

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

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WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

PARASHAH

FROM WHERE?

Rabbi Nison Alpert on the Sidrah

וַיָּבֹא אַבְרָהָם לְסַפֵּד לְשָׂרָה וּלְבַכְתָּהּ.

And Avraham came to eulogize Sarah and to bewail her (23:2).

From where had he come? R' Levi said that he was coming from the burial of his father Terach to that of Sarah. R' Yosi objected: "But Terach's burial preceded Sarah's by two years! Rather, from where had Avraham come? He had come from Mount Moriah. And Sarah had died due to her distress. And that is why the Torah juxtaposes Akeidas Yitzchak to the words 'and these were the days of Sarah'" (Bereishis Rabbah, Parashas Noach).

The verse emphasizes that Avraham "came," but fails to tell us from where he had come and, more importantly, why this "coming" was of sufficient importance to merit being mentioned in the Torah. Obviously, since Avraham was now in Chevron, he had to have "come" from some other place. Why, then, does the Torah need to tell us? It seems to be superfluous.

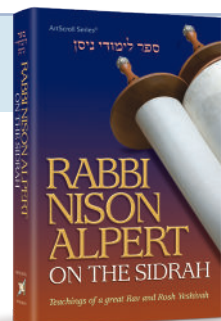
The Midrash in Bereishis Rabbah, quoted above, deals with this question. R' Levi said he was coming from burying his father, Terach. R' Yosi objected, saying that Terach had died two years earlier, and argued that he must have been coming from Mount Moriah, where he had nearly brought his son Yitzchak as an offering. Sarah's death was brought on by the distress she felt upon hearing of this incident.

Upon thinking about what it was that led each of these sages to give the answers they did, I would like to tell you that Hashem has opened my eyes to a wonderful allusion that explains the source for both opinions.

The phrase that raised the question here is וַיָּבֹא אַבְרָהָם. Let us separate the phrase into its two component words: וַיָּבֹא and אַבְרָהָם. Now let us read each of these words backwards. We get the word אָבִיו (his father) from וַיָּבֹא, and

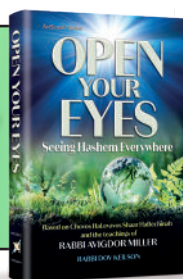
אַבְרָהָם (he came from the mountain) from אָבִיו. Now let us look again at the two opinions in light of the observation that we have just made. R' Levi reasons that only the word וַיָּבֹא is superfluous, since the Torah had to mention Avraham but did not need to tell us that he had come. R' Levi reversed that superfluous word and concluded that Avraham's coming was connected with his father.

R' Yosi, however, thought that the two-year gap made the first interpretation, based on וַיָּבֹא, implausible. He therefore looked at the next word, אַבְרָהָם, and concluded that he must have "come" from what had happened on the mountain, Mount Moriah. 📖



Rav Nison Alpert

WATCH A FASCINATING INTERVIEW
WITH THE AUTHOR OF *OPEN YOUR EYES*,
RABBI DOV KEILSON
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ARTSCROLL PUBLICATIONS

וַיְבִאָהּ יִצְחָק הָאֵלֶּלָה שָׂרָה אִמּוֹ.

And Yitzchak brought her into the tent of Sarah, his mother (24:67).

After Eliezer returned with Rivkah, the Torah tells us, “*And Yitzchak brought her into the tent of Sarah his mother, and he took Rivkah as his wife.*” Targum Onkelos explains that Yitzchak saw that Rivkah’s behavior paralleled his mother’s, and only then did he take her as his wife. In the previous *pasuk*, the Torah states that Eliezer told Yitzchak everything that had happened to him.



Rav Shlomo Wolbe

Rashi explains that Eliezer recounted the numerous miracles that occurred in the course of his finding a mate for Yitzchak: the earth contracted to allow him to arrive at his desired destination quickly, and immediately after the

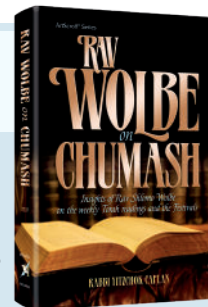
conclusion of his *tefillah*, he was answered in an astonishing way. If so, what more was needed to prove that Yitzchak and Rivkah were literally a match made in heaven? After hearing about the miracles that brought

THE DECIDING FACTOR MUST STILL BE THE PERSON’S MIDDOS.

him his prospective match, why did Yitzchak feel compelled to examine Rivkah’s actions before agreeing to marry her?

The answer is that even if there are earth-shattering events that all point in the direction of a specific match, the deciding factor must

still be the person’s *middos*. At the beginning of the *parashah*, when Eliezer wished to find a proper wife for Yitzchak, he prepared a test to assess her *middos*. The Torah true way of checking into a *shidduch* is by investigating how the prospective spouse conducts himself or herself. Like many other things, miracles may make us lose sight of what is truly important. We must always bear in mind that “*Derech eretz kadmah laTorah*” — good *middos* precede and are the foundation of the Torah. They are the foundation of the entire Jewish nation as well, which is why our *Avos* sought good *middos* when looking for a mate with whom to build their families and all future generations (*Shiurei Chumash, Parashas Chayei Sarah* 24:66, quoting the Brisker Rav) 📖



The *baal emunah* always conducts himself in a dignified manner. He lives with Hashem in a different sphere.

Avraham Avinu was the first to believe in Hashem, and the people of the world held him in high esteem. Avraham did not just live with *emunah*. He taught *emunah*.

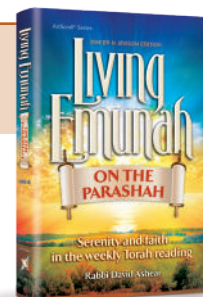
The *pesukim* in this week’s *parashah* go on at great length describing the mission of Eliezer, the servant of Avraham, when he was sent to find a wife for Yitzchak. We find that he practiced *emunah* the entire time, following in the footsteps of Avraham. When he arrived at the place he was searching for, the first thing Eliezer did was pray to Hashem for success. Later, when he saw that Hashem brought him the perfect girl, the *pasuk* says that he immediately bowed to Hashem in gratitude for helping him. Then he went to Rivkah’s parents’ house to ask permission for her to become the wife of Yitzchak. He related how clearly Hashem showed him that this was the right girl. And then he said, “If you agree to let her

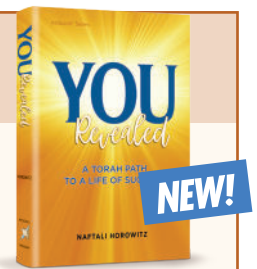
go, please tell me. And if not, I will be on my way.”

He spoke with great *emunah*, he did his *hishtadlus*, he tried to convince them, and then he simply requested a response so that he could move forward. When he was told that they were going to allow Rivkah to go with him, he immediately bowed all the way to the ground to thank Hashem. He knew that everything was being orchestrated by Him, and therefore, He should receive the first thank you.

Eliezer was not embarrassed to thank Hashem in the presence of other people. The *baal emunah* is never embarrassed to serve Hashem, because he knows Hashem is the One Who counts most and He always comes first.

We should all strive to live on a more elevated level, demonstrating that Hashem stands behind us and it is up to us to bring glory to His Name. 📖





Several years ago, when my wife and children had already moved upstate for the summer, I arrived home late one night from learning, as I tend to do when I'm coming to an empty house. I headed upstairs and, as my dentist always advised, I went to brush my teeth before going to sleep. There on the bathroom vanity sat a tube of toothpaste that looked like it had seen better days. The thought of *shlepping* down two flights at that late hour to get a fresh tube from our storage room didn't appeal to me. I squeezed the tube and enough came out to do the trick.

The next morning, I needed to get to *Shacharis* on time, so again I squeezed, and out came toothpaste. I made a mental note to go to the storage room that night before heading upstairs, and of course I forgot. Again I squeezed, this time even harder, and again enough came out. Next morning...you guessed, *Shacharis*.

Now I began to challenge myself. How long could I keep getting toothpaste out of a tube that, in my estimation, was already depleted two nights earlier? The answer turned out to be more than a week!

When that tube finally gave out (I won't even tell you what it looked like when I was done with it), I stopped and thought: Imagine how much toothpaste lies in the landfills of this country, inside tubes that people regarded as empty when in truth there was plenty left inside. Perhaps enough to meet our country's tooth-brushing needs for several years. All it took on my part was a bit more work. Squeezing.

Why am I telling you this story? Because I quickly realized that this wasn't a lesson about toothpaste at all. Toothpaste costs \$3.00 a tube, so wasting some is not a big deal. This is a lesson about you and me. I

thought about how much untapped potential lies in the cemeteries of our nation, about how much more people are capable of accomplishing. Yet, that greatness remains buried inside them, because they never squeezed it out of themselves. Perhaps at one point they decided, "This is all that I am and all that I can be" or, "There are great people in this world, but clearly I wasn't meant to be one of them."

Sometimes, *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* squeezes us because He knows what is inside of us and wants us to bring it forth into the world. However, our lives are far better when we learn to squeeze ourselves. Growing is difficult, yet the rewards are eternal. Changing ourselves takes perseverance and hard work, but there is no great-

SOMETIMES, HAKADOSH BARUCH HU SQUEEZES US BECAUSE HE KNOWS WHAT IS INSIDE OF US AND WANTS US TO BRING IT FORTH INTO THE WORLD.

er feeling than that of self-actualization, the achievement of one's full potential, in any given area of life.

You have the potential to leave this world at the end of a good, long life, with the knowledge that you left none of your capabilities untapped. The gift of life is so very precious, priceless indeed, and it should therefore never be wasted. 📖



Throughout *Tehillim*, David HaMelech mentions events from his past, including the moment he was born, his mother's care for him, the dangers that Hashem lovingly spared him from — all these were on his lips always. He never forgot and never stopped thanking Hashem.

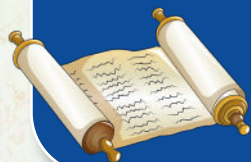
Rav Avigdor Miller followed in David HaMelech's footsteps.

When Rav Miller was sitting *shivah* for his brother, after sitting for *nichum aveilim* for a number of

HE WANTED TO SPEND THOSE EXTRA HOURS THANKING HASHEM.

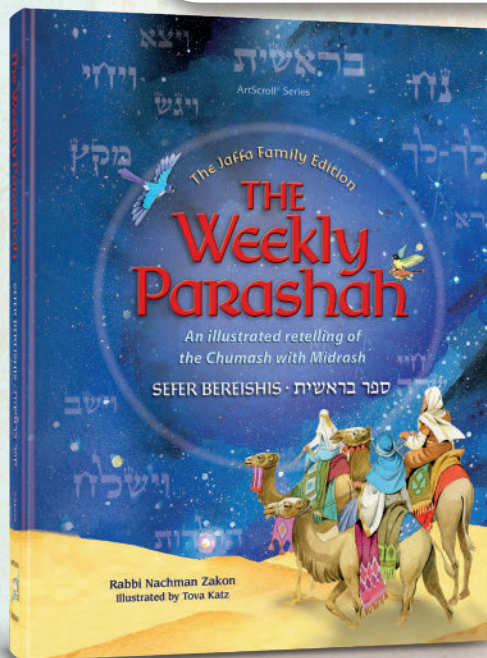
hours, he went into a side room to be by himself. Knowing that he was not allowed to learn, family members wondered why he wanted to

be alone. Rav Miller explained that he wanted to spend more time thanking Hashem throughout the year, but he was too busy learning and teaching Torah. Now that he could not learn, he wanted to spend those extra hours reviewing his life and thanking Hashem for every last kindness He had performed for him. 📖



Parashah for Children

פרשת חיי שרה



Me'aras HaMachpeilah

- ▶ It's the oldest Jewish cemetery in the world — over 3700 years old!
- ▶ The first man and woman to be created, Adam and Chavah, are buried there as well.
- ▶ Eisav's head is buried there.
- ▶ For 700 years the Arabs did not allow Jews to enter Me'aras HaMachpeilah. In 1967 the Jews conquered Chevron — including Me'aras HaMachpeilah — in the Six Day War with the Arabs. We are fortunate that our generation can go and pray inside.
- ▶ The big building where people pray is actually built over the cave where the Founding Fathers and Mothers are buried. The entrance to the cave has been sealed for many centuries and is below ground.
- ▶ It's one of our holiest places.
- ▶ All souls pass through this cave on the way to heaven.



In a Sefer Torah, why is the letter “kaf” in the word “v’livkosah” (“to cry for her”) written smaller than all the other letters?

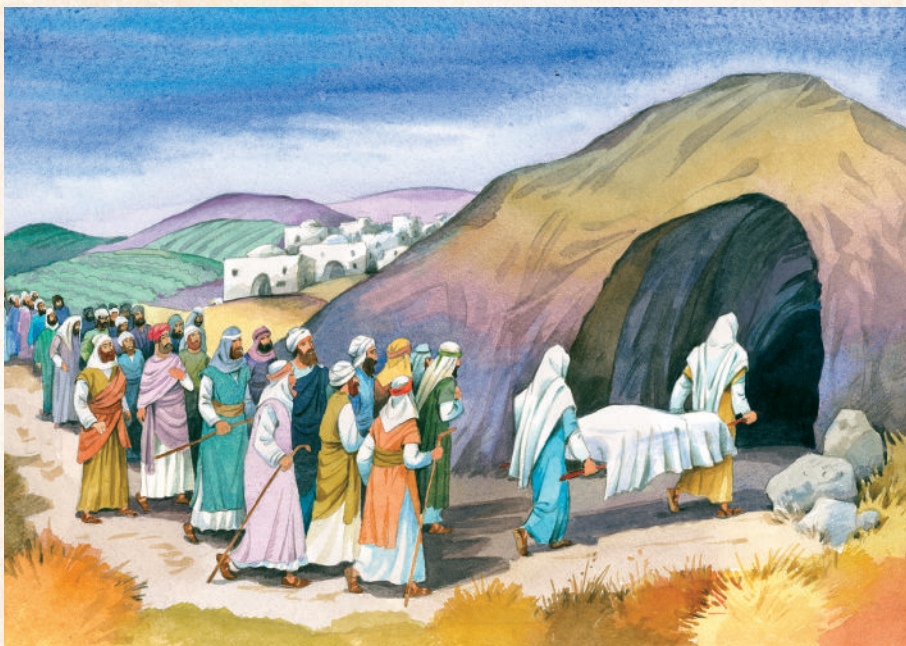
To show us that Avraham cried only a little at his wife's funeral.

Burial

When Avraham entered Me'aras HaMachpeilah with Sarah's body, something very unusual happened. Adam and Chavah came back to life and got out of their graves!

They wouldn't let Avraham bury Sarah. They said, “Sarah did so much good in her life. If she is buried here we will be so embarrassed. We weren't like her. We sinned and brought death to the world.”

It wasn't until Avraham promised to pray for them and ask that Hashem should forgive them that they let Avraham bury his beloved wife, Sarah Imeinu.



The city of Chevron has another name: Kiryas Arba, which means “the city of four.” It was called that because four pairs of holy people are buried in the city: Adam and Chavah, Avraham and Sarah, Yitzchak and Rivkah, Yaakov and Leah. Also, because of four giants that lived in Chevron.

The Jewish city today that is built near the Arab city of Chevron is called Kiryat Arba.