

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON CHAYEI SARA - 5759

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weekly-halacha@torah.org Weekly-halacha for 5759 Selected Halachos
Relating to Parshas Chayei Sara By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt A discussion of
Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

DAVENING WAS INSTITUTED BY OUR FATHERS (Berachos 26b)
CONFLICT: INDIVIDUAL VS. CONGREGATIONAL CUSTOMS

Which customs should one follow when davening in a shul where the nusach and customs are different from his own? While many people are faced with this issue only occasionally, others must contend with it on a daily basis. Often, the only available [or the most accessible] shul is one that davens a different nusach from one's own. It is difficult and uncomfortable for a person who is accustomed to daven in a certain way to suddenly daven in a nusach with which he is unfamiliar. In addition, it is a general rule that one should not deviate from the customs handed down to him by his parents and grandparents. But the halachah may require one to daven according to the nusach of the congregation where he finds himself regardless of personal considerations. Let us, therefore, examine the sources before resolving these conflicting demands.

A terse command in Parashas Re'eh(1), Lo siggededu, is interpreted by the Sages as Lo sa'asu agudos agudos, do not splinter off into separate groups that perform mitzvos and serve Hashem in different, somewhat conflicting ways. The Talmud discusses the nature of this prohibition. Abayei maintains that Lo siggededu applies when two different batei dinim in one city issue conflicting rulings. This makes the one Torah that was received at Sinai appear as if it were "two Torahs"(2) and causes confusion and discord³. Rava, however, does not object to different batei dinim - even in the same city - issuing contradictory rulings, since it is within the very nature of the Torah that different rulings will be rendered by different schools of thought, as Beis Shamai and Beis Hillel did for many years. In Rava's opinion, the prohibition of Lo siggededu is meant to discourage one beis din from rendering a split decision. For the reasons stated above, the Torah did not want different factions of one beis din to issue conflicting opinions, giving people a choice of which ruling to follow.

We find in halachic literature that Lo siggededu applies even to deviations from mere custom, not only from prohibitions and rulings of a beis din. Rama(4), for instance, rules that during the Sefirah mourning period observed between Pesach and Shevuous, all members of a community should follow the same custom and observe the mourning restrictions during the same time period. Chayei Adam(5) rules that that in a minyan reciting Tachanun, the practice of nefilas apayim should be done in a uniform manner, all using either the right or the left arm. This application of Lo siggededu is hotly debated by the poskim. Many are of the opinion that it does not apply in these situations at all. They base their reasoning on some of the following arguments: Lo siggededu applies only when a scholar instructs his followers to deviate from local custom(6); it applies only to prohibitions, not to mere customs(7); minor differences, such as different nuschaos, are not significant enough to invoke Lo siggededu(8); it concerns only different actions, not different words(9). But other poskim take a more stringent approach; in their view any deviation from the accepted custom, as minor as it may seem, may constitute Lo siggededu(10). While the Mishnah Berurah does not discuss the particular question of nuschaos, his rulings on related issues(11) point to a stringent view on this subject.

In pre-war Europe, Lo siggededu was much more of an issue than it is today. Most communities, especially in the small towns and villages, had only one Rav and one local custom, and individuals who practiced their own customs while disregarding local practice may have possibly transgressed Lo siggededu. But nowadays when there are many shuls and Rabbis in every city each following ancestral tradition, the situation is similar to the case of two

batei dinim in one city where Lo siggededu does not apply(12) [according to Rava's opinion(13)]. Still, it is possible that within the confines of a single congregation, e.g., when an individual davens in a nusach which is different from that of the congregation's, Lo siggededu may still apply.

But even in situations where the Biblical prohibition of Lo siggededu does not apply, we still find(14) an additional exhortation - this one established by Rabbinical edict - which calls for uniformity within the same congregation: Le'olam al yeshaneh adam mi-pnei ha-machlokes - One should never deviate [from local custom] because it leads to discord. As the Vilna Gaon warned(15): "Differences in customs lead to differences of the hearts." Practicing different customs, even minor ones, could lead to strife and discord.

Harav M. Feinstein was asked numerous times for his opinion on this matter. For reasons which are not completely clear, he did not always give the same response. Basically, though, he was unsure if the Biblical prohibition of Lo siggededu applied to the question of different nuschaos - but the Rabbinical edict against deviating from local custom was definitely relevant. Usually, he advised that the local custom be strictly upheld, unless the individual could keep his practiced undetected by others in the shul. The following is a digest of the guidelines that Harav Feinstein offered on this subject and its specific applications [see footnotes for the opinions of some other poskim]:

Any part of davening, e.g., Shemoneh Esrei, which is normally recited in an undertone may be recited in one's own nusach(16). Preferably, Pesukei d'Zimrah and Birchos Kerias Shema should be recited according to the nusach of the minyan, since they are sometimes recited out loud. If, however, it is difficult for one to change from his own nusach, they may be recited in one's own nusach provided that they are said in an undertone(17).

Kedushah or any other part of davening which requires a minyan should be recited according to the nusach of the minyan, even if it is recited in an undertone(18).

Viduy and the Thirteen Midos should be recited with the congregation before Tachanun, even if one's own custom is not to do so(19).

One may recite Viduy in an undertone in a shul that does not recite Viduy, but one may not strike his chest as he usually does. The Thirteen Midos cannot be recited, since a minyan is required to recite them(20).

A sheliach tzibbur must always daven according to the nusach of the tzibbur, even while reciting his own silent Shemoneh Esrei(21).

On Pesach night, one should recite Hallel with the tzibbur even if his custom is not to do so; he may not leave shul to avoid reciting Hallel. If he can avoid reciting the blessing without it being noticeable he should do so; otherwise he should recite the blessing as well(22).

One who follows the view of the poskim that yire'u eineinu is not recited at the nightly Ma'ariv, need not recite it with the congregation if the people around him will not notice his omission(23).

If the officers and members of a shul do not mind, there is no halachic objection to having men who put on tefillin on Chol ha-Moed and men who do not, daven in the same shul(24).

FOOTNOTES: 1 Devarim 14:1. 2 Rashi, Sukah 44a; Yevamos 13b. 3 Rambam, Avodah Zarah, 12:14. 4 O.C. 493:2. See Magen Avraham 6 and Pri Megadim for an elaboration. 5 32:33, quoted by Mishnah Berurah 131:6. 6 Keren Orah, Yavamos 13b [see also Tosfos Rid, ibid.]; Da'as Torah O.C. 493:3. 7 See Meishiv Davar 17. 8 See Eishel Avraham O.C. 51; Teshuvos u'Vacharta b'Chayim O.C. 24; Kaf ha-Chayim 661:2 (concerning different customs in a sukkah). See also Aruch ha-Shulchan 651:22 (concerning different customs of shaking the lulav). 9 Salmas Chayim 22-23. 10 Pe'as ha-Shulchan 3:14. See also Chayei Adam 32:33 mentioned above. 11 See 31:8; 131:6; 493:16; 624:16; 661:2. 12 See Sha'arei Teshuvah 693:1; Beir Halachah 468:4; Igros Moshe O.C. 1:159; E.H. 1:59; Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Yom Tov Sheini K'hilchaso, pg. 179). 13 Generally, the halachah is like Rava when he disagrees with Abbaye. The ruling of the Rambam concerning this issue, however, is unclear and subject to much debate by the later commentators. 14 Pesachim 51b, and quoted in O.C. 468:4. See Avnei Nezer O.C. 424:7. 15 Ma'asei Rav, She'iltos, 90. 16 Igros Moshe O.C. 2:23. This is also the opinion of most poskim with the exception of the Pe'as ha-Shulchan who rules that one should always daven according to the nusach of the tzibbur. Harav S.Z. Auerbach writes that it is not our practice to do so (Yom Tov Sheini K'hilchaso, pg. 180). 17 Igros Moshe O.C. 2:23. [In other Responsa, however, Harav Feinstein required that Pesukei d'Zimrah and Birchos Kerias Shema be said according to the nusach of the tzibbur; see O.C. 2:104.] Harav S.Y. Elyashiv is quoted (Tefillah K'hilchasa, pg. 92) as permitting these tefillos to be recited according to one's own nusach. 18 Igros Moshe O.C. 2:23. This is also the opinion of other poskim, see Meishiv Davar 17 and Minchas Yitzchak 7:1. [In a later ruling (O.C. 5:35-5), however, Harav Feinstein writes that this not required.] 19 Igros Moshe O.C. 3:89. 20 Igros Moshe O.C. 4:34. 21 Igros Moshe O.C. 2:29. Other poskim disagree; see Shoel u'Meishiv 3 1-247 and She'irim Metzuyanim B'halachah 26:3. Harav S.Y. Elyashiv is quoted (Yom Tov Sheini K'hilchaso, pg. 131; Avnei Yashfei 1:14) as ruling like this view. 22 Igros Moshe O.C. 2:94. It is reported, however, that the Brisker Rav left the shul when the congregation said Hallel (Hagadas Mo'adim u'Zemanim). 23 Igros Moshe Y.D. 3:96-8. If,

however, he generally omits yire'u eineinu only on Motzaei Shabbos, then he must recite it along with the tzibbur; *ibid.* 24 Igros Moshe O.C. 5:24-5.

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drasha@torah.org Drasha Volume 5 Issue 5 Parshas Chayei Sarah Soul Trustee

When Avraham seeks a wife for his son Yitzchak, he called no one other than his trusted loyal servant, Eliezer. Eliezer was one of the primary soldiers, aiding Avraham during his battle to rescue Lot. Eliezer was considered by Avraham to be his heir apparent until Hashem informed him of the forthcoming birth of Yitzchak. Eliezer was nicknamed the one who drew and watered from his master's Torah. Simply put, the Torah constantly informs us that Eliezer was Avraham's right-hand-man. Before sending Eliezer, the Torah tells us that "Avraham told his servant, the elder of his household, who was in complete charge of every one of Avraham's possessions, to swear that he would not take a girl from Canaan for Yitzchak. Eliezer swore in the name of Hashem, the Master of the heaven and the earth" (cf. Genesis 24:3). Avraham instructed his most trusted aid to get the proper shidach (mate) for Yitzchak. He was to go back to Avraham's hometown. The girl had to come from the right family. She must have been raised in the proper environment. And Avraham warned Eliezer that Yitzchak was not to leave the Land of Canaan. His charge was forceful. He made his trusted servant swear. He used strong language. "Be careful - watch out! Lest you bring my son there!" (Genesis 24:6) The Torah's reiteration of Eliezer's domestic position in this context is perplexing. Isn't the juxtaposition - the glorifying of Eliezer's position as "the elder of his household, who was in complete charge of every one of Avraham's possessions" contradictory with the severe scrutiny and pressure that Avraham placed on him in reference to Yitzchak's matrimonial requirements? If Avraham trusted Eliezer for his entire worldly possessions, why did he make him swear in this instance? And if he had to swear in regard to Yitzchak, then why define him here as "the elder of his household, who was in complete charge of every one of Avraham's possessions"? Isn't the fact that he had to swear, obvious evidence that he, in fact, was not in charge?

Rabbi Yisrael Lipkin of Salant, the founder of the mussar movement, once stayed at an inn. The inn was quite crowded and the innkeeper realized that he was low on meat. Seeing a distinguished and pious-looking Jew with a beard, the innkeeper approached Reb Yisrael. "Are you perhaps a shochet? You see, I am running low on meat and I must slaughter a cow." Reb Yisrael was taken aback. "I would love to help," he stammered, "but unfortunately I am not a ritual slaughterer." The next morning Rabbi Lipkin approached the innkeeper. "I have a tremendous business opportunity. If you were to invest a few hundred rubles with me, I can guarantee a nice return." The man looked quizzically at the rabbi. "Reb Yid," he stammered. "I hardly know you! How do you expect me to invest with you? Give me a few references, and as many days, and let me check out the deal in its entirety. Then we can meet and I'll make my decision." "Aha!" Exclaimed the great mussar luminary. "Just yesterday, you were about to trust me with the ritual slaughter of your cow. You were going to feed you guests with that meat based on the appearance of my frock and beard. Nevertheless, you would not invest a few rubles on those same grounds. Shouldn't one treat his spiritual skepticism on the same level as his financial uncertainties?"

The Be'er Mayim Chayim explains: the Torah specifically states, in the context of Avraham's admonitions, that Eliezer "was the elder of Avraham's household, who was in complete charge of every one of Avraham's possessions." When buying stocks and bonds, when investing in real estate, when purchasing appliances or furniture, Eliezer had free reign. Yet when it came to Yitzchak's future that esteem was not enough. Avraham made

Eliezer swear in the name of Hashem that he would bring a suitable wife for Yitzchak. Avraham's concern for spirituality and his future were by no means on the same level as those he had for his mundane needs. True, Eliezer was in complete charge of every one of Avraham's possessions. But when it came to Avraham's future, when it came to spiritual decisions, even Eliezer was suspect. For when it comes to your spiritual needs, your sole trustee can never become your soul trustee. Good Shabbos, Rabbi Mordechai

Kamenetzky

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mj-ravtorah@shamash.org Chayeisara.98 Shiur HaRav Soloveichik ZT"L on Parshas Chayei Sarah (Shiur date: sometime in the 1970's)

Insights into the Parsha of Chayei Sarah are ipso facto insights into the covenant community. The Parsha is a biography of the life of Sarah and it is a pattern and paradigm for Jewish History as well as the future of Jewish destiny.

There were 2 covenants between Hashem and Bnai Yisrael. The first was the Patriarchal Covenant between Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and Hashem. The second was the Sinaitic Covenant between Hashem and Moshe and (again) between Moshe and Bnai Yisrael, which included the obligation to repeat the covenant before the death of Moshe and upon entry to Eretz Yisrael. The focus of the Sinaitic covenant is the commitment to keep the 613 Mitzvos. Our commitment to the Sinaitic covenant can be compared to the contractual obligation through which one can accept upon himself indebtedness to another. Similarly, Bnai Yisrael have accepted the obligation to keep the Mitzvos of Hashem.

The Rav wanted to understand the nature of the Patriarchal Covenant. On the surface it is an enigmatic covenant, with only one commandment contained within it, circumcision. What did this covenant accomplish, what does it demand from the Jew and what is its relevance to us today?

The Torah mentions the Patriarchal Covenant when it first mentions the Sinaitic Covenant in Parshas Bechukosai, referring to it as Bris Rishonim. The dual covenant notion is expressed in Mussaf on Rosh Hashonah, as both are mentioned in the Beracha of Zichronos. Apparently the 2 covenants are complementary. The Patriarchal Covenant is the background and pre-requisite for the establishment of the Sinaitic Covenant. The Sinaitic Covenant relates to human deed and performance. It teaches us how to act in all situations. The Patriarchal Covenant addresses human personality and character as a whole, the essence of the I-awareness, teaching man who he should be. The Sinaitic Covenant teaches man how to act and what to do as a member of the Covenantal Community. The Patriarchal Covenant tells the Jew how to feel as a member of the Covenantal Community, and how to experience being a Jew. It is a wonderful experience to be a Jew, unfortunately not everyone knows how to appreciate this experience.

The covenant was reached with 2 people: man and woman. From the time of creation and their first rendezvous, Hashem addressed Himself to both man and woman. Both were created together, only together were they called Adam and endowed with the greatest of gifts, their humanity of Tzelem Elokim. Human reality is a dual one, that at creation transcended the physiological sex differentiation and extended into the metaphysical level. The very statement of creation, where man and woman were created together and in the image of Hashem, contradicts the perverse notion that Judaism ascribes an inferior status to women. At the same time, it also cuts away the false notion that there is no metaphysical distinction between man and woman. Man and woman differ existentially, but they do not differ in terms of values (axiological existence), as both share the image of God, their humanity. Hashem created a dual existence, man and woman, as they complement each other. The two existential beings together represent one perfect destiny.

This complementary nature and single destiny is the basis of the covenant

community. We can see this through the relationship of Abraham and Sarah. Both were equal parties to the covenant with Hashem. Indeed, at times we might be tempted to think that Sarah was the central figure (see Rashi on the verse telling Abraham to listen to the voice of Sarah, that Abraham was on a lower level, in terms of prophecy, than Sarah was).

The definition of the Covenantal Community as requiring both Sarah and Abraham, man and woman, is also seen at the end of Parshas Lech Lecha. Abraham asks that Hashem pass the covenant on to Ishmael, resigning himself to remaining childless with Sarah. Hashem answers that Sarah, his wife, will bear him a child to be called Isaac, and this child, the product of both Sarah and Abraham, will be the recipient of the covenant. Ishmael cannot be the recipient of the covenant, because he represented only one side of the Covenantal Community, Abraham, but not Sarah.

Another example is where Hashem appears to Abraham and changes his name to indicate he is now the father of all the nations of the world. Hashem informs him that the change is effective from the time of notification. Later, when Hashem informs Abraham that Sarah's name has been changed, it is mentioned in terms of having previously been changed. Since the Covenantal Community required both Abraham and Sarah, it was impossible to change the name of one without automatically affecting the name of the other. Sarah's name was changed automatically at the same time Abraham's name was changed. Hashem later simply informs Abraham that her name has already been changed as well. Hence their names were changed and they were selected together, and only together, to achieve covenantal sanctity.

The Torah describes the connection between them in various stories. After Sarah dies, Abraham realizes that with the death of the mother of the Covenantal Community, his mission as father of the Covenantal Community is drawing to a close. All that is left for him is to act out the last part and walk of the historical stage, making way for others to pick up the mantle of father and mother of the Covenantal Community. Abraham survived Sarah by 38 years. Yet, after the death of Sarah the Torah tells us just 2 stories involving Abraham [in relation to his role as father of the Covenantal Community]. The first is the purchase of the burial plot for Sarah, the Mearas Hamachpelah, the second is the story of finding a wife for Isaac. Indeed, the latter story is more important in the context of the relationship of Rebecca and Isaac as the next generation of the Covenantal Community. The Torah says that Isaac brought Rebecca into the tent of his mother, and she filled the gap left by the death of the mother for of the Covenantal Community. Once again there would be a father and a mother for the Covenantal Community. Abraham has now moved off the center stage for the remaining 38 years of his life, as he has entrusted the destiny of the Covenantal Community to Isaac and Rebecca.

The Torah says that Abraham came to eulogize Sarah and to cry for her. Human nature would dictate that one would cry first and then eulogize. Crying is not mourning, rather it is the spontaneous release of tension to a (usually destructive) surprise. On the other hand, a eulogy is a rational, intellectual performance that requires clarity of mind to evaluate and appraise the loss, and to discover how reality has changed. Abraham suffered a double loss with the death of Sarah. The first was the loss of his wife and partner, who went through thick and thin with him and together they met the challenges of life. No one understands the bleak loneliness and destructive nostalgia felt by a surviving mate. Abraham felt that his whole world had been dislocated. The second sense of loss was the uncertainty of the fate of the Covenantal Community. Abraham knew the secret that the covenant was entrusted to both a man and a woman. Now that the mother of the Covenantal Community had died, would Hashem trust him to continue? Perhaps he had sinned and was no longer worthy to be the father of the Covenantal Community. The first thing that Abraham did was to appraise Sarah's contributions to the growth of the Covenantal Community, and to put in place a plan for how to continue without her. After all, Abraham was not alone in this loss. As the Rambam writes, that they had brought tens of thousands of followers into the covenant. These people also felt the loss of the mother of their community. First Abraham had to orient himself to the loss of Sarah in terms of the community. Only afterwards could he break

down and cry over his loss as an individual.

What was Sarah's assigned role within the Covenantal Community? What kind of a person was she? The first (enigmatic) verse (and Rashi) in the Parsha answers these questions. The repetition of the word Shana after each digit in the number 127 is strange, as well as the clause at the end of the verse, Shnay Chayei Sarah. Rashi quotes the Midrash that the reason for the repetition is to emphasize that when she was 100 she was free of sin as a woman of 20, and as a woman of 20 she was as beautiful as a girl of 7. [Parenthetically, the Rav noted 2 questions here. We know that a woman is punishable from the age of 12, so why was she compared to a woman of 20 in terms of purity from sin, which implies that a woman of 20 is not liable for her actions. Also, we know that the prime age of beauty for a woman is not 7, but closer to 20. The Rav noted that while he does not like to alter texts, he felt that this Midrash would read better if it was inverted to say that she was as beautiful at the age of 100 as a woman of 20 and as free from sin as a young girl of 7.]

What kind of a life did she lead? What was the essence and substance of her personality? The Torah answers these questions by stressing that indeed Sarah was a unique individual. She was a 7 year old innocent child, with the beauty of a 20 year old girl at the age of 100. Rashi stresses that even though she was ripe in years (100), she was still a young vivacious girl. The whole biography of Sarah can be summed up in these three closing words of the first verse, Shnay Chayei Sarah.

The Rav mentioned that he would associate the opening Rashi in Chayei Sarah with (Lhavdil) the story of Peter Pan. Peter Pan refused to grow up and take his place in life. However, Sarah did not suffer from a stymied, under developed personality. She was a bold, daring and responsible person who, miraculously, did not allow the maturity of the adult in her to squash her inherent enthusiasm of an innocent child. She grew older and wiser with the passage of time, yet in times of need or crisis the young girl in her came to the fore. Rashi is telling us that the three time periods of a member of the Covenantal Community, childhood, young adulthood and mature older person can coexist simultaneously; they are not mutually exclusive. The paradoxical confluence of all three in an individual is a sign of greatness necessary for leadership in the Covenantal Community.

There are 4 basic Mitzvos in the life of the Jew. Study of Torah, Faith in Hashem, Prayer and the Love of Hashem. One studies Torah with his intellect. Not everyone is endowed with the capabilities necessary to study Torah. Intellectual endeavors are esoteric in nature. The more capable one is, the more time he has for study and the pursuit of knowledge and the more knowledge he accumulates. A wise person is called a Zaken because intellectual wealth is usually associated with someone who has devoted much time to study, which is typically an older person. Maturity is required for the study of Torah. The immature mind cannot grasp the concepts of study.

Torah scholarship, indeed scholarship in any field, requires intellectual curiosity and skepticism. The effective student questions everything that the teacher offers him, attempting to refute the lesson in order to achieve a clearer understanding of the topic. The Gemara (Baba Metziah 84a) relates the story that after the passing of Resh Lakish, the Rabbis sent Rabbi Elazar Ben Pedas to take his place as the study partner of Rav Yochanan. After a while he was sent back. Rav Yochanan explained that Resh Lakish would argue with him and force him to support his positions and opinions. Rabbi Elazar Ben Pedas would agree with Rav Yochanan and would not challenge him intellectually. Rav Yochanan had no use for a passive study partner. Some people become vindictive with old age. However old age that is accompanied with a discriminating skepticism is a very important quality for the study of Torah.

When it comes to prayer, skepticism is an undesirable quality. [The Rav noted that the Jewish people discovered prayer, taught the world how to pray, and unfortunately many of us have forgotten how to pray. The Rav emphasized the importance of the Siddur in the life of the Jew. He related the story of the first Lubavitcher Rebbe, the Baal Hatanya, who as a young boy in White Russia reached the age where he had to choose where to continue his studies. He was presented with 2 choices. The first, Vilna, was the center

and pinnacle of Talmudic study. The second was the town of Mezeritch, where the Maggid of Mezeritch concentrated on the study of prayer and the Siddur. The Baal Hatanya was an accomplished Talmudist already, but he felt that he knew nothing about the Siddur and how to pray, so he decided to go to Mezeritch.] The adult, with the skeptical mind does not know how to surrender himself in prayer. He does not know how to generate the mood of despair, helplessness, worthlessness necessary for prayer. If a man does not feel himself completely dependant on Hashem for his needs, he may not pray. The closer one comes to Hashem the more he realizes how insignificant he truly is. The Rambam speaks of man's movement towards Hashem and with the sudden realization of how worthless he is, that he is someone here today and gone tomorrow, he recoils from Hashem. The Rambam refers to this experience as Yiras Hashem. This experience is the spring well of prayer.

The sophisticated intellectual cannot pray. Only a child, the naive person who is capable of complete faith and trust in Hashem can pray. An infant has unlimited trust in his mother. King David expresses this concept when he says that he puts his faith in Hashem like the weaned child's faith in his mother. A child instinctively feels protected in the arms of his mother, sensing that the mother would never allow any harm to come to him and would do anything to make his life more enjoyable. A child has absolute faith in his mother because she has never lied to or disappointed him. This same absolute, child-like faith in Hashem is required for prayer. In theological terms, faith cannot be applied to man. Faith is absolute, complete reliance without reservation that he will never be betrayed or disappointed. To have faith in man would contradict the statement of King David, Kol Haadam Kozev, all men lie. One can have confidence in man, but it is blasphemous to have faith in man.

Faith requires of the faithful the willingness from time to time to suspend his judgement, to surrender body and mind to Hashem. Faith sometimes requires irrational actions without providing an explanation for the action. The ability to surrender judgement requires the child within to help the intellectual adult surrender himself to God and pray.

The ability to suspend judgement was required of Abraham at the Akeida. Hashem had decreed that it was prohibited to murder another human being, including the abomination of human sacrifice. One who commits such an act is punishable with death. Abraham had spent much of his adult life engaging the priests who practiced human sacrifice in debate, attempting to convince them to stop this horrible practice, a practice that contradicts the very essence of humanity. Abraham built altars, but he never sacrificed anything on them, with the exception of the ram on Mount Moriah after the Akeida. Suddenly, Hashem commands Abraham to offer a human sacrifice. In this context, it was not important who he was to sacrifice, but rather that he was to offer a human sacrifice at all. Abraham could have protested to Hashem, how could he do the very thing that he had devoted so much of his energy and time to discredit and prevent! How could he suspend his humanity and offer a human sacrifice? Abraham never protested to Hashem. He suspended his judgement and humanity in order to fulfill the will of Hashem. Abraham acted as a child, showing complete faith in Hashem.

Hashem does not ask us to make the same leap of faith that He required of Abraham. All we are asked to do is to accept the Torah and the Mitzvos without trying to rationalize each Mitzvah. We have no right to rationalize the Mitzvos, our obligation is to accept and follow, and like Abraham show our complete faith in Hashem. It takes a great deal of Chutzpa to rationalize the Mitzvos, to make them fit in our view and mood of the minute.

The Rambam writes that Abraham deduced that Hashem was the guiding force behind creation. The Rambam describes Abraham as an intellectual giant who overcame the foolishness of the idolaters that surrounded him to recognize Hashem. Yet this intellectual giant was capable of suspending his judgement when he had to faithfully serve Hashem. Abraham was also the first person to pray to Hashem, because he was the first who was capable of suspending his intellect to express his complete reliance and child-like faith in Hashem. He was able to view himself as dust and ashes when praying to Hashem. He acted the same way when called to perform the Akeida. The

Torah teaches us that man must be ready to act as both an adult and child, and to switch between them at a moments notice.

Both Abraham and Sarah, the founders of the Covenantal Community, exhibited maturity and child-like behavior when called upon to do so. The Torah expects a member of the Covenantal Community to fight as a young man for his ideals, like Abraham did when called upon to save his nephew. Abraham was at least 75 years old at that time, probably older, yet he acted as a young warrior when it was time to fight and went into battle without hesitation. When Abraham studied the skies of Mesopotamia in search of Hashem he acted as a wise old man. When he prayed, he did so with the complete faith of a young child. And when called upon to fight, he did so as a young and vigorous man.

What is the covenant personality as defined by the patriarchs and matriarchs? One trait is the existential dialectic with which he/she is burdened, having an awareness of greatness as well as helplessness, of courage and self doubt. The 3 fold personality that is so indicative of the Covenantal Community, that of child, youth and old person, is expressed in the opening verse of the Parsha, Shnay Chayei Sarah, the biography of Sarah. These three traits combined to form the essence of the covenant personality as exhibited by the patriarchs and matriarchs.

In addition to the covenant personality, the Patriarchal Covenant has also created a concept of covenant historical destiny that is distinct from historical experience. The covenant bestowed upon Bnay Yisrael a destiny distinct from other historical processes in 2 ways: 1) causal determination and 2) dialectic covenant destiny.

The main distinction between universal historical and covenant dynamics lies in their view of the causality of events. Universal historical dynamics is based on the premise that an event in the present is caused by an event in the past. Event A begets event B. It is based on a mechanical notion of causality. The covenant event should be placed in a different causal context, that of teleology or purposiveness. The covenant dynamic is sustained by the covenant promise and the drive to attain a goal that temporarily lies outside the reach of the community.

Let us examine the relationship between the Jew and Eretz Yisrael. The whole Eretz Yisrael experience, including that of the state and the political pressures that it faces, cannot be explained in normal historical mechanistic terms. Rather it is a covenant event. The commitment of the Jew to the land is not based on events that happened in the past as much as on a promise of a miraculous future when the divine promise will be fulfilled. In covenant history, the future is responsible for the past. Covenant events cannot be explained in terms of normal historical categories. You cannot explain in normal psychological terms the commitment of the Jew to Eretz Yisrael. It is an irrational yet unconditionally strong commitment based on the covenant promise.

The covenant has created a new concept of destiny. The word destiny conveys a notion of destination. The historical experience of the Jew is not based on the point of departure, but rather his destination towards which he is driving. The destination of the Jew is the ultimate eschatological redemption of the universe that will occur with the coming of Moshiach. The covenant is the force behind this destiny.

However, historical destiny can also be characterized by another trait, which is the contradiction of our historical experience. There has never been a period in history where the Jew lived a completely covenant existence. From the beginning of our history, Jews have always lived among non-Jews. Abraham lived among the children of Ches, he dealt with them in economic matters. The modern Jew is certainly entangled and integrated into the general society. Consequently we also share the universal historical experience as well. We have no right to tell society that societal ills like pollution, famine and disease are problems owned by the rest of society. These problems apply to the Covenantal Community as well. The Jew as a member of humanity, as someone endowed with Tzelem Elokim, must contribute his part to the benefit of mankind, regardless of the terrible treatment accorded him throughout the ages. The patriarchs and matriarchs were buried together with Adam and Eve, the parents of all of society, in

order to show that there is no gap between the Jew and the rest of society. There is no contradiction between laws based on human dignity of Tzelem Elokim, and laws based on the sanctity of the Covenantal Community. The Covenantal Community adds additional responsibilities to the Jew beyond those he already has based on his humanity.

The non-Jewish world finds it difficult to understand this duality and therefore view us as an enigmatic people. For example, they view our commitment to Eretz Yisrael as irrational because they do not comprehend the nature of the covenantal commitment that is the foundation upon which this attachment is based. The extra commitment that the Jew has that they do not share or understand creates existential tension between the Jew and non-Jew. Abraham described this tension when he instructed Eliezer and Ishmael to sit here while he and Isaac travel on to another point. The Jew and non-Jew have common cause up to the point of Poh, "here". However the Jew has an additional commitment beyond that of society. He cannot remain "here" as Abraham said. He must go further, to Koh, to fulfill his additional covenantal commitment and destiny. This tension is worth enduring in order to be the maintainers of the destiny and legacy of Abraham.

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From: Jonathan Schwartz[SMTP:jschwartz@ymail.yu.edu]
Subject: Internet Chaburah-- Parshas Chayei Sarah

Prologue: Everywhere we turn today, we seem to encounter many people encouraged by the growing singles scene who attempt to squelch it. Through the efforts of shadchanim, both professional and otherwise, great efforts have been made to improve the lives of young people searching for marital bliss. One could wonder how it could be so difficult for Hakadosh Baruch Hu to match people (See Sotah 2a) if the shadchanim find it fairly simple to match couples together? The famous Maggid, Rabbi Yaakov from Doubno, compared the shadchan to a hammer and a saw. Often, the hammer must bang the sides together or saw certain pieces to make 2 pieces measure up to each other. The hammer or the saw, aware of their powerful work in lining up pieces could take the credit for the power they seem to show in creating the new furniture piece. However, the credit is not due to their efforts alone. It is the human power behind the saw and the hammer that powers and drives the pieces to mesh together, it is the skilled human eye that measures the pieces together and is sure that the pieces will line up.

Simialrly, the shadchan is merely the tool that actually lines the 2 people up together to form their shidduch. It takes the power, knowledge and plain Siyata d'Shmaya to actually complete a true shidduch. This is the reason that Hakadosh Baruch Hu works so hard to create shidduchim. Those selected to serve as guides in his master plan lack the true knowledge of the ultimate power behind their attempts. With that in mind, we turn to this week's chaburah entitled:

Trouble in Paradise?: When HER Parents Say No The Rama (Yoreh Deah 240) quotes the Maharik who tells us that a son is not required to listen to his father who does not like the girl that the son intends on marrying. The Noda B'Yehuda (Tinyanna, Even HaEzer, 45) notes that this Rama applies to a girl whose parents disagree with her choice of mate. The logic behind this position appears in the writings of the Maharik (164) who was asked about a young man who wanted to marry a certain young woman. The young man's father intervened and did not wish his son to marry that girl. The question posed to the Maharik was whether the son had to listen or not. The Maharik responded that the son did not have to listen. He compared this to a situation where a father asks a son to violate a command in the Torah. For, if we command the son to listen to his father, he will have to marry another girl whom he will not love as much which will cause ill will in the home. Not listening to the fire would be keeping to the worlds of the psalmist in Shir Hashirim who notes that large amounts of water cannot squelch the love that exists between the two beloved people in the shir. The Maharik concludes his teshuva by noting that l'fnim mi'shuras hadin would require a son to do

nothing without the will of his parents. If the son can, he should attempt to put out the fire in his heart for his parents. If he cannot, then he should follow his heart.

Thus, according to the Maharik, it seems that the issue of whether one has to listen even l'fnim Mishuras hadin based upon his (the son's) own heart. This is the opinion of the Shevet HaLevi (Rav Vosner (vol. IV, 124) and the Tzitz Eliezer (Vol. 13, 78). The Sdei chemed (Ma'areches Chaf, 147) notes that if a groom is not a fitting shidduch for a daughter, she should listen to her parents. Others do not split the decision between sons and daughters eventhough daughters are not commanded to keep pru u'revu and could technically wait for a shidduch that her parents want. The Maharashdam (Yoreh Deah 95) allowed a son to violate a stipulation in a will not to marry a certain girl provided that she was a proper Jewish girl. He agrees that a young couple cannot raise a proper Jewish home if there is not a proper amount of love between them. Settling, because of parental wishes, will cause great anger in the home and resulting sin. What happens in a situation when there would be great pain to the parents by having the children go through with the marriage? The Netziv (Meishiv Davar 2:50) notes that one cannot marry a girl if his parents tell him that it would shame them too much. The Agudas Eizov (16) disagrees. The Shevet Halevi defends the Netziv's position against that which we have quoted from the Maharik, by noting that the Maharik's case was one in which the son had been accused of improper behavior with a married woman and now the son sought to marry the woman following her divorce. The Maharik still did not object to the match. The Shevet Halevi determines that this is the line that decides the degree of embarrassment to the parent. If their shame is greater, only then does the Netziv hold it would be assur for the child to proceed with the wedding.

Bottom line, a child does not have to listen to the objections of a parent in the marital arena. Still, the general consensus of the poskim is that the parents and the children should work to reach some level of agreement on acceptable matches. In situations of family discord, it is a good idea to seek the advice of an experienced Moreh Ho'ra'ah who can help assist in the formulation of an acceptable agreement to all parties.

Battala News Mazal Tov to Evan Kevelson upon his engagement

ravfrand@torah.org Rabbi Frand on Parshas Chayei Sarah

"RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Chayei Sarah -

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 168, The Laws and Customs of the Hespel.

What About A Back-Up Plan? The pasuk tells us that Avraham sent his trusted servant Eliezer to Avraham's own ancestral home to find a wife for Yitzchak. Avraham instructed Eliezer that "...Under no circumstances are you allowed to take a wife for Yitzchak from the daughters of Canaan..." [Bereshis 24:3]. However, Eliezer raised a logical question: What should he do if the girl does not want to follow him back to Canaan? Eliezer inquired whether in that case, he should take Yitzchak to Paddan Aram. Avraham's reply was "No. Even if she does not want to come here, Yitzchak cannot go there." The question arises; if Yitzchak could not go to Padan Aram and could not marry a girl from Canaan, then what option would Yitzchak have if the girl refused to follow Eliezer to Canaan? How would Yitzchak get married? We can understand Avraham's preference that the girl should come to Yitzchak. But what about a back up plan? What about planning for a "worst case scenario" - in case she refused to come? What would have been with the Jewish people? What would have happened if Yitzchak did not have a wife and children? Avraham's response teaches us an attitude and outlook (hashkafa) towards life. If something cannot be done the way that it is supposed to be done, then it should not be done at all. We have an obligation to live our lives based on Torah. "What is going to be? I do not know what is going to be. I have to do what I know is right; the rest is G-d's responsibility." It is this outlook which we see with Avraham, and which we have seen throughout the ages from the Gedolei Yisroel, the Sages of Israel. We do not compromise. We do not bend the rules. If something can not be done the way it should be done, then we just do not do it! The question "but what will happen now?" -- is not our problem.

The Netziv, the Rosh Yeshiva of the Volozhiner Yeshiva -- the

grandfather of all Yeshivas, provided a classic example of this concept. At approximately the turn of the century, the Russian government wanted to impose a rule that Russian subjects would have to be taught in the Volozhiner Yeshiva. The alternative was that the Yeshiva would be shut down. [I am not trying to draw any parallels to today. We are not talking about the pros or cons of secular education; I am merely trying to bring out a point. We cannot compare Russia circa 1900 to the United States circa 2000.] The Netziv was faced with the question: "Do I permit Russian subjects to be taught in the Volozhiner Yeshiva, or do I close the Yeshiva?" In order to understand the significance of that decision, we must remember that there were no other Yeshivos. Closing the Volozhiner Yeshiva did not mean that the students would switch to others. Volozhin, with its 400 students, was the only Yeshiva in Russia. The Netziv's dilemma was: should he allow Russian subjects to be taught for a couple of hours a day, or should he close the Yeshiva. What did the Netziv do? The Netziv closed the Yeshiva! But -- "what's going to be?" The Netziv responded, "that is G-d's issue. It is His Torah. He knows He wants it learned. It is His problem." The Netziv had to do what was right, despite the ramifications. So the Netziv closed the Yeshiva. At the time when the Netziv made his decision, he did not know what the result would be. In actuality, as a result of closing Volozhin, many other Yeshivos were started across Russia, Poland and beyond. Closing the Yeshiva in Volozhin caused Torah to be spread. The entire Yeshiva movement today can be traced back to that one Yeshiva in Volozhin! But the Netziv did not know what the outcome would be. He did not know "what's going to be," and he did not care. He only knew what was right. This was the approach of Avraham Avinu, and this was the approach of Gedolei Yisroel.

I would like to tell over an incident which I recently heard from Rav Pam, shlit"a (and again I am not trying to bring any parallels to today). Reb Chaim Soloveichik had a son named Rav Velvel Soloveichik, who later became the famous Brisker Rav in Eretz Yisroel. A relative of Reb Chaim once came to him and suggested that Rav Velvel learn the Russian language. The relative said, "Today, to be a Rabbi, one has to know how to speak Russian. It is time for Rav Velvel to learn Russian." To which Reb Chaim responded "So, he won't be a Rabbi." The man persisted, "Well, to be a businessman, it is certainly necessary to know Russian." Reb Chaim responded, "So, he won't be a businessman." So the man said, "Even to be a Rosh Yeshiva today, one must know Russian -- to speak to the students and to the parents." Reb Chaim responded, "So, he won't be a Rosh Yeshiva." Finally the man inquired "If he won't be a Rav and he won't be a businessman and he won't be a Rosh Yeshiva, what will be with him?" Reb Chaim answered, "He will be a poor man who knows Shas by heart!" In other words, "What is going to be? I don't know what is going to be. But I know that I do not want my son Velvel learning Russian." Again, no parallels to today. But the lesson to be learned is that one must do what he feels is right, is in accordance with the Torah, and "let the chips fall where they may". The consequences are G-d's business.

When It Comes To Finding a Mate -- Providence Will Handle It The Medrash [Bereishis Rabbah 60] says that there were four people in history who made improper requests. Three of these people were fortunate, in that even though their request was articulated improperly, G-d answered them kindly. The fourth person received a terrible response. These four people were Eliezer, Kalev, Shaul, and Yiftach. Eliezer said "And it will be the girl that says 'Not only will I give you to drink, but I will give your camels to drink' will be the girl who will marry my master's son." [Bereshis 24:14] The Medrash says that this was not an appropriate way to ask. What if a maidservant had come out and met all of Eliezer's conditions? Fortunately, G-d sent Rivkah. Kalev promised to give his daughter in marriage to the person who would capture the city of Kiryat Sefer [Yehoshua 15:16]. Kalev did not know what kind of person would conquer the city. What if a slave would have conquered the city? Fortunately, Osniel ben Kenaz conquered the city. Shaul promised his daughter to the person who would kill Goliath [Shmuel I 17:25]. Again this was a rash promise, but again G-d was kind and Dovid killed Goliath. However, there was one man whose improper

request resulted in tragedy. Yiftach was praying for success in battle against Ammon. Yiftach said to G-d, "If You deliver Ammon into my hands, the first thing that comes out of my house to greet me, I will offer as a sacrifice..." [Shoftim 11:31] Unfortunately, his daughter was the first to greet him. [According to the commentaries, Yiftach either sacrificed his daughter or sent her away for the rest of her life. Either way, this was a punishment for Yiftach's improper request.] The question can be asked: Eliezer, Kalev, and Shaul also asked improperly. Why were they fortunate and why was Yiftach struck with tragedy? The Beis Av offers a beautiful insight. The Beis Av says that the common denominator of Eliezer, Kalev, and Shaul was that their requests all involved Shidduchim, marriages. When it comes to finding a proper mate, that is one area regarding which a person can legitimately say "G-d -- take care of me!" When it comes to finding a person's life mate, the rule is that this comes from the Hand of G-d [Yalkut Shimoni 117]. Regarding Shidduchim one is allowed to play with Providence and rely on G-d's intervention. Yiftach's pledge had nothing to do with a shidduch. When one utters an irresponsible pledge like that, anything can happen.

I once heard the following from Rav Simcha Zissel Brody, who heard it from the Chazon Ish. The Chazon Ish commented, there are two things that are "as difficult as splitting of the Red Sea" -- a person's livelihood and finding a mate. We all know that a person's livelihood is difficult because Adam received a curse that it should be difficult to bring forth bread from the earth. But, the Chazon Ish asked, why should finding a mate be so hard? The Chazon Ish explained that unfortunately, we live in a time in which we usually do not see the Hand of G-d. However, there is one area where everyone admits that we often can still see it. G-d takes a special interest, and plays a special role in Shidduchim. We all have stories that we feel were 'basherte'. I will just say over my favorite shidduch story. This is a story of a young man who went out looking for a shidduch for a very long time with no success. He went out with his seventy ninth girl. It was a terrible date. He came back upset and broken. He decided to go buy something to eat. He walked into a Kosher hamburger place in Borough Park, sat down at a table and ordered a burger. A woman came up to him and asked, "Are you married?" He responded "No". She said, "I have a shidduch for you." This was a woman completely out of the blue, who had never met him before! Yet he and the girl suggested by that woman are now living happily ever after. This is an example where we see Hashgocha (Divine Providence) -- the Hand of G-d. Here a person can take the liberty and say "Master of the World, take care of me."

Sources and Personalities Netziv -- Rav Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin (1817-1893); Volozhin. Rav Chaim Soloveichik -- (1853-1918); Brisk, Lithuania. Rav Velvel Soloveichik -- (1886-1959); Brisk; Jerusalem. Rav Simcha Zissel Brody -- Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshivas Chevron (Jerusalem). Chazon Ish -- Rav Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz (1878-1953); Bnei Brak.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, Washington twerskyd@aol.com
 Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Yerushalayim dhoffman@torah.org
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Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash (Vbm) Student Summaries of Sichot Delivered by the Roshei Yeshiva PARASHAT CHAYEI SARA SICHA OF HARAV LICHTENSTEIN SHLIT"A

Dedicated by Susan and Jacques Gorlin in commemoration of the third yearzeit of Boris Gorlin, Boruch ben Asher Zelig, A"H, 28 Mar Cheshvan 5759.

"The Speech of the Forefathers' Servants"

Summarized by Rav Eliyahu Blumenzweig

Chazal teach us that "the speech of the servants of the forefathers is more beautiful than the Torah of [the forefathers'] descendants." What is responsible for this? It would seem that this is nothing more than a single instance of Rabbi Yitzchak's general question, which Rashi uses as the opening to his commentary on the Torah: "Surely the Torah should have started only at the point where we are told, 'This month shall be for you the beginning of the months....,' for this is the first mitzva which Benei Yisrael

were commanded. Why, then, did God start with the whole story of what took place 'in the beginning?' The reason is that 'He shall tell the might of His deeds to His nation.'" This means that we have to know what to answer the nations of the world. The Ramban holds that Rabbi Yitzchak's question is meant to achieve more than simply providing a reason for the story of Bereishit. In his opinion, the principle that "the deeds of the fathers foreshadow [those of] the children" does not mean that anything which happened to the forefathers will happen to their descendants as well. Rather, the deeds of the forefathers represent guidelines and instruction to their descendants as to what represents proper behavior.

We find two types of instruction in the Torah. One type is presented in the form of mitzvot, stipulating the various actions which a person must perform or refrain from performing. The second type is embodied in the character of those people whose actions, behavior and way of life is meant to guide us. Sometimes the practical example set by a living character directs and influences us to a much greater extent than the mere codification of that lifestyle in the form of mitzvot. This is particularly true of the mitzvot pertaining to inter-personal relationships, where it is often difficult to lay down precise and accurate guidelines. The Torah does not leave it entirely up to the individual's discretion to decide how to behave towards others, but at the same time we are also not given a complete list of specific instructions regarding every situation which might arise during the course of our lives.

The study of a real, live character, in all its detail, including all his behavior (in every situation, and in moments of crisis and change) as well as the impression and influence which he leaves on those around him, provides one with a complete picture which he can strive to emulate. When faced with the temptation of sin, Yosef - who obviously was well-versed in the prohibitions pertaining to sexual immorality - suddenly saw before him the image of his father who appeared to him and inspired him - and therefore desisted from sin. Rav (one of the Sages of the gemara) or Rebbi (according to a different view) said of himself that he was sharper than his colleagues thanks to his continual sense Rabbi Meir standing behind him. (Eiruvim 13b) This sensing - even only in the realm of the imagination - of personalities of high spiritual stature has the power to guide a person's lifestyle and influence his everyday actions.

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weekly@vjlists.com * TORAH WEEKLY * Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion Parshas Chayei Sarah www.ohr.org.il/tw/5759/Bereishi/chayeisa.htm

When It's a Wrench to Be a Mentch "And Avraham prostrated himself before the members of the council..." (23:12) The way a person behaves when he's sitting alone in front of his TV is not the way he behaves when he's receiving an Academy Award in front of 200 million people or when he is bowing to royalty or shaking hands with the President. How much of the time do we really visualize that we are in the presence of G-d? How often do we think "G-d is watching me now. He knows exactly what I'm thinking. He sees everything I am doing." I don't know how many people do that too often.

Avraham faced ten tests. Most commentators explain that his final and greatest test was the akeida -- G-d's command to bring Avraham's son Yitzchak as a sacrifice. However, Rabbeinu Yona (Avos 5:3) explains that Avraham's tenth test was finding a grave for his wife Sarah. Why was this such a test for Avraham? Why was this the pinnacle of G-d's testing Avraham's mettle? How did finding a grave for Sarah prove that he was worthy to be the progenitor of G-d's representatives in this earthly realm?

Imagine a used-car salesman. With a smile right out of a toothpaste ad which can blind at ten paces, he'll tell you that the jalopy he's leaning on will run for another 50,000 miles at least. When he moves his arm, the car sags like an exhausted mule. Avraham thought he was the legitimate heir to Eretz Yisrael. He assumed that he could bury his beloved wife wherever he chose. However, he has to enter into a haggling match

with Efron which made buying a used car look like dealing with a Rolls-Royce salesman.

Add the emotional upheaval of the akeida, followed directly by the news of Sarah's death, and one could forgive Avraham for treating Efron, the world's prototypical used-car salesman, with the disdain he deserved. But is that how Avraham treated him?

"And Avraham prostrated himself..." Avraham treated Efron like the most honorable of people. He didn't say "I had a bad day! My wife just died! I'm stressed out."

Avraham remembered that Efron, a human being, deserved to be treated like the Image of G-d that he was. Avraham didn't react to Efron according to Efron's level. He behaved as a Jew should. If Avraham had a hard day, why should Efron suffer? Sometimes the little pebbles in life's path trip us up more easily than its giant boulders. A person who understands that life is no more than a giant test will recognize a large test. But how about someone pushing in line in front of us? Will we react with the knowledge that we are G-d's ambassadors to the world? Will we feel that He is watching us, expecting us to bring honor to His name and to the people who bear His name? Sometimes the little annoyances of life are more of a test than the cataclysmic events.

A Jew must be a mentch even when treated in a most unmentchlich way. That's the hallmark of a person who knows that he is standing in the presence of the King. Because we have a hard day at the office, it doesn't mean that we can take it out on our children or our spouse. This can take enormous self-control. It takes a person who has total mastery over himself to always treat every human being, Jew or non-Jew, with dignity.

Avraham's tenth test was really two tests in one. He was under the greatest stress and he was confronted with a person who was somewhat less than a prince. Nevertheless, he accorded him honor. This, the ultimate test, showed that Avraham was fit to be the father of the Jewish People -- G-d's ambassadors.

Sources: Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler, Rabbi Yissachar Frand

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Recommended Reading List Ramban 22:9 Cave of Machpela 24:1 Blessed in all Things 24:64 Rivka's Modesty 25:8 Full of Years Sforno 24:14 Prayer or Divination 24:65 The Awe of Yitzchak 25:8 Avraham's Death

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated 1. Name the four couples buried in Kiryat Arba. 23:2 - Adam and Chava, Avraham and Sara, Yitzchak and Rivka, Yaakov and Leah.

2. What did Sara hear that caused her death? 23:2 - That Yitzchak was almost slaughtered. 3. What title of honor did the B'nei Ches bestow upon Avraham? 23:6 - Prince of G-d. 4. Where was Avraham born? 24:7 - Ur Kasdim. 5. How were Avraham's camels distinguished? 24:10 - They were muzzled, so they wouldn't graze in the fields of others. 6. What is meant by "all the good of his master in his hand?" 24:10 - Eliezer carried a document in which Avraham gave all he owned to Yitzchak so that people would want their daughter to marry him. 7. What special character trait did Eliezer seek when choosing a wife for Yitzchak? 24:14 - He sought someone who excelled in performing acts of kindness. 8. Why did Avraham's servant, Eliezer, run toward Rivka? 24:17 - He saw that the waters of the well rose when she approached. 9. Why did Lavan run to greet Eliezer? 24:29 - Lavan coveted his money. 10. When Lavan told Eliezer that the house was cleared out, what did he remove? 24:31 - Idols. 11. Who did Eliezer want Yitzchak to marry? 24:39 - His own daughter. 12. Aside from Eliezer, to which other people did Rivka offer to give water? 24:44 - To the men who accompanied Eliezer. 13. Lavan answered Eliezer before his father, Besuel, had a chance. What does this indicate about Lavan's character? 24:50 - That he was wicked. 14. What did Rivka mean when she said "I will go?" 24:58

- I will go even if you don't want me to go. 15. What blessing did Rivka's family give her before she departed? 24:60 - That the blessings given to Avraham would continue through her children. 16. Who was Keturah? 25:1 - Hagar. 17. What gift did Avraham give to Yitzchak? 25:5 - The power of blessing. 18. How old was Avraham when he died? 25:7 - One hundred and seventy five years old. 19. For how many years did Yaakov attend the Yeshiva of Ever? 25:17 - Fourteen years. 20. How many times is Eliezer's name mentioned in this week's Parsha? None!

Written and Compiled by Rabbi Reuven Subar General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman Production Design: Eli Ballon Prepared by the Jewish Learning Exchange of Ohr Somayach International 22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103 Jerusalem 91180, Israel Tel: 972-2-581-0315 Fax: 972-2-581-2890 E-Mail: info@ohr.org.il Home Page: http://www.ohr.org.il (C) 1998 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved.

Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash (Vbm) Parashat Hashavua Parashat Chayei Sara

To all Yeshivat Har Etzion Alumni Shalom U-verakha It is with great pleasure that we invite you and your family to participate in the tenth annual YESHIVAT HAR ETZION SHABBATON with HaRav Aharon Lichtenstein shlit"i. This year the shabbaton will be held IY"H on Shabbat Parashat Toldot, November 20-21, in Teaneck, New Jersey. For more information, please contact the NY office, 212-732-4874. We hope to see you all. To the entire Teaneck, NJ community: HaRav Aharon Lichtenstein will be speaking in Teaneck, Friday night November 20th at 8pm, at Congregation Bnai Yeshurun. The topic in English will be "Blessed Shall be the Stringent." The entire community is invited

Dedicated by Susan and Jacques Gorlin in commemoration of the third yearzeit of Boris Gorlin, Boruch ben Asher Zelig, A"H, 28 Mar Cheshvan 5759; On the occasion of the yearzeit of our grandfather Reuven ben Chaim Shabtí Leib (Ralph Raskas) by his grandchildren Rachel and Alan, David, and Jeremy; In honor of the birth of Ariella Chana Etshalom, born 10 Marcheshvan. May HaKadosh Barukh Hu enable her parents Yitzchak (83-84) and Stefanie Etshalom to raise her to a life of Torah, to the Huppah and to a commitment to Ma'asim Tovim.

Sichat Avdei Avot By Rav Yair Kahn

Upon glancing at parashat Chayei Sara, one notices that the account of Eliezer and his quest for a bride for Yitzchak spans the majority of the parasha. One is immediately struck by the length and seemingly unnecessary repetition, so uncharacteristic of biblical narrative. The Torah, which at times seems so stingy and grudging regarding important details, is overly generous with respect to this particular story. This feature is even more pronounced when contrasted with the halakhic sections of the Torah, which are extremely terse. This peculiarity was noticed by our Sages. In fact, Rashi in his commentary quotes the famous midrash: "Rav Acha said: The conversations of the servants of our forefathers are dearer to the Omnipresent than the Torah of their children. After all, the parasha of Eliezer is repeated in the Torah, while many laws can only be derived through subtle hints." In order to attain a greater appreciation of this statement, we must first analyze our parasha, specifically with respect to its verbosity.

Let us begin with the repetition of the story. Why does the Torah relate both the actual encounter between Eliezer and Rivka, as well as Eliezer's retelling of this meeting? It is worth noting that the reference of the midrash to "conversations of the servants," may very possibly refer to the transcription of Eliezer's account. Therefore, we will briefly focus on Eliezer's rendition, and pay specific attention to discrepancies between it and the actual events.

Professor Nechama Leibovitz a"h, did a marvelous job both in pointing out the differences between the two accounts, as well as analyzing the reasons for these discrepancies. I cannot cover all the points noted by her; therefore, I will focus on what I consider the ones which are critical for our purposes.

Eliezer is charged by Avraham to return to his homeland and birthplace ("moladeti") in order to choose a bride for Yitzchak (pasuk 4). Eliezer, on the other hand, relates that he was sent specifically to Avraham's family ("beit avi") to choose a bride (pasuk 38,40). In order to solve this contradiction, the Rashbam interprets "moladeti" as referring to family, and not to birthplace. However, a quick glance at the first pasuk in parashat Lekh Lekha (12:1) reveals the difficulty of this interpretation.

Furthermore, in the original account, Eliezer hands the jewelry to Rivka prior to determining her lineage (22:23), while in Eliezer's account this order is reversed

(22:47). The Ramban suggests that Eliezer lifted the jewelry before questioning Rivka, but gave it to her only after receiving her answer. After all, it would be absurd to transfer the jewels to this girl before determining that she is a viable candidate, from the family of Avraham. (See Rashi's commentary for an alternate solution.)

However, if Eliezer was charged with going specifically to the family of Avraham, it is very difficult to understand why he didn't immediately limit his interview to family members. Why did he originally intend on approaching all the girls in the village at random? Why was he so overwhelmed when he discovered that Rivka was related to Avraham (pasuk 27)? The commentators mentioned above based their interpretations on the assumption that Eliezer retold the events with accuracy. Therefore, it is crucial to smooth over the discrepancies of the two accounts. However, an unbiased reading of the original account of the Torah clearly indicates that Eliezer was not sent to Avraham's family but rather to his homeland. Therefore, he planted himself near the well, and began to interview all the girls of the village. When the first girl successfully passed her interview, he immediately showered her with gifts, even before questioning her lineage. He is subsequently overwhelmed by the surprisingly fortuitous discovery that this girl is in fact Rivka, a descendant of Nachor. Eliezer diplomatically alters the story in order to convince Lavan and Betuel to permit the marriage. Therefore, he claims that he was sent specifically to Avraham's family. Consequently, he is forced to switch the order of events, and claim that the jewels were only given after determining Rivka's family connections. In order for us to appreciate Eliezer's contribution to the story, the Torah must transcribe both the actual events, as well as Eliezer's dialogue with Lavan.

However, I believe that the Torah's lengthy rendition of this story comes to stress a different point. Although impressive, I find it hard to accept that the Torah was so verbose only in order to eternalize Eliezer's sharpness and smoothness as a diplomat. Instead, I will try to show how a careful reading of the parasha reveals an engaging tale of religious commitment, faith and divine providence.

When initially charged by Avraham with the task of finding a bride for Yitzchak, Eliezer is skeptical regarding the success of this mission (pasuk 5). Avraham assures him that with the help of God (literally), he will successfully complete his mission (pasuk 7). With this assurance, armed with the promise of divine assistance, Eliezer faithfully embarks on his journey, with no idea whatsoever, how he will proceed. Even upon reaching his destination, he does not know to whom to turn. How is he to choose the "right girl" out of the hundreds of possible candidates? In his desperation, he lifts his arms in passionate prayer (the force of his supplication is indicated by the "shalshet," pasuk 12). He devises a test that he will use in his interviews which will help him make the right choice.

At this point, we can imagine that Eliezer assumed that he would spend the next few days in the village, until finding a girl who passes the test and is willing to leave everything, move to Canaan, and marry some unknown person. Even if he eventually finds such a girl, can he be certain that this is really Yitzchak's "bashert?"

However, even before completing his prayer, a beautiful girl suddenly appears, with pitcher on her shoulder (pasuk 15). Startled by the coincidence of her immediate arrival, Eliezer races towards her to begin the interview (pasuk 17). To his amazement, the girl passes the test with flying colors (pasuk 19). Stunned by the rapid unfolding of events, Eliezer must ascertain one additional point: will the girl and her father agree to the marriage? Everything hangs in the balance. Was everything that happened mere coincidence, or has the Almighty responded to his prayer? Impatient to find out, Eliezer asks for the girl's father's name (pasuk 23). Upon hearing the astonishing news that the girl is from Avraham's family, Eliezer, overwhelmed with gratitude and awe, prostrates himself before the Almighty (pasuk 26), an act that reflects his awareness of his encounter with Providence ("Hashgacha").

Trembling with excitement, Eliezer follows Rivka to her home. Spurred by a sense of urgency, he insists on telling his story immediately (pasuk 33), stressing the divine nature of his mission. Lavan and Betuel, infected by Eliezer's passion, realize that

Rivka is divinely ordained to be the bride of Yitzchak, and have no choice but to comply (pasuk 50). At this point Eliezer knows that his mission has been crowned with success, his gratitude to Hashem knows no bounds, and once again he prostrates himself before Hashem (pasuk 52).

Summary The covenant between Hashem and the Jewish people is a dual one. It consists of the covenant forged with our forefathers, as well as the Sinaitic covenant. The former is a covenant between Hashem and individuals. The latter was forged with the entire Jewish people. The terms of the covenant of Sinai are the 613 mitzvot. Values and ideals must be formalized and formulated as objective commandments in order to obligate the entire nation. The terms of the "berit avot" are the values and ideals themselves. The lives and experiences of the avot which express deep religious commitment as well as moral awareness and sensitivity. The

"Torah of the children" can be derived from subtle hints. Through painstaking and committed study of the word of Hashem, we use nuances to ascertain the halakha. In fact, human involvement and intelligence, as opposed to divine signals, are preferred regarding halakhic decisions. "Chakham adif mi-navi" (the sage is superior to the prophet). In

contrast, "the conversations of the servant's of our forefathers" relates a tale dealing with real people in real life situations, fraught with challenges and dangers. The "irrelevant" detail is an experience, which reflects a human reaction to actual events. One should accompany Eliezer as he travels the road from skepticism to faith, one should actually feel the pounding of his heart. The singular fondness for "the conversations of the servant," is

because it is a simple human story. It lacks great nature confounding miracles. However, it contains a breathtaking human and religious drama, a drama in which man encounters Hashem within the natural order.

-end

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dafyomi@vjlists.com The Weekly Daf #248 Pesachim 86-92 Parshas Chayei Sarah <http://www.ohr.org.il/yomi/yomi248.htm> ... Mountain, Field and House The Beis Hamikdash of the future, says the Prophet Yishayahu (2:3), will be called the "House of the G-d of Yaakov." Why the G-d of Yaakov and not of Avraham and Yitzchak? Rabbi Elazar explains that Avraham referred to the Beis Hamikdash as a "mountain" (Bereishis 22:14) and Yitzchak called it a "field" (ibid. 24:63). Only Yaakov referred to it as a "house" (ibid. 28:19) and this was the designation favored by Hashem for the Beis Hamikdash to which all the nations will flock in the future.

Maharsha explains this gemara against the background of a midrash about a king who wanted to build a palace and brought three good friends to the intended site. The first said that he remembered when a mountain stood there and the second recalled a field at that spot. When the third said he remembered a palace on that site, the king declared that he would name the palace he was going to build there in honor of the third friend.

The Patriarchs form the blueprint of the history of their descendants. Avraham's reference was to the first Beis Hamikdash which enjoyed the full protection of the Divine Presence like the security provided by a sentry on a mountain, a security which is not enduring and which ended in destruction. Yitzchak's reference was to the second Beis Hamikdash, which lacked some of the sanctity of its predecessor and was therefore less protected, as is a field. Yaakov, however, referred to the Beis Hamikdash which existed before the world was created (Pesachim 54a) which was the model for the third Beis Hamikdash, the Divine palace of the future, which will enjoy both maximum Divine protection and durability like a house. * Pesachim 88a

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daf-insights@shemayisrael.com Insights to the Daf: Pesachim 85-87 INSIGHTS INTO THE DAILY DAF brought to you by Kollel Iyun Hadaf of Yerushalayim Rosh Kollel: Rabbi Mordecai Kornfeld daf@shemayisrael.co.il

Pesachim 85 1) "ASEH DOCHEH LO SA'ASEH" QUESTION: The verse teaches that it is forbidden to break the bone of the Korban Pesach even if one wants to get to the marrow in order to eat it. Had the verse not stated this explicitly, we might have thought that breaking the bone is permitted in such a case, because the Mitzvas Aseh to eat the Pesach is Docheh the Lo Sa'aseh of breaking the bone. Why would we have thought that breaking the bone is permitted for the reason of "Aseh Docheh Lo Sa'aseh?" In order for an Aseh to be Docheh a Lo Sa'aseh, both the Aseh and the Lo Sa'aseh must be done *at the same time* ("b'Idnei"). At the very moment that one fulfills the Aseh he has to be doing the Lo Sa'aseh as well, in order for the Aseh to be Docheh it. If he does the

Lo Sa'aseh now but he will only fulfill the Mitzvas Aseh later, then it is not permitted to transgress the Lo Sa'aseh. For example, if a Kohen has a Nega (a leprosy mark which makes it forbidden for him to perform the Avodah), he may not transgress the Isur of cutting it off ("Ketitzas Baheres") in order to do the Avodah, because when he cuts it off he is not yet doing the Avodah (Shabbos 133b). (TOSFOS, DH k'she'hu Omer -- see also Insights to 35:2(e), 47:3) ANSWERS: (a) The PISKEI TOSFOS (Zevachim 97b, #69) explains that when it is *impossible* to fulfill the Aseh without transgressing the Lo Sa'aseh, then one may transgress the Lo Sa'aseh even before he actually fulfills the Aseh. This is not clear, though, because in the case of the Kohen with a Nega it is also impossible for him to do the Avodah without removing the Nega, and yet he is *not* allowed to cut it off! Perhaps the Piskei Tosfos means that in case of a *type* of Mitzvah which could never be fulfilled unless one does a Lo Sa'aseh, the Aseh is Docheh the Lo Sa'aseh even when the Aseh is not fulfilled at the time the Lo Sa'aseh is done. If the Mitzvah of eating the Pesach applies to the marrow inside the bone, then that Mitzvah could *never* be fulfilled without breaking the bone. A Kohen who has a Nega, though, can fulfill the Mitzvah of performing the Avodah at a different time, or have another Kohen do it for him now. It is merely incidental that the Kohen has a Nega. In the case of the marrow inside a bone of the Korban Pesach, eating a Korban Pesach entirely will *always* necessitate breaking the bone. (b) The YA'AVETZ answers with a principle of the RAN cited by the NEMUKEI YOSEF (Bava Metzia 30a). The Gemara in Bava Metzia implies that if there would only be a Lo Sa'aseh preventing a Kohen from entering a cemetery, then there would be grounds to say that the Mitzvas Aseh of returning a lost object (which is resting in the cemetery) is Docheh the Lo Sa'aseh which forbids a Kohen to go into a cemetery and become Tamei. The Rishonim ask, why would we think that this is a case of Aseh Docheh Lo Sa'aseh? The Kohen transgresses the Lo Sa'aseh right when he enters the cemetery, but at that time he has not yet fulfilled the Mitzvah of returning the lost object! The Ran answers that the act of walking somewhere to return the lost object is part of the Mitzvah and is Docheh the Lo Sa'aseh, since the person is already involved in the action of returning the lost object. Similarly, in our case, when one breaks into the bone to get the marrow, suggests the Ya'avetz, he is in the process of eating the marrow. Since he breaks the bone during that process, the principle of "Aseh Docheh Lo Sa'aseh" should apply. (The comparison between the lost object in the cemetery and the case of breaking a bone to get to the marrow is not clear, though. In the case of returning a lost object, the Nemukei Yosef holds that the Mitzvah is not merely to place the lost object into the hands of the rightful owner, but rather the Mitzvah is the involvement in returning the lost object from the moment that one finds it and moves towards it. That is why -- if one turns away from the lost object after seeing it -- he transgresses a Mitzvas Aseh (Bava Metzia 26a). Here, though, the Mitzvah is solely to eat the meat of the Pesach, and even though one has made efforts to get the meat, one has not fulfilled the Mitzvah until he has done an act of *eating*.)

Pesachim 86 1) HALACHAH: "KVITLACH" IN THE KOSEL HA'MA'ARAVI QUESTION: The Mishnah (85b) states that the thickness of the walls (Ovi ha'Chomah) around the Har ha'Bayis was sanctified with the Kedushah of Har ha'Bayis. Is it prohibited, then, to place notes in the crevices of the Kosel? ANSWER: (a) It is clear from our Gemara that the area *upon which the wall is standing* is indeed Kadosh. For this reason, the entranceways of the gates leading into Har ha'Bayis are Kadosh. Nevertheless, the Gemara concludes that the reason the gates are Kadosh is because they are on ground level. The windows and the top of the wall, though, are not Kadosh, because they are not on ground level. When the Mishnah says that they are Kadosh, it is referring to windows in the wall that are *level with the ground* of the Azarah, and to low walls, the tops of which are level with the ground of the Azarah. Therefore, there should be no problem placing one's hand into a crevice in the Kosel. (b) However, the RAMBAM (Hilchos Beis ha'Bechirah 6:9) rules that the windows and the thickness of the walls *are* Kadosh -- not like the conclusion of our Gemara. But what is the Rambam's source for this ruling? The RA'AVAD qualifies the Rambam's ruling and writes that the windows and the top of the walls are only Kadosh when they are level with the ground of the Azarah. The KESEF MISHNAH suggests that perhaps this is also the intention of the Rambam. However, that is difficult to say, for there is no indication to that effect in the words of the Rambam. The Rambam mentions this Halachah several times elsewhere (e.g. Hilchos Korban Pesach 9:1) but he never specifies that it applies only when the windows and the tops of the thickness of the walls are level with the ground. Furthermore, the Rambam himself (Hilchos Beis ha'Bechirah 6:7) rules that the roofs and upper stories ("Gagin v'Aliyos") are *not* Kadosh. How can the Rambam rule that the top of the wall is considered like the *inside* of the wall and is Kadosh, and the roofs -- which actually are inside the Azarah -- are like the *outside* and are not Kadosh? What is the difference between them? The RADVAZ explains that the Rambam's source is the Gemara in Zevachim (56a) which appears to argue with the conclusion of our Gemara and take our Mishnah literally -- that the windows and the top of the walls are like the inside and are Kadosh, even when they are not level with the ground. This is also the approach of the CHAFETZ CHAIM (Zevach Todah). Concerning the second question, what is the difference between the roofs and the top of the walls, it could be that there is a significant difference. The primary places of use on a wall are the top of the wall and the window in the wall. Roofs and upper floors, though, are not the primary use of a structure, but rather the room or chamber underneath is what is used. The roofs and upper floors are only secondary uses of the structure. Therefore, they were not sanctified. Only areas which are the primary use were sanctified. According to the Rambam, then, if there would be windows in the Kosel, they would have Kedushah ha'Azarah and someone who is Tamei (such as a Nidah or Ba'al Keri) would not be allowed to walk on the top of the wall or to put his hand in a window in the wall. However, it would still appear that it is permitted to place one's hand in the crevices in the Kosel into which people customarily place notes. Since these crevices do not penetrate the entire thickness of the Kosel, they should be no different from chambers built in the Azarah which open only to a non-sanctified area, which the Gemara says are not Kadosh. HALACHAH: According to what we have discussed, it should be permissible to place notes in the Kosel, even according to the Rambam. However, RAV OVADYAH YOSEF (Yabia Omer vol. 5, YD 27:2) mentions that there might be another problem. We know that the Kosel narrows slightly towards the top, because each layer of stones is slightly recessed from the one beneath it (this was an architectural technique designed to maximize a wall's strength and support). If so, when one stands right next to the Kosel, he is actually standing on *top* of the wall -- for he is standing directly above the wall's lower layers of stone! For this reason, it should be prohibited for someone who is Tamei to walk within a meter or two of the Kosel! In practice,

though, Rav Ovadyah Yosef does not clearly rule that it is indeed prohibited to get too close to the Kosel. It would seem that our assertion above should apply here as well -- the recessions of the wall should be no worse than chambers in the Azarah which open into non-sanctified area. Since there is still a Mechitzah (the rest of the Kosel) separating between the person and Har ha'Bayis, the area above each layer of stone opens into an area outside of Har ha'Bayis and therefore that area should be considered non-sanctified. However, it has been said that some of the great sages of Yerushalayim had the practice not to walk very near the Kosel. (This is not the practice of most people today, see also IGROS MOSHE, OC vol. 2, end of #113).

86b EVERYTHING THE HOST TELLS YOU TO DO YOU MUST DO OPINIONS: Rav Huna brei d'Rav Nasan visited the home of Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak. They told Rav Huna to recline, and he did so. When they asked him why he reclined, he answered, "Everything which the host tells you to do, you must do, except for 'leave' (Chutz mi'Tzei)." What does "Chutz mi'Tzei" mean -- it sounds ridiculous to suggest that one should not listen to the Ba'al ha'Bayis when requested to leave! (The MEIRI in fact writes that some "Letzanim" (jokers) added this phrase to the Gemara and it should be taken out). (a) The MAGEN AVRAHAM cites the BACH who says that a guest does not have to obey his host's word when his host tells him to go to the market to buy something. The host does not have the prerogative to send his guest out of the house to do things for him. The MAHARSHA adds that a guest is only required to listen to his host when that person is his host. Once he asks his guest to go out of the house, he is no longer the host. (b) The SEFAS EMES says that perhaps this phrase was added to the Gemara because of the incident of "Kamtza and Bar Kamtza" (Gitin 56b). Bar Kamtza was so embarrassed when the host insisted that he leave his home, that he took revenge in such a terrible way which resulted in the destruction of the Beis ha'Mikdash. After the Churban, Chazal added to the dictum, "Everything which the host tells you to do, you must do" the condition "except for 'leave'." If the host tells the guest to do something self-degrading, he does not have to listen to him. (c) It has been said that this dictum of Chazal alludes to one's service of Hashem. The Tana Elisha ben Avuyah, also known as "Acher," heard a heavenly message proclaiming, "Return in repentance, wayward children" -- except for Acher." When he heard, this, Acher despaired of doing Teshuvah and he became a sinner. He should not have listened because the gates of Teshuvah are never closed to anyone. Therefore, this statement that "Everything which the host tells you to do, you must do, except for 'leave'," means that whatever the Ba'al ha'Bayis -- Hashem -- tells you to do, you must do, except for "leave;" if one hears a heavenly message saying that he must leave the service of Hashem for his Teshuvah will not be accepted, one must not listen, because Hashem always accepts a person's Teshuvah. (REISHIS CHOCHMAH)

87b BAVEL -- OUR MOTHER'S HOME QUESTION: When Hashem sent the Jewish people into Galus to Bavel, in His mercy He sent them to "Beis Iman," their mother's home. What makes Bavel their "mother's home?" RASHI says that Bavel is called their "mother's home" because Ur Kasdim is in Bavel, and Ur Kasdim is the place from which Avraham Avinu came. Why, though, is Ur Kasdim considered to be their mother's home? Avraham Avinu came from Charan which was not in Bavel (RAMBAN, Bereishis 11:28). He only came to Ur Kasdim later. ANSWERS: (a) The MAHARSHA writes that since Ur Kasdim is where Avraham dedicated his life to Emunah in Hashem, that is why it is called "Beis Iman." (As to why it is called their "mother's" home and not their "father's home" if that is where Avraham came from, the Maharsha says that it is the place where Avraham developed his *Emunah*, and thus it is called "Beis *Iman*," from the same root as "Emunah.") (b) The MAHARSHA also says that we find in the Gemara (Sanhedrin 38b) that the head of Adam ha'Rishon was made from the earth of the land of Israel, and his body was made from the earth of Bavel. "Their mother's home," then, refers to the place from which Adam ha'Rishon's body came. RAV YOSEF ENGEL in Gilyonei ha'Shas adds that Chavah was taken from part of Adam's body (the rib) which was taken from the earth of Bavel, and that is why it is called "Beis *Iman*."

Mordecai Kornfeld |Email: kornfeld@virtual.co.il|Tl/Fx(02)6522633 6/12 Katzenelbogen St. |
kornfeld@netvision.net.il|US:(718)520-0210 Har Nof, Jerusalem,ISRAEL|
kornfeld@shemayisrael.co.il|POB:43087, Jrslm