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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 4:17 - הדלקת נרות
- 4:35 - שקיעה
- 8:38 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:14 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:03 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 4:35 - שקיעה
- 5:17 - צאת הכוכבים
- 5:47 - צאת 72

מולד כסלו - Monday 9:05:08 pm

אוטען שבת!

Did you Know?

It may be possible to say that this parsha records the first suicide in the Torah. The letter 'kof' in the word, 'v'livkosa,' to cry for her, is smaller than the other letters. The Baal HaTurim says that Avraham cried only a little for she was old when she died. He then brings a second explanation that it was as if Sarah brought about her own death when she handed him over to Divine justice (Beraishis 16:5) and was thus punished first. She had complained that Avraham should have prayed not only that he have children, but that she should as well. She continued then by saying, "HaShem should judge between you and me." The Gemara (Bava Kama 93a) learns from this that one who hands his friend over for justice (e.g. "I hope you get what you deserve!") is punished first, thus Sarah died before Avraham. In that case, concludes the Baal HaTurim, Avraham was limited in his crying since one does not eulogize one who brought about their own death. We learn from here how careful we must be in our words and the danger of becoming insulted or bearing a grudge.

Thought of the week:

Be life long or short, its completeness depends on what it was lived for.

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"ויהיו חיי שרה מאה שנה ועשרים שנה ושבע שנים שני חיי שרה." (בראשית כגא)

"The lifetime of Sarah consisted of one hundred years, twenty years and seven years. [These were] the years of Sarah's life."

Rashi brings the well-known Midrash that uses the way Sarah's age is expressed to teach us that when she was one hundred she was like twenty in terms of sin. Just as a person of twenty has not sinned since she's not liable until that age for Heavenly punishment (*bas onshin*), so too at one hundred she was without sin. Rashi continues to say, also learned from this posuk, that at twenty she had the beauty of a seven-year-old.

These drashos seem awkward. Surely, if one were trying to convey the innocence of one who had not sinned, it would make more sense to say that at one hundred, she was as innocent as a seven-year-old girl. Similarly, if one wanted to describe a radiant beauty, it would be more appropriate to discuss the beauty of a full-grown woman of twenty, rather than a child, who has not developed adult features, and of whom beauty is not an oft-mentioned virtue.

There are those who discuss the fact that at twenty, one has ceased growing, and similarly, when it came to sin, Sarah was at a standstill. Likewise in terms of maturation, a seven-year-old is in a stage of growth and development, and Sarah never stopped growing in her beauty.

This seems unusual also, because we are still speaking of Sarah's beauty. Why is it so important to us? The Torah records her beauty elsewhere, when Avraham told her prior to going to Egypt that he now realized she was [still] beautiful, and shortly thereafter when her beauty was praised to Pharaoh. Why this mention of her beauty at the time of her death?

Perhaps, we can understand and answer these questions by explaining that Rashi is not referring simply to being without sin or being beautiful. Rather, he is referring to the type of innocence and beauty that she had.

When we say that at one hundred Sarah was as sin-free as a twenty-year-old, we are saying that her innocence from sin was not merely the fact that she did not sin. For that, the seven-year-old would have been a more compelling comparison. Rather, just as a twenty-year-old is an adult with *daas* and a full understanding of his or her actions, so did Sarah, at one hundred, remain sin-free out of an awareness of what she was doing and a conscious effort to avoid sin.

Similarly, when we say that at twenty she had the beauty of a seven-year-old, we are discussing the type of beauty she had. A girl of seven may be naturally beautiful though she doesn't work on looking attractive. Further, such beauty does not arouse improper thoughts in males, as it is pure and non-sensual in nature. At twenty years old, when most women are trying to make themselves look more attractive to men, Sarah did not. Her beauty was unsullied for she was modest and thus her features reflected the innocent beauty of a youngster.

When we look at these qualities of Our Mother, Sarah, we can understand why the Torah would want us to know them at the time of her death. These were not descriptions of her physical self, but rather of her spiritual being, and the way she lived her life. In such a life, all the years are truly equal in their goodness.

The mother of a tzaddik was asked what she and her husband had done to deserve such a wonderful neshama in their child. "My husband was not a scholar, nor did he do any special mitzvos," she replied. "However, during Shalosh Seudos, when he came to the words, "May we merit seeing children and grandchildren who study Torah and do Mitzvos," he would repeat them several times and cry out to HaShem, 'Ribono Shel Olam! All I ask is a child who will do Your will and bring glory to Your name.'"

"Aha," replied the questioner. "That is why you were blessed with this neshama. It is natural for parents to ask for a child to love and give them nachas. However, your husband put aside all of his own desires and asked for a son who would give nachas to HaShem, and his sincere prayer was answered."