א ביסל תורה!

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כ״ו חשון תשפ״ז · **חיי שרה**

The Lessons From the אמהות

By Amit Rotenberg '28

פרשת חיי שרה begins with the passing of שרה אימנו at the age of 127. The תורה tells us, "וַיִּהְיוּ חַיֵּי שָׂרָה מֵאָה שָׁנָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וְשֶׁבַע שָׁנִים" – "And the life of Sarah was 100 and 20 and 7 years" (בראשית כ״ג:א). רש״י famously explains that the תורה uses the word "years" to teach us that all of שרה's years were equally good. This is difficult to understand. שרה experienced many hardships throughout her life. She waited years to have a child, was taken into פרעה's palace, and had to deal with the difficult situation involving הגר and ישמעאל. How can we say that all her years were equally good?

One answer is that שרה understood that everything that happened to her was part of Hashem's plan. Even when things seemed difficult or unfair, she trusted that Hashem was guiding her in the right direction. שרה did not measure her life based on how easy or comfortable it was. Instead, she measured it based on her relationship with Hashem and her ability to fulfill her purpose. This teaches us that we cannot always control what happens to us, but we can control how we respond. A person who lives with אמונה can find meaning even during difficult times.

Later in the פרשה, אברהם sends his servant אליעזר to find a wife for יצחק. אליעזר travels to ארם נהרים and asks Hashem for a sign. He decides that the girl who offers water to him and also volunteers to water his camels will be the right girl for יצחק. רבקה arrives and immediately does exactly that. She does not simply give אליעזר water; she goes out of her way to take care of all his camels as well.

This shows us how special רבקה's מידה of חסד was. She did not wait for someone to ask her for help. She noticed that someone needed something and immediately took action. Furthermore, watering camels was not an easy job. רבקה had to repeatedly draw water for all of them. Nevertheless, she did it with excitement and kindness. This teaches us that true חסד is not just about doing something nice when it is convenient. True חסד means being willing to put in effort for another person, even when it takes time and energy.

The main lesson of פרשת חיי שרה is that we should try to live with אמונה, perform kind deeds, and leave behind a positive legacy. שרה teaches us to trust Hashem even during challenging times, while רבקה teaches us to go out of our way

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to help others. Together, they show us what it means to live a meaningful Jewish life.

We should strive to bring these qualities into our own lives, so that the people around us are positively affected by our actions, just as שרה and רבקה influenced the generations that followed them.

Why the Life of שרה and not the Death of שרה?

By Jake Levy '30

This week's פרשה, פרשת חיי שרה begins with the פסוק: "ויהיו חיי שרה" "And this was the life of שרה" (בראשית כ"ג:א). Why does the פסוק say "and this was the life of שרה" and not "this was the death of שרה", as it is the topic of the following פסוקים? Why are we talking about her life as though it is continuing, even though she passed away?

We learn later in the פרשה of the first jewish wedding between יצחק and רבקה. After אליעזר, the servant of אברהם brings רבקה back to the home of יצחק, she is brought into the tent of שרה אמינו, "ויביאה יצחק האהלה שרה אמו" "And יצחק brought her [רבקה] to the tent of שרה his mother" (בראשית כ"ד:ס"ז). The בראשית רבה says on this פסוק that when שרה was living three miracles would happen. One was that when she lit the candles for שבת they stayed lit until the next friday. Another miracle was that there was a blessing in the dough, presumably in freshness. And lastly, when שרה was alive, there would be a cloud that would be around the tent as divine protection.According to this opinion, when שרה died all three of these miracles went away.

Now we come back to when אליעזר brings רבקה to be יצחק's wife, the בראשית רבה continues saying that when רבקה came all of these miracles came back. The פסוק continues by saying "ויקח את רבקה ותהי לו לאשה" "And he [יצחק] took רבקה as his wife" (בראשית כ"ד:ס"ז). Why would יצחק take her to his mother's tent and then marry her? Typically in those days, people would get married and then bring their wives to their house. We can learn from this that יצחק was testing רבקה one last time. When יצחק saw the miracles be returned to the tent he realized that רבקה was the perfect woman to be his wife and continue the Jewish nation.

Furthermore, there is a connection between these two אמהות. The reason why the פרשה starts of with the life of שרה and not the death of שרה is because although שרה was physically dead, spiritually her attributes passed on to רבקה. It was not as if שרה had died, rather she had just passed the torch to the next generation of Jews.

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via Email, Email bisltorah@maimonides.org

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