

Chayus

A Shabbos Stimulus

ערב שבת
פרשת חיי שרה,
כ"ד חשוון, ה'תשפ"ג
שנת הקהל

THE EDA AND DAVID SCHOTTENSTEIN EDITION

In Loving Memory of Itta bas Yosef Mordechai ז"ל and Tzvi Daniel ben David ז"ל Ainsworth

Dedicated by David & Eda Schottenstein

הקהל
Hakhel

from
Sichos In English

Perfecting The Cycle

The novelty of this year is obvious: it is Hakhel. Just as with Shemitah of which the Torah makes a clear differentiation between the “six years you shall sow your field” and the “seventh year which shall be a Shabbos for the Land;” so too with Hakhel “at the end of (every) seven years... assemble the people together” In one respect Hakhel is distinguished from the other years even more so than Shemitah. Hakhel occurs “at the end of (every) seven years, in the set time *of the year of Shemitah*” (Dev. 31:10). Rashi explains that although the Torah says “in... the year of Shemitah,” Hakhel actually took place in the year *after* Shemitah. It is called “the year of Shemitah” only because the laws of Shemitah still apply, in reference to the Shemitah harvest which extends into the next year. So we see that Hakhel has an advantage over Shemitah. It is the eighth year; and simultaneously it is the culmination of the seventh (Shemitah) year—“at the *end* (meaning culmination and perfection) of seven years.”

Talk by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Shabbos Parshas Toldos, 5741

סיפור חסידי

Once Upon a Chasid

By Yanki Tauber
Published by Kehot Publication Society

A New Sound

“I shall make you swear you by G-d, the G-d of the heavens and the G-d of the earth...”

“G-d, the G-d of the heavens, Who has taken me from my father’s house and from the land of my birth...” (Chayei Sarah 24:3-7)

In speaking of the time when G-d took him from the land of his birth, Abraham does not refer to Him as ‘the G-d of the earth’, only as ‘the G-d of the heavens’; but in speaking of G-d in the present tense, he describes Him as both ‘the G-d of the heavens and the G-d of the earth.’

Said Abraham to Eliezer: When G-d summoned me from the house of my father, He was G-d of the heavens but not of the earth: the inhabitants of the earth did not recognize Him and His name was not referred to in the land. But now that I have made His Name a commonplace in the mouths of His creatures, He is G-d in both heaven and earth.

Rashi’s commentary

“Who is like Your people Israel, a one nation within earth” (Shabbos afternoon prayers). The Jewish people, even in their material, ‘earthy’ involvements, are forever bound up with the Almighty. They are a “one nation within earth”—the nation which makes the Oneness of G-d a reality within the mundane earth.

Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi

One evening, a joyous farbrengen was held at the humble home of Rabbi Shmuel Betzalel Sheftel (the ‘Rashbatz’). For hours the group of chassidim sat, toasting l’chayim’s, singing, talking, rebuking and inspiring one another. As the clock marked the passing of the night, the meager platters of ‘farbaisn’ (food with which to follow up the l’chayim vodka) ran out; so Rabbi Shmuel Betzalel instructed that the lamb being raised in his yard be slaughtered. A hot stew was prepared to fuel the farbrengen for many an hour to come.

The next morning, Rabbi Shmuel Betzalel’s wife came in from the yard with the distressing news that the lamb—which constituted the whole of the ‘family ranch’—has disappeared! The lamb is gone! Said Rabbi Shmuel Betzalel: “No, no, the lamb has not disappeared. The lamb is very much here, it has only changed its sound. Yesterday it said ‘meh-eh-eh...’, today it is saying ‘Echo-o-d...!, O-o-one...!’”

The Scholar and the Storyteller

I came today to the well... (Chayei Sarah 25:22)

Said Rabbi Acha: The conversations of the household servants of the fathers (i.e. the Patriarches) are more desirable than the Torah study of the children. For Eliezer’s story is recounted at length twice in the Torah, while many bodies of law are conveyed with a mere allusion.

Rashi’s commentary

Two authors came to Rabbi Israel of Ruzhin to request letters of approbation for their respective works. One had compiled a brilliant talmudic thesis, full of many original and insightful ideas; the other brought a book of stories from the lives of the righteous. Rabbi Israel gave precedence to the author of the book of stories and only later dealt with the talmudic work.

Explained the Ruzhiner: “The Torah also begins with tales of the righteous—the book of Genesis—and only then proceeds to recount its laws and precepts. In fact, the very first mitzvah does not appear until well into the book of Exodus!

“Both these authors are men of great distinction and each has presented me with a most valuable work. But one consists of the author’s accomplishments in Torah, while the second is a record of G-d’s accomplishments in His world...”

לקוטי שיחות

A Sicha

By: ProjectLikkuteiSichos.org

Adapted from the works of the **Lubavitcher Rebbe**

A Wife Named Keturah

The Verse: Avraham added and took another wife and her name was Keturah (*Bereishis* 25:1).

The Rashi: *Keturah*—This is Hagar. She was called Keturah because her deeds were as beautiful as incense (קְטֹרֶת), and because she tied (קָטְרָה, Aramaic for “tied”) her opening, for she was not intimate with any man from the day she separated from Avraham.

The Questions:

- 1) What evidence is there in the straightforward reading of the verse to suggest that Keturah was indeed Hagar?
- 2) Why are two explanations of this name necessary?

The Explanation: The narrative of Avraham and

Hagar is troubling. Avraham wielded inordinate influence over the people of his generation, single-handedly bringing so many of them into a relationship with G-d. How could his own wife have strayed so far from his ideals? Rashi, therefore, pointedly says: “This is Hagar.” “This,” as in, “this is the Hagar that you, the reader, have been wondering about.” Even after Hagar was banished, her deeds remained “as beautiful as incense” due to Avraham’s influence on her. However, if she would have taken a new husband, Avraham would not have intervened and attempted to (re)marry her. Rashi, therefore, adds a second comment: Hagar never remarried, as she was waiting for the time when Avraham would take her back.

This clarifies the verse’s wording, “Avraham

added and took **another** wife,” which implies that he took a new wife, and did not reunite with his previous wife. The word “added” alludes to the transformation of darkness into light, whereby we “add” to the domain of holiness by transforming a negative force to holiness. Hagar had been banished by Sarah, for Hagar represented a darkness that could not be incorporated into the sphere of holiness. But Avraham succeeded in “adding” her as a wife, revealing how this darkness could indeed be transformed.

This also explains why Keutrah’s name alludes to incense. The incense that was offered in the Beis Hamikdash consisted of eleven ingredients. The number ten alludes to spiritual perfection; while eleven alludes to the forces of unholiness that are outside the bounds of “ten.” The incense thus represents the possibility of transforming those forces of unholiness into a “pleasing aroma” (i.e. incense) for G-d. Thus, Hagar is identified as Keturah due to her similar transformation.

A Cryptic Tale: Commenting on this verse, the Talmud relates:

“The sons of Rabbi Tarfon’s sister were sitting silently before Rabbi Tarfon. [In an attempt to encourage them to say something.] he began and said: The verse states: ‘Avraham added and took another wife, and her name was Yochani.’ They said to Rabbi Tarfon: It says: ‘Keturah.’ Rabbi Tarfon said about them the phrase ‘the children of Keturah’” (Zevachim 62b).

What is the meaning of this cryptic story? Rabbi Tarfon saw that his nephews were “sitting silently” and were ignorant, not being involved in Torah study. He wanted to teach them, which is a form of

“giving birth” to them, for one who teaches Torah to another person is considered to have birthed them. Therefore, he taught them a verse that touches on the theme of giving birth. The objective of Avraham’s marriage was to bring more children into the world. The name “Yochani” alludes to a miraculous birth (our Sages (Berachos 57a) taught that if a person sees the name Yochanan in his dream, it is a premonition of miracles to come). Thus, by changing the name in this citation, Rabbi Tarfon hinted to his nephews that he was attempting to instigate a miraculous “birth” and opening of their minds to Torah study.

But they protested that the correct name was Keturah, and Rabbi Tarfon remarked that they were behaving like “the children of Keturah.” In contrast to the miraculous birth hinted to in the name “Yochani,” Keturah connotes the closing of the womb, which alludes to being closed-minded. Rabbi Tarfon said that if his nephews identified with the closed mind of “Keturah,” they would never be open to Torah study.

Alternatively, Avraham’s marriage with Keturah resulted in him having children miraculously at a very advanced age. As a result of them being born miraculously—outside the bounds of nature—Keturah’s children were included in the command of circumcision which transcends rationality. Rabbi Tarfon was alluding to his efforts in producing a similar miraculous, spiritual birth in his nephews. Hopefully, they would also achieve supernatural results in their Torah study.

Likkutei Sichos vol. 15, p. 174ff.

גאולה
Geulah

Yalkut Moshiach uGeulah al HaTorah
Translated by Yaakov Paley

In Sarah’s Merit

Rabbeinu Eliezer MiGarmiza writes that the initials of the first four words of our *parshah*—*va-yiyu* (yud) *chayei* (ches) *Sarah* (shin) *mei’ah* (mem), spell the word Moshiach. He continues saying that in her merit Moshiach will come, but does not explain further.

This can be understood as follows: The original sin was introduced to the world through Chava, who gave Adam to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. Our matriarch Sarah rectified the greatest bulk of Chava’s sin, making it possible for us to work towards the complete redemption. Since Sarah dedicated her lifetime to making it possible for Moshiach to arrive, the name Moshiach is alluded to in the verse that summarizes her life.

Nachal Kedumim

A Tithe For Avraham

“And Avraham was old, advanced in days, and G-d had blessed Avraham with everything [בכל]” (Chayei Sarah 24:1).

After defeating four kings at the Battle of Siddim Valley (see Bereishis Chapter 14), the priest Malkitzedek brought Avra[ha]m bread and wine, “and he gave him a tithe of everything [מכל]” (v. 20). Although the Rabbis teach (cited in Rashi) that it was Avra[ha]m who tithed his plunder from the war and gave it to Malkitzedek, the simplest reading of the verse suggests that Malkitzedek gave Avra[ha]m bread, wine, and a tithe. According to the latter interpretation, what was Malkitzedek tithing?

The word כל (“everything”) has a numerical value of 50. Since 5 is one-tenth of 50, “a tithe of everything” equals five. Malkitzedek’s tithe was the five attributes of primordial kindness, bestowed upon Avra[ha]m in Parshat Lech-Lecha. This is the letter ה, which has the numerical value of 5, that was added to his name, and he was then called Avraham.

This week, in Parshat Chayei Sarah, Avraham is blessed with an additional five attributes, per the verse “...and G-d blessed Avraham with everything” (כלל can be read to mean “a second [tithing of] everything”). These five attributes, from G-d Himself, represent the five attributes of primordial stringency.

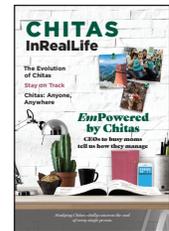
Since Avraham’s previously acquired attributes of kindness served to sweeten these five stringencies, he only then achieved the harmonious state of: “G-d blessed Avraham.”

Par. 30

מורה שיעור לחת"ת ורמב"ם לשבת Shabbos Chitas / Rambam Guide

Book	Section
Chumash – Rashi*	Chayei Sarah, 7th Aliyah
Tehillim*	Chapter 119 (first part)
Tanya*	Igeres Hakodesh Chapter 32 - עד עמ' קג - תדרשנו.
Rambam – Sefer Hamitzvos*	Positive Mitzvah #78
Rambam – One Chapter*	Sefer Mishpatim – Hilchos Sechirus, Chapter 2
Rambam – Three Chapters**	Sefer HaKorbanos – Hilchos Bechoros Chapters 5 – 7

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