

חיי שרה
Chayei Sara

Genesis 23:1-25:18
Haftarah I Kings 1:1-31
Shabbat, November 7, 2026
כ״ז בְּחֶשְׁוָן תשפ״ז

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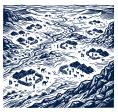

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This week's parsha, Chayei Sara, opens with Abraham mourning Sarah and purchasing the cave of Machpelah at full price, establishing the first lasting Israelite claim to the land. He then sends Eliezer to find a wife for Isaac, and the servant's prayer at the well brings him to Rivkah, whose chesed (kindness) in watering the camels marks her as the right match. Her swift decision to leave home, her marriage to Isaac, and the restoration of Sarah's blessings to the tent close out Abraham's life, which ends in peace with Isaac and Ishmael burying him together. The haftarah turns to David's old age, as Nathan and Bathsheba secure Solomon's succession.

The midrash and classical commentaries linger over small details: the miracles that returned with Rivkah, the nature of Keturah, the meaning of Isaac's love, and the deeper layers hidden in words like "ba-kol" and "la-su'ach." Together they show how the sages read ordinary verses as windows into Sarah's merit, Abraham's blessing, and the refinement of Rivkah's character.

The Chassidic teachings find in Isaac's prayer and Rivkah's veil a picture of sweetening judgment through song and devotion, and in Sarah's death an act of advocacy for Israel. The modern commentaries close with notes of reconciliation —between Isaac and Ishmael, and in Rivkah's first glimpse of Isaac at prayer.



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מדרש

Midrash

ON GENESIS 25:1

How Rebecca showed she could fill Sarah's role

Bereshit Rabbah 60:16

Rebecca's arrival restored the miraculous signs that had accompanied Sarah—the protective cloud over the tent, the open doors of hospitality, the blessing in the dough, and the Shabbat lamp—showing that she was a true successor to Sarah's piety and virtue, conducting herself in purity just as Sarah had. Seeing this, Isaac drew her into his mother's tent, recognizing her as a worthy continuation of Sarah's legacy. Rabbi Yudan derives an additional lesson from the sequence of events: a parent should first ensure that his grown children are married before remarrying himself, as Abraham did by waiting until after Isaac's marriage to Rebecca before he himself took Ketura as a wife. AI SUMMARY

“Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah; he took Rebecca, she became his wife, and he loved her, and Isaac was comforted after his mother” (Genesis 24:67). “Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah” – all the days that Sarah was alive, there was a cloud suspended over the entrance to her tent. When she died, that cloud ceased. When Rebecca came, the cloud returned. All the days that Sarah was alive, the doors were kept wide open [for guests]. When Sarah died, that opening ceased. When Rebecca came, the opening returned. All the days that Sarah was alive, there was [divine] blessing bestowed upon her dough. When Sarah died, that blessing ceased. When Rebecca came, it returned. All the days that Sarah was alive, there was a lamp kindled from Shabbat night until Shabbat night. When Sarah died, that lamp ceased. When Rebecca came, it returned. When he saw that she was acting just like his mother, separating ḥalla in purity, and shaping loaves from her dough in purity, immediately, he “brought her into the tent.”

Rabbi Yudan said: The Torah teaches you that if an [unmarried] person has adult children, he should see to marrying them off first and then take a wife for himself. From whom do you learn it? From Abraham. First, “Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah” and then, “Abraham took another wife, and her name was Ketura” (Genesis 25:1).

חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

APTA · OHEV YISRAEL, CHAYEI SARA

Heartfelt song can soften harsh judgments in exile

Ohev Yisrael

Yitzchak's going out "to meditate in the field" toward evening represents his effort to sweeten and remove the harsh dinim (judgments) from Knesset Yisrael (the Community of Israel) during exile, while Rivkah—who embodies the Shechinah (Divine Presence)—is stirred with mercy upon seeing the suffering, even though it will yield great future reward (gemul). Her covering herself with a veil (hatzaif, numerically equal to rinah, "song") teaches that through heartfelt zemirot (songs) and Pesukei DeZimrah (Verses of Praise) recited with awe and love, Israel can cut down the accusers, nullify harsh judgments, and draw down goodness and redemption speedily. AI SUMMARY

"And Isaac went out to meditate in the field, etc." One may say that it is known that the attribute of Yitzchak is the attribute of fear and gevurah (severity/strength). And evening, too, is the attribute of dinim (judgments), and Yitzchak the tzaddik (righteous one) wished to rectify his aspect and to remove and clear away the harsh dinim from upon Yisrael his children. This is "and Yitzchak went out to meditate in the field" — in the manner that Yitzchak called it "field," and when he looked upon the destruction of the Temple, "Zion shall be plowed as a field," he prayed about this matter. This is "lasuach basadeh" (to meditate in the field) — to pray in the "field of holy apples." And "toward evening" means to remove all the dinim from upon Knesset Yisrael (the Community of Israel), above and below, and especially at the time when they are scattered and dispersed among the nations.

"And he lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, camels (gemalim) were coming." This means: he saw the good reward (gemul) that would grow from this for the seed of Israel in the future, on account of the greatness and multitude of the troubles and afflictions that they accepted upon themselves and suffered in the time of exile, and nevertheless they served Hashem Yitbarach (the Blessed One) and kept the Torah and mitzvot. And when he saw this good reward, his mind was set at ease about it and he agreed to the matter.

"And Rivkah" — she is the Shechinah (Divine Presence) — "lifted up her eyes and saw Yitzchak." This means: when she, too, saw the troubles and afflictions that would pass over Israel in the time of exile, her mercy was greatly stirred and her innards yearned for her children. "And she fell from off the camel (gamal)" means that she fell from the good reward (gemul) that would grow for the seed of Israel from this in the future, and her mind was not set at ease by this. For this reason she did not wish to agree to it — namely, that they should have troubles and afflictions beyond measure, even though afterward their reward, their goodness, and their success would be doubled without measure or limit — in the manner of "neither them nor their reward."

"And she said to the servant, 'Who is this man…'" — for Yitzchak signifies his attribute, the attribute of din (judgment), and this is "coming to meet us" — meaning that it is in opposition to us, for she did not wish to agree to this matter. "And he said, 'He is my

master'" — this is the attribute of Yitzchak, which is the attribute of gevurah. "And she took the veil and covered herself" — this means that when the Shechinah sees, as it were, that Knesset Yisrael is in distress and exile, she, too, clothes herself in various garments and joins with them in their distress; and please God, at the time of the redemption, the glory of Hashem will be revealed, and she will remove herself from the garments, and His kingship will be revealed over us, as it is written, "And your eyes shall see your Teacher."

Further, "the veil" (hatzaif) in gematria (numerical value) equals "rinah" (song) — meaning that the righteousness of Rivkah our mother, peace be upon her, availed through her prayer: that through the rinah and singing of Pesukei DeZimrah (Verses of Praise) with complete intention, in awe and love, they would be able to cover themselves from the dinim, and also to nullify them, and to protect themselves. Also, "zemirot" (songs) carries the meaning of "zamir aritzim" (the cutting down of the tyrannical). That is, through the zemirot, offered in awe and fear and love, truly and wholly, one can cut down and destroy all the accusers and prosecutors, and nullify all the dinim and afflictions from upon them, and sweeten them at their root. And through this, all goodness will be drawn down upon them, speedily in our days, Amen. And understand this.

Translation: translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5)

חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

BERDITCHEV · CHAYEI SARA, KEDUSHAT LEVI

What made Yitzchok's love for Rivkah true love

Kedushat Levi

Yitzchok's love for Rivkah was not rooted in physical attraction or self-gratification, but in recognizing her as a true partner enabling him to serve the Creator more fully. True love between husband and wife is measured by how much each enables the other to fulfill the Divine will, not by how one's own desires are satisfied. AI SUMMARY

Genesis 24,67. "Yitzchok brought Rivkah into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he wed her and she became his wife and he loved her." We need to examine what the Torah meant by Yitzchok loving Rivkah that is so extraordinary that it has to be spelled out here. A husband can love his wife on two different levels. He may love her, i.e. be physically attracted to her as she enables him to satisfy his biological urges. If this is his "love," it is not love at all, but is merely love of his self. There are husbands who do not love their wives because they are instruments of fulfilling their physical desires, but because their wives enable them to perform their Creator's will better and more profoundly. This is the true meaning of "someone loving his wife." The Torah testifies that Yitzchok's love for Rivkah was of the latter category.

Translation: Kedushat Levi translated by Rb. Eliyahu Munk

חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

BRESLOV · ON GENESIS 23:9

Why did Abraham insist on paying full price for the cave?

Likutei Halakhot, Choshen Mishpat, Laws of Gifting 4:11

Avraham Avinu insisted on paying full price for the Me'arat HaMachpelah, and David insisted on paying full price for Aravnah's threshing floor, because places of such elevated kedushah (holiness) are surrounded by powerful klipot (husks/shells) that can only be subdued by revealing the holy gevanin (colors/hues)—the aspect of the four hundred worlds of longing—contained within silver and gold, not by receiving them as a free gift. The higher the kedushah of a place, the greater the klipot surrounding it, and correspondingly the greater the need to draw forth this revelation of holy colors through payment in order to nullify them. AI SUMMARY

11. And therefore Avraham Avinu (our father Abraham) did not wish to take the Me'arat HaMachpelah (Cave of Machpelah) as a gift from Efron, as it is written (Bereishit 23): "Let him give it to me for full price (kesef malei)." For because of the great intensity of the kedushah (holiness) that was there, when it was under the hand of Efron, the klipot (husks/shells) surrounded it very greatly, and therefore with Efron there was darkness and gloom, as is brought. Therefore it was not possible to remove it from Efron as a gift, for free, but only for full price, because it is impossible to bring out and raise up kedushah for free, especially such a lofty kedushah.

Therefore he gave him four hundred shekels of silver, which hint at the four hundred alemin dechisufin (worlds of longing), as is written in the holy Zohar. That is, because the money of Avraham was very holy, and all the elevated gevanin (colors/hues) were revealed through it, which are the greatness of the Borei yitbarach (Creator, blessed be He). This is the aspect of the four hundred worlds of longing in which the tzaddikim (righteous ones) delight, which are the aspect of the totality of all the holy colors, which everyone craves and delights to see and gaze upon.

And this is the aspect of "four hundred shekels of silver, over l'socher (current among merchants)," and its Targum (Aramaic translation) renders: "that is accepted in commerce in every province" — that is, all the commerce and trade in every province is all done by means of silver (kesef), as it is written (Kohelet 10): "And money answers everything," because silver contains within it all the elevated colors that are included in the four hundred worlds of longing, which are the aspect of "four hundred shekels of silver."

And by this power Avraham acquired the Me'arat HaMachpelah from Efron, by revealing the greatness of the Creator through his four hundred shekels of silver, in which all the colors, etc., were included, as above. Through this the klipot that wished to cling there were subdued, and they fell and were nullified, and the field and the cave rose up and were acquired by Avraham, as it is written: "And the field of Efron rose [vayakam]" — "it had a rising

[tekumah]," as Rashi explains there — and all this through the revelation of the colors that were in the silver of Avraham, as above.

But certainly Efron did not merit to enjoy these colors, for afterward, when the silver came into his hand, the colors — which are the aspect of the four hundred worlds of longing — became hidden, as explained above.

Similarly, David did not want to accept the threshing floor of Aravnah for free, because that was the site of the Beit HaMikdash (Holy Temple), where it was impossible to extract from the sitra achra (the "other side," i.e., the realm of impurity) for free, but only with full payment of silver, in order to subdue the kelipot (husks/shells of impurity) that surrounded it, through the revelation of the hues contained in silver and gold, as mentioned above.

This is why silver and gold are mentioned there regarding David, as it is written in Divrei HaYamim (Chronicles) (I 21): "for full silver... and David gave... shekels of gold," because there it was necessary to raise up holiness to the highest degree, since that was the site of the Beit HaMikdash and the Beit Kodshei HaKodashim (House of the Holy of Holies).

Therefore it was necessary to reveal all the hues contained in the silver and gold, in order to subdue the kelipot that surrounded that place—for the higher the holiness, the more the kelipot surround it there. Correspondingly, one must draw forth the revelation of the hues even more, in order to subdue them and nullify them through this, as mentioned above.

Translation: translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5)

חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

PIASECZNO · CHAYEI SARA, ESH KODESH

Why Sarah's death at hearing of the Akedah was not a failure

Esh Kodesh

Sarah's death upon hearing of the Akedah was not a failure but an act of advocacy for Israel: by letting her pure soul depart under the weight of that suffering, she demonstrated before Hashem that even the greatest tzaddik (righteous person) cannot endure excessive suffering, and that this too was for Israel's sake. This is why the Torah affirms that all her years, including her final moment, were equally good, teaching that suffering must come in a measure the soul can bear, and that Hashem should have mercy and bring swift salvation instead. AI SUMMARY

"And the life of Sarah was... years... these were the years of the life of Sarah" (Bereishit 23:1). Rashi explains that the repetition of "years" in each clause indicates that at twenty she was without sin, as she was at one hundred. This phrase, "the years of the life of Sarah," highlights that all her years were equally good. We must understand what this teaches us, for it seems that no other righteous woman in the Torah is described with such greatness. Furthermore, it is puzzling that even though the Torah later uses similar wording regarding Avraham Avinu and Rashi also comments that he was without sin, it does not repeat the phrase "the years of Avraham" to emphasize that all his years were equally good.

The holy books, specifically in the work Ma'or VaShemesh at the beginning of Parashat Va'era by the holy Rebbe Menachem Mendel of Rimanov, explain the Talmudic statement that "the covenant was established through salt" and "the covenant was established through suffering." Just as salt preserves meat when used in the right measure but becomes unbearable when overused, so too suffering must be balanced to be bearable and mixed with mercy.Rashi comments that Sarah's death is juxtaposed with the Binding of Isaac because upon hearing about it, her soul departed from her body, and she died. The faithful shepherd, Moshe Rabbeinu, juxtaposed Sarah's death with the Akedah to advocate on our behalf, illustrating that excessive suffering can cause even the greatest soul, like Sarah's, to leave the body. If Sarah, who was as pure at one hundred as she was at twenty, and whose years were all equally good, could not withstand such intense suffering, how much more so can we not endure.

Additionally, it can be said that Sarah herself internalized the Akedah to such a degree that it caused her soul to depart—also for the sake of Israel. She showed Hashem that Israel cannot withstand excessive suffering. Even those who survive severe suffering often have their strength, spirit, and minds diminished. There is little difference between partial death and total death in such cases.

This explains why the Torah emphasizes "the years of the life of Sarah." It might seem that Sarah failed compared to her previous years by allowing the Akedah to affect her so deeply. However, since she did so for the sake of Israel, the Torah affirms that all her years, including those affected by the Akedah, were equally good. May Hashem have

mercy on us, all of Israel, and quickly bring salvation, both spiritually and physically, with revealed kindnesses.

Translation: Sefaria Community Translation



חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

GER · CHAYEI SARA, SEFAT EMET

Why did Eliezer retell his whole mission in detail?

Sefat Emet

Eliezer's repeated, self-scrutinizing account of his mission teaches that one must examine one's own motives carefully, lest personal interest—however subtle—distort the fulfillment of a sacred task. Every person, like Eliezer, should see himself as a sheliach (emissary) of HaShem, recognizing that success in any undertaking comes not from personal merit but from aligning fully with the Divine will, so that "the desire of HaShem will prosper in his hand." AI SUMMARY

My grandfather and teacher, of blessed memory, said in the name of the holy Rabbi of Kotzk, regarding "אלי" (concerning me), that it is written this way because when he had a personal interest at stake, he did not feel his own interest. And it seems that the Torah repeated the entire passage because of this—as our Rabbis, of blessed memory, said, "the conversation of the servants [of the Patriarchs] is more pleasing [than the Torah of their children]"—for he, too, feared that he might have some ulterior interest, and that through it he might spoil the mission. For he knew with certainty that the will of Avraham Avinu (Abraham our Father) would be fulfilled by HaShem, may He be blessed; he only feared lest he himself cause some flaw in carrying out the mission.

This is what is meant by "my way has prospered"—he reviewed the entire matter for himself and became aware of his own interest. And when his personal interest was removed, he merited to complete the mission properly. This was also because he knew that all the success came through the merit of Avraham Avinu, even though he himself was also a tzaddik (righteous man).

So, too, every person must know that he is a sheliach (emissary) of HaShem, may He be blessed, in this world. And in accordance with his awareness of this, all his deeds should be directed toward this purpose. He should also know that whatever he merits to accomplish comes about because it is His, may He be blessed, will that His will be done. Then, "the desire of HaShem will prosper in his hand."