

Parasha 5: Chayei Sarah (The Life Of Sarah) B'resheet/Genesis 23:1 – 25:18

*All Scripture References from The Orthodox Jewish Bible - Referred to as OJB- unless otherwise noted

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As it is with most of the Torah parashot, the title comes from the opening sentences of the present parasha. In this case it is no different. However, it is seemingly ironic, that in reality, while we are told that Sarah had lived 127 years, the actual subject of the initial parasha is her death! This is, in fact, not such a surprise. The 'Hebraic mind', and 'culture' is about...life. It's about enjoying the goodness which YHWH provides His people with, when they hear, and do according to His Torah instructions. So, while the opening of the

parasha actually has more to do with recording the passing of Sarah, true to 'Hebraic form', the emphasis is on the fact that SHE LIVED! Her death is simply a secondary reflection. Our blessed Rebbe Yeshua is seen speaking along these same lines to the sect of the Sadducees. They were challenging Him regarding the truth concerning the 'promise of resurrection' of the physical body, which belief they rejected. In speaking of the Patriarch's, Master Yeshua declares what YHWH has said in the Torah (Shemot/Exodus 3:6),

“ANOCHI ELOHEI AVRAHAM ELOHEI YITZCHAK VE ELOHEI YAAKOV (*I am the G-d/Mighty One of Avraham, the G-d/Mighty One of Yitzchak [Isaac], and the G-d/Mighty One of Yaakov [Jacob], Hashem [YHWH] is not the G-d/Mighty One of the Mesim (dead ones) but the G-d/Mighty One of the Chayyim (living).*” (Mattityahu/Matthew 22:32 OJB-definitions mine)

Please take note, first of all, that YHWH declares 'I am', not 'I was', the Mighty One of the Patriarchs. Rebbe Yeshua then follows this with the final statement, 'YHWH IS NOT the Mighty One of the DEAD, but of the LIVING!' Our Master knew of the old 'Hebraic idiom' that says, 'The righteous in death are still considered to be alive'. This is because the 'Hebraic mindset' sees 'life', not only as it 'exists in time', but also as it 'exists in the realm of the eternals' of YHWH. The 'Hebraic mindset' is all about 'life', and 'living', both now, and even beyond the point of physical death.

The Rabbinical commentaries on this parasha, provide several interesting thoughts as to what may have happened, emotionally, between Sarah and Abraham after Yitz'chak/Isaac was offered on Mt. Moriah. We are told of some of the very strong emotions, that were said to have come about between he and his wife afterward. This, of course, is 'rabbinical commentary' from the 'Jewish Traditional Writings/Sh'ba'al Peh/Oral Torah' known today as the 'Talmud', and 'Mishnah'.

It is true, that we are told nothing of the *'emotional circumstances'* surrounding the situation here in our parasha, in the *'Written Torah/ Sh'bichtav'*. All things considered, could there have been some very definite emotional conflicts that came to play in the relationship between Abraham and Sarah? Especially over Abraham's taking Yitz'chak/Isaac to offer him to YHWH? Most definitely there could have been. The fact is, we are not told in the *'written Torah'*, that Abraham even spoke with Sarah regarding YHWH's instruction concerning Yitz'chak/Isaac. Only that Abraham *'immediately'*, the next morning, saddled his donkey with two of his servants, and went off with Yitz'chak/Isaac to Moriah. So, the undercurrent of emotional turmoil alluded to in the *'Rabbinical writings'* most definitely could have been there. Some of the finer points of that record, as to how Hasatan, **(may his memory be blotted out forever)**, was involved, may be left to question. However, the point that Sarah was overwhelmed with emotion, when she learned what her husband's plan was, has strong probabilities. Also, that she set out in pursuit after them, may very well have happened. Then, after reaching Kiryat-Arbah (Chevron/Hebron), she learned that Yitz'chak/Isaac was indeed alive. This may have caused Sarah to be overcome with even stronger emotions of relief at hearing that her son was alive. The rush of emotions, up and down, at Sarah's advanced age, may have proven to be too much for her. So, her death, as a result, would not be too far of a reach to accept as a valid possibility. We certainly can recognize the distinct possibilities that could come into play given the circumstances surrounding the whole situation.

Having said this, let me make a much needed clarification. In our desire to be restored to the *'Hebraic mindset'*, and the *'Ancient Paths'* of the *'written Torah'*, we must be careful in our approach to the *'extra-biblical writings'* of the *'Talmud'*, and *'Mishnah'*. To give the *'Jewish Traditional Writings'* the same weight as the written Torah itself, is not wise. In many cases, these writings do provide some excellent commentary, and insights into the *'Hebraic culture'*, and *'mindset'*, which the rabbis are able to provide. However, our approach is, that only the written Torah, in its original *'Hebraic setting'*, should be held as YHWH's inerrant Word. ***[Important Note- we do believe that ALL Scripture (TaNaKh/Hebrew Scriptures as well as the Kethuvim HaNotzrim/Writings of the Nazarenes/Messianic Writings [Mattityahu/Matthew-Hitgalut/Revelation]) are also the inspired, and the inerrant Word of YHWH. In this instance, we are focused mainly on the words of the 'Torah Proper', Genesis/B'eresheet to Devarim/Deuteronomy]** I do not believe that you can, or should, wholly discount the Oral Torah in a wholesale manner. Even our blessed Rebbe Yeshua did not wholly reject, outright, the precursor to the Oral Torah of His day, *'The Tradition of the Elders'*, as long as it did not conflict with the clear instructions of the written Torah as given through Moshe.

At the end of the day, when it comes to the *'rabbinical commentaries'* as opposed to the *'written Torah'*, the latter, is the only standard that anyone can put their unwavering trust in. Through our blessed Master Yeshua's *'redemptive work'*, we all have the indwelling of the Ruach HaKodesh/YHWH's Spirit of Holiness. It is the *'anointing'* of YHWH's indwelling Ruach that will *'teach us/bear witness'* to what Truth really is. (Yochanon Alef/I John 2:27) We take from the *'Talmud'*, and *'Mishnah'*, that which the Ruach witnesses to be Truth. As we say down south, *'you gotta learn to chew up the meat, and spit out the bones'*.

The Importance Of The Biblical Record Of Abraham's Purchase Of Machpelah

It is interesting how that the Torah goes into such detail about Abraham's came purchasing the cave at Machpelah, and the adjacent field. So much detail is provided about the location, the people involved, the money that was exchanged, and those who witnessed the transaction. However, after a moment of reflection, in light of the present situation in Yisrael today, it will become clear as to what YHWH was after in all that was recorded.

There is so much contention, both now, and in history, over The Land known as Yisrael. Today, all the Arab nations, as well as many other nations, including our own United States of America, are intent on shrinking the borders of the nation of Yisrael. Dispute is made on every hand as to Yisrael's right to call what portion of The Land its possession.

Of course, some of the hottest contested land, is that of the ancient, and holy city of Yerushalayim/Jerusalem. Then, of course, there is Sh'chem, known today as Nablus, set in the Judean/Samaritan hills. This is home to the ancient burial site of the Patriarch Yosef/Joseph. The third area is the very place we are studying in our parasha...Chevron/Hebron. Today, there are many brave people of Jewish Yisrael, that have made it their desire to hold this place, as a site belonging to them. It is a city that has seen many Jewish people persecuted, and murdered for their efforts.

Modern day Chevron/Hebron is home to a majority of Muslim inhabitants. The right of the Jewish people to live in this area is contested at every hand. The sad thing is, that not all of the pressure is being applied by Muslim factions. Many secular Jewish organizations, both in the government, and in the private sector, also are interested in forfeiting this area for the supposed purpose of '*giving land for peace*'. Yet, in almost every instance, where Yisrael has taken this approach, it has resulted in new, and renewed attacks from the Arab/Palestinian terrorist factions. These militant factions use the Arab people that come, and settle there, to provoke tensions among the Yisraeli's. YHWH in His wisdom has provided a '*clear historical record*' through the '*written Torah*', that this city did indeed belong to Abraham. It was bought, and paid for at an exorbitant price, and in the presence of witnesses, who agreed to both the purchase, and the terms.

Now, as a further insight, it is held by '*Jewish tradition*', that the burial site at Machpelah was also the burial site of Adam, and his wife Chavah/Eve. It is also the burial site of two other Patriarchs, Yitz'chak/Isaac, and Ya'akob/Jacob, and their wives. (B'resheet/Genesis 23:19; 25:9; 49:31; 50:13). The fact that Adam, and Chavah/Eve, may have been buried there, may be the reason, that Abraham was willing to pay such an exorbitant price for the cave, and adjoining field. It may have also been because Machpelah, means '*double*'; which implies, it was large in size. It would be a perfect place to serve as a family burial site for the rest of the Patriarchs also to be buried.

Abraham Sends His Servant To Find A Bride For Yitz'chak/Isaac

Now, we come to the part in our parasha where Abraham, well advanced in years, and realizing that his time is short, takes on his last act of responsibility for his son...to find him a bride. This is no small undertaking. Abraham knew the people that were in this locale were basically pagan, idol worshipers, who had no affinity toward accepting the ways of YHWH his Mighty One. Yet, when Abraham goes over his plan to send his trusted servant to find a bride for Yitz'chak/Isaac, he instructs him to go back to Charan/Haran. This is the country he left behind. Abraham instructs his servant to find his family there, and to choose a wife from among them. Now, let's ask a question here? Abraham's family, were they really much different from the people that were living around him there in Cana'an? No, they were much the same. So then, why was Abraham so adamant on two specific points? He instructed his most trusted servant emphatically 1) Not to take a wife from among the people close by them for Yitz'chak/Isaac, and 2) Not to let Yitz'chak/Isaac return to the land from which he himself had crossed over.

The first answer may become clear as we consider the following. First, it is true that Abraham's family was pagan, idol worshippers. The people around him in Cana'an were too. So, what was the difference? Whether close, or far away, the woman who would become Yitz'chak's/Isaac's bride would come from the same background, and influences. Yet, most likely in Abraham's mind, it would be easier to 'assimilate' this woman into their culture, and worship, if there were enough distance put between her, and her family. To take a woman from the people close by would make that hope more prone to failure.

As we all know, family influence can really be a dynamic for success, or failure in any marriage. Also, Abraham knew, that there was nothing he was consciously aware of that he possessed in character, or had been doing, that had caused YHWH to choose him. However, there must have been 'something' that YHWH saw, that could have influenced His choice. Maybe, there was a woman back in Charan/Haran, from among his family, that had that 'something' too? It is clear, that Abraham had no clear-cut plan as to 'how' that might happen. He gave no instructions to his servant, other than where to go, and NOT to choose a wife from Cana'an, or let Yitz'chak/Isaac go back to Charan/Haran under any circumstances.

Eliezer: Faithful Servant And Type Of The Ruach HaKodesh/ YHWH's Spirit Of Holiness

Abraham brings his faithful servant to him, and charges him with the responsibility of finding a wife for his son. It is a very solemn moment. He causes his servant to swear an oath to observe all of his instructions completely. Here is the passage,

*“And Avraham said unto his eved zekan [elder servant] of his bais [house], hamoshel (that ruled) over all that he had. Put, now, thy yad [hand] under my thigh;
And I will make thee swear by Hashem Elohei HaShomayim and Elohei Ha'Aretz, [YHWH my Mighty One of The Heavens and my Mighty One of The Earth] that thou shalt not take an*

isha [wife] unto beni [my son] of the Banot HaKena'ani [Daughters of The Cana'anites], among whom I dwell:

But thou shalt go unto my eretz [land], and to my moledet [birth], and take an isha [wife] unto beni [my son] Yitzchak [Isaac].

And the eved [servant] said unto him, What if the isha [can also mean 'a woman'] will not be willing to follow me unto HaAretz Hazot [This Land]: must I needs bring binecha [your son] back unto ha'aretz [the land] from where thou camest?

And Avraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not beni [my son] to there! Hashem Elohei HaShomayim [YHWH my Mighty One of The Heavens], which took me from bais avi [my father's house], and from the eretz of my moledet [land of my birth], and which spoke unto me, and that swore unto me, saying, Unto thy zera [seed] will I give HaAretz Hazot [This Land]; He shall send His Malach [Angel] before thee, and thou shalt take an isha [woman/wife] unto beni [my son] from there.

But if the isha [woman] will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be released from this my shevu'ah (oath): only do not bring back beni [my son] there. And the eved [servant] put his yad [hand] under yerech [the thigh of] Avraham adonav [his master], and swore to him concerning this matter.” (B'reshet/Genesis 24:2-9 OJB- definitions mine)

The 'sign of the oath' which was being made was, that Abraham's servant would place his hand 'under his thigh', and take the oath. This phrase, 'Put, now, thy hand under my thigh', was a way of saying, that the servant would actually reach under Abraham's thigh, and touch the place of circumcision. The 'right thigh' was a picture of 'strength'. The place of 'circumcision', the 'sacred sign' of YHWH's covenant. It was a common practice at that time to give expression to the 'sacred intimacy', and 'depth' to which an oath was to be taken. As we cited above, Abraham was intent, concerning Yitz'chak/Isaac, NOT being taken back to Charan/Haran, and that no woman from Cana'an be taken for his wife. So, Abraham was making his will known with complete clarity, and directness. The servant at the end, puts his hand under Abraham's thigh, and takes the oath.

Let me also take just a moment to point out a very important principle. which we have been touching on in these Torah studies. The principle of the 'execution stake' is an 'eternal principle', that governs all that YHWH does. It is also a principle by which all who desire to walk in YHWH's ways must embrace. (see Luke 9:23-24) There is no room for the flesh, or human strength alone, when it comes to achieving YHWH's purposes. It's ALL ABOUT HIS GLORY, and to ensure that this is a 'governing principle', the 'execution stake' must be embraced.

The one identifying characteristic of all that YHWH does is, 'life out of death'. This is a 'continuous undercurrent' throughout all of Scripture. YHWH reveals His purpose, then in each instance, He allows that purpose to seemingly fail, or die. The situations, in each instance, seemingly get beyond the ability of human effort to complete. Then, somehow, YHWH brings what, for all practical purposes, appears to have died, to its desired end. It is solely realized by His supernatural intervention. It is LIFE OUT OF DEATH...LIFE OUT OF DEATH. Over, and over again, you see this as a 'working principle'. This 'principle' is shown in Abraham's servant. He is continuously focused on the 'will of his master'. He prays, not just for his success, but that he would succeed in order that his 'master's will' for his son might be realized. Everything is about Abraham, the abba/father, and his son, Yitz'chak/Isaac. Even so, may YHWH so work in all of our hearts this principle of the 'execution stake'. It is imperative, that all our focus, desire, all we are and do, is about YHWH's glory. It is about the Son, our blessed Master Yeshua, being 'lifted

up for all to see. No matter how troubled the waters may get along the way, or how impossible the hope may be that we will ever see YHWH's will done as we labor. Let us always remember...IF HE GAVE THE CALL, THEN HE WILL BRING IT TO PASS. OUT OF THE DARKNESS OF SEEMING FAILURE AND DEATH, HE WILL RAISE UP THAT PURPOSE TO ITS INTENDED END. Just as Abraham's servant remained completely focused on the *'will of his master'*, and refused to let anything stop his efforts short. May we have that same heart for our Abba YHWH, and His Son, our blessed Master Yeshua!

Now, there are a number of things that point to Abraham's servant being a *'type of the Ruach HaKodesh/YHWH's Spirit of Holiness'*. First, though we know this servant is *'Eliezer'*, whom Abraham originally supposed was to become his heir before the birth of Yitz'chak/Isaac (B'resheet/Genesis 15:2), nowhere in this discourse is he named. This is exactly the characteristic which Rebbe Yeshua said would describe the Ruach HaKodesh/YHWH's Spirit of Holiness. He would *'not speak of'*, meaning *'out from His own Being'*, or *'on His own initiative'*. (see Yochanon/John 16:13) THE MINISTRY OF YHWH'S RUACH HAKODESH/SPIRIT OF HOLINESS IS TO GLORIFY THE SON, AND TO REVEAL HIM.

Abraham's servant was sent to find a bride for Yitz'chak/Isaac, and to bring her back from among her people, and their land. This is a picture of the *'sanctifying work'* of the YHWH's Ruach HaKodesh in the bride of YHWH's Son. (see 1 Thessalonians 5:23) When the servant found the bride, he gave her gifts. (B'resheet/Genesis 24:22; 53) Even so, YHWH's Ruach HaKodesh gives gifts to the assembly of the Mashiach out from whom will come His bride. (see 1 Corinthians 12:7-10) YHWH's Ruach HaKodesh will *'present'* the bride to the Bridegroom, even as Abraham's servant brought, and presented Rivka/Rebecca to Yitz'chak/Isaac. (see Ephesians 5:23) Abraham's servant faithfully fulfilled his oath to his master. The Ruach HaKodesh/YHWH's Spirit of Holiness will be faithful to do YHWH's will also.

In closing, we see two other characters passing from the scene. Abraham dies, and also his son from Hagar, Yishma'el/Ishmael, dies too. We are also told, that Yishma'el/Ishmael had twelve sons, and we are given their names. The introduction of this fact, will become more apparent as we study the *'prophetic events'* surrounding the *'Acharit HaYamim/Latter Days'* leading into the time of the Great Tribulation. They are, in fact, the *'anti-type'* to the importance of the *'twelve tribes of Yisrael'*. (see Yeshayahu/Isaiah 46:9-10) So, another chapter is closing, as YHWH continues to move forward in working out His *'eternal'*, and *'redemptive purposes'*. Now, in our next parasha, we will look into the *'life of Yitz'chak/Isaac'*. May YHWH continue to *'open our eyes'* as we proceed. Amein

We say the following blessing as we continue each week's study of Torah...

***Chazak u'Baruch...
Strength and Blessing!***