

Erev Shabbos Kodesh Parshas Chayei Sarah 5770

D'ei Chochmah L'nafshechah

“Let your soul know wisdom”

Parshas Chayei Sarah

From the discourses of Moreinu v'Rabeinu
the Gaon and Tzaddik Shlit'a

- not for general circulation -



Published by the Yam Hachochmah Institute

Under the auspices of "Yeshivas Toras Chochom"

for the study of the
revealed and hidden Torah

"YAM HACHOCHMAH"
PUBLISHING INSTITUTE
P.O BOX 5245 JERUSALEM
TEL: 057-3153884 FAX: 15325388242
E-MAIL: tc7@neto.bezeqint.net

Shalosh Seudos¹ of Parshas Chayei Sarah 5768

”וַיְהִי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה מֵאָה שָׁנָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וְשִׁבְעֵי שָׁנִים, שְׁנֵי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה.
וַתָּמֶת שָׂרָה בְּקִרְיַת אַרְבַּע הוּא חֵבְרוֹן בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן; וַיָּבֹא אַבְרָהָם לְסַפֵּד לְשָׂרָה
וַלְבַתָּהּ.”

“And the life of Sarah was one hundred and twenty and seven years, these were the years of Sarah’s life. And Sarah died in Kiryas Arba, which is Chevron in the land of Canaan; and Avraham came to mourn Sarah and weep for her.”²

Rashi explains that the burial place was called Kiryas Arba after the four giants that were there: Achiman, Sheishai, Talmai, and their father. Another possible reason was on account of the four couples who would rest there: Adam and Chavah; Avraham and Sora; Yitzchak and Rivkah; and Yaakov and Leah. “And Avraham came”—from Be’er Sheva to eulogize Sora. In addition, he elucidates why the death of Sora is recorded immediately after the *akeidah*. Sora expired upon hearing the news that her son was prepared for the slaughter and had barely escaped from the knife. [The actual term in Rashi is: *שלא נשחט* which translates as, “he was nearly *not* slaughtered.” This requires further explanation.]

¹ The lesson was delivered at the third meal of Shabbos.

² Bereishis 23:1-2

The Three *Tzimtzumim* of Yitzchak

As is well known, Avraham represents *Chessed* / Kindness, Yitzchak represents *Gevurah* / Might, and Yaakov represents the proper balance of both of these attributes. On a deeper level, Avraham alludes to a revelation of light in an aspect of the *Shem HaVaYaH*, while Yitzchak symbolizes constriction [of spiritual illumination] as embodied by the Name *Elokim*. Hashem runs the universe through both of these aspects or Names.

Rav Hillel of Paritsh learns from the Baal HaTanya that there are three stages of constriction or *tzimtzum*. The first stage is the revelation of the *Ohr Ein Sof*, the boundless light of Hashem. The purpose of this revelation was solely so that it would afterward be constricted to implement Hashem's plan to create the world. The second limitation was the revelation of the *Ohr Ein Sof* within specific boundaries. The third is the establishment of all the numerous constrictions and boundaries [that seem to hold less and less Divine light in a graduated manner until the physical world appears to be completely devoid of spiritual content].

These are the three sources of creation—the three primordial *tzimtzumim*. Even so, ה' הוא האלקים—“Hashem is *Elokim*”—He hides the *Shem HaVaYaH* [which represents His transcendent boundlessness] within the constriction of *Elokim*. These constrictions relate specifically to Yitzchak, which means laughter, since in the ultimate future, “Our mouths will be filled with laughter and our tongues with joyous song.”³ This means that when Moshiach comes, the

³ *Tehillim* 126:2

pleasure and mirth that Hashem derives from the multitude of constrictions will finally be revealed.

Yitzchak Avinu in the House of Lavan

In the system of the Arizal, these three constrictions are also called *Reisha d'lo Isyadah* which relates to *Atik*, *Galgaltah*, and *Mocha Sesima'ah*. *Reisha d'lo Isyadah-Atik* is the “source pleasure” which Hashem derives in revealing His light from the hidden to the revealed state. *Galgaltah* represents the constriction through which Hashem carries out His simple and ultimate will that His boundless light be revealed from within boundaries. *Mocha Sesima'ah* refers to the actual revelation of Hashem's light through those many limitations and vessels. Torah itself is a revelation of this light through the many boundaries and vessels, since it is very broad and comprises many letters that spell out an abundance of [details regarding the proper fulfillment of the] *mitzvos*. We see, then, that learning Torah reveals an aspect of *Mocha Sesima'ah*.

The next level is fulfilling the six hundred and thirteen *mitzvos* and the seven [major] rabbinic *mitzvos*, which add up to six hundred and twenty—the numerical value of כתר [20+400+200]. Fulfilling the *mitzvos* in all their details reveals an aspect of *Galgaltah*, the constriction which causes that which is beyond boundaries to be perceived from within boundaries. When one merits to unite Torah and *mitzvah* fulfillment, he can ascend to the aspect of *Atikah—Kesser*.

But all of these levels can only be attained through successfully withstanding many bitter tests over a long period of time. These tests are only

sent as an invitation to ascend on high to the loftiest planes, even higher than that all *avodos*, since it is the weathering of trials that provides the Creator with the greatest pleasure and reveals His great light from its hidden state.

[But one may ask why he should aim for such high spiritual levels? The answer is that] it is not enough to fill oneself up with Torah and *mitzvos*. We all have an obligation to anticipate the light of Moshiach which will allow us to be redeemed both personally and collectively. We all must ascend to the source of Torah and *mitzvos*, the world of *Reisha d'lo Isyadah*, where the *Shechinah* and *emunah* are to be found. This level of the *Shechinah* is compared to Rivkah who emerged from the same place as Lavan, whom the Arizal calls the *Lavnunis HaElyon*, the Supernal Whiteness. The *Shechinah* or *Malchus* aspect symbolized by Rivkah is sourced in this Supernal Whiteness—it is from the place of Lavan. What does this mean in terms of our personal *avodah*, though?

Every person goes through periods when he feels like he is being robbed of his individual aspect of *Malchus*. [For example, sometimes one feels that his fellow Jew wishes to take his source of livelihood.] Our sages taught that appropriating another person's source of income is comparable to having an affair with his wife. Each person has his own aspect of *Malchus* [his wealth, which is his influence which provides him with stability is like his "wife"] which it is his task to reveal in the world, but each person's aspect is hidden and requires that he ascend to the *Lavnunis HaElyon* to find it. One can only merit to grasp the humility of the Creator who wishes to be revealed to His creations when he reaches this towering world.⁴

⁴ See *Likutei Moharan* I:79

It is precisely when one appreciates Hashem's humility that he sees the greatness of Hashem. Even the *ohr pashut*, the simple light that He reveals, is as nothing compared to His unfathomable essence. We can therefore understand that the revelation of His light was a constriction of phenomenal and really incomprehensible magnitude. Surely we cannot even begin to express this in words, since "no thought can grasp this at all."

A Jew who is truly one with the *ohr pashut* grasps that there is only Hashem. At this level one fulfills the command, "Each man must sit 'beneath himself'—no man should go out of his place on the seventh day."⁵ "Sitting beneath oneself" means that one attains the light of absolute oneness known as Shabbos. At this level, no one "goes out of his place," because it is clear that no one can ever take advantage of him or even confuse him. If someone tries to do so, he becomes even more connected to the light of Shabbos and the first constriction, the source in which Hashem revealed His *ohr pashut*, which includes the entire expanse of creation.

When one reaches this level he is filled with profound humility since he understands the absolute powerlessness of the lower beings that are bound by limitations. In addition, why should a person be any different from his Master who demonstrates the ultimate humility [by allowing His infinite light to be so bound into such limited vessels]? Surely nothing will bother a person on this great level since he will be so completely filled with the tranquil light of truth and *emunah*.

⁵ *Shemos* 16:29

“Dwell in the Land and Graze on Faith”

It was regarding this level that Dovid HaMelech exhorted, “Trust in Hashem and do good; dwell in the land and graze on faith.”⁶ “Trust in Hashem” means that one should always be filled with complete trust and rely on Hashem. Even when one feels overwhelmed by confusion and barriers, he must still believe that this is all for a definite purpose. It is through such challenges that one truly ascends to מנוחת אהבה, to a state of loving serenity, and is able to be absolutely subsumed in the *ohr pashut*, in Hashem’s simple and pure light.

Through this he will automatically “do good”—all bad will be transformed to good.⁷ “Dwell in the land”—when he arrives and is a part of the place of the first constriction, the place of the *Lavnunis HaElyon*, he will cleave to the *Shechinah* [which is associated with the land]. “And graze on faith”—he will then attain the *emunah* of Moshe “the faithful shepherd,” who was willing to sacrifice himself for the benefit of the Jewish people.⁸

In truth, every Jew should be willing to learn Torah and fulfill the *mitzvos* with great self-sacrifice since every person feels himself drawn slightly closer with every bit of Torah that he learns and with every *mitzvah* that he observes. Even so, one still sees that he is distant from acting with true self-sacrifice, since so many obstacles prevent him by taking away his opportunity to truly reach his greatness.

The problem is that he can only reach the source by accessing the *Loven HaElyon*. *Mocha Sesima'ah* and *Galgaltah* are simply not enough, since he must

⁶ *Tehillim* 37:3

⁷ *Likutei Moharan* I:79

⁸ *Ibid.*

reach the place where *Malchus* is hidden at its origin. When a Jew truly wishes to serve Hashem and his fellow Jews with self-sacrifice, he must reach the light of Shabbos and truly dwell in the aspect of *emunah*, in the “land.” It is through this that he will attain the self-sacrifice of Yitzchak which includes complete humility.

This is the deeper meaning of the verse, “And Avraham gave birth to Yitzchak.” Avraham, an aspect of the light, gave birth to Yitzchak who was the husband of Rivkah, who emerged from the place of Lavan. In order to better understand why in the highest place one specifically finds *Malchus* which we would have thought is a lower level, we must first explore the paradigm of a woman in relation to her husband. A man and woman are one soul; the woman is the aspect of *Malchus*. Although it appears as though the woman is the “lower” aspect, this is not actually true, since at her source the wife is the “woman of valor who is a crown to her husband.”⁹ This explains why a woman recites the blessing, “That He made me according to His will.” In truth, this is lofty praise since it affirms that the woman is sourced in the highest aspect of *ratzon*, of the Divine will, which is associated with *Kesser*. It is precisely in the place of *Lavnunis HaElyon* that we discover the root of all true humility, since it is in this place that Hashem reveals His *ohr pashut*, which is as nothing compared to His Essence. A person who ascends to *Atik* will always act with true deference and submission before every other Jew. [*Malchus*, which is the expression of humility, emerges from and is joined at the root with *Kesser*, the highest level where we find a glimpse of Hashem’s will.]

⁹ *Mishlei* 12:4

“He Barely Escaped the Knife”

Our sages taught that the entire redemption depends on Yitzchak.¹⁰ This means that to bring the redemption we must follow the path of Yitzchak by demonstrating self-sacrifice to learn Torah and fulfill the *mitzvos*. Of course, we have no idea how to truly emulate Yitzchak's absolute dedication and self-sacrifice since he was literally willing to allow his own father to slaughter him to do what he thought was Hashem's will. Similarly, we should be willing to use the last ounce of our strength to serve Hashem, even if this means that we feel as though it is “killing us,” G-d forbid. We cannot possibly fathom how the great *tzaddikim* served Hashem with just such absolute devotion. Like Yitzchak, they also, “barely escaped the knife.”

This is the real meaning of the teaching that when Yitzchak was not slaughtered, Sarah died. In our context this means that when the *Shechinah*, symbolized by Sarah Imeinu, sees that we are not willing to sacrifice for Torah, she flees back to her source. The *Shechinah* demands that we all live with self-sacrifice, willing to die each day for the honor of Hashem. [When understood this way, Sarah Imeinu died of disappointment when she learned that Yitzchak was *not* slaughtered, that he did not merit to achieve complete *mesirus nefesh*.]

After Sarah Imeinu ascended on high, Yitzchak needed to seek Rivkah from the house of Lavan, the higher place of the *Loven HaElyon*. This helps us understand the Kabbalistic teaching regarding the verse, “And she said to him, ‘I am the daughter of Besuel, the son of Milkah, who was born to Nachor.’” This refers to the vessels of the world of *Loven HaElyon* which are very hidden. First

¹⁰ See *Shabbos* 89

we have בתואל: this refers to בת which indicates the *Shechinah*, and ל-א which alludes to the Divine Name אלב"ם which is the highest Name within the *Olam HaMalbush*. The name Milkah is written as מלכה which means queen, and it also refers to the *Shechinah*. The *nun* of the name נחור refers to the fifty [gates] of the root of *Malchus*, while the *ches* symbolizes the *Olam HaMalbush* itself.¹¹ The letters *vav* and *reish* that finalize the name Nachor allude to the worlds that emerged from the *Olam HaMalbush*.

“Ben Dovid, Your Servant, Will Come and Redeem Us”

Just as Yitzchak did not leave Eretz Yisrael because he was a “perfect offering,” so too, the *tzaddik* remains complete in holiness, especially in his humility which is his main quality. Of course, humility is hardly at its most precious when it is the end result of a spiritual fall. Surely the greatness of humility need not be expressed only when a person has deviated from his innate holiness. On the contrary, the greatness of humility emerges when a person cleaves to the humility of Hashem and is totally one with Him in the place of Rivkah. Regarding Rivkah the verse states, “הטִי-נָא כַדְּךָ” —“Let down your pitcher.”¹² The word כַּדְּךָ alludes to the *Shem HaVaYaH* when it is written out with the images of twenty-four “eyes” interposed among the letters. [This represents the absolute providence of Hashem, and our ability to see it as well. The particular arrangement can be found in the deeper Kabbalistic works and is

¹¹ See *Drush Malbush* in *Sefer Vayakhel Moshe*

¹² *Bereishis* 24:14

profoundly moving.^{13]} On this level one reveals the eighteen lines that connect the twenty-four “eyes.” Together they add up to forty-two and symbolize the forty-two Name which alludes to absolute self-sacrifice.

All of this teaches that Yitzchak must search in the highest planes for his marriage partner. After Sarah died he returned from בְּאֵר לַחַי רְאִי—the “well of living vision”—and merited to reveal the *Shechinah* just as it was revealed before his mother died.

We learn from this that if one has a difficult time serving Hashem with self-sacrifice, he should connect to the light of Shabbos—he must focus on how the entire creation is merely a reflection of Hashem. Then the light of Dovid HaMelech, whose attribute was true humility, will shine upon him. This light is the “black light” which is hidden within the *Ein Sof*.

In this context we can understand why Miriam spoke against Moshe regarding the “Cushite woman that he took.”¹⁴ This was her way of explaining that she did not see any of the humility which comes only from the blackness of true toil and self-sacrifice in Moshe, since he was completely subsumed in the light of the Creator.

Of course she was mistaken. Hashem answered her, “And the man Moshe is more humble than any man on the face of the earth.”¹⁵ This teaches that the *tzaddik* accesses genuine humility through truly understanding that in reality there is only the revelation of Hashem’s light; nothing else really exists.

¹³ See *Kriyas Shema* in the *Siddur* of Rav Shabsi, the disciple of the Baal Shem Tov for one example.

¹⁴ *Bamidbar* 12:1

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 12:3

Compared to Him, we are truly nothing. The *tzaddik* sees this and that is why he is the epitome of humility.

Similarly, we find that Dovid HaMelech also had a complete level of humility since he was completely subsumed in Hashem. Dovid's source is *Binah*, which alludes to *avodah* with self-sacrifice and humility. Although Shlomo, his son, represents the light of *Chochmah*, Shlomo did not reach a higher level than his father. Through *Binah*, one can access the light of *Arich Anpin*, the *Malchus* of *Kesser*. Dovid HaMelech reached such a great level of *Arich* that he climbed until just before *Atik* as well. If Shlomo had also managed to access *Atik*, the redemption would have arrived, since the *geulah* depends on completing both levels of *Chochmah* and *Binah*. Sadly, the sin of Shlomo marrying the daughter of Pharaoh prevented him from reaching this greatness, and the redemption has not yet come. Nevertheless, the process was begun and the light of the *geulah* began to shine since their time.

It is our task to complete the *yichud* by including the aspect of *Atik* with *Arich*. Then the light of the redemption can burst forth out of *Arich* due to the strength of the revelation of *Atik* within *Arich*. This is what is meant by the phrase, "Ben Dovid will come and redeem us." In terms of *avodah* this translates into our connecting *Chochmah*, the aspect of Shlomo, with *Atik*, just as Dovid connected *Binah* to the aspect of *Arich*.

Arich is an aspect of darkness and toil while *Atik* represents light. Nevertheless, one must also connect to Hashem through the true humility and self-searching that results from internalizing the light and understanding that everything is from Hashem. In this manner, *Atik* too reveals an element of

darkness, since even the most connected *tzaddik* is pitch black compared to the Source of all. This is the meaning of the words of the holy *Zohar*, “Kesser, although it is a primordial light, a sublime and transcendent illumination, it is nothing compared to the Primal Cause.”¹⁶

The Chill the Overtakes Dovid HaMelech

Since it is hard for us to attain true self-sacrifice, we must begin our search in an aspect of *Atik*. We must all follow the path of our teacher Moshe who was completely nullified to Hashem. In this manner we rectify שלמה, whose very name spells למשה, “to Moshe.” In this manner we connect the aspect of Dovid, who eventually attained the level of *Atik*. The verse states, “And Dovid was old, advanced in days,”¹⁷ since the source of old age is in *Atik*, the “Ancient One.” This is also the symbolism of the added *yud* when Dovid’s name is spelled with full articulation as דויד. However, Dovid was not “warmed” by this even when he was covered. [The verses describe the coldness from which he suffered in his old age.] This teaches that he had trouble in this world since his source is in *Arich*, not *Atik*. He therefore could not use his garments, which are rooted in the level of *Arich*, to “warm him” in *Atik*. This is why he sought Avishag the Shunamite to warm him. This was his attempt to access the vessels of the lower worlds of *Beriyah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah* into which *Atik* descends and is enrobed.

This teaches that the self-sacrifice of expending great effort is not enough. One must also raise his *avodah* up to the level *Atik* which also has [a connection to] vessels of *BY”A*. The purpose of this entire elevation of Dovid at

¹⁶ *Tikunei Zohar*, pg. 135b

¹⁷ *Malachim* I:1:1

the end of his life was to be a prelude for Shlomo to rule, since *Atik* is the spiritual source of *Chochmah*, the aspect of Shlomo. It is not enough to remain at the level of nullification that is *Chochmah* since this is nothing compared to the aspect of *Kesser*. As we see from the verse, “From where does wisdom come to be found?” [This is read literally as, “Wisdom is to found in the state of *ayin*, or nothingness.”¹⁸] This is hinted at in another verse, “And Adoniyah the son of Chaggis exalted himself...”¹⁹ Adoniyah (אדוניא) is a contraction of the phrase אדוני ה-י. This indicates that he attained the level of *Chochmah* and everyone thought he was charming and graceful, but nevertheless he was still in the state of arrogance compared with the higher aspect of *Kesser*, which was the source of Shlomo. Shlomo could have built upon great antecedents—the wondrous humility of Dovid HaMelech who cleaved to Hashem in truth for his entire life. [This is the root idea why Shlomo HaMelech built the *Beis Hamikdash* on the “foundations” that were laid down by his father.] It is for this reason that Shlomo could have attained the soul-qualities of Moshe, the faithful shepherd, who had remarkable humility and self-sacrifice generated by his powerful connection to the light of Hashem at all times. This level is alluded to by our sages when they say that in the merit of Moshe covering his face so as not to gaze at Hashem, he was rewarded with, “seeing the image of Hashem.”²⁰ Shlomo could have brought the joy of the ultimate redemption into the world, the laughter of Yitzchak that is sourced in the humility to be discovered when Hashem reveals His *ohr pashut*, if he had only felt more of Hashem’s own humility and emulated it.

¹⁸ *Iyov* 28:12

¹⁹ *Malachim* I: 1:5

²⁰ *Bamidbar* 12:8

We all must work to ascend to the level of the pleasure of *Atik*, to enjoy a connection to the unity of Hashem through deep contemplation that everything is *Elokus*. In this manner, we will also come to great humility when we realize that all the *ohr pashut* is nothing compared to Hashem's essence. Of course, we must also learn the holy works which discuss the proper methods of contemplating these levels [so that we can be ensured that we truly attain humility through this and not its opposite, G-d forbid].

Through this we will feel a deep humility before Hashem and our fellow man, since we will feel as nothing compared to Hashem. In this manner we will draw upon ourselves the willingness to sacrifice ourselves in our Divine service, since our hearts will be a holy fire for Hashem. No person will be able to annoy or cheat us on this level since we will know that everything is truly from Hashem. If something appears to ruffle us, this is an opportunity for a much deeper relationship with Hashem.

“Let Your Soul Know Wisdom”

This is the meaning of: “דעה חכמה לנפשך והיא כתר לראשך”—“Let your soul (*nefesh*) know (*d'ei*) wisdom (*Chochmah*) and it will be a crown (*Kesser*) for your head.”²¹ We must understand that the ultimate level of *Chochmah* is only when one attains true humility, which is associated with the level of *nefesh*. We must not be like Adoniyah ben Chaggis who wished to rule over others because he had attained the levels of *Chochmah / Abba* and *Imma Ila'ah*. On the

²¹ From the *Shabbos zemer* “*D'ror Yikrah*,” based on *Mishlei* 24:14.

contrary, we should uplift the attribute of *Chochmah* and complete the mission of Shlomo so that Moshiach will finally arrive.

“And it will be a crown / *Kesser* for your head.” This means that even if one attains the serene light of *emes* and *emunah* which are elements of *Kesser*, he will still reveal that in that lofty place one can still deepen his humility. Since the first constriction is as nothing compared to Hashem Himself, it follows that if one really gets to this level he will have even more humility, since his closeness to Hashem is all the more.

“Guard your holy *mitzvos*; guard your holy Shabbos.” After one merits to touch the level of *Reisha d'lo Isyadah* which is the first *tzimtzum*, he should also merit to fulfill the *mitzvah* of Hashem at the level of *Galgaltah* where the boundless is revealed within the aspect of limitations. In this manner, he will merit the Torah which is the third constriction, with its many boundaries through which Hashem is revealed in the world. Through this he will ultimately attain the level of *Mocha Sesima'ah*, which is the inner vitality of the holiness of Shabbos.

May Hashem help us so that the powerful self-sacrifice of Moshe Rabbeinu will bring us to “graze on faith” so that we can serve Hashem with true dedication. Clearly what we have been discussing here was not meant to be a theoretical discourse. Rather, every word was meant as a practical guide to access the supernal worlds which are the true reality. Every Jew can reach them if he wants to and is willing to learn the written works that teach us how to get there. In these *seforim* we find astounding concepts regarding these worlds which are relevant to us all, since we all have an aspect of the *neshamah* of

D'ei Chochmah L'Nafshechah

Parshas Chayei Sarah

Moshiach within us. It follows that it is incumbent on all of us to bring the time of Moshiach, speedily in our days. Amen!

Translated and Adapted by Rav Micha Golshevsky.

Please feel free to send comments, questions, and any feedback to:

tc7@neto.bezeqint.net .