



Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

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CHAYA SARAH

22 Cheshvan 5775

Kohen - First Aliya: Page 118, Chapter 23, verses 1-16

- ✚ Sarah died at the age of hundred and twenty seven in Hebron.
- ✚ A mourning Avraham (Abraham) meets up with the children of Heth to get their permission to buy 'the cave of machpelah' from Ephron as a burial plot for Sarah.
- ✚ Ephron wanted to give the cave to Avraham for free, but Avraham insists on paying for it. They both agree on the price of 400 shekels.

Levi - Second Aliya: Page 120, Chapter 23, verse 17- Chapter 24, verse 9

- ✚ The sale of the cave was finalised in the presence of the children of Heth.
- ✚ Avraham buries Sarah in the cave which later became the burial place of all our patriarchs and matriarchs apart from Rachel.
- ✚ Eliezer, Avraham's most trusted servant is sent out to Avraham's birth place Charan to find a suitable wife for Yitzchak (Isaac). Eliezer is made to swear an oath that the prospective bride must be willing to come back with him because under no circumstances is Yitzchak allowed to leave his birth place, the land of Canaan.

Sh'lishi - Third Aliya: Page 124, Chapter 24, verses 10-26

- ✚ Upon arrival to Charan, Eliezer rests at a well and prays to Hashem, requesting that whichever girl who comes to the well and offers to draw water from the well for his camels, would become Yitzchak's future wife.
- ✚ Rivkah (Rebecca) the daughter of Bethuel arrives at the well and draws water to quench the thirst of Eliezer's camels.
- ✚ As a reward Eliezer gives Rivkah a gold ring and two bracelets. He reveals to Rivkah the purpose of his mission and how Hashem had answered his prayer by sending her to him.

R'VI'I - Fourth Aliya: Page 126, Chapter 24, verses 27 - 52

- ✚ Rivkah leads Eliezer to the house of her father and is greeted also by her brother Laban.
- ✚ Upon showering both Bethuel and Laban with more jewellery and gems, Eliezer asks permission and receives their consent for Rivkah's hand in marriage to Yitzchak.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya: Page 129, Chapter 24, verses 53 - 67

- ✚ Eliezer returns back to Hebron with Rivkah and introduces her to Yitzchak who escorts her back to his late mother, Sarah's, tent.
- ✚ Rivkah's presence comforts Yitzchak and his mourning for his beloved mother comes to an end.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya: Page 132, Chapter 25, verses 1-11

- ✚ Avraham marries another wife, Keturah (Various Midrashim believe this was Hagar, Sarah's former maidservant and mother of Ishmael), and bores him six more children whom later become the descendants of many of the Arab nations we know today.
- ✚ Avraham dies at the age of 175 and is buried alongside Sarah in the cave of Machpelah'
- ✚ Yitzchak becomes sole beneficiary of Avraham's acquired land, property and possessions.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya: Page 134, Chapter 25, verses 12 -18

- ✚ The generations of Ishmael who died at the age of 137 is recorded here.

Haftorah – Page 136, 1st BOOK OF KINGS Chapter 1 verses 1 to Chapter 31

OVERVIEW:

- ✚ Dovid Ha'melek (King David) was nearing the end of his life and despite his expressed wishes that his son Shlomo (Solomon) will succeed him as king. Dovid's son Adoniahu recruits two influential men to help prepare his own ascension to the throne instead.
- ✚ The prophet Nathan encourages Bat Sheva, the mother of Shlomo, to approach Dovid Ha'melek and plead with him to reaffirm his choice of Shlomo as his successor.
- ✚ Mentioning Adoniahu recent actions of which the king had been unaware. Dovid acceded to Bat Sheva's request and swore an oath that Shlomo will indeed reign the land of Israel on his passing and will sit on his throne in his stead.

LINK TO SEDRA READING:

- ✚ The beginning of Chayai Sarah, Avraham is mentioned as getting old; and the haftorah starts in the same fashion with Dovid Ha'melek getting old.
- ✚ Both Avraham and Dovid secure the future of our lineage. Avraham sends away Ishmael to ensure Yitzhak will be his rightful heir and Dovid makes sure that the right son will rule Israel once he died.

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

It's hard to escape from the theme of old age in this week's sedra of Chaye Sarah. It opens with the end of Sarah's life, followed not long after by the death of Avraham. What strikes me is that both of these deaths are not recorded as the fading away of a once energetic and enthusiastic past; but portrays how they had both lived their lives to the maximum without old age getting in the way.

Chaye Sarah begins by dividing up Sarah's age of 127 into three parts. "100 years, 20 years and 7", teaching us straight away that Sarah's vibrancy for life never waned. She was just as active, beautiful and spiritually pure at the age of one hundred than when she was at the age twenty and seven years old.

Avraham too was the same. As we have seen, the majority of his accomplishments and achievements occurred not in his youthful years but in the last quarter of his life. It was only a few weeks ago, we read how aged seventy five, Avraham left his homeland to start a new life in the land of Canaan, but it did not stop there he continued traveling from place to place, acquiring wealth, digging wells, welcoming and entertaining guests constantly, and even fought wars.

Old age was also not a factor when boring offspring. Avraham was eighty six years old when Hagar gave birth to his first son, Ishmael and although the Torah at first seems to concede to the fact that both Sarah and Avraham were 'advanced in years' as it portrays the struggles both of them had in conceiving a child together; There was nothing to suggest it was impossible. We know this because the Torah told us that Sarah now aged ninety finally conceived and gave birth to Yitzchak when Avraham reached the young age of 100 years old.

The Torah tells us that Hashem had blessed Avraham in every way. Jewish tradition offers many opinions to this verse but I prefer the explanation given by Ben Zoma in Pirkei Avos (Ethics of the fathers). 'A man is truly blessed when he is happy with his lot'. I believe that in Avraham's twilight years, Avraham had reached the point in his life where he was not only blessed with everything, but also knew Hashem had blessed him because of what he had been able to achieve during his life time.

The way both Avraham and his wife Sarah spent the latter part of their lives, deconstructs a well implanted myth about slowing down and becoming more passive. There was certainly no dormancy throughout either of their lives. Quite literally they broke down any conventional expectations of what can be achieved in the twilight years of a person life.

May we all be blessed with longevity and good health so we can all continue to do mitzvors for one another until the end of days. Amen

