



## THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU

Do you know what is your purpose in life?  
How does this express itself in your order of  
priorities?

A life lesson from Abraham and Sarah.

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TEACHER'S MANUAL



# JEWISH INSIGHTS

A TASTE OF THE REBBE'S TEACHINGS



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Shluchim of the Rebbe to Mumbai India

# Contents

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## A. Take it to Heart.....5

When Abraham was 99 and Sarah was 90, the Torah describes them as old, coming on in years (Source 1). Thirty-eight years later, the Torah again describes Abraham as old and coming on in years (Source 2). If he was old at 99, he was certainly old at 138! Why is this phrase repeated?

What does “coming on in years” mean? It can’t mean extreme old age, because the phrase is also used regarding King David, who was only 70 years old.

The Rebbe explains that “coming on in years” doesn’t describe age, but how that person lived their life. Coming on in years describes a person who “comes into” their years and takes those experiences to heart. David’s life was turbulent, and he took those experiences to heart, earning him the moniker “coming on in years.”

Abraham also “came inside” his years and took to heart his life's events. The Torah repeats this at 138 because when most people grow old, they take life less to heart. Therefore, the Torah stresses that Abraham remained that kind of person, one who takes life seriously and is influenced by it.

The Zohar says that “coming on in years” means that he served G-d perfectly all his life. Both interpretations are interconnected and support one another; because Abraham dedicated his life to serving G-d, he took his life seriously.

## B. The Meaning of Life.....11

All of Sarah’s years were equally good. (Source 3)

The Torah seems to consider Sarah’s life as one bloc, “the years of Sarah’s life.” How can all of her life be encapsulated under a single title, when over the years there were such extreme changes in her life?

“Sarah’s life” does not refer to the years she lived, but to the meaning that filled her life, the ideals she lived by. All her life, she lived with the same meaning: the three mitzvot given uniquely to women, the pillars of the Jewish home.

This is a lesson to all Jewish women, to emulate Sarah, whose focus was on the spiritual, rather than on the material and superficial.

## C. How Can We Fix the Past?.....15

Even a woman who did not live this way in the past can rectify that now by influencing others to live such a life.

We learn this from Sarah: the Zohar says "coming on in years" means a life of perfect days, filled with mitzvot and meaning. How can the days that Sarah spent in the palaces of Pharaoh and Abimelech be "perfect?"

Indeed, those days were not perfect and bright, but because Sarah worked to influence others, G-d in return rectified those days of her past, and transformed them.

This applies for all of us as well. When we influence others to go in the right direction, G-d changes our past in return.

The Rebbe wrote to a woman that influencing others to follow the laws of Family Purity will rectify the time in her past when she did not observe it.

## Introduction

When the angel informed Abraham at 99 years old that he would have a child, the verse says that Abraham and Sarah were "coming on in years." What does this phrase mean and why is it so important for the Torah to tell us this?

### השיעור לפרשת חיי שרה

משיחת שבת פרשת חיי שרה ה'תשמ"ח,  
הנחה בלתי מוגה  
תורת מנחם, התשמ"ח, כרך א', עמוד 487 ואילך;  
(ומלקוטי שיחות, כרך ל"ה עמוד 91 ואילך, מוגה).

ומשיחת שבת פרשת חיי שרה, מבה"ח כסלו, ה'תשמ"ג,  
הנחה בלתי מוגה  
תורת מנחם ה'תשמ"ג כרך א' עמוד 500 ואילך.

# A. Take it to Heart

## Source 1 Genesis 18:11

**Student's** pg. 3  
Now Abraham and Sarah were old, coming on in years; Sarah had ceased having a cycle as women do.

וְאֵבְרָהָם וְשָׂרָה זָקְנִים בָּאִים  
בְּיָמִים קָדָל לְהִיט לְשָׂרָה אֲרֹחַ  
בְּנָשִׁים

## Source 2 Genesis 24:1

**Student's** pg. 3  
Abraham was old, coming on in years, and G-d blessed Abraham in everything.

וְאֵבְרָהָם זָקֵן בָּא בְּיָמָיו וַיְהִי  
בְּרַךְ אֶת־אֲבְרָהָם כָּפֹל

## >> The Rebbe

### Now He's Old?

**Student's** pg. 3  
In the previous Torah portion of Vayera the verse already said "Abraham and Sarah were old, coming on in years." If they were already old before Isaac was born, then now at the time of the binding of Isaac 38 years later Abraham was certainly "old, coming on in years." Why then does the verse in our Torah portion need to state that Abraham was old?

לכאורה אינו מובן: מהו החידוש כאן לאחרי שכבר נאמר בפרשת וירא<sup>1</sup> "ואברהם ושרה זקנים באים בימים", ובמכל שכן וקל וחומר: אם קודם לידת יצחק היו אברהם ושרה זקנים באים בימים, לאחרי עקידת יצחק בהיותו בן ל"ז שנה<sup>2</sup> - כעבור ל"ח שנה - על-אחת-כמה-וכמה שאברהם היה זקן בא בימים!

### "Coming On in Years"

**Student's** pg. 3  
We first need to understand the meaning of the words "coming on in years."

ויובן בהקדים פירוש המילים "בא בימים".

The school teachers explain that this means extreme old age. Meaning, Abraham wasn't just old, he was "coming on in years" with additional years on top of his old age.

ה"מלמדים" ב"חדר" מסבירים שהמשמעות היא זקנה מופלגת, כלומר, לא רק "זקן" סתם, אלא גם "בא בימים", שנוספו לו עוד ימים רבים<sup>3</sup>, ובמילא, נוסף יותר בזקנה.

But the truth is that this explanation isn't viable.

אמנם, כאשר תדייק היטב, אי אפשר לפרש שהכוונה לזקנה מופלגת, שהרי,

(3) ראה גם פי' הראב"ע עה"פ וירא שם.

(1) בראשית יח, יא.  
(2) פרש"י תולדות כה, כ.

King David is also described as “old, coming on in years,” and he only lived 70 years - certainly not extreme old age.

## King David Took Life to Heart

Student's  
pg. 4

Rather, we can explain that “coming on in years” is intended literally, that he “came into the years,” like we would say about someone that he “came into the house.” Meaning, this isn’t a description of a number of years, but a description of a person’s lifestyle during these years.

This means that he “entered” the years and events that he experienced. These weren’t just passing events that left no impression on him, rather he “entered” every day and every event and lived with them, taking them to heart. All of the days impacted him, the good ones made him happy, and the negative ones had the opposite effect. This impact even leaves a clear mark on the features of a person’s face.

We can see this clearly in the fact that there can be two people of the same age, but one looks older than the other. This is because the effects of the life experiences of the older-looking one are apparent in his appearance, because he took every event to heart.

This is why King David is described as “coming on in years” even though he only lived to 70, because the many tribulations he endured—including numerous wars, aggravation from his sons, etc.—left a mark on him, making him “coming on in years.”

גם בדוד המלך נאמר<sup>4</sup> “והמלך דוד זקן בא בימים”, אף על פי שכל משך ימי חייו לא היו אלא שבעים שנה בלבד, שבוודאי אין זו זקנה מופלגת!

ויש לומר הביאור בזה: הפירוש של “בא בימים” הוא - כפשטות התיבות - שבא (נכנס) בתוך הימים, כמו בא בבית, וכיוצא בזה.

זאת אומרת, שאין זה תיאור מספר שנות האדם אם רב או מעט, אלא אופן חיי האדם בימים אלו<sup>5</sup>.

כלומר, שהימים שעברו עליו, המאורעות שבהם וכו', הם באופן שנכנס בהם, היינו, לא כמו דבר העובר וחולף שלא נשאר ממנו רושם, כי אם, שנכנס בתוך כל יום ויום ומאורעותיו, לחיות עם הדבר, להתרגש ולקחת ללב, שאז, כל יום ויום וכל מאורע ומאורע - הן דבר המשמח, והן הפכו חס ושלום - פועל ומשפיע עליו, עד שְׁנִיכֵר בגלוי בתווי פניו וכו'.

וכפי שרואים במוחש שיכולים להיות שני אנשים באותו גיל, שאחד מהם נראה מבוגר יותר מהשני, מכיוון שניכר עליו רושם המאורעות שעברו עליו, משום שלוקח לליבו כל מאורע כו'.

וזהו מה שכתוב בדוד “בא בימים”, אף שמספר שנות חייו היה שבעים שנה בלבד - כי, מצד ריבוי המאורעות שעברו עליו, כמו: ריבוי המלחמות, “דם לרוב שפכת”<sup>6</sup>, העגמת־נפש שהיתה לו מבניו כו'<sup>7</sup>, וכיוצא בזה בנוגע לשאר מאורעות שהותירו את רישומן עליו מפני שלקח לליבו כו' - נעשה “בא בימים”.

(6) דה"א כב, ח.  
(7) ראה ש"ב יג, ל ואילך. שם יח, לב ואילך.

(4) מלכים א' בתחלתו - הפטרת שבת זה.  
(5) מהדילקוט המוגה.

Some people have less turbulent lives, without wars and the like. There are also people who take things to heart less. But some people have endured a lot in their lives and taken it all to heart, and this can be recognized in their appearance.

King David belonged to the latter category of people. He endured many tribulations during his life; wars with external and well as internal enemies. He also suffered aggravation from some of his sons. He took all of this to heart, so even at the relatively young age of 70 he was called “coming on in years.” He had endured a great deal, and had “entered” those events and internalized them.

## Abraham Took Life to Heart Even After Age 100

Student's  
pg. 5

Based on the above we can understand why the verse in our portion states that Abraham was “old, coming on in years,” even though the verse in the previous portion already stated that “Abraham and Sarah were old, coming on in years.”

It is natural that as a person ages they become more wise and mature and they understand that they don't need to take every event so seriously. In addition, older people have already experienced a lot in their lives, so external events tend to no longer bother them that much.

Therefore, even after it has been stated that “Abraham and Sarah were old, coming on in years” because of the many tribulations they endured, it is still necessary to inform us that even 38 years later Abraham was “old, coming on in years.”

The reason why Abraham was still taking events to heart 38 years later is because the most important events of his life occurred during this period, including the birth of Isaac and the binding of Isaac.

Even though the Torah already told us that Abraham was “coming on in years” at age 100, it repeats this statement when he was 138. Naturally elderly people take things less to heart, either because they are more mature, or simply because they've been through so much already. The Torah wishes to tell

על פי זה יש לבאר מה שכתוב בפרשתנו  
“ואברהם זקן בא בימים” - בהוספה על  
מה שכתוב לפני זה “ואברהם ושרה זקנים  
באים בימים”:

מטבע הדברים, שככל שהאדם הולך  
ומתבגר - מחכים יותר, ובמילא, מגיע  
למסקנה שאין להתרגש ולקחת ללב כל  
מאורע כו', או לפי שטבעו של זקן שכבר  
עבר הרבה בחייו, שאין הדברים שסביבו  
תופסים מקום אצלו<sup>8</sup>.

ולכן, אף שכבר נאמר “ואברהם  
ושרה זקנים באים בימים” מצד ריבוי  
המאורעות שעברו עליהם עד זמן ההוא,  
יש מקום וצורך לחדש שגם לאחר ל”ח  
שנה “אברהם זקן בא בימים”.

ויש לומר בטעם הדבר - מכיון שבינתיים  
היו מאורעות שהיו חשובים ומכריעים  
בחי אברהם הרבה יותר מאשר  
המאורעות בשנות חייו הקודמים - החל  
מהמאורע הכי עיקרי של לידת יצחק עד  
לעקידתו כו'.

us that this wasn't the case with Abraham. He continued to "come on in years" and take everything to heart, even at such an advanced age. The reason for this is that he experienced very important events during this time, such as the binding of Isaac.

## Taking Every Day's Spiritual Meaning to Heart

Student's  
pg. 5

Based on the above explanation of "coming on in years"—that the person "came in to them" and was impacted by them—we can better understand the Zohar's explanation of this expression. The Zohar explains that it means that all of the days of the person's life were completely devoted to Divine service, without missing a single day.

Based on the above, the Zohar's explanation of "coming on in years" shouldn't be seen as just an allusion from the verse. It is based on the literal meaning of the phrase, that Abraham didn't have any days that just passed by. He invested himself into every day, to serve G-d every day as required on that specific day.

Meaning: the simple literal meaning of "coming on in years" is about Abraham's physical life, that the events of every impacted him. The Zohar, as the inner dimension of the Torah, emphasizes the deeper meaning of Abraham's life, his spiritual life and Divine service. This was Abraham's true life, to use the words of the founder of Chabad the Alter Rebbe "the life of a holy person isn't the physical life but the spiritual life." The Zohar therefore explains that Abraham "came on in years" and they left an impact on him because all of his days were filled with Divine service and every day was a "living" day.

על פי פירוש זה ב"בא בימים" (שימי האדם הם באופן ש"נכנס" בהם ופועלים עליו רושם כו') - יובן היטב פירוש הזהר<sup>9</sup> ב"בא בימים" - שכל ימי חייו היו שלמים בעבודת השם, שלא החסיר מלעבוד את השם אפילו יום אחד מימי חייו.

לפי הנ"ל מובן, שפירוש הזהר אינו על דרך הרמז בלבד, אלא הוא מיוסד על הפירוש הפשוט ב"בא בימים", שלא היה יום אצל אברהם שרק חלף ועבר, אלא אברהם בא ונכנס ב"ימיו", לעבוד את השם בכל יום ויום כפי שהיה נדרש בכל יום לפי ענינו.

כלומר: הענין של "בא בימים" לפי פשוטו—טו של מקרא (הנ"ל), מתייחס לחייו הגשמיים של אברהם, שמאורעות כל יום ויום השפיעו עליו וכו'; ואילו בזהר, פנימיות התורה, מודגש התוכן הפנימי של חיי אברהם, שהם חיי הנשמה ועבודת השם שלו, שהם חיי אברהם האמיתיים [ובלשון רבינו הזקן<sup>10</sup> "שחיי הצדיק אינם חיים בשרים כי אם חיים רוחניים"], ולכן מפרש, שזה שאברהם בא ונכנס בכל יום ויום (עד שהיה ניכר עליו הרושם של כל ימי חייו), היינו לפי שכל ימיו היו ממולאים בעבודת השם, באופן שכל יום ויום היה יום "חי"<sup>11</sup>.

(10) תניא אנה"ק ביאור לסי' ז"ך בתחלתו (קמ"ב).  
(11) שלושת הקטעים הללו - מהליקוט המוגה.

(9) ראה זהר פרשתנו קכט, א. זהר ויחי רכא, ב ואילך. רכד, א.  
וראה תו"א פרשתנו טז, א. משפטים עט, ב. ועוד. לק"ש ח"ד ע'  
1194. ח"כ ע' 315 ואילך. וש"נ.



*The simple meaning and the Kabbalistic meaning are intertwined. The Zohar explains the words “coming on in years” in the spiritual sense, that all of Abraham’s days were filled with Torah and mitzvot. This complements the simple explanation that “coming on in years” means that Abraham “came into” his days and took them seriously. Because Abraham took his days seriously he filled them with Torah and mitzvot, and because every moment of his life was infused with holy purpose he took life seriously.*

משיחת שבת פרשת חיי שרה ה'תשמ"ח  
הנחה בלתי מוגה  
תורת מנחם, התשמ"ח, כרך א', עמוד 487 ואילך  
(ומלקוטי שיחות, כרך ל"ה, עמוד 91 ואילך, מוגה)

## **Story** Sichah, 10 Shevat 1965

Something that Reb Michoel would always repeat to the students—perhaps there are those present who heard it from him—is that when studying Chassidut, it cannot remain abstract; one needs to know that those words are intended for them.

He gave an analogy:

There were once yishuvniks, simple Jews who, in order to earn a living, lived in towns with few or no other Jews. With time, being disconnected from Jewish society and with no ability to study in Jewish schools, there were some who, despite their great piety, lacked basic Jewish knowledge and couldn't even read Hebrew.

Once, a yishuvnik received a letter from afar, and since he couldn't read, he asked the melamed to read it to him.

(The custom then was that several yishuvniks banded together and hired a teacher, or melamed, for their children. The teacher would be located somewhere between all the towns so all parents in the area could send their children.)

When the melamed began to read the letter, it turned out that the yishuvnik's father had passed away. When he heard that, the yishuvnik fainted.

Reb Michoel would conclude and tell his students:

It doesn't make sense: The melamed read the letter, and the yishuvnik can't read at all. Logically, the one who could read and understand the letter should have fainted, not

the one hearing it second-hand. But who fainted? The yishuvnik, not the melamed!

The answer is that to the melamed, the news is of a stranger, but to the yishuvnik, it's his father!

The analogy is obvious:

When one studies Chassidut and thinks that it relates to “someone else’s father” - they may learn Chassidut, reading and understanding everything it says perfectly, but they will not faint.

However, one who merely hears their friends learning but realizes that the content is directed at them personally, it is their “father in heaven,” will faint!

\*

*The lesson is simple and powerful. We need to take life seriously. We must understand that everything that happens in our life is of vital importance, something that will inevitably affect us in the strongest way possible.*

*Abraham was very affected by his life, because he took it seriously. He knew there was purpose and meaning, so everything that happened in his life had meaning in his eyes and he took those events to heart. Even at 138 he still took life to heart.*

*We all have a mission and purpose, one we’re meant to fulfill during the course of our lives. Everything that happens to us is of critical importance and we have to take it to heart and act accordingly - like one who reads a letter about their own father, not one who reads it about a stranger.*

## B. The Meaning of Life

### Source 3 Genesis 23:1

Student's  
pg. 7

The life of Sarah was one hundred years and twenty years and seven years; these were the years of the life of Sarah.

וַיְהִי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה מֵאָה שָׁנָה וְעֶשְׂרִים  
שָׁנָה וְשִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים שְׁנֵי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה

Rashi

The years of the life of Sarah: All were identically good.

שְׁנֵי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה: כִּלְכָל שְׁוִיין לְטוֹבָה:

### >> The Rebbe

#### An Entire Life as a Single Unit?

Student's  
pg. 7

The name of this Torah portion is Chayei Sarah, “the life of Sarah.” All of the 127 years of Sarah’s life are summarized with this title, “the life of Sarah.” In the words of Rashi, “all of her years were identically good.”

שם הפרשה הוא - "חיי שרה", כלומר שכל מאה עשרים ושבע השנים של שרה נכללים בשם אחד - "חיי שרה", ובלשון רש"י: "כולן שוין לטובה".

The Torah portion begins with the words “the life of Sarah was.” We can deduce from this that the Torah relates to all of Sarah’s many years of life as a single unit - “the life of Sarah.” As Rashi notes, after listing off the years of Sarah’s life—one hundred years and twenty years and seven years—the Torah repeats the words “[these were] the life of Sarah,” emphasizing that all the years of Sarah’s life were identically good, there was no difference between ages 7, 20, and 100.

Student's  
pg. 7

How can all of Sarah’s 127 years be lumped together under one title as identical? Over the course of these 127 years there were radically different periods. Certainly we can’t compare Sarah’s life in Ur Kasdim and Charan (even though Sarah was occupied with converting the women there to belief in G-d, as Rashi states) to her spiritual status after fulfilling the Divine command to “go out for yourself from your land . . . to the land I will show you,” and then to the apex of her spiritual status when she heard about the binding of Isaac.

ולכאורה אינו מובן: כיצד יכולים לכלול את כל מאה עשרים ושבע השנים ביחד, בשם אחד - "חיי שרה" ("כולן שוין לטובה") - הרי במשך מאה עשרים ושבע השנים היו חילוקים מן הקצה אל הקצה, וכמובן בפשטות שאין להשוות את מעמדה ומצבה של שרה בהיותה ב"אור כשדים" וכן ב"חרן" (אף שגם שם היתה שרה מגיירת את הנשים, כפירוש רש"י על הפסוק "ואת הנפש אשר עשו בחרן") לגבי מעמדה ומצבה לאחר קיום הציווי "לך לך מארצך גו' אל הארץ אשר אראך", ועד לחילוק וריחוק הערך בתכלית

This was a complete transformation, from one extreme to the other. How then can we summarize all of Sarah's 127 years with the single title "the life of Sarah"?

## What Do You Live With?

Student's  
pg. 8

The explanation is that "the life of Sarah" refers to the matters with which Sarah "lived," the matters that energized her. These were identical throughout all the years of her life, and that is why all of her 127 years are given one title.

*"The life of Sarah" doesn't refer to Sarah's physical lifespan, but to the meaning that filled her life, the things that she lived with. Her entire life she lived with the same content, the same meaning.*

Student's  
pg. 8

Even a simple Jew understands that the true content and meaning of Sarah's life didn't lie in eating breakfast and lunch. These weren't the things she lived with. Her true life certainly wasn't expressed when she was in the homes of Pharaoh and Abimelech, because the fact that great kings praised her beauty and attempted to take her for themselves didn't mean anything to her. Moreover, it caused her indescribable pain and suffering - what business does a Jewish woman have with a non-Jew, and certainly a woman like our matriarch Sarah!

The content and meaning of Sarah's life was expressed in the matters Rashi specifies in our Torah portion: "candles burning from one Shabbat eve to the next,

- בין מעמדה ומצבה בעת ששמעה אודות "עקידת יצחק", שזהו ריחוק הערך מן הקצה אל הקצה. ואם כן, איך יכולים לכלול את כל משך מאה עשרים ושבע שני שרה בשם אחד - "חיי שרה"!?!

והביאור בזה: "חיי שרה" מתייחס לענינים שבהם הייתה החיות של שרה, כלומר, הענינים שבהם שרה חיה, וענין זה היה באופן שווה במשך כל מאה עשרים ושבע שנות חייה (כדלקמן), ולכן נכללים כל מאה עשרים ושבע השנים בשם אחד - "חיי שרה".

כי הנה, אפילו יהודי פשוט מבין שהתוכן והמשמעות האמיתית של "חיי שרה" - לא התבטא באכילת "ארוחת בוקר" או "ארוחת צהריים", וכיוצא בזה - לא בענינים אלו "חיה" שרה. ופשוט שהענין של "חיי שרה" לא התבטא בזה שהיתה בביתו של פרעה ובביתו של אבימלך, כי העובדה שמלך גדול (כפרעה ואבימלך) מהלל ומשבח את יפיה ועד שלוקח אותה אליו - הנה לא זו בלבד שענין זה לא תפס מקום אצלה כלל, אלא אדרבה: ענין זה גרם לה לצער וסבל שאין כמוהו - כי איזה עסק יש ל"בת ישראל" עם גוי? על-אחת-כמה-וכמה כאשר מדובר אודות שרה אמנו!

במה התבטא אפוא התוכן והמשמעות האמיתית של "חיי שרה" - הרי זה מפורש בפירוש רש"י בפרשתנו<sup>12</sup>: "נר דלוק מערב שבת לערב שבת

a blessing in her dough, and a protective cloud of the Divine presence hovering over her tent.” These three matters represent the three commandments that are unique to Jewish women.

This explains how all of Sarah’s life can be summarized with one title. Over all the years of Sarah’s life, throughout all the different circumstances she found herself in, the core value that she lived with was constant. The true meaning of her life was always “candles burning from one Shabbat eve to the next, a blessing in her dough, and a protective cloud of the Divine presence hovering over her tent,” the three pillars every Jewish home stands on.

*The meaning in Sarah’s life was Shabbat candles, the laws of kosher, and family purity - the three pillars of the Jewish home. This was always the focal point of her life, through all of its stages: youth, middle-age, and old age.*

## What Is The Focal Point Of My Life?

Student’s  
pg.9

This is the lesson we learn from the Torah portion of Chayei Sarah. Every Jewish woman, even one who grew up distant from Jewish observance, knows that her ancestor was our matriarch Sarah.

It is clear to all, even to non-Jews, that the purpose of Sarah’s life didn’t lie in the matters that were of greatest importance to the non-Jewish women of the kingdoms of Pharaoh and Abimelech. To these women, the most important thing was wearing a beautiful dress and very high heels, etc. Sarah, by contrast, found her purpose in her

וברכה מצויה בעיסה, וענן קשור על האוהל” - שלוש המצוות המיוחדות לנשי ישראל.

ועל פי זה מובן כיצד כוללים את כל מאה עשרים ושבע השנים בשם אחד - “חיי שרה” - כי בכל שנות חייה של שרה, בכל שינויי המצבים שבמשך שנים אלו, היה העניין של “חיי שרה” באופן שווה, כלומר, שבכל הזמנים כולם היה התוכן והמשמעות האמיתית של “חיי שרה” - “נר דלוק מערב שבת לערב שבת, וברכה מצויה בעיסה, וענן קשור על האוהל” - שלושת העמודים שעליהם עומד ונשען כל בית ישראל.

וזוהי ההוראה הנלמדת מפרשת השבוע “חיי שרה”: כל בת ישראל, אפילו זו שנמצאת במעמד ומצב של תינוקת שנשבתה כו’ - יודעת היא שסבתה של סבתה היא “שרה אמנו”.

ומכיון שמובן בפשטות (אפילו לאינם יהודים) שהתוכן והעניין של “חיי שרה” לא התבטא באותם עניינים שבהם שקועים וחיים נשי אומות העולם אשר במלכותו של פרעה ואבימלך (לבישת שמלה יפה, נעליים בעלי עקב גבוה ביותר, וכיוצא בזה), כי אם בעניינים נעלים יותר -

Shabbat candles and other mitzvot. This is a clear directive for every Jewish woman, that as a daughter of Sarah the core of her life should be the three pillars of Sarah's life: "candles burning from one Shabbat eve to the next," "a blessing in her dough"—referring to the laws of kosher food—and "a protective cloud of the Divine presence hovering over her tent," referring to the laws of family purity and modesty.

Even if a woman has for a time been lacking in this respect and not living like Sarah, she has the ability to change her life and elevate herself to the level of conduct of Sarah, her forebear.

*There's nothing wrong with dressing well and wearing heels, of course. On the contrary, Jewish sources emphasize the value of a woman's beauty. The point is not to be immersed in those external, materialistic matters, they shouldn't be the focal point of one's life. Every Jewish woman and girl knows that the focus of Sarah's life was spirituality, not materialism, and they should all strive to emulate her.*

"נר דלוק מערב שבת לערב שבת וכו'" - הרי זו הוראה פשוטה לכל בת ישראל, בתה של "שרה אמנו", שה"חיים" שלה צריכים להיות בשלושת העניינים שבהם התבטא כללות העניין של "חיי שרה": "נר דלוק מערב שבת לערב שבת", "ברכה מצויה בעיסה" - כשרות האכילה ושתיה, ו"ענן קשור על האוהל" - טהרת המשפחה, וכללות ענין הצניעות (כיסוי הראש וכו').

ולכן, גם אם היה משך זמן מסוים שהיה חסר אצלה בהנהגה המתאימה לרוח של "חיי שרה" - ביכולתה לשנות מעמד ומצב זה, ולבוא לדרגה כזו שהנהגתה תהיה בדוגמת ההנהגה של "חיי שרה".

# C. Fixing the Past

## >> The Rebbe

### Influencing Others

Student's  
pg. 10

Not only is it possible to change one's future conduct, it is even possible to repair one's past conduct. This can be achieved by acting with love for fellow Jews, specifically by influencing another Jewish woman to improve on her past conduct.

In Torah Ohr the Alter Rebbe quotes the Zohar's teaching on the words "Abraham was old, coming on in years" - "in these elevated days." This means that all days need to be complete, "elevated." This raises the question, what are we to do with the days that were spent in negative circumstances, similar to the period that Sarah spent in the homes of Pharaoh and Abimelech?

*The Zohar says that "coming on in years [lit. days]" refers to special, holy days. Meaning Abraham and Sarah's days were all filled with meaning, complete with mitzvot. But what happened on those days in Sarah's life when she was subject to negative circumstances? Were those days also filled with light and meaning? They certainly can't be considered complete and illuminated days. How then can it be said about Sarah that she was "coming on in years?"*

Student's  
pg. 11

The answer is that when we act with love for our fellow Jews and influence those who are in an undesirable state to correct their ways, G-d acts with us "measure for measure." In reaction to our helping someone else reach a better place spiritually, G-d will likewise repair and complete all our own past deficiencies.

יתירה מזו: לא זו בלבד שביכולתה לשנות את מעמדה ומצבה מכאן ולהבא, אלא ביכולתה גם לתקן את מעמדה ומצבה בעבר - על ידי כללות העניין של אהבת ישראל ואחדות ישראל, כלומר, על ידי זה שהיא פועלת על בת ישראל נוספת להעמידה בקרן אורה (תמורת מעמדה ומצבה הקודם).

ובהקדים:

בתורה אור בפרשתנו מובא מאמר הזהר על הפסוק "ואברהם זקן בא בימים" - "באינון יומין עילאין כו" [= באותם ימים עליונים], כלומר, שכל הימים צריכים להיות בשלימותם.

על פי זה נשאלת השאלה: מה עושים עם אותם ימים שבהם היו במעמד ומצב בלתי רצוי - בדוגמת מצבה של שרה בבית פרעה ובבית אבימלך!?

והתשובה לדבר: כאשר עוסקים בהשפעה על הזולת באופן של אהבת ישראל ואחדות ישראל, ופועלים על זה שנמצא במעמד ומצב בלתי-רצוי ומעמידים אותו בקרן אורה - הנה מכיון שמדתו של הקב"ה היא "מדה כנגד מדה", מתנהג הקב"ה עמו באופן כזה, ועל ידי זה הרי הוא מתקן ומשלים את כל עניני העבר.

As our sages say “you restored the soul of the poor person, I will restore your soul.” “Measure for measure” is a mode of conduct that is logically imperative, “should the judge of the entire world not act justly?”

ובלשון חכמינו ז"ל: אתה החיית את נפש העני - חייך שאני מחזיר לך נפש תחת נפש כו'. ובפרט שכללות ההנהגה באופן של "מדה כנגד מדה" מחויבת היא גם על פי השכל - כי "השופט כל הארץ לא יעשה משפט" (בתמיה).

*The answer is that when Abraham and Sarah influenced others to fill their lives with light, it rectified those days in their lives that were lacking in light. G-d acts with us measure for measure: When we restore the soul of a poor person, G-d restores our soul. When we fill others' days with light, G-d fills our days with light.*

*So even if we unfortunately have had days of darkness in our lives we shouldn't lose hope. We can still fix them. We can help others illuminate their days, and in return G-d will illuminate our dark days.*

משיחת שבת פרשת חיי שרה, מבה"ח כסלו, ה'תשמ"ג

הנחה בלתי מוגה.

תורת מנחם ה'תשמ"ג כרך א' ע' 500 ואילך

## Making up for Neglecting Family Purity

*The Rebbe wrote this point in connection with Family Purity.*

*A woman wrote to the Rebbe with a question close to her heart. Her children were born before she became more observant and she wasn't careful with the laws of Family Purity. Now, after learning their significance, how could she make up for the past?*

*The Rebbe's response is incredible:*

### Source 4 Igrot Kodesh, vol. 20 p. 97

You write as though this failing cannot be rectified, which is contrary to a fundamental principle of our holy Torah, that nothing can stand in the way of repentance.

"...כֹּתֶבֶת שְׂפָאֵלוֹ אֵין בְּזָה לְתַקֵּן וְכוּ', שְׁהָרִי זֶהוּ הַפֶּךְ יְסוּד אֲמוּנָתֵנוּ וְתוֹרָתֵנוּ תוֹרַת חַיִּים, שְׂאֵין לָךְ דְּבַר הָעוֹמֵד בְּפְנֵי הַתְּשׁוּבָה.



**Student's**  
pg. 11

Most importantly, it is clear that the way to rectify a negative is through something positive, good, and holy, and not G-d forbid by another negative matter of sadness, or worse, despondence - this is completely out of the question.

What you should do practically is try to explain the laws of Family Purity to your friends and others in your area.

*Here too, the solution is the same. In order to rewrite the past, to turn darkness to light, there is only one method: Bringing light to another. In that merit, G-d will brighten our lives and futures, and even retroactively change the past*

ועוד וגם זה עקר, פשוט שענין בלתי רצוי, התקון שלו הוא על ידי ענין רצוי וטוב וקדוש, ולא חס ושלום להוסיף בעוד ענין בלתי רצוי, וענין העצבות, ועל אחת כמה וכמה היאוש – הרי הם מדברים המשלים בשליה מחלטת.

ובנוגע לפעל, תשתדל בהסברת הענין של חקי ודיני טהרת המשפחה בסביבתה בין מכירותיה וידידותיה"