



Parshas Chayei Sarah 2023, continuing lasting legacies

The Parsha Perspective is in honor of our land, Eretz Yisroel. May G-d protect our brave soldiers as they eradicate our enemies. May G-d save all the hostages in Gaza from harm and return them immediately. May G-d comfort all those who lost family or friends in the horrific attack. May G-d grant a speedy recovery to all those injured in the attack.

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. This cave would be used 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 prayed to G-d to have mercy on him and show him the future wife of Yitzchak. The test he formulated was if the girl would offer him and his camels water to drink.

Eliezer then headed to the city's well and encountered a young girl carrying a water jug on her shoulder. When he approached her and requested water, she gave him water to quench his thirst. But she also offered to provide water to his many camels to drink as well.

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. Rivkah ran home to tell her family about Eliezer and his mission to find Yitzchak, a wife. Her brother Lavan quickly went outside to greet Eliezer and invited him to stay the night. The following day, Eliezer and Rivkah traveled back together to Cana'an.

When Yitzchak met Rivkah, he brought her into his mother's tent to see if the miracles of her tent would return. While Sarah was alive, her candles remained

illuminated from Friday afternoon to Friday afternoon. Her dough stayed fresh and miraculously increased as needed. Most importantly, a cloud of G-d hovered over her tent.

But all these incredible miracles vanished when Sarah passed away. Yet, when Rivkah entered Sarah's tent, all the miracles returned. Once again, the cloud of G-d hovered over the tent. Her candles burned the entire week, and her dough never finished. When Yitzchak saw the miracles return, he knew she was one to continue his amazing mother's legacy.

However, a question comes to mind: The second Pasuk of our Torah portion relates how Avraham Avinu mourned for his wife, the mother of the Jewish people.

וַתָּמָת שָׂרָה בְּקִרְיַת אַרְבַּע הוּא חֶבְרוֹן בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וַיָּבֵא אַבְרָהָם לְסֹפֵד לְשָׂרָה וּלְבִכּוֹתָהּ (23:2)

"And Sarah passed away in Kirias Arba which is Chevron in the land of Canaan. And Avraham came to eulogize Sarah and to cry for her." Interestingly, the Torah uses just five words to describe and relate how Avraham mourned for his wife, Sarah. Shouldn't the Torah have elaborated just a bit more and detailed how Avraham mourned for his wife and partner in his holy mission? Why does the Pasuk only use five words to recount how Avraham grieved the loss of Sarah imeinu?!

Unfortunately, the answer to this question is relevant in ways we could have never imagined. We haven't even begun to truly mourn the loss of the 1400 holy souls that were slaughtered as we are heavily focused on eradicating our enemies and bringing the hostages home safely. We just concluded the Shloshim, the thirty day period of intense mourning for those killed in the horrific attack.

Sadly, this is not the first time in our history or recent memory that we have experienced such pain and sorrow. From the slaughter of sixty-nine Jews in Chevron in 1929 before the modern state of Israel to the incomprehensible wickedness of the Nazi regime, our knowledge of pain and sorrow is substantial.

But what is also substantial is our knowledge of creating living memorials to honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. We have and will continue to build massive living testimonials to keep their memories alive and ensure the continuity of the Jewish Nation.

We follow in the footsteps of our forefather, Avraham Avinu, who immediately set out to continue Sarah's legacy. He sent his most trusted servant, Eliezer, to find a wife for their only son, the next forefather of the Jewish people, Yitzchak Avinu.

The living testimony to Sarah Imeinu's life was enshrined into history as Rivkah entered Sarah's tent, becoming the next matriarch of the Jewish people. The miracles that defined Sarah's tent's holiness returned to her rightful place, the carrier for her legacy. The Jewish reaction to pain, sorrow and tragedy is purposeful grief and heartbreak that seeds a lasting future for our people.

In the face of such wickedness, cruelty and outright evil abroad and at home, we can't let them prevail. We can't let them win or succeed for the sake of the millions who were murdered in cold blood for the simple fact that they were Jewish. We must overcome, we must defeat and succeed far beyond our quantitative numbers to protect the legacies formed in suffering and set by the ultimate sacrifice.

This perspective is the challenge set before every Jew from our Inception to this very day. How do we mourn the past in a manner that ensures our future? How do we honor those who have given everything of themselves to our Creator, our Father in Heaven? How do we live our lives today with the legacies of giants on our shoulders?!

While this awareness may seem daunting, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rav Menachem Mendel Schneerson, outlines the steps we must take. No matter who we are, what profession we are in or how much we have studied, we must share G-d's love with all. We can help those less fortunate, share G-d's wisdom and give strength as we cross the finish line into the ultimate redemption.

"The attempt to eliminate the people of G-d was an attempt to eradicate the presence of G-d from the human situation. The fact that after Auschwitz the Jewish people still lives and can still affirm its faith is the most powerful testimony that G-d still lives."

- Crisis and Covenant by Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

Am Yisroel Chai!

Have a meaningful Shabbos

Rabbi Sholom Yemini