

**Parshas Chayei Sarah in a Nutshell**  
(Genesis 23:1–25:18)

Sarah dies at age 127 and is buried in the Machpelah Cave in Hebron, which Abraham purchases from Ephron the Hittite for four hundred shekels of silver.

Abraham's servant Eliezer is sent, laden with gifts, to Charan, to find a wife for Isaac. At the village well, Eliezer asks G-d for a sign: when the maidens come to the well, he will ask for some water to drink; the woman who will offer to give his camels to drink as well shall be the one destined for his master's son.

Rebecca, the daughter of Abraham's nephew Bethuel, appears at the well and passes the "test." Eliezer is invited to their home, where he repeats the story of the day's events. Rebecca returns with Eliezer to the land of Canaan, where they encounter Isaac praying in the field. Isaac marries Rebecca, loves her, and is comforted over the loss of his mother.

*(continued next column)*



Our Sages teach: A person should always be careful concerning the Afternoon Service, because Elijah was answered only in the afternoon." Implied is that when G-d sees a person struggle to pray despite the burning demands of his schedule, He responds and answers those prayers.

-- The Rebbe

**Anshei Lubavitch Congregation**

Rabbi Levi and Leah Neubort

*Adult education:*

Rabbi Avrohom and Rivky Bergstein

*Youth Outreach:*

Rabbi Eli and Ruty Steinhauser

**Shabbos Schedule**

**Erev Shabbos – Oct 29 / Cheshvan 23**

Candle Lighting ..... 5:38 pm

Mincha ..... 5: pm

**Shabbos Day – Oct 30 / Cheshvan 24**

Tehillim Reading ..... 8:00 am

Shacharis..... 9:30 am\*

Torah Reading..... 10:40 am

Kiddush ..... 12:20 pm

Mincha ..... 5:40 pm

Rabbi's Drasha ..... 6:00 pm

Shabbos Ends..... 6:36 pm

*\*Latest morning Shema is now 10:00 AM. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).*

**Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):**

**Minyan**

Shacharis (Mon-Fri) ..... 6:15 am

Shacharis (Sunday) ..... 9:00 am

Mincha (Sun-Thurs) ..... 1:45 pm

This weeks Kiddush is sponsored by Binyamin Rotem in honor of the birth of his grandson Yonatan

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Abraham takes a new wife, Keturah (Hagar), and fathers six additional sons, but Isaac is designated as his only heir. Abraham dies at age 175 and is buried beside Sarah by his two eldest sons, Isaac and Ishmael. ❖

**תהלים**

*Tehillim - Psalms*

Join us this Shabbos morning  
Oct 30 at 8:00 AM for  
Shabbos Mevorchim Tehillim.

This week's Tehillim reading is dedicated to a refuah sh'laima for Doniel Aryeh Leib ben Rivka.

**Thank You to:**  
The Baal Korei, and  
The Security Volunteers

Join us weekday mornings as we delve into the mysteries of Chassidic concepts. 5:55 am, followed immediately by Shacharis.

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**Halachic Zmanim**

Shabbos, Oct 30, 2021  
Daylight Savings Time

Earliest Tallis..... 6:28 AM  
Latest Morning Shema ...10:00 AM  
Earliest Mincha (Gedola).. 1:07 PM  
Plag Hamincha..... 4:53 PM  
Earliest Evening Shema .... 6:23 PM

## Chassidic Masters

### The Return of Hagar

*Based on the teachings of  
the Lubavitcher Rebbe*

*Courtesy of MeaningfulLife.com*

*And Abraham again took a wife,  
and her name was Keturah*

*- Genesis 25:1*

*Keturah is Hagar. Why is she called  
Keturah? For her deeds were [now]  
as pleasing as the ketoret.*

*- Midrash Rabbah on verse*

Hagar was the Egyptian maidservant of Abraham's first wife, Sarah. When Sarah had failed to conceive a child after many years of marriage, she implored Abraham to have a child with Hagar. Hagar did give Abraham a child, Ishmael, who turned out "a wild man, whose hand is against everyone and everyone's hand is against him" (Genesis 16:12). Sarah then demanded of Abraham that he banish Hagar and Ishmael from their home. When Abraham hesitated, G-d instructed him, "whatever Sarah tells you to do, hearken to her voice." Hagar drifted back to the paganism of her homeland, and found an Egyptian wife for Ishmael.

Years later, however, we find Ishmael back in the Abrahamic fold, accompanying Abraham and Isaac to the akeidah. And then, three years after Sarah's death, Abraham remarries Hagar. The reconciliation is now complete—indeed it is Sarah's son, Isaac, who brings Hagar back for her marriage with his father (as per Midrash Rabbah on Genesis 24:62).

"Everything that happened to the Patriarchs," say our sages, "is a signpost for their children. This is why the Torah elaborates on... the events of their lives... for they all come to instruct the future" (Nachmanides on Genesis 12:6). The same is true regarding the shifts in Abraham's relationship with his "barbarous" wife and son: his expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael and their subsequent readmission into his family represent the different stages in our history of dealing with the "Hagars" and "Ishmaels" in our lives—the raw and unruly elements in our nature, society and environment.

#### **The Spiritualist, the Miner, and the Future**

There are three basic ways of dealing with the mundanity in one's life: a) disavowal, b) refinement or c) sublimation.

The first approach is that of the ascetic, whose reaction to mundanity is to escape it. Repelled by the corporeality of physical life, he reduces his involvement in the material to the bare minimum and devotes his life to spiritual pursuits.

Then there is the "refiner," who approaches the untamed wilderness of materiality as a prospector panning for gold. He knows that much of what passes through his hands is profitless sludge, but he is searching for the nuggets of sublimity imbedded within. So he doesn't disavow the material, but neither does he embrace it unequivocally. His life is an exercise in selectivity: to extract the sparks of potential while rejecting the irredeemable dross.

The third approach is that of the "sublimator," who refuses to regard any element of G-d's creation as "irredeemable." He insists that every creature, every force, every experience, no matter how lowly, can be transformed into something positive and holy. There is nothing that is intrinsically negative in G-d's world, he argues; evil and corruption are never more than skin deep. Everything can, and should, be transformed into a force for good.

These three approaches are actually three stages in the history of human potential. On the second day of creation, G-d divided His creation into two domains, decreeing that "The lower realms shall not ascend to the higher realms, and the higher realms shall not descend to the lower realms." The breach between the spiritual and the physical was absolute: the spiritual could not be actualized, nor could the physical be sanctified. Man had a choice—he could either succumb to the mundanity of the material, or he could transcend it. "Refining" or "sublimating" the material was beyond the capacity of a world in which an inviolable boundary separated the holy from the mundane.

This state of affairs prevailed for the twenty-six generations from Adam to Moses. Then, as the Midrash describes it, G-d rescinded His decree. If. ❖

***(Continued next page)***

On the sixth of Sivan in the year 2448 from creation (1313 bce), "G-d descended upon Mount Sinai," setting the precedent that the supernal may permeate the earthly, "and to Moses He said: 'Ascend to G-d,' " empowering the earthly to be elevated.

The era of "refinement" (birur) commenced. At Sinai, we were enfranchised to extract kernels of holiness from the husk of materiality. We were given a guidebook, the Torah, to teach us how to distinguish between that which can be positively utilized and that which must be rejected. The Torah spells out which foodstuffs are elevated when they energize our positive deeds, and which coarsen our minds and hearts and deaden our spiritual sensitivities; which relationships can bring love, joy and sanctity to our marital lives, and which are exploitative and debasing. The same applies to every area of life: the Torah instructs us which elements of physical life we are to embrace and develop, and which we are to reject and disavow. To attempt to go beyond this guide—to seek to sublimate that which the Torah decrees to be irredeemable—is futile and counterproductive. Just as pre-Sinai man was incapable of bridging the divinely imposed barrier between matter and spirit, so, too, are we capable of sanctifying only that which the Creator of life has empowered us to sanctify.

Finally, G-d promises that there will come a time when "I shall remove the spirit of impurity from the earth" (Zachariah 13:2).

A time when all evil and negativity shall cease from the earth and the positive essence of every creature and phenomenon in G-d's world shall come to light. No longer will we face the daily challenge of winnowing the holy from the profane; no longer will we know the pain of being compelled to relinquish potent areas of our lives because of our inability to properly and constructively channel them. Instead, we will inhabit a world in which everything will naturally lend itself to a good and G-dly end.

### **Abraham's Sinai**

Abraham lived in the pre-Sinai era. This means that, ultimately, his achievements were confined to the spiritual realm. He forged the Jewish soul, developing his own life into a paradigm of loving kindness and commitment to G-d and bequeathing these qualities to his descendants. He battled the near-universal paganism of his time, prevailing upon many of his generation to renounce their idols and recognize the one G-d. But the physical substance of creation was largely unaffected; the divine demarcation between the spiritual and the material was still in force, precluding any human endeavor to sanctify the mundane.

Nevertheless, as "father" and archetype of the Jewish nation, Abraham embodied the entire history of our mission in life. So Abraham's life also included a transcendent "pre-Sinai" period, a "refinement" period, as well as the futuristic "sublimation" era. These three phases in the life of Abraham are delineated by the three Parshiot

(Torah sections) which the Torah devotes to Abraham's life: Lech-Lecha (Genesis 12-17), Vayeira (18-22) and Chayei Sarah (23-25).

The exclusively spiritual period in Abraham's life lasted until his circumcision. The divine instruction to circumcise himself was Abraham's "Sinai"—the first (and only) occasion on which G-d commanded a mitzvah (Torah commandment) to him. For the first time in his life, Abraham could perform a mitzvah—an act that carries a divine empowerment to transform a physical entity (in this case, his own body) into an object of divine will.

[This explains a curious detail of Abraham's behavior related by the Torah. When Abraham wanted his servant, Eliezer, to take an oath, he told him to "place your hand under my thigh"(Genesis 24:2). An oath is taken while holding a sacred object such as a Torah scroll or tefillin; here Abraham is telling Eliezer to swear on the part of his own body sanctified by the mitzvah of circumcision. Yet our sages tell us that "Abraham observed the entire Torah" though it was yet to be given [at Sinai]; so Abraham studied Torah, put on tefillin, affixed a mezuzah on his doorpost, etc. It would therefore seem that he had no shortage of "sacred objects" available to him. Why, then, did he have Eliezer place his hand "under his thigh," contrary to all common standards of modesty and propriety?

***(Continued next page)***

But as explained above, the import of Abraham's pre-Sinai mitzvot were of a wholly spiritual nature. Since G-d had not commanded him to do them, they remained human deeds, subject to the natural law that separated the spiritual from the material; while they had a profound effect on his own soul, the souls of his descendants, and the spiritual essence of creation, they had no impact on the material substance of the universe. The single exception was the mitzvah of circumcision, whose commandment by G-d constituted an empowerment to sanctify the physical. Thus, this was indeed the only sacred object available to Abraham.]

The significance of this watershed event in Abraham's life is emphasized by the fact that, upon commanding him to circumcise himself, G-d changed Abraham's name. Originally, the first Jew's name was Abram; G-d added the Hebrew letter heh to make it Abraham. "Abram" is an acronym for the Hebrew words av ram--"exalted father"; "Abraham" stands for av hamon goyim--"father of a multitude of nations" (Genesis, 17:5). Before he was granted the commandment of circumcision, Abram was an exalted father—a progenitor of spiritual achievements and a founder of a spiritual legacy; his deeds, however, remained "exalted," beyond the realm of the material. Upon his circumcision, Abraham assumed a role of influence upon "a multitude of nations"--a role that involved his refinement and elevation of the pedestrian and the mundane (to the extent that this was possible before Sinai).

### **The Refining Woman**

"Male and female He created them," is how the Torah describes G-d's creation of human life. Indeed, this duality extends to all forms of life, and to all elements of creation—heaven and earth, sun and moon, energy and matter, and the numerous other physical models of maleness and femaleness. The same is true of the spiritual essence of life—our relationship with G-d comprises both a "male" initiating and achieving aspect, and a "female" receptive and nurturing element

Thus we find that many mitzvot are commanded solely to the man, while others are the domain of the woman: a husband and wife, our sages explain,

embody the two halves of a single soul; the deeds of each contribute to their common soul's fulfillment of both the "masculine" and "feminine" elements of its mission in life. More specifically, each mitzvah is both a "male" and "female" act: it is an act of conquest, of aggressive appropriation of resources from an alien domain for holy purposes, as well as an act of nurture, of refining, purifying and developing the appropriated resource into a vessel of holiness. In the words of the Talmud, "Man brings home grain; but does he chew grain?" Man wrests nutritive potential from the earth, but it is the woman who winnows the chaff from the cereal, sifts the fine flour from the coarse, and kneads, forms and bakes it to edible perfection.

Thus it was Sarah, the female half of Abraham's soul, who effected the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael. When Abraham hesitated, loath to relinquish the potent potentials implicit in his pagan mate and wild son, G-d said to him: "whatever Sarah tells you to do, hearken to her voice." True, you are now Abraham, father of multitudes and elevator of the mundane, but in every refinement process there is the extractable ore and the unprofitable rubble. Hagar and Ishmael represent elements of My creation too crude, too volatile, to be redeemed by your efforts. Sarah, your feminine sense of differentiation, has rejected them—do as she says.

However, Abraham's life includes a post-Sarah era as well—an era in which the most savage of Ishmaels and the most foreign of Hagar's have a place in Abraham's family. (Thus Hagar is here called "Keturah," connoting the fact that "her deeds were as pleasing as the ketoret"; for the ketoret, too, represents the transformation of the "irredeemable" elements of creation into a vessel of holiness). This era in Abraham's life is the forerunner and prototype for the age of sublimation, when "no longer will your Master be cloaked; your eyes shall see your Master" (Isaiah 30:20)--when the divine essence of creation will no longer be shrouded in a mantle of corporeality and the positive utility of every creature will be manifest and accessible. ❖

## From Our Sages

### ***I am a stranger and a resident amongst you (Genesis 23:4)***

*The Jew is a “resident” in the world, for the Torah instructs him not to escape the physical reality but to inhabit it and elevate it. Virtually all the mitzvot (divine commandments) of the Torah are physical actions involving physical objects, in keeping with the Jew’s mission to make a “dwelling for G-d in the material realm” by sanctifying the everyday materials of everyday life.*

*At the same time, the Jew feels himself a “stranger” in the material world. His true home is a higher, loftier place, the world of spirit, the world of holiness and G-dliness from which his soul has been exiled and to which it yearns to return. Indeed, it is only because the Jew feels himself a stranger in the world that he can avoid being wholly consumed and overwhelmed by it, and maintain the spiritual vision and integrity required to elevate it and sanctify it as an abode for the Divine Presence.*

*-- (The Lubavitcher Rebbe)*

*The story is told of the visitor who, stopping by the home of the great chassidic master Rabbi DovBer of Mezeritch, was outraged by the poverty he encountered there. Rabbi DovBer’s home was bare of all furnishing, save for an assortment of rough wooden planks and blocks that served as benches for his students during the day and as beds for his family at night. “How can you live like this?” demanded the visitor. “I myself am far from wealthy, but at least in my home you will find, thank G-d, the basic necessities: some chairs, a table, beds . . .”*

*“Indeed?” said Rabbi DovBer. “But I don’t see any of your furnishings. How do you manage without them?”*

*“What do you mean? Do you think that I schlep all my possessions along with me wherever I go? When I travel, I make do with what’s available. But at home—a person’s home is a different matter altogether!”*

*“Ah, yes,” said Rabbi DovBer. “At home, it is a different matter altogether . . .”*

*-- (Likkutei Dibburim)h* ❖



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## Haftorah for Chayei Sarah in a nutshell

*I Kings 1:1-31*

This week's haftorah describes an aging King David, echoing this week's Torah reading, which mentions that "Abraham was was old, advanced in days."

King David was aging, and he was perpetually cold. A young maiden, Abishag of Shunam, was recruited to serve and provide warmth for the elderly monarch.

Seeing his father advancing in age, Adoniah, one of King David's sons, seized the opportunity to prepare the ground for his ascension to his father's throne upon the latter's passing — despite King David's express wishes that his son Solomon succeed him. Adoniah recruited two influential individuals — the High Priest and the commander of David's armies — both of whom had fallen out of David's good graces, to champion his cause. He arranged to be transported in a chariot with fifty people running before him, and invited a number of his sympathizers to a festive party where he publicizing his royal ambitions.

The prophet Nathan encouraged Bat Sheva, mother of Solomon, to approach King David and plead with him to reaffirm his choice of Solomon as his successor. This she did, mentioning Adoniah's recent actions of which the king had been unaware. Nathan later joined the Bat Sheva and the king to express support for Bat Sheva's request. King David acceded to their request: "Indeed," he told Bat Sheva, "as I swore to you by the Lord God of Israel saying, 'Surely Solomon, your son, shall reign after me and he shall sit on my throne in my stead,' surely, so will I swear this day." ❖

Any one of us who has to take tests knows what it is to cram. You try to cover an entire course in two weeks. Or in business, you know the end of the month is coming and you try to push in a few more sales to improve the bottom line.

There is something unnatural in such an approach. Try cramming the growth cycle of a crop on a farm: not working for most of the season and then plowing, sowing, watering, and harvesting in a month. Wouldn't be very successful, would it?

Well neither — in the long term — is cramming for anything else. What was remembered for the test is forgotten two weeks later. For a business to be maintained, sales must be steady.

The same thing applies spiritually. Too often, we cram. On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, suddenly we get very involved. We like to focus on peak experiences. What Abraham teaches us is to take each day one day at a time, and to live it to the ultimate. Not to have occasional spiritual heights, but to relate to G-d earnestly each day, to take that day seriously and use it in the fullest and most complete way possible.

– The Rebbe

שבת שלום גוט שבת!



**Good Shabbos to all!**