7 NOVEMBER 2026 | 27 CHESHVAN 5787 VOLUME 40 | #10

DAF HASHAVUA

חַיֵּי שָׂרָה | CHAYEI SARAH

SHABBAT ENDS:

London: 5.13pm
Birmingham: 5.18pm
Bournemouth: 5.25pm
Cardiff: 5.28pm
Dublin: 5.33pm
Edinburgh: 5.16pm
Glasgow: 5.21pm
Hull: 5.13pm
Leeds: 5.13pm
Liverpool: 5.23pm
Manchester: 5.18pm
Nottingham: 5.17pm
Sheffield: 5.18pm
Southend: 5.09pm
Southport: 5.24pm
Jerusalem: 5.23pm

Shabbat Mevarechim

Rosh Chodesh Kislev is on Tuesday and Wednesday



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SIDRA BREAKDOWN

חַיֵּי שָׂרָה
CHAYEI SARAH

5th Sidra in:
בְּרֵאשִׁית
BEREISHIT

By Numbers:
105 VERSES
1,402 WORDS
5,314 LETTERS

Headlines:
ISAAC AND REBECCA

CHAYEI SARAH:
Artscroll p.106
Hertz p.80
Koren Sacks p.139
Soncino p.118

HAFTARAH:
Artscroll p.1136
Hertz p.90
Koren Sacks p.1423
Soncino p.135

SIDRA SUMMARY

1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – BEREISHIT 23:1-16

Sarah dies aged 127, in Kiryat Arba, also known as Hebron. After eulogising Sarah, Avraham negotiates with the head of the local Hittites, Efron, in order to purchase a burial plot for Sarah, Me'arat Hamachpelah (the Cave of Machpelah). They agree a price of 400 silver shekels.
Point to Consider: *In what way does the spelling of Efron's name hint at his greed? (see Rashi to 23:15)*

2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 23:17-24:9

Avraham buries Sarah. Avraham asks his servant (understood to be) Eliezer to seek a wife for his son Yitzchak (Isaac), making him take an oath only to select a girl from Avraham's birth town, Charan, rather than from Cana'an. Avraham also insists that Yitzchak's future bride must agree to leave her home to come to the Land of Cana'an (later Israel), rather than Yitzchak going to live in Charan.

3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 24:10-26

Eliezer sets out on his journey, with ten camels and presents from Avraham. Towards the evening, Eliezer arrives at a well, close to his destination, where he rests the camels. He prays to God to show him a clear sign of the identity of Yitzchak's future bride: the young lady who would offer water to Eliezer and his camels. As he finishes his prayer, Rivkah (Rebecca) appears, with a jug on her shoulder, from which, after drawing water from the well, she gives Eliezer to drink. She then draws water for all of his camels to drink. Eliezer gives her jewellery and asks her who she is. Rivkah relates that she is the daughter of Betuel, Avraham's nephew. She grants Eliezer his request for a place to sleep.

4TH ALIYA (REVI'I) – 24:27-52

Eliezer is amazed that his prayers were answered so quickly and exclaims thanks to God. Rivkah runs home to tell her family what has happened. On seeing Eliezer's gifts to Rivkah, her brother Lavan runs out to greet him and welcomes him in. Eliezer introduces himself and recounts the story of his journey. He asks permission to take Rivkah as a wife for Yitzchak. Lavan and Betuel agree.

5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 24:53-67

Eliezer gives more jewellery, as well as gold and silver vessels, to Rivkah. He gives her family delicious fruit (Rashi). They eat and drink together, and Eliezer stays overnight. The next morning, Lavan and his mother ask for Rivkah to stay with them longer before leaving. Eliezer is insistent and Rivkah agrees to go immediately. Rivkah meets Yitzchak in the Negev, where he brings her into his mother Sarah's tent.

6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 25:1-11

Avraham marries Ketura, whom the Midrash identifies as Hagar. Their descendants are listed. Avraham dies, aged 175. He is buried by Yitzchak and Yishmael, also in Me'arat Hamachpela, next to Sarah.

7TH ALIYA (SHEVI'I) – 25:12-18

Yishmael's descendants are listed. He dies, aged 137.

HAFTARAH (I KINGS 1:1-31)

This section of the Book of Melachim (Kings) relates the attempt by Adoniyah, the older son of King David, to establish himself as David's successor. Queen Batsheva and Natan the Prophet manage to foil this plot, by warning King David, who reasserts his younger son Shlomo's (Solomon) right to succeed him.

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CLEAR THE DECK

BY: **RABBI MOSHE CHAIM LISTER**
Barnet Synagogue

On 29 April 1975, as South Vietnam was collapsing, South Vietnamese Air Force Major Buang-Ly escaped with his wife and children in a tiny two-seat Cessna O-1 Bird Dog. Over open sea with little fuel, he spotted the *USS Midway*. With no radio with which to communicate, Buang-Ly scribbled a message, weighted it with a pistol, and dropped it onto the carrier's deck. The note read:

"...I can land on your runway.... Please rescue me. Major Buang, wife and 5 child."

Captain Lawrence Chambers, in command of the *Midway* for less than five weeks, quickly realised the only hope for Major Buang-Ly and his family was to make space for an emergency landing. Convinced he would be court martialled, Captain Chambers nonetheless gave the order to clear the deck by any means. Helicopters that could be moved were repositioned; those that could not were simply pushed overboard. An estimated $10 million worth of aircraft, equivalent to around $62 million today, was sacrificed to make room for a single light aircraft carrying a desperate family. With no room for error and a dangerous crosswind blowing, Major Buang-Ly and his family landed safely on deck to waving arms and wild cheers. Despite defying orders from superior officers during the incident, Captain Chambers faced no disciplinary action, and his decision came to be celebrated as one of the most remarkable humanitarian acts of the Vietnam War.

This week, one of the Torah's lesser recognised heroes, plays a colossal part in Jewish history. Eliezer, Avraham's trusted aide, is charged with finding a wife for Yitzchak (Isaac). Despite years of loyal service, Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki, 1040–1105) describes how painful this was for Eliezer; he had a daughter of marriageable age and had hoped that Avraham might agree to her marrying Yitzchak (see commentary to *Bereishit* 24:29). This was not to be, and in a gesture of immense selflessness, Eliezer pushed his own hopes overboard and put his all into a mission that spelled the end of his own dream.

It is for this reason, among many others, that I find Eliezer so inspiring. So many of us have been in a situation where someone flies onto our radar in need of assistance. Be it a family of seven on a small plane looking to land, or Avraham himself, we genuinely want to assist. Yet when we look at the crowded deck of our own lives, already overflowing with commitments, responsibilities, and things we value, we conclude that we simply don't have room. This week we are reminded that the future is not shaped by those with empty schedules or unlimited resources - it is shaped by those who are willing to make space for others, even when life appears already full. Greatness, Godliness, and kindness require sacrifice, and it is those who are prepared to rearrange their priorities and create space for another who leave a legacy that inspires generations.



A South Vietnamese Air Force UH-1H is pushed overboard to make room for Major Buang to land his Cessna O-1.



Major Buang's O-1 after landing aboard Midway



SEFER YIRMIYAHU (JEREMIAH) - PART 9

YIRMIYAHU IN EGYPT

BY: **PNINA SAVERY**
Ma'ayan and US Educator

Following the violent assassination of Gedaliah ben Achikam, the remnant of the Jewish people journey to Egypt, taking Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah) with them. The Jews settle in, integrating with the Egyptians. Yirmiyahu continues to prophesy even in Egypt, rebuking the people for their assimilation and paganism. They openly defy their prophet, stating: "we will not listen to the message you have spoken to us in the name of God" (*Yirmiyahu* 44:15-16). Even after the realisation of all his previous prophecies, the people still do not want to listen to Yirmiyahu.

Yirmiyahu also delivers what appears to be a prophecy to Egypt directly, and there are other examples of prophecies to other nations elsewhere in *Sefer Yirmiyahu*. However, it seems clear that these are not given over to the non-Jewish nations, rather they are spoken about the nations but directed to the Jewish people.

Yirmiyahu had spoken against Egypt in Chapter 46 which took place chronologically earlier, before the destruction of the Temple. There his prophecy foresaw the downfall of Egypt at the hands of the Babylonians. This had been considered impossible. Egypt was one of the mightiest nations at the time, and Babylon was a small, relatively new country that seemed weak. Who would have believed that Egypt would fall at the hands of Babylon?

Eventually, this prophecy comes true in 605 BCE with the famous victory of the Babylonians over Egypt in the Battle of Carkamish. This momentous historical event represented the rise of the Babylonians as the world's new great empire. Their rise to power was shockingly fast, and they had defeated Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) less than 20 years later.

At our later stage, with Yirmiyahu himself living in Egypt, he continues to describe how the Babylonian king, "My servant", will bring down further destruction upon Egypt (*Yirmiyahu* 43:9-13). Even though Egypt had been defeated by Babylon in battle, they are currently independent and have managed to repel attempted Babylonian invasions. While it seems that Babylon never successfully ruled over Egypt, some accounts show that Babylon did manage to invade. First-century historian Josephus records that Nevuchadnezzer (Nebuchadnezzar), the Babylonian King, "invaded Egypt to suppress it, killing its king, recapturing the Jews there, and bringing them to Babylonia".[1] Despite all that the exiled Jews did to escape Babylonian rule, it ultimately catches up with them.

> **“ Despite all that the exiled Jews did to escape Babylonian rule, it ultimately catches up with them.**

The prophet is trying to teach the people that if God wills it, anything can happen. The only reason Babylon was able to defeat the mighty Egyptians was because "God thrust him down" (*Yirmiyahu* 46:15).

Interestingly, Chapter 46 is read as the haftarah for *Parashat Bo* which describes the final three plagues and the exodus of the Jewish people from Egypt. It was unthinkable that a small slave nation could defeat the might of the ancient Egyptian empire, yet it happened because it was the will of God. Just as God ensured a miraculous victory for the Jewish people in *Sefer Shemot*, so too He will ensure a miraculous victory for the Babylonians over the Egyptians to further His plan for the Jewish people.

[1] Josephus, *Antiquities X*, 9:7.

ISRAEL IN THE PARASHA

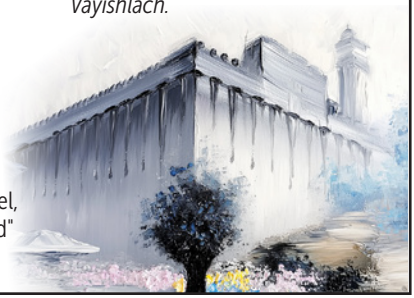
This series is an adaptation of short ideas written by former Chief Rabbi Lord Jakobovits z"l in the 1960s, which were later reprinted in a compilation of his writings, 'Mishnat HaSar'.

CHAYEI SARAH: THE JEWISH PEOPLE'S FIRST LEGAL CLAIM TO THE LAND OF ISRAEL

The Torah gives a detailed account of Avraham's efforts to acquire the Cave of Machpelah and its burial plot from the Hittites after Sarah's death, including the substantial sum he paid for it. Avraham refused to compromise in securing it as an "*achuza*," a permanent holding (*Bereishit* 23:3-20). Through this acquisition, Avraham gave tangible legal expression to the Jewish people's pre-existing claim to the Land.

By means of this legal transaction, God's promise that the Land would belong to Avraham and his descendants became a reality (Ibn Ezra to *Bereishit* 23:19). Moreover, the intent of the entire episode is "to demonstrate the unique significance of the Land of Israel, both for the living and the dead" (*ibid*.).

A fuller explanation of this idea will be given in *Parashat Vayishlach*.



PHRASE OF THE WEEK

Q R S

BY: **RABBI ALEX CHAPPER** | Borehamwood & Elstree United Synagogue

Each week, working our way through the alphabet, we explore a Jewish word or phrase, bringing clarity and deeper understanding to its meaning.

Does ***RUACH HAKODESH*** mean:

1. Divine Inspiration? | **2.** Holy Spirit? | **3.** Repetition of the Amidah?

Although *Ruach HaKodesh* literally means "Holy Spirit", it refers to a form of Divine Inspiration that can guide human understanding without direct prophecy. While prophecy ceased with the destruction of the Temple, *Ruach HaKodesh* is said to remain accessible in moments of clarity, holiness and deep spiritual connection.

Chazal, our Sages, teach that the Matriarchs and Patriarchs kept the whole of the Torah even before it was given. They explain that this was possible as they were imbued with *Ruach HaKodesh*. Their closeness to God allowed them to intuit the values and practices of the Torah, and they were inspired by God to keep the mitzvot.

The *Zohar*, the central work of Jewish mysticism, notes that King David received *Ruach HaKodesh* and, with its inspiration, composed his *Tehillim* (Psalms). At other times, he would begin to compose, thereby inducing *Ruach HaKodesh* to rest upon him.

According to the Talmud, parents are granted *Ruach HaKodesh* when they come to name their child. This relates to the idea that a person's name reflects their *neshama* - their soul or essence. Therefore, *Ruach HaKodesh* is temporarily gifted to parents so that they endow their child with a name that is not random but reflects who they are on a deeper level.



COVENANT AND CONVERSATION

BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

This is adapted and abridged from Rabbi Sacks' original 2020 Covenant & Conversation essay. Learn more from Rabbi Sacks at www.rabbisacks.org

A British newspaper once interviewed a prominent member of the Jewish community and a member of the House of Lords on his 92nd birthday. The interviewer asked, "Most people, when they reach their 92nd birthday, start thinking about slowing down. You seem to be speeding up. Why is that?"

He replied: "When you get to 92, you see the door starting to close, and I have so much to do before the door closes that the older I get, the harder I have to work."

We get a similar impression of Avraham (Abraham) in this week's *parasha*. Sarah, his constant companion, has died. He is 137 years old. We see Avraham mourn her, and then he moves into action. He engages in an elaborate negotiation to buy a plot of land in which to bury her. The local Hittites politely try to discourage him, offering a free burial site. Insistent, Avraham pays a high price to purchase the Cave of Machpelah (The Cave of the Patriarchs).

This purchase is recorded in great detail here and three times subsequently in *Bereishit* (Genesis). Something significant is being hinted at.

Immediately afterwards we read, "Avraham was old, well advanced in years, and God had blessed Avraham with everything." (*Bereishit* 24:1) Yet rather than resting, Avraham launches a new initiative, to find a wife for his son Yitzchak (Isaac).

As with the purchase of the field, this course of events is described in more detail than almost anywhere else in the Torah. Every conversational exchange is recorded. The contrast with the story of the Binding of Yitzchak could not be greater. There, almost everything – Avraham's thoughts, Yitzchak's feelings – is left unsaid. Here, everything is said. Again, the literary style calls our attention to the significance of what is happening, without telling us precisely what it is.

The explanation is simple and unexpected. Throughout their journey, God promised Avraham two things: children and a land.

Despite this, when Sarah dies, Avraham has not a single inch of land, and his only son of the covenant - Yitzchak - is currently unmarried. Neither promise has been fulfilled. Hence the extraordinary detail of the two main stories, the purchase of land and the finding of a wife for Yitzchak.

There is a moral here. *God promises, but we must act*. God promised Avraham the land, but he had to buy the first field. God promised Avraham many descendants, but Avraham had to ensure that his son was married to a woman who would share the life of the covenant.

God does not and will not do it alone. By self-limitation (*tzimtzum*) through which He creates the space for human freedom, God gives us responsibility, and only by exercising it do we reach our full stature. What changes the world is *not what God does for us, but what we do for God*.

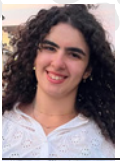
That is made Avraham the first Jewish leader. Leaders take responsibility for creating the conditions through which God's purposes can be fulfilled. They are active, even in old age.

The most important point of this *parasha* is that large promises become real through small beginnings. Leaders begin with an envisioned future, knowing we can only reach it one act at a time. There is no miraculous shortcut. Avraham acquired only a single field and had just one son who would continue the covenant. Yet he did not complain, and he died serene and satisfied. Because he had begun and left future generations something on which to build. All great change is the work of more than one generation, and none of us will live to see the full fruit of our endeavours.

Leaders see the destination, begin the journey, and leave behind them those who will continue it. That is enough to endow a life with immortality.

THE TRIBE WEEKLY
PARASHAT CHAYEI SARAH 6-7 NOVEMBER | 27 CHESHVAN

CHAYEI SARAH



BY: **MALKA GABBAY**

Tribe gap year student

The Rabbis teach us that Avraham (Abraham) faced ten tests from God in his spiritual journey to becoming the father of the Jewish people. The binding and near sacrificing of his son Yitzchak (Isaac) in last week's *parasha* seems to be the final one of these tests. Rabbeinu Yonah (13th century Spain), in his commentary on *Pirkei Avot* (5:3), suggests that it was actually the death of his wife, Sarah – and the initial lack of a burial place for her – that was the final test.

Losing a beloved spouse is certainly a cause for profound grief, but in what way was it a test?

To answer this question, we must first understand the true purpose of marriage in Judaism: to reunite two souls that were separated before birth, allowing them to become whole once again. Marriage is meant to be a soul connection that lasts forever. When a couple shows love, care and attention to one another, this level of soul connection can be achieved.

After Sarah's death, Avraham sought to build an eternal connection in the next world with her. Despite his grief, he focused on buying a burial place for her in *Me'arat Hamachpelah* (the Cave of the Patriarchs), located in Chevron (Hebron). Chevron has the Hebrew root *chaver*, meaning friend or partner. This is one of many reasons why it was particularly appropriate for Avraham and Sarah to be buried next to each other in Chevron.

Rabbeinu Yonah suggests that, given God's numerous promises of the Land to Avraham, he might have complained about the efforts he needed to make to acquire a burial plot. But he did not complain, thus passing this test too.

Shabbat shalom.

Chayei Sarah Cave Search

Can you find ten 'Caves of the Patriarchs' 
amongst the items found in this week's Parasha in the box below?





THE BOOK OF JOSHUA (YEHOSHUA): PART NINE

THE TRIBE SCRIBE

The Mountain that Waited for Kalev



Writer: Rabbi Nicky Goldmeier Cartoonist: Paul Solomons

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