be well taken care of if she married Isaac? Rather, the prophecy concerning Abraham's descendents - "And they will afflict them for four hundred years" - was already well known, and Betuel and Laban hesitated before subjecting Rebecca's unborn children to the Egyptian exile. However, when they realized that it was ordained by G-d, they gave their consent and declared, "We cannot speak to you bad or good."

(Yalkut David)



The years of Sara were one hundred and twenty-seven years (Gen. 23:1)

Sara is the only woman in the Torah whose lifetime is explicitly recorded. This is because she is considered to be the mother of the entire Jewish people, as it states (Isaiah 51:2), "And to Sara who gave birth to you."

(Zohar)



And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac, but to the sons of the concubines...he gave gifts (Gen. 25:5-6)

What is the connection between justice and judgment? Whenever G-d gives a person an abundance of blessings, he must ask himself: Do I really deserve so much goodness? Why me and not someone else? This "self-judgment" will then prompt him to give tzedaka (charity) in a generous and unstinting manner.

(Lubavitcher Rebbe)