



Parshas Chayei Sarah 2019, the productivity mindset

This week's Parsha Perspective is dedicated in memory of Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yosef Ben Zev Wolf. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.

Our Parsha begins with the passing of Sarah at 127 years old. Avraham negotiated with Ephron to buy a plot of land in Chevron, known as Mearas HaMachpelah for 400 shekels to use as a family burial plot for the next generations.

When Avraham finished mourning for Sarah, he sent his most trusted servant, Eliezer, to find a wife for his son Yitzchak. When Eliezer arrived in the city, he went to a well and encountered a young girl who offered to give him and his camels water to drink. When Eliezer asked who she was, he discovered that her name was Rivkah, and she was a great-niece of Avraham; at that moment, he knew she would marry Yitzchak.

When Rivkah told her family what had occurred, her brother Lavan went outside to greet Eliezer and invited him to stay the night. With her family's blessings the next morning, Eliezer and Rivkah traveled back together to the land of Cana'an, where she married Yitzchak and went into Sarah's tent.

A question comes to mind: The Pasuk says (24:1) *“Ve’Avraham Zaken Ba Bayamim Va’Hashem Berach Es-Avraham Bakol”* – *“Avraham was old, advanced in his days; and G-d had blessed Avraham with everything.”* Rashi writes that the word *“Bakol—everything”* has the same numerical value as the word *“Ben—son,”* which is 52.

He explains that now Avraham indeed had everything, he had physical wealth, a profound relationship with Hashem, and now a child to continue on his legacy.

But Rashi does not address an obvious question about the Pasuk repeating itself. It says, *“Avraham was old and advanced in his days.”* So why does the Torah, which is usually very concise with its wording, tell us twice that Avraham was getting old?

One answer that is brought down in the Midrash (*Bereishis Rabbah 48:16*) is that the reason the Torah reiterates itself is that Hashem had re-gifted Avraham and Sarah their youth to give birth to Yitzchak. As it says in Parshas Vayera, when Sarah overheard the angel notifying her husband that she will have a child, she laughed.

The Pasuk says, (18:12) *“Vatitzchak Sarah Bekirbah Lemor, Acharei Veloti Hayetah-li Ednah Va’adoni Zaken”* — *“Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “Now that I am worn out, I shall have my heart’s desire? My husband is old”!* But now that it is 37 years later, Avraham Avinu's age is catching up again.

However, the Lubavitcher Rebbe brings down a more profound explanation. He writes that the meaning of *“Ba Bayamim”* — *“advanced in his days,”* **is not** a description of the age of Avraham but how he used his days.

Avraham Avinu did not let a day pass by with no element of growth. Rather, he took it upon himself daily to continue developing his relationship with G-d. As Zohar writes, *“Avraham did not miss a day of serving Hashem.”* Even during chaotic and turbulent times, he remained concentrated on his goals.

Despite the passing of his wife, Sarah, he remained focused on his responsibility of continuing the Jewish people by finding a wife for his son, Yitzchak. Avraham Avinu did not let his days surpass him; instead, he advanced on his days for the best opportunity to grow and improve.

In our daily lives, it is imperative that we understand that we should aim to be productive every day. Whether it be small and incremental steps toward your ambitions or achieving your goals, you must strive for growth every day. You will then start accomplishing achievements beyond your wildest expectations, unlocking mankind's potential.

“The secret of getting ahead is just getting started.”

Have an inspirational Shabbos!

Rabbi Sholom Yemini