



אור בישראל

A LIGHT FROM WITHIN ISRAEL פרשת חיי שרה

כ"ב חשוון תשפ"ה 23.11.24

עם סיוון רהם-נאלי



"Chayei Sarah" is the fifth parsha in the Book of Genesis, and it begins with Sarah's death, she is buried in the Cave of Machpelah, the place that Avraham purchases with money. There he bids farewell to Sarah at her funeral.



Immediately after Sarah's passing - there is a need to ensure continuity, the next generation. Avraham seeks to find a bride for Yitzchak, and the portion details how the suitable woman was chosen: Rivka, our matriarch.



Rivka, our matriarch, meets Eliezer, Avraham's servant, near the well. He only asks for a drink, but she draws water for him and also for all his camels. Our commentators note not only her swiftness but also her approach: she doesn't do it with a feeling of "I have no choice, I must do this, when will this end?" but rather with a feeling of joy, enthusiasm, and sense of purpose/mission. You can learn more about a different kind of mission in our story, down below.



The parsha ends with Avraham's death and the establishment of the household of Yitzchak, our patriarch and Rivka, our matriarch. The first generation of the Jewish people has passed, but we continue, generation after generation to this day.

A STORY FOR SHABBAT

IT'S FUN TO HAVE A MISSION!

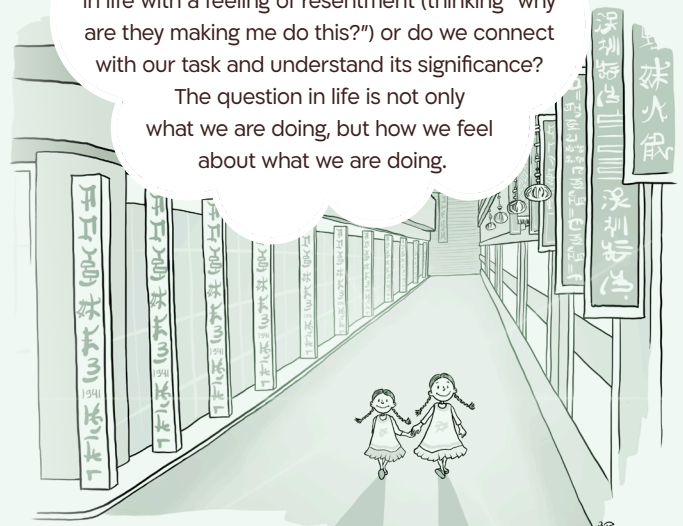
"Welcome girls!" announced the coordinator of the Zoom meeting based in New York, as thousands of girls all over the world watched him on their computer screens. The Chabad movement has about 5,000 families of shlichim - emissaries (messengers) stationed around the world. They devote themselves to serving Jews wherever they live, in even the most distant places, in order to teach and support them. Every year an annual conference of the shlichim takes place in New York, first for all the men and then, a couple of months later, for all the women. Thousands of children of shlichim participate in these conferences too. But that year, Covid had canceled the in-person program, so it was being held on Zoom. "A warm welcome to our girls all around the world!" continued the announcer with enthusiasm. Then he reported how many girls were taking part in the Zoom from different places and said that he wanted to highlight a special group of young shlichot. He said: "There are girls listening today who are living in difficult circumstances, who have a very challenging job, and whose lives are far from regular. To them we say, "Kol Hakavod!" "You are amazing! And you're doing fantastic work!" Tuning in to the Zoom meeting were two little girls, nine-year-old Chani and her sister, seven-year-old Mushka, sitting in the living room of their home in Jiuzhaigou. Jiuzhaigou is a city of 20 million people located in the province of Sichuan, China. More than a billion people live in China, including Chani and Muschka and their parents, Dovi and Sarah Henig, the Chabad shlichim of Jiuzhaigou. Suddenly, Chani and Mushka turned to their parents and remarked: "Mom, Dad, did you hear what he just said? He said that there are daughters of shlichim who are having a very hard time, girls who are living in difficult circumstances. Kol Hakavod to them! They are truly righteous girls! Their parents were shocked. Their daughters were growing up in Jiuzhaigou without any friends who were like them

and attending school via the internet. There were no kosher markets, all their food had to be ordered from outside the country. And if that weren't enough, the Covid virus that originated in China and spread throughout the world, had resulted in very strict restrictions in China itself. Whoever came into the country was required to isolate for three weeks under the supervision of the Chinese government. No one wanted to undertake such a difficult isolation period, so Chani and Mushka hadn't seen any members of their extended family for nearly two years. And in spite of all this, when they heard there were girls who were having a hard time, they didn't even imagine for one minute that the announcer was talking about them. Why? Because life was good for them: They had a mission and a life of meaning and joy. They didn't feel sorry for themselves but grateful for the opportunity to make a difference.

Food For Thought

Do we participate in important activities in life with a feeling of resentment (thinking "why are they making me do this?") or do we connect with our task and understand its significance?

The question in life is not only what we are doing, but how we feel about what we are doing.





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FROM THE DIARY OF A CHEMED STUDENT

Hevron Now and Forever

by Noam Elezra

My name is Noam Elezra from Kiryat Arba - Hevron. I am 12 years old and this year I will be celebrating my Bar Mitzva. I will be celebrating it right here in Maarat Hamachpela (the Cave of the Patriarchs where our forefathers were buried). This has been our family tradition since my family has been living in Kiryat Arba for three generations. We go to Maarat Hamachpela a lot. At the beginning of the war, we were afraid and not sure what would happen. Both of my brothers serve in the army. I went with my parents to Maarat Hamachpela to pray for their safety and for all the rest of the IDF soldiers and for the hostages.

During Elul we go there for Slichot and my favorite Chol Hamoed outing is praying there early in the morning and catching a glimpse of Rav Shmuel Eliyahu as he prays there too.

On Shabbat Chayei Sara, visitors from Israel and abroad come to celebrate there together. On this special Shabbat, we read Parshat Chayei Sara, the Parasha in which Avraham Avinu bought Maarat Hamachpela from Efron Hachiti as a burial place for his wife, Sara Imenu. Sometimes there is not enough place to sleep so people happily set up tents on the grass around Maarat Hamachpela and also in the neighborhood of Kiryat Arba.

I would like to invite you to also come to honor the life and legacy of Sara Imenu and the purchase of Maarat Hamachpela by Abraham Avinu.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER!

"Shalom. My name is Nir. I'm 50 years old and I just celebrated my bar mitzvah this past Shabbat. When I was 13, I didn't know anything about a Sefer Torah or tefillin. Over the years, I've made a lot of progress, but I always felt that I had missed out. For the past few years, I've been praying at a Chabad shul in the Agamim neighborhood of Netanya.

As my fiftieth birthday approached, the rabbi asked me: "What is your bar mitzvah parsha?" I was really embarrassed and didn't know what to say. Finally, I replied: "Honorable rabbi, I never had a bar mitzvah so I don't know." I'm so connected to Judaism today that my rabbi couldn't believe it. When my friends at shul heard about this, they decided that on my birthday, the eighth of Cheshvan, which was this past Shabbat, they would make a bar mitzvah for me. Even now, as I write these words, I still feel so emotional. I haven't gotten over what happened on Shabbat! In parashat "Lech Lecha," which is my bar mitzvah parsha, we read how Avraham Avinu undergoes a brit milah at age 99. This was really inspiring for me because I thought that if Avraham could have a brit at such an advanced age, I could celebrate my bar mitzvah at age 50. It's never too late! I'm sending this note in order to encourage others to do the same. Just picture a 50-year-old father standing there as his children throw candy at him at his bar mitzvah. This actually happened to me! I was also privileged to have my own father place his hands on my head during Birkat Kohanim (the Priestly Blessing) for the first time. This was definitely one of the highlights of my life. A mother-in-law doesn't usually attend her son-in-law's bar mitzvah, but my mother-in-law said that she was privileged to do so! Naturally, over the course of the festive meals, songs, and prayers, we also paid tribute to our hostages, soldiers, and the entire nation. I would like to thank my family, my Chabad rabbi, Rav Raphael Loyov and, of course, God, who never gives up on any of us. May we all have the opportunity to make up for what we have missed and to rectify, no matter our age or situation.

Around the Shabbat Table

- Do you think each of us can be an emissary/messenger? In what way?
- What "mission" do you feel you have in life?
- Have you ever had a case where you felt you were "filling in something that was missing"?



דף הפרשה מוקדש לעילוי
נשמת החיילים הקדושים
מיכאל בן חמו ואייל טויטו הי"ד



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