



Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 80

**Chayei Sarah** | Building A Jewish Home



# MESILLOT

*Pathways to the Soul*

illuminating teachings and insights on the weekly parasha  
by **Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l**

From the weekly lectures of his son,  
**Rabbi Israel Abargel shlita**

# ...PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL...

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### Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets

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## Parashat Chayei Sarah

### The Humble Doctor

**There** was once a very renowned doctor who had the opportunity to ride in the carriage of the Head Rabbi of a certain city. On their way, the doctor boasted of his good deeds, that he doesn't heal people only for money. If a poor person comes to him and tells him that he doesn't have money, he treats him anyway, as if he had paid in full. The rabbi showed him no signs of admiration and then casually said, "I do the same..."

**The** doctor was very surprised at his reaction because the rabbi wasn't known to be well versed in medicine, so who would come to him about such a matter?! After contemplation, the doctor thought that the rabbi meant that he treats all those who turn to him for *Din Torah*, even if they don't have the money to pay...

**A** few moments later, the doctor continued to praise

himself, that sometimes when he sees that the patient doesn't have enough money, he gives them medicine for free. Once again, the rabbi wasn't moved and then said, "I do the same..."

**The** doctor's astonishment grew even more since he never knew that the rabbi had any medicines in hand... However, after some thought, the doctor thought that perhaps the rabbi meant spiritual medicines for the soul...

**The** doctor then continued to boast that when he meets a patient in need of special treatment, he goes out of his way to obtain the means for them. The rabbi then replied, "I do the same..."

**Here**, the doctor could no longer hold back. He turned to the rabbi and asked in bewilderment, "What's the meaning of this strange expression that you repeat

again and again?! The rabbi also heals the sick, creates medicines for them, and takes care of the means for the recovery of the needy?!”

**The** rabbi explained with a smile, “I also make a habit of publicizing my good deeds,<sup>1</sup> whereas my negative behavior I conceal from the eyes of all...”<sup>2</sup>

### True Matchmaking

**Yossi** was a successful man, handsome, talented, smart... and single! He’d been in *shidduchim* for more than ten years, wandering from lobby to lobby and from house to house... Throughout his wanderings, he managed to roam far and wide, but ultimately, he remained single!

**Yossi** sat on his sofa, broken and discouraged, as his best friend, David, sat opposite him.

“**What** should I do? I have no hope,” Yossi said sadly.

**David** answered, “First of all, we need to find out what the reason is. I suggest that at your

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### Wellspring of Wisdom

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**1. It’s** said jokingly... Good thing we shake the *Arba’at Haminim* during Sukkot in the synagogue, and we eat the *maror* at home.

**People** invest a lot of money in a beautiful *etrog*. They place it in an expensive silver box and carry it to the synagogue with great honor. They shake it with pride, making sure that everyone sees its beauty and splendor...

**Let’s** imagine for a moment what would happen if we shook the *etrog* and *lulav* only in the *sukkah* at home and not in the synagogue. All flaunting would instantly disappear. No one would need to impress anyone anymore... And when no one needs to impress anyone, they can then buy a standard *etrog*. After all,

it’s a shame to spend a lot of money on an *etrog* that no one will see...

**On** the other hand, eating the *maror* on Seder Night isn’t an easy task... The color of one’s face changes, their stomach turns... But this is the days’ mitzvah, and the mitzvah should be fulfilled with joy. When one finally finishes eating the *maror*, they can breathe a sigh of relief...

**How** lucky are people that they eat the *maror* at home! If they ate it in the synagogue, they would suffer just to show everyone how mighty they are...

- Peleh Doresh (p. 493).

**2.** BeNoam Siach – Shemot (p. 69).

next meeting, I'll hide close by and listen to the conversation..."

**Yossi** sat once again on a spacious armchair opposite the girl he met.

**He** then opened, saying, "First, I must preface... If you think I know Torah, then know that it's not true. If you think that I have good *middot*, then know that you're wrong. If you were told that I'm a smart person, then know that I'm not. And don't build on the fact that I'm rich..."

**The** girl nervously asked, "Is there anything positive about you?"

**Yossi** replied, "Yes, I only speak the truth...!"

**Yossi** was left alone again...

### Yosef's Might

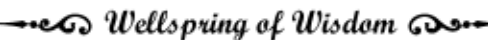
**The** Midrash says<sup>4</sup> that once, a woman approached Rabbi Yossi and asked him, "I'm very interested in the accounts told in your Tanach. I pondered the story of Yosef, the son of Yaakov, and realized that

**David** approached him, shocked, "Are you serious!?! Just as someone shouldn't concentrate only on their virtues, so too they shouldn't concentrate only on their shortcomings... You don't need matchmaking help, you need mental help..."

**The** Lubavitcher Rebbe writes<sup>3</sup> that truth is the middle path. An inclination to the right – to be stringent with oneself and find faults or sins, not in accord with the truth. An inclination to the left – to be lenient with oneself, covering one's faults, or being lenient in matters of *avodah* out of self-love – both these ways are false.

**Such** is the way of our holy Torah, to convey the truth as it is...

when Yaakov was 19 years old, he had his eleventh son, Yosef. Yosef lived in his father's house for seventeen years and received the entire Torah from him. At the age of seventeen, Yosef was sold into



3. HaYom Yom (27<sup>th</sup> of Adar I).

4. Bereshit Rabbah 87:6.

slavery, and after a long and tiring journey of shame, he was sold to the slave market in Egypt... And ultimately, “He was purchased by Potiphar, the officer of Paraoth, chief of the butchers” (Bereshit 39:1).

**Yosef** served his Egyptian master for a whole year, and throughout that year, Potiphar’s wife tried to throw him down into the abyss...

**But** she didn’t succeed !

**Yosef** mightily stood the test !

**He** stood firm and strong in the face of temptations and threats, didn’t give in to her will, and didn’t listen to her for an entire year.

**And** truthfully, it seems very strange to me. How can a young

man manage to withstand such an ordeal ? Therefore, I think the Torah covered up for him...”

**Rabbi** Yossi replied, “Chas ve’shalom ! Our Torah is the Torah of truth ! If you truly studied the Tanach, you must’ve read about Reuven and Bilha and Yehuda and Tamar... If the Torah didn’t cover up for them when they were older and under the supervision of their father Yaakov, then surely it didn’t cover up for Yosef, who was young and without any supervision... And know that everything written in our Torah is true and accurate !”

**Before** we move on to Sarah Imeinu, we’ll need another introduction...

### Three Types of Tests

**The** Gemara says<sup>5</sup> that after longevity, a person will be buried in the ground and then stand before the *Kiseh HaKavod* (Throne of Glory).

**There**, they’ll be asked six questions, one of which is, “When

you were in lower world, did you engage in Torah study ?”

**If** they set time for Torah, whether learning by themselves or participating in a *shiur*, they’ll have what to answer. But, if they didn’t merit, and their whole life

was spent in futility, they'll be gripped by immense shame...

**In** order to save themselves from the shame, they'll apologize to the High Court with one of these three apologies:

1. They'll apologize by saying that they were poor and preoccupied with earning enough to live, and therefore they weren't free to study Torah.

2. They'll apologize by saying that they were extremely rich and preoccupied with managing their wealth, and therefore they weren't free to study Torah.

3. They'll apologize by saying that since they were so good-looking and preoccupied with their evil inclination, they weren't free to study Torah.

**The** Gemara continues and reveals to us what they'll respond back to them in heaven...

**If** he says, "I was poor and preoccupied with earning money," they'll respond, "Were you poorer than Hillel?"

**It's** said about Hillel HaZaken that every day he would work and earn one coin. Half he would give to the guard of the Beit Midrash to let him in, and the other half he would use to buy food for his family.

**One** Friday, he didn't find work to earn a wage, and the guard of the Beit Midrash didn't allow him to enter. He wasn't ready to give in. With great vigor, he climbed to the roof of the Beit Midrash and sat at the edge of the skylight to hear the words of Torah from the mouths of Shemaya and Avtalyon, the great sages of the time.

**Then**, snow started to fall, and Hillel's body slowly became covered, not feeling a thing...

**The** next day, at dawn, Shemaya said to Avtalyon, "Avtalyon, every day at this hour, the Beit Midrash is lit from the sunlight, but today it's dark. Is it perhaps a cloudy day?" They lifted their eyes, and to their dismay, they saw the image of a man in the skylight.

**They** quickly ascended to the roof and started to clear the

## Parashat Chayei Sarah - Where's Your Wife ?

snow. They found Hillel covered in five feet of snow! In the end, they succeeded in saving his life.

**And** so, they'll say to them in heaven, "If Hillel, with all the difficulties of his immense poverty, was able to set time for Torah study, you could've as well!"

**If** they say, "I was wealthy and preoccupied with my possessions," they'll respond, "Were you wealthier than Rabbi Elazar?"

**It's** said about Rabbi Elazar ben Charsum that his father left him an inheritance of one thousand villages on land and another one thousand ships at sea. Nevertheless, he didn't let the wealth worry or distract him. Every day he would take a jug of flour on his shoulder and walk from city to city and from country to country to learn Torah.

**If** they say, "I was good-looking and preoccupied with my evil inclination," they'll respond,

"Were you more good-looking than Yosef?"

**It's** said about Yosef HaTzaddik that every day, Potiphar's wife would seduce him with words. Moreover, the clothes that she wore to entice him in the morning, she didn't wear them for him in the evening. The clothes that she wore for him in the evening, she didn't wear for him in the morning of the next day. One day, she said to him, "Just give up already!" He said to her, "No way!"

**We** find that Hillel HaZaken obligates the poor, Rabbi Elazar ben Charsum obligates the rich, and Yosef HaTzaddik obligates the wicked!

**From** the words of the Gemara, we learn that although every person during their lifetime experiences many tests, there are three main tests... the test of poverty, the test of wealth, and the test of guarding your *kedusha*...

**Now**, let's move on to Sarah Imeinu...

## Where's Your Wife ?

**In** the year 1958 from the creation of the world, Sarah

Imeinu was born. When she was fifteen years old, she married



Avraham Avinu, and after seventy-four years of marriage, Avraham Avinu was commanded regarding the *brit milah*.

**As** is known, on the third day after the *brit*, the pain increases, a lot. And yet, despite this, Avraham Avinu continued in his holy way and sat at the entrance of his tent and looked for guests...

**Hashem** called for three of His angels, Michael, Gavriel, and Rafael, and said to them, I have a mission for you. Go to Avraham and tell him, "At this time next year, Sarah, your wife, will have a son" (Bereshit 18:10).

**The** angels clothed themselves in human bodies that looked like Arabs and landed near Avraham's tent...

**Avraham** Avinu ran towards them and brought them to his tent. In record time, a tablecloth was laid, glasses of cold drinks were poured, and steaming butter cookies were served...

**Meanwhile**, in the kitchen, the chefs were working on preparing the main course...

**Then**, the angels turned to Avraham and asked him, "Where is Sarah, your wife?" (Bereshit 18:9). Rashi explains that the angels knew where Sarah was, rather they asked only to praise her modesty in order to endear her to her husband.<sup>6</sup>

**Because** the angels wanted to endear Sarah to her husband, and they knew that *mesirut nefesh* for Hashem was the most important

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...**Wellspring of Wisdom**...

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**6. The** greatest danger to married life is routine! When life is conducted in the same way, day after day, and the days join into months and years, one "merits" apathy and boredom, and this eventually destroys married life...

**Therefore**, we must constantly look for ways to freshen up and enliven life. The first thing we need to do in order to

achieve this is to observe the mitzvah of counting the days of purity... This brings wonderful renewal.

**In** addition to that, we should look for other ways to renew married life, and here, the angels wanted to spark renewal, to endear Sarah to her husband. Thus, they asked him, "Where is she?"

Parashat Chayei Sarah - Combined Trials

thing to Avraham, they turned to him and said, “Avraham! You’re blessed that you merited such a righteous wife like Sarah! A wife who stood strong through all possible tests. You’re blessed that you merited a true *eshet chayil*, a truly G-d fearing woman who serves Hashem at all times!

Both during times of prosperity and times of poverty, and stands firm against the temptations of the *yetzer*...

**The** angels hinted at all this through the word, “אֵינָהּ” (where) which is an acronym for אֶלְעָזָר (Elazar ben Charsum), יוֹסֵף (Yosef HaTzaddik), הִלֵּל (Hillel HaZaken)...<sup>7</sup>

### Combined Trials

**Avraham** Avinu was seventy-five years old when he was commanded, “Go from your land, from your birthplace, and from your father’s house to the land that I will show you” (Bereshit 12:1).

**Avraham** and his wife, Sarah, set out together. After an arduous journey, they arrived in Eretz Israel. When they approached a bakery and wanted to buy bread, the baker charged an astronomical amount.

**Avraham** Avinu said in astonishment, “With that much money, I can buy the entire bakery!”

**The** baker replied, “Are you new to town?! Don’t you know that there’s a severe famine in the entire region?”

**The** problem was that at the time, Avraham Avinu had no money at all... Thus, he was forced to leave Eretz Israel and look for food elsewhere...

**Although** we don’t have exact details, it seems that they didn’t escape the feeling of hunger either...

**Avraham** and Sarah then arrived at the Egyptian border, and the guards beheld Sarah’s beauty. They said to each other, “What’s she doing here?! She should be the wife of Paraoh, the king of Egypt!”

**Without** asking questions, they ordered the royal carriage, coated in gold and diamonds, and placed Sarah in it.

**With** the squealing of the horses, the carriage stopped at the entrance to the royal garden surrounding the palace, and the march towards the palace began...

**Beautiful** flowers of all colors, enchanting scents, stunning animals, peacocks with beautiful feathers, parrots, songbirds, etc. Through thick bars could be seen lions and cheetahs, leopards, and tigers. Between the branches of the trees, monkeys were seen jumping cheerfully...

**They** stopped at a magnificently carved door studded with gold and diamonds and waited for permission to enter. And when they received it, they entered...

**The** beauty was breathtaking...

**Then** she stood before Paraoth, the king of Egypt, a conquering,

authoritative personality radiating infinite power and strength. He fixed his steel-gray eyes on her and observed...

**Paraoth** then said to her, “If you marry me, you’ll be a queen in the full sense. You’ll possess all kinds of marvelous jewelry. You’ll enjoy the honor of kings, luxurious clothes, and abundant food...”

**At** that moment, entrancing aromas of royal delicacies rose from the palace kitchen, tantalizing smells of middle eastern cuisine...

**Although** Sarah Imeinu was in great poverty and distress, and after a long voyage, the severe feelings of hunger flooded her empty stomach, and though she was just a regular person without any important status, she stood the test bravely and kept her sanctity...<sup>8</sup>

**The** next day, Paraoth surrendered and sent Avraham and Sarah away in honor and with a lot of money! At once, Sarah Imeinu became rich...

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*~ Wellspring of Wisdom ~*

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**8. The** Midrash (Vayikra Rabbah 32:5) marvels at the magnitude of Sarah’s test, saying that the one day that she spent in

the presence of Paraoth was equal to the test of Yosef HaTzaddik in the presence of Potiphar’s wife for an entire year!

**From** that time until the end of her life, Sarah Imeinu lived in great wealth. Although one of the outcomes of money is to impede the heart and mind and to lead a person to pursue worldly desires, Sarah Imeinu heroically withstood the test and preserved her *kedusha* and modesty, her purity, and her simplicity...

**In** addition to all three of these tests, Sarah experienced other waves of sorrow and trials as well... the anguish of infertility, the distress of Hagar and her son Ishmael, and more...

**When** she was ninety years old, she was tested in matters of holiness once again. Avimelech, king of the Philistines, said to her, “Marry me, and I’ll make you a powerful queen...”

**But** Sarah withstood this test too...

**At** the end of her life, she merited to leave the world wholly pure and clean! Without any blemish!

**Rashi** interpreted the first verse in our parasha, “The life of Sarah consisted of one hundred years, twenty years, and seven years. These were the years of Sarah’s life” (Bereshit 23:1), as follows...

**“The** life of Sarah consisted of one hundred years, twenty years, and seven years” – The reason the word “years” is written at every period is to tell you that each period is explained in and of itself. At the age of one hundred, she was as a woman of twenty in regard to sin, for just as at the age of twenty she never sinned, since she had not reached the age of being subject to punishment, so too, when she was one hundred years old, she was sinless. And when she was twenty, she was as beautiful as when she was seven.

**“These** were the years of Sarah’s life” – The word “years” is repeated to indicate that they all passed by equally good... Her entire life, she was as happy as she was when she was seven...

## Speaking of Emuna

**Rashi's** words, "they all passed by equally good," need clarification...

**How** can it be that she felt only goodness her entire life? After all, during her lifetime, she suffered many terrible ordeals. She went through many hardships which words can't describe, and only at the end of her life, at the age of one hundred, after she had banished Hagar and Ishmael, did she finally live a life of happiness and contentment...

**Our** holy Torah is true and accurate in every respect! If it testifies that this was the case, then it must have been so. Sarah Imeinu never felt sorrow for even one-thousandth of a second in her entire life!!!

**Before** we explain how this is possible, a little introduction...

**There** are 150 chapters in the book of Tehillim, and every chapter has immense sanctity concealed within it.

**However**, there are two very unique chapters in the book. The first is chapter 100, beginning with the verse, "A psalm of thanksgiving. Let all the earth shout with joy to Hashem" (Tehillim 100:1), and the second is chapter 20, beginning with the verses, "For the conductor, a psalm of David. Hashem shall answer you on a day of trouble; may the name of Elokei Yaakov strengthen you" (Tehillim 20:1-2).

**Now** we can answer our question...

**Rashi's** intention in the words "equally good" was to say that the days of her life weren't good in and of themselves, rather in her eyes, they were equally good, meaning that she received them with love and joy, and as far as she was concerned, they were good years, feeling no sorrow throughout them at all.

**Rabbi** Yeshayahu Akiva Krishevsky writes...<sup>9</sup> I once heard

**Parashat Chayei Sarah - Speaking of Emuna**

a wonderful *maamar* from the Rebbe of Chakova about *chazal's* homiletic interpretation of “the age of 100 as the age of 20.” It’s well known that when someone is overcome by trouble and distress, they begin to cry out in prayer to Hashem that He save them from their suffering. At that time, they aren’t engaged in singing and praising. Rather only when they receive their salvation do they change their tone of voice and begin singing praises and giving thanks to Hashem for the miracles and wonders that He did for them.

**But** the way of the tzaddikim is that even in times of trouble, they don’t associate with the feeling of sorrow or grief, rather they turn their hearts to praising and thanking Hashem because they know the absolute truth that nothing bad descends from Hashem, only pure goodness, mercy, and kindness.

**This** is what *chazal* said about Sarah Imeinu! When she was 100 years old, an allusion to chapter 100 of Tehillim, which says, “A psalm of thanksgiving. Let all the earth shout with joy to Hashem... Give thanks to Him,

bless His Name. For Hashem is good. His kindness is forever, and His faithfulness extends from generation to generation.” That is, she was filled with the revelation of endless mercy and kindness. And when she was 20 years old, an allusion to chapter 20 of Tehillim, which says, “Hashem shall answer you on a day of trouble,” meaning that she was in a state of sorrow and anguish. At all times, she received everything equally good, as if they were open kindnesses.

**But** how can someone reach such a level that they accept everything that happens to them in the same manner, whether good or “bad,” and all the sufferings and difficulties that come upon them be in their eyes as open kindness and mercy?

**The** answer is, only when we constantly reiterate to ourselves words of *emuna* and *bitachon* that Hashem alone performed all the deeds from the creation of the world until now, He performs all the deeds and events that are now occurring in the world, and He will perform all the acts and

events that will be until the end of all generations, and all this whether on the large, worldly scale, or the small, private scale, including the minute details of everyday happenings of every person, will we reach that level.

**When** we repeat these words of *emuna* and *bitachon*, again and again, only then will that *emuna* be fixed in the depths of our hearts, and that sure knowledge won't depart from

our souls even for a moment. Just as Rebbe Aharon of Karlin was accustomed to interpret the verse, "I believed, when I spoke," (Tehillim 116:10) – that through constantly speaking words of *emuna* and *bitachon*, one will merit attaining true *emuna* and wholeheartedly rely on Hashem.

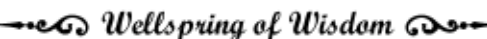
**And** when Sarah Imeinu passed away, Avraham came to eulogize her...

### Sara Imeinu

**HaRav** Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l writes<sup>10</sup> that at the beginning of our parasha, the Torah tells us about the passing of Sarah Imeinu, the founder of our holy nation, and of Avraham's coming, "to mourn Sarah and to weep for her (וְלִבְכֹתָהּ)" (Bereshit 23:2). Interestingly, the letter ך in the word "וְלִבְכֹתָהּ" (and to weep for her), is written in the Torah with a smaller letter than the other letters.

**Rabbi** Ovadia Yosef zt"l explains that the Torah comes to hint to us that Avraham Avinu

didn't cry excessively over the passing of Sarah Imeinu. Instead, he wept a little. This was because he witnessed first-hand the remarkable life of kindness and good deeds that she embodied during her 127 years in this world. He then saw by *ruach hakodesh* the immense reward Hashem has waiting for her in the world to come. Thus, there was only reason to rejoice, to join in her joy, over all that she had merited, and there was certainly no reason to weep excessively.



10. Imrei Noam (Parashat Chayei Sarah, Maamar 1).

**According** to the Midrash,<sup>11</sup> the eulogy Avraham Avinu delivered on Sarah's passing was the famous verses of *Eshet Chayil* found at the end of Mishlei. The Midrash explains how each verse was fulfilled in Sarah Imeinu.

**Although** these verses were written in the book of Mishlei by Shlomo HaMelech, it wasn't Shlomo who composed them, but rather, it was Avraham Avinu who first said them in his praise of Sarah Imeinu. Shlomo HaMelech merited attaining them with *ruach hakodesh*, and he then preserved them for all future generations in his book of Mishlei.

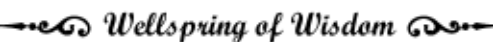
**We'll** focus on one verse, "She seeks wool and linen" (Mishlei 31:13). The Midrash explains this verse by saying that Sarah Imeinu sought, with all her might, to separate Itzchak Avinu (wool) and Ishmael (linen).

**We've** become familiar already with wool and linen from parashat Bereshit, where the Torah tells us about Cain and Hevel's

offering to Hashem. With regards to Cain's offering, it says, "And Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering to Hashem" (Bereshit 4:3). Rashi explains that Cain brought flax seed (which is used to make linen) as his offering. Regarding Hevel's offering, it says, "Hevel also brought from the firstborn of his sheep" (Bereshit 4:4), and of course, sheep have wool. We can conclude that Cain represents the aspect of linen, whereas Hevel represents wool.

**Similarly**, Itzchak Avinu, who emulated Hevel's righteous ways, also represents clean and white wool, the aspect of Hevel. Whereas Ishmael followed in Cain's evil ways, just as Cain murdered his brother, so too did Ishmael seek to kill his brother Itzchak. Thus, he, too, represents linen, the aspect of Cain.

**The** previous parasha recounts how "Sarah saw that the son of Hagar, the Egyptian, who she had borne to Avraham, was playing" (Bereshit 21:9). The Midrash<sup>12</sup>



11. Midrash Tanchuma (Chayei Sarah, 4).

12. Bereshit Rabbah 53:11.



teaches that the word “playing” refers to a few matters. That he openly engaged in immorality. He would search for married women and violate them. He was steeped in idol worship, as he would build altars, catch locusts, and sacrifice them upon it. And he was engaged in bloodshed. Ishmael would take a bow and arrow and shoot it, aiming at Itzchak, while pretending to be playing.

**Sarah**, concerned about the purity and sanctity of Itzchak’s education and out of fear that he may learn from Ishmael’s evil ways, immediately told her husband, Avraham, “Cast away this maidservant and her son, for the son of this maidservant will not share in the inheritance with my son Itzchak” (Bereshit 21:10).

**From** this, we learn that the primary virtue and praise of a woman is measured by her *mesirut* to her precious children’s education. Ensuring that they walk in the way of our holy Torah and that they not graze in “foreign fields”

and be influenced by their bad deeds.

**Since** fathers are usually not at home most of the day, and it’s the mothers who care for their children, they are entrusted with a most sacred task... to keep an eye on their children’s actions, to pay attention to whom they associate with and who their friends are.

**We** must guard every step that our dear children take and know at all times where they are and with whom they interact with. It’s forbidden for you to be content when your child says, “I’m going to a friend.” We need to know precisely where they’re going and when they’ll return in order to protect them from falling into undesirable places. Just as it’s forbidden for a guard to fall asleep while on duty, so too, every parent must be very alert to everything their children are doing at every moment of the day.

**A** child’s friends have an enormous influence on them. The Rambam writes<sup>13</sup> that by nature,

a person's character and actions are influenced by their friends and colleagues. We have to think twice and even three times about who our children associate with and before allowing them to go to their homes. This is what Shlomo HaMelech meant when he said, "He who walks with the wise will become wise, while one who associates with fools will suffer" (Mishlei 13:20).

**Praiseworthy** and blessed are those precious mothers who follow in the footsteps of Sarah Imeinu, giving themselves over with *mesirut nefesh* for the sacred upbringing of their children. Blessed are the mothers who are home when their children return from school and welcome them with love and affection, genuinely

interested in everything that happened to them throughout their day and extend every effort to help them with whatever they need...

**It's** impossible to describe in words the magnitude of the reward that these mothers will receive in heaven. In the merit of their outstanding effort in raising their children, Hashem will grant them to see the fruit of their labor, in fulfillment of the verse, "All who see them shall recognize that they are the seedling blessed by Hashem" (Yeshayahu 61:9).

**This** is the first point we learn from the education of Sarah Imeinu, to keep our children away from bad acquaintances.

**Now**, for a few more points...

### The Foundation of Education

**Our** parasha deals with several issues. Among them, finding a wife for Itzchak, which occupies a very central part of the parasha, the passing of Avraham Avinu, and the succession of Ishmael's descendants.

**There** are 105 verses in our parasha, of which only the first two

verses speak of Sarah, and another 18 verses deal with the purchasing of the *Maarat HaMachpelah* (Cave of the Patriarchs). The other 85 verse deal with other matters !

**Every** person with common sense has to ask themselves... Why is the parasha named after Sarah? After all, she takes up

only a very minimal portion of the parasha?!

**Moreover**, why is it called “Chayei Sarah” when it deals with her passing?

**The** answer to this is simple...

**Sarah** Imeinu’s main purpose in life was to bring up holy children in the world... loyal servants of Hashem. All her life, she prepared herself for that moment when she would have a son, and she would be able to raise him in the proper way.

**If** we want to know if we were successful in raising our children, we must observe how the child looks after they grow up and continue on their own. If, even then, they continue on the same path, then it’s a sign that the foundations we educated

them with have been well rooted within them.

**Since** most of the parasha revolves around Itzchak Avinu at the age of 40, and even then, the results of his mother’s (Sarah) upbringing are clearly visible, then we can say that Sarah didn’t die. Her spirit and upbringing still live in the heart and soul of her only son, Itzchak!

**That’s** why the parasha is called “Chayei Sarah” – not regarding the past, but the present. Sarah is still alive!

**We** find no details about the way Sarah engrained the values and morals of the Torah in her son’s heart... However, *chazal* reveal to us the infrastructure of everything, the preparation of the soil before harvesting the blessed crop that will soon grow...

## The Four Virtues

**The** Midrash says<sup>14</sup> that all the days that Sarah was alive, a cloud hung over the entrance of her tent, the doors were wide

open, there was a blessing in her dough, and a candle would burn continuously from Shabbat night to Shabbat night.

**Parashat Chayei Sarah - A Lit Candle – Observing Shabbat**

**Here**, *chazal* revealed to us Sarah's *avodah*...

A candle burning from Shabbat to Shabbat teaches us about Sarah's *avodah* in observing Shabbat Kodesh, both in keeping from desecrating it *chas ve'shalom*, and in honoring it properly.

A blessing in her dough teaches us that Sarah was careful about the sanctity of foods, making sure everything was as kosher as possible.

**A Lit Candle – Observing Shabbat**

**The** candle that was lit from Shabbat to Shabbat teaches us that Sarah guarded the sanctity of Shabbat, without desecrating it and without making any mistakes. In this merit, she was given heavenly protection –

”כִּי אֲשַׁמְרָהּ שְׁבֻת אֶל יְשַׁמְרֵנִי”

(If I guard the Shabbat, Hashem will protect me).

A person's protection depends on their observance of Shabbat,

A cloud hanging over the entrance of her tent teaches us about her observing the mitzvah of family purity.

**The** doors being wide open teaches us about her guarding the sanctity of her thoughts, that even though she was engaged in kindness, helping other women, as *chazal* say,<sup>15</sup> “Sarah converted the women,” nevertheless her thoughts weren't blemished even by a hairsbreadth!

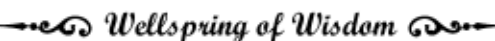
We'll explain...

and a person's livelihood depends on them eating the three Shabbat meals<sup>16</sup> (according to Halacha).

**But**, if *chas ve'shalom*, the Shabbat isn't kept, all the spiritual foundations of the home are shaken, and the results are not long in coming...

We'll explain...

**Shabbat** morning. Yossi feels like going to the beach. He



15. Bereshit Rabbah 39:14.

16. See Zohar Parashat Yitro 88a.

hadn't gone to the beach all week, he didn't have enough time, and his poor children didn't enjoy their break enough either, and what about *Oneg Shabbat*? ! He got up, loaded his whole family into the new van, and lest they go hungry, he also took the barbecue with him...

**They** arrived at the beach and found a quiet spot. Yossi lit the barbecue, the smell of the charcoal wafting. He laid out the sausages and lamb chops and patiently waited for them to be grilled...

**They** ate, had their fill, and went down to wade their feet in the waters of the sea... The day came to an end, and Yossi merited fulfilling the verse, "Don't look upon me that I'm dark skinned, for the sun has tanned me" (Shir HaShirim 1:6). They got in the van and returned home...

**On** the way back, he noticed sadness on his wife's face, "My dear wife, why are you sad?"

**"I'm** a little scared. We desecrated Shabbat. We lit a fire. We drove in the car..." she replied.

**Yossi** responded, "Listen, Shabbat is a day of rest. Everyone rests as they see fit. There's one whose rest is to drive and relax at the beach..."

**Yossi** didn't know, didn't feel, that he had just started a war against Hashem!

**The** Rambam rules<sup>18</sup> that Shabbat and idolatry are each weighted against all the other mitzvot of the Torah. Shabbat is the sign between Hashem and us, forever. Anyone who desecrates Shabbat in public is like an idolater. Both of them are considered complete gentiles.

**Thus**, the prophet praises and says, "Praiseworthy is the man who does this, and the person who holds fast to it; who guards the Shabbat against desecrating it" (Yeshayahu 56:2).

**Anyone** who keeps Shabbat according to Halacha and honors it and delights in it according to their ability, it's explained in Kabbalah that their reward in this world is greater than the reward that is waiting for them in the world to come, as it says, "Then you will delight in Hashem, and I will mount you upon the heights of the earth, and I will give you the heritage of your father Yaakov, for the mouth of Hashem has spoken" (Yeshayahu 58:14).

**Therefore**, every person should make their greatest effort in keeping the Shabbat and be extremely careful from desecrating it because the sin of desecrating the Shabbat is very severe and nearly excludes a person from Am Israel, *chas ve'shalom*.

**In** order to truly know what's forbidden and what's permitted on Shabbat, and to be able to keep it properly, we must memorize the Halachot of Shabbat well and repeat them over and over again,

because, without this, it's almost impossible for a person to be saved from desecrating Shabbat.

**When** a Jew merits observing Shabbat properly, the atmosphere in their home is sanctified, and the children grow up properly with holiness, purity, and joy...

**But**, even after a Jew has had the privilege of strengthening their Shabbat observance, they shouldn't be satisfied with that. Rather, they should seek to influence their friends and family to keep the holy Shabbat as well. This is the aspect of, "מוסיפין מחול על קדש" (We add from the mundane to the holy)<sup>19</sup> – meaning that thanks to them, other Jews who used to behave on Shabbat as they do on weekdays, now observe and sanctify it! Thus, the mundane has become holy!

**In** the merit of more and more Jews who keep Shabbat according to Halacha, we'll merit "A day that is entirely Shabbat," with the complete redemption soon in our days, amen!

## A Hanging Cloud – Family Purity

A cloud hung continuously over Sarah's tent. This hints to a cloud that (when appearing to the tzaddikim) expresses the manifestation of the Shechina.

**As** we find throughout all those forty years that Am Israel walked the desert, seven clouds accompanied them in all their journeys. Six clouds enclosed them like a box, and one cloud went before them. For there in the desert, under the leadership of Moshe Rabbeinu, Am Israel merited being surrounded by the Holy Shechina.

**The** reason that Sarah merited that the cloud permanently hung over her tent was due to her modesty and strictness in observing all the laws of family purity.

**The** cloud hints to modesty, to family purity – the woman's special mitzvah. A woman who is meticulous in fulfilling her mitzvot with joy and out of a feeling of true happiness that she merits fulfilling the will of Hashem merits the manifestation of the Shechina in her home.

**Nevertheless**, it's clear that it's impossible to observe the mitzvot without knowing the Halacha. What a person learns before getting married isn't enough. Both the man and woman have to go back and learn these laws several times. A couple who wants the children born to them to be holy, pure, and have the best future possible, should invest considerably in learning the laws of family purity.

**In** these matters, there's no need to be stringent or lenient. One needs to know what's permitted and what's not. Stringencies are another level. But first things first, one needs to know well the primary laws and customs.

**Today**, Baruch Hashem, there's a lot of awareness of family purity. There's no city that doesn't have several excellent rabbi's who are very knowledgeable in Halacha, and there's no city that doesn't have several good rebbetzins who are very knowledgeable in these matters.

**Parashat Chayei Sarah - A Hanging Cloud – Family Purity**

**Also**, a woman should always study with a rebbetzin and a man with a rabbi.

**The** cloud hung over the tent – the Shechina always rested in the home. Why? Because there was never a mistake regarding Sarah. There was not even one mistake. She knew exactly how to keep boundaries.

**But** on the other hand, a home where the matter of family purity is weak – sometimes keeping, sometimes not, sometimes partially keeping, only on these days, and on those less, only certain things, this yes and this no... The cloud leaves the tent. The Shechina departs the home. Then, the blessing disappears, and one's livelihood is affected...

**If** the couple has *yirat shamayim*, they'll say,

"חָטְאוּנוּ, עָוִינוּ, פָּשְׁעָנוּ"

(We've sinned, we've erred, we've transgressed).

**and** look for where they can improve. If they're foolish, they'll say, "It's from the *ayin hara*

(evil eye) of the neighbors. He has the eye of Bilam! And his wife... Bilam is nothing compared to her!"

**Such** talk not only doesn't bring them salvation, but deepens the damage. Like someone who enters a swamp with their car and hits the gas in the hope of getting out, but instead, they sink even more.

**One** needs to make sure that the Shechina rests in their home. When the Shechina manifests, one merits a true Jewish home... Inner peace, inner joy, a good eye about the other, loyalty between the spouses, priorities, correct values... In such homes, money will never lack.

**This** is what Rava said to the residents of Mechoza, "Honor your wives so that you will become wealthy"<sup>20</sup> – Honor your wife, and there will always be an abundance in your home.

**The** word "honor" can be interpreted in several ways... that



the woman knows that she's the center of her husband's world, that he has a constant listening ear, and that he always has the strength to contain her heart and soul. Such a woman will never make a mistake, and *chas ve'shalom*, will never set her eyes on another. Such a woman will have such faithful *mesirut nefesh* only for her husband.

**In** addition to this, a man who honors his wife keeps the right boundaries in the right places. He will never cross boundaries under any circumstances because he's

acquainted very well with the concept called "human dignity." He also won't set his eyes where he shouldn't, and he won't mess with things that shouldn't be messed with. He knows how to manage everything at the right time and in the right way.

**All** this we learned from our holy ancestors and at the top of them all – Sarah Imeinu, the first mother of the world, the first mother who established Am Israel for generations – in the merit of her holiness and purity.

### **Blessing in the Dough – Sanctity of Foods**

**The** blessing in the dough alludes to the *kashrut* of the food. Today, this issue is relatively easier than in the past. You can find almost all foods with *mehadrin* kosher supervision.

**When** someone is meticulous in eating only kosher foods and saying the proper blessing before and after eating (slowly and with intention) out of awe, love, and gratitude to Hashem, they're body and soul become very

purified, and with consistency, they'll truly begin to feel this...

**Although**, we should know that there are malicious people who forge kosher certificates. Even if there's a shiny certificate hanging on the wall, it doesn't necessarily mean that what they sell is kosher... Therefore, we need to be very careful before buying.

**The** first thing is to check whether the rabbi who signed the certificate is a real person or not

and whether he's actually the guy in the back cooking your "kosher" meal (as we've seen such incidents with our own eyes several times).

**In** the last year of HaRav Yoram Michael Abargel's life, he told us that once, someone managed to smuggle a hundred tons of non-kosher meat from the occupied territories. This is what he told us...

**This** morning, a police officer from one of the border crossings came here (to his Beit Midrash) in a storm of emotions. I asked him, "Why are you so upset?" Too which he replied, "Today I stopped a truck that was transporting sand, and after conducting an inspection, we discovered under the sand dozens of tons of meat from the occupied territories! After an investigation, the truck driver revealed to us that the meat was intended for restaurants in Tel Aviv..."

**A** few years ago, a close friend, who worked as a kosher supervisor in a certain restaurant, told me that one night, he simply couldn't sleep, which wasn't usual

for him. He didn't sleep much, but when he did sleep, it was deep. That night, he felt something weird, and at two in the morning, he decided to get up, wash his hands, and get in his car to drive to the restaurant where he worked.

**He** drove to the back parking lot, and he noticed that the kitchen was light on. He was surprised because he remembered very well that he was the last to leave the restaurant and turned off all the lights. He approached the restaurant and suddenly saw the owner unloading meat. He went to the freezer and saw someone sticking holographic stamps with kosher symbols... He prevented a serious error that could've been very unfortunate at the last moment...

**In** this case, it was a *yirei shamayim mashgiach* who was summoned by heaven to the restaurant. But unfortunately, we've heard of other cases that ended differently... That's why we need to be careful.

**A** child who eats non-kosher foods will ultimately be insensitive to anything spiritual,

to anything holy. Their hearts will become like concrete. They'll be number one in sports, in math, etc., but in anything related to Torah and *yirat shamayim*, their hearts will be sealed.

**On** the other hand, when someone is meticulous in eating only kosher foods, they merit holy, pure children that will light up the world with their Torah and good deeds...

### Four Directions – Sanctity of Thought

**The** *avodah* of Avraham Avinu was to bring about the *tikkun* for the sin of heresy and to elevate the entire world to true *emuna*.

**This** *avodah* was also assigned to his wife Sarah (since Avraham was the reincarnation of Adam HaRishon,<sup>21</sup> and Sarah was the reincarnation of Chava).<sup>22</sup>

**The** Midrash says<sup>23</sup> that Avraham would convert the men, and Sarah would convert the women.

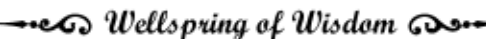
**Sarah** would teach lessons in *emuna*, sometimes in groups and sometimes individually, and naturally, when a rebbetzin sits with

women who practice idolatry and speaks with them, she can't escape from hearing hair-raising stories...

**Despite** this, Sarah Imeinu completely kept her sanctity of thought and let it be in control at all times!

**From** the time a woman gets married, she must know that the main part and center of her world and life is her husband and her home... Everything else is secondary.

**A** woman must know that although before her marriage, the world and helping others were at the forefront of her mind, she must know that now after



21. Tikkunei Zohar 102a.

22. Sefer HaLikutim (Shoftim, 15).

23. Bereshit Rabbah 39:14.

her marriage, priorities change. Now, the center of her world is her husband and her home, and everything else is secondary.

**“All** honor of the king’s daughter is within” (Tehillim 45:14). From now on, she should set in her mind that with every load of laundry that she washes at home and in every task needed to keep the house running, she fulfills a mission no less important than the mission of a doctor who heals others. Only that the doctor deals with bodies, and she deals with souls. She builds the souls of her home, of her husband, of her children, and of herself.

**But** if the home becomes secondary, because her “career” is number one and shopping and all kinds of outings and activities take its place, it’s very difficult for such a home to succeed. It’s like a body without a soul, and the soul of a home is a woman. A woman who, *chas ve’shalom*, fulfills the verse, “Sometimes outside, sometimes in the streets - she lurks at every corner” (Mishlei 7:12) – the whole world knows her – There’s no way

that there will be peace in her home, if there will even stay a home to have peace in...

**At** times, circumstances require that both parents work, and sometimes even a little beyond that. But that shouldn’t detract from a woman’s knowledge that her home is at the center, her husband, her sons, and her daughters are the main thing, and that’s her entire world. They’ll forever be number one.

**And** even if, Baruch Hashem, she was blessed and has the ability to also contribute to helping others, to help out a couple more girls in school, to assist a few more young women to get on the right path, to help the world, may Hashem bless her lot! But this is only on the condition that she doesn’t detract from the importance of her home. Such a woman, even when she’s at work, must always be available for her husband and children. Her heart is always at home. Such a woman is blessed, and truly blessed is her lot!

**Sarah** Imeinu knew this secret. Before everything, she was an *eshet chayil*. Only then, during her free time, she converted the women...

**Even** though she was concerned about and cared for them, she was able to maintain the sanctity of her thoughts.

**And** one shouldn't be surprised how she managed to hear so much "filth" and yet kept her sanctity of thought.

**The** Baal Shem Tov says, "Where a person's thoughts are, there they are!" If one's thoughts are constantly in holy and pure places, then even when they hear such things, those words don't stick to them...

**In** contrast, there are women who can be at home all day, and yet their minds and hearts wander all day in malls and shopping centers. A woman like

that should know she, all of her – is in a place of filth!

**Someone** who thinks about garbage, at that moment, is immersed in a pool of garbage, and in contrast, someone who thinks about good things is in a good place.

**Someone** who properly guards the purity of their thoughts merits an infinite abundance of *kedusha* being drawn down on them through that purity. In contrast, when someone thinks impure and forbidden thoughts...

**Therefore,** a sacred responsibility falls upon every couple to always try to sanctify their thoughts. The purity of the thoughts of a couple draws down new powers into their home, a spirit of purity unto their children, protection from all kinds of spiritual and physical troubles, and it is the key to everything.

### Rivka's Test

**At** the age of 127, Sarah passed away. From then on, her blessings departed, the Shechina

departed, the cloud that hung above the tent departed, and the candle went out...

**Parashat Chayei Sarah - The Pathway...**

**Sarah** was the backbone and foundation of her home. As soon as she passed away, darkness descended.

**Her** son, Itzchak, didn't know how to continue his life without the great light of his *tzadeket* mother.

**Three** years passed after Sarah's death, and then Itzchak received a marriage proposal. Itzchak decided, "I'll test Rivka. If she passes, I'll know that she's the successor of my mother, Sarah!"

**Itzchak** brought Rivka to his mother's tent, and suddenly, the candle lit! The huge bowl of dough became filled again, and the dough spilled onto the entire counter! A white, pure cloud

descended from the sky and hung over the tent!

**Itzchak** was full of excitement. "He took Rivka as his wife, and he loved her. Itzchak was then consoled for the loss of his mother" (Bereshit 24:67).

**The** light that disappeared, that departed – returned! And it returned in all its glory! And this time, even stronger and with new vigor. He married her and was happier than ever...

**Only** then, when the Shechina is resting in a home and when the foundations are in place, it's possible to continue the formation of Am Israel, it's possible to draw down the soul of Yaakov Avinu to the world...

**Shabbat Shalom!**

*The Pathway...*

1. The primary virtue and praise of a woman is measured by her *mesirut* to her precious children's education. Ensuring that they walk in the way of our holy Torah and that they not graze in "foreign fields" and be influenced by their bad deeds. Since fathers are usually not at home most of the day,

and it's the mothers who care for their children, they are entrusted with this sacred task of keeping an eye on their children's actions, to pay attention to whom they associate with and who their friends are.

2. We must guard every step that our children take and know at all times

### *The Pathway...*

where they are and with whom they interact with. It's forbidden for you to be content when your child says, "I'm going to a friend." We need to know precisely where they're going and when they'll return in order to protect them from falling into undesirable places. Just as it's forbidden for a guard to fall asleep while on duty, so too, every parent must be very alert to everything their children are doing at every moment of the day.

3. A child's friends have an enormous influence on them. The Rambam writes that by nature, a person's character and actions are influenced by their friends and colleagues. We have to think twice and even three times about who our children associate with and before allowing them to go to their homes. This is what Shlomo HaMelech meant when he said, "He who walks with the wise will become wise, while one who associates with fools will suffer" (Mishlei 13:20).

4. Praiseworthy and blessed are those precious mothers who follow in the footsteps of Sarah Imeinu, giving themselves over with *mesirut nefesh* for the sacred upbringing of their children. Blessed are the mothers who are home when their children return from school and welcome them with love and affection, genuinely interested in everything that happened to them throughout their day and extend every effort to help them with whatever they need...

5. A man must always honor his wife. The word "honor" can be interpreted in several ways... that the woman knows that she's the center of her husband's world, that he has a constant listening ear, and that he always has the strength to contain her heart and soul. Such a woman will never make a mistake, and *chas ve'shalom*, will never set her eyes on another. Such a woman will have such faithful *mesirut nefesh* only for her husband.

6. In addition to this, a man who honors his wife keeps the right boundaries in the right places. He will never cross boundaries under any circumstances because he's acquainted very well with the concept called "human dignity." He also won't set his eyes where he shouldn't, and he won't mess with things that shouldn't be messed with. He knows how to manage everything at the right time and in the right way.

7. From the time a woman gets married, she must know that the main part and center of her world and life is her husband and her home... Everything else is secondary. A woman must know that although before her marriage, the world and helping others were at the forefront of her mind, she must know that now after her marriage, priorities change. Now, the center of her world is her husband and her home, and everything else is secondary.

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# Shabbat Times Chayei Sarah

25<sup>th</sup> of Cheshvan , 5783

City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	4:17 pm	5:19 pm	5:47 pm
Miami	5:12 pm	6:07 pm	6:43 pm
Los Angeles	4:29 pm	5:27 pm	6:00 pm
Montreal	4:03 pm	5:08 pm	5:33 pm
Toronto	4:31 pm	5:35 pm	6:01 pm
London	3:52 pm	5:01 pm	5:19 pm
Jerusalem	4:23 pm	5:13 pm	5:46 pm
Tel Aviv	4:19 pm	5:09 pm	5:41 pm
Haifa	4:17 pm	5:06 pm	5:39 pm
Be'er Sheva	4:21 pm	5:10 pm	5:43 pm

### Pathways to the Heart

*From the Words of  
HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l*

*The Torah was given to Moshe  
Rabbeinu in the merit of his  
holiness and humility, and it is  
passed on from generation to  
generation by the truly righteous.*

*A home of Torah needs to be  
supported by a true tzaddik  
whose teachings are the teachings  
Hashem and whose mind has  
been purified by Torah Lishma.  
A home like this has secure and  
stable foundations.*



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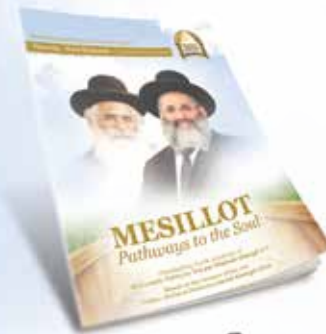
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