

Chayei Sarah

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Light points

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THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ON THE
WEEKLY TORAH PORTION

Lightpoints
לזיכרון ולעילוי נשמת
הרה"ח הרה"ת
הר"ר ישעיה זושא
ב"ר אברהם דוד ע"ה ווילהעלם
נלב"ע ביום ד' שבט ה'תשפ"ב
תנצב"ה

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ת זאב ארי' ב"ר שמעי' ע"ה קרינסקי
נלב"ע כ"ג מר חשון ה'תשס"ט
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♦
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חיי שרה

Chayei Sarah

כג:א | 23:1

וַיְהִי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה מֵאָה שָׁנָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה
וְשִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים נָשִׂי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה

*The life of Sarah was one hundred
years and twenty years and seven years,
the years of the life of Sarah.*

Life is What You Make of It

Sarah's life was far from uneventful: she was born and raised in one part of the world, but moved a number of times, spending the last half of her life in the Land of Israel. She was also taken captive *twice* by powerful kings who desired to marry her against her will.

Yet when the verse says “The life of Sarah was one hundred years and twenty years and seven years, the years of the life of Sarah,” Rashi explains that the phrase “the years of the life of Sarah” summarizes all 127 years of Sarah's life, saying, “They all were equally good.” Considering everything that Sarah

endured, how can Rashi suggest that all 127 years of her life were equally good?

The answer lies in the Torah's unusual phrasing. Usually, when stating how long a person lived, the Torah says, "All the *days* of so-and-so were...",¹ or "These are the *days of the years* of so-and-so's life."² Here, however, the Torah refers to the number of Sarah's years as "the *life* of Sarah," not "the years of Sarah."

The Torah's wording indicates that this verse is not only telling us how many years Sarah lived, but also that all 127 years were "Sarah's life," i.e., perfectly and equally filled with the meaning and purpose by which she defined her life.

To Sarah, living meant being in a vibrant relationship with G-d, first and foremost through the mitzvos entrusted to the Jewish woman. As our Sages tell us, a cloud (representing the Divine Presence) hovered constantly over Sarah's tent because she carefully maintained the purity of her married life; the dough she prepared was particularly blessed in the merit of her separation of *challah*; and the Shabbos candles that she lit burned miraculously throughout the following week.³

The physical and emotional distresses that Sarah experienced certainly pained her, but the pursuits by which she defined her life were never diminished or changed. Thus, the "life of Sarah"—her spiritual passions and endeavors—were perfect and good throughout all her 127 years.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 35, pp. 92–93

1. See Bereishis 9:29.

2. See Bereishis 25:7.

3. See Rashi, Chizkuni and Gur Aryeh, Bereishis 24:67.

 כג:א | 23:1

וַיְהִי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה מֵאָה שָׁנָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה
וְשִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים חַיֵּי שָׂרָה

*The life of Sarah was one hundred
years and twenty years and seven years,
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127 Varieties

In the story of Purim, the miraculous salvation of the Jewish people came about through Queen Esther, who ruled over 127 provinces. The Midrash comments: “Why would Esther merit to rule over 127 provinces? As Esther was the granddaughter of Sarah, who lived 127 years, let her come and rule over 127 provinces.”⁴

The correlation between Sarah and Esther is certainly not only a numerical parallel; the matching numbers indicate that Sarah’s life and the miracle of Purim have something in common.

Rashi’s interpretation of the words “the years of the life of Sarah” at the beginning of Parshas Chayei Sarah hints to the common feature between Sarah and the miracle of Purim. Rashi wonders: after we read that Sarah lived for 127 years, why is it necessary to recap that “these were the years of the life of Sarah”? He concludes that this phrase comes to summarize all 127 years, saying, “They all were equally good.”

Now, no person’s life is unmarked by change; yet remarkably, the Torah attests to Sarah having experienced all 127 years of her life as equally good.

4. Bereishis Rabbah 58:3.

When we encounter the same number, 127, in the book of Esther, the Midrash understands that this serves to draw our attention to Sarah's life, based on which we can understand why the Jews merited that miracle of Purim. During the Persian exile, the Jewish people lived scattered across 127 different lands. Each place was unique in climate, culture, language and character. Inevitably, outside of their Torah observance, the lifestyles of the Jews in these diverse locations varied tremendously. Yet when the decree to annihilate the Jews reached each province, not even one Jew considered the option to renounce his Judaism and be spared!⁵ Like the 127 years of Sarah that were astonishingly "all equally good," the Jews of 127 different "varieties" were identical in their steadfast belief and devotion to G-d. They therefore merited, says the Midrash, "that the granddaughter of Sarah" would "come and rule over 127 provinces."

—*Sichos Kodesh 5730, vol. 1, pp. 638–639*

5. See Torah Ohr 91b.

 24:1 | א:ד:כ

וַאֲבֹרָחָם זָקֵן כָּא בְּיָמָיו

Avraham was old, advanced in days.

Aging Well

The Torah describes Avraham as “old, advanced in days.” Whereas the term “old” refers to Avraham’s chronological age, the term “advanced in days” refers to the extent to which Avraham “lived” his life and the effect each day had on him.

A person might be old but not advanced in days, if life merely passed him by without deeply affecting him. Avraham, however, was “advanced in days”—he had advanced, entered and immersed himself in the happenings and changes of every day of his life, such that inevitably, experiencing life’s ups and downs so deeply and personally took a physical toll on him as well.

This idea is reflected in the Zohar’s understanding of the words “advanced in days” to mean that Avraham “lacked none of his days” in this world—i.e., he had utilized every single day of his life in the service of G-d. In the words of the Zohar, “When Avraham passed from this world, he rose and vested himself in his days, for he was not lacking even one of these precious garments...”⁶ Just as Avraham was “advanced in days” in the literal sense, having profoundly experienced all the events of his life physically, so had he experienced and fully lived the spiritual significance of every day; there had

6. Zohar 1:224a.

not been even one day in Avraham's life during which he had not immersed himself in the spiritual calling of the moment.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 35, pp. 90-92

 כד:י | 24:10

וַיִּקַּח הָעֶבֶד עֶשְׂרֵה גִמְלִים מֵאֲדֹנָיו
וַיֵּלֶךְ וְכָל טוֹב אֲדֹנָיו בְּיָדוֹ

*The servant took ten of his master's
camels and he went; and his master's entire
fortune was in his hand...*

Parenting is Forever

Yitzchak was a grown man when Eliezer set off to find him a wife. The strong education that he had received from his parents had clearly had the desired impact, and Yitzchak lived by the same values of devotion to G-d as his parents had. (Thus, for example, when G-d commanded Avraham to offer Yitzchak as a sacrifice, Yitzchak was equally as willing to go ahead with it as was Avraham.⁷) Now that Yitzchak was 40 years old, one would assume that he could be left to his own devices to find a wife, without needing parental assistance to ensure that he'd continue on the right path.

But good wasn't good enough for Avraham. Avraham wanted to make certain that Yitzchak would encounter no hindrance whatsoever in marrying the right person and building a life on the path that G-d desired. Therefore, though Avraham still had many years to live, he parted with all his worldly possessions and gifted everything to Yitzchak in order to make him a more attractive suitor. As Rashi says, "Avraham wrote a deed gifting all he owned to Yitzchak, so that they

7. See Rashi, Bereishis 22:8.

[family of the prospective bride] would be eager to send him their daughter.”⁸

Avraham demonstrated that even once our children and students are grown and mature, ready to build independent lives of their own, we mustn’t cease in guiding them in the right direction. We must continue to guide them toward the proper path even at the cost of tremendous personal sacrifice, thereby ensuring that they build their lives in accordance with the Torah’s eternal ways.

—*Sichos Kodesh 5730, vol. 1, pp. 209–210*

8. Rashi ad loc.

לעילוי נשמת
מרת יהודית בת ר' נחום זלמן הלוי ע"ה
קליין
נלב"ע ביום כ"א מר חשון ה'תשע"א
תנצב"ה



נדפס ע"י בנה הרה"ת יוסף ברוך זוגותו מרת גילה שיחיו
קליין

לעילוי נשמת
מרת שיינא לאה
בת ר' יוסף ע"ה
עמער
נלב"ע ביום כ"ב מר חשון ה'תשס"ז
תנצב"ה



נדפס ע"י בני משפחתה שיחיו

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ת יעקב ב"ר אברהם ע"ה
הריסון
נלב"ע ביום כ"א מרחשון ה'תשפ"ב
תנצב"ה



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