

Reflections of Redemption

Essays on the Weekly Torah Reading and Moshiach,
Based on the talks of the
Lubavitcher Rebbe,
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Reprinted for Parshat Chayei Sarah, 5781
(Vol. 5)



VAAD L'HAFOTZAS SICHOS
788 EASTERN PARKWAY • BROOKLYN, NY 11213
5781 • 2020

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Horav **Schneur Zalman Halevi** עי"ה
ben Horav **Yitzchok Elchonon Halevi** הי"ד
Shagalov

Passed away on 21 Tamuz, 5766

Reb **Dovid Asniel** ben Reb **Eliyahu** עי"ה
Ekman

Passed away on 5 Sivan - Erev Shavuot, 5765

Mrs. **Devora Rivka** bas Reb **Yosef Eliezer** עי"ה
Marenburg

Passed away on the second day
of Rosh Chodesh Adar, 5766

Reb **Yitzchok Moshe** (Ian)
ben Reb **Dovid Asniel** עי"ה

Ekman (Santiago, Chile)

Passed away on the 24th day of Shevat, 5769

ת. נ. צ. ג. ה.

AND IN HONOR OF

Mrs. **Esther Shaindel** bas **Fraidel Chedva** שתחיל
Shagalov

DEDICATED BY

Rabbi & Mrs. **Yosef Y.** and **Gittel Rochel** שיחי
Shagalov

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Printed in the U.S.A.

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by
Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann

Chayei Sarah

INFLUENCING THE NATIONS

The miraculous birth of Isaac enabled Sarah and Abraham to influence the nations of the world. The two ways they influenced the world anticipate how Moshiach will affect the world.

After the death of Sarah, the Torah tells us that Abraham took another wife, Keturah, who bore him six sons. There is something rather puzzling about this. We know that the birth of Isaac – which occurred when Abraham was one hundred years old – was a miraculous event. In fact, the Torah goes to great length to emphasize the miraculous nature of Isaac’s birth, repeating on several occasions the wonderment of Abraham and Sarah when told the news, the advanced age of Abraham and Sarah, etc.

Yet, when Abraham has six more sons – forty years later – there is no indication that it’s a miracle or at all unusual. If the birth of Isaac when Abraham is one hundred is a miracle, how much more so the birth of six more sons when Abraham is one hundred forty! We would expect some indication – either from Abraham’s perspective, as when he laughed when told of Isaac’s birth, or from the Torah’s perspective – that this too is unusual. But there is nothing beyond the statement of the fact.

We must therefore ask, why doesn’t the Torah focus on the miraculous nature of the birth of Keturah’s children? Why only Isaac, the son of Sarah? The answer, surprisingly, includes an important insight about the times of Moshiach.

When Isaac was born, Sarah remarks that others will rejoice with her. Rashi, foremost of Biblical commentators, explains that the

blessing and miracle of Isaac's birth brought with it many blessings and miracles: many barren women were remembered with Sarah, many sick people were healed on that day, many prayers were answered, and there was much joy in the world. The birth of Isaac brought salvation and rejoicing to the world at large.

Because Isaac was born, Sarah became the agent for and source of miracles and blessings for many other people. In the same way, the miracle of Isaac's birth caused Abraham to experience other miracles, namely, the birth of six more sons forty years later.

There is another parallel which, as we shall see, is very significant. Those who benefited from Sarah – the multitude that shared in her miracle and blessing – were not Jewish. In the same way, the six sons of Abraham from Keturah – who were born as a result of Isaac's birth – also were not Jewish. In other words, the birth of Isaac, the link to the Jewish people, enabled his parents to influence and benefit the rest of the world.

Still, there are essential differences between Sarah and Abraham in this regard. The first difference is *when* the world benefited. The extension of Sarah's blessing and miracle occurred immediately. When she gave birth, other previously barren women also gave birth; on that day the sick were healed, etc. The extension of Abraham's blessing and miracle to the nations of the world was delayed. In fact, it happened forty years later, with the birth of the six non-Jewish nations.

The second difference is *how* the benefit came about. In Sarah's case, the effect was automatic, requiring no further action on her part: as she was blessed, so automatically the nations were blessed. They benefited as a natural consequence of her situation. On the other hand, in order for the nations to benefit from Abraham's miracle, another miracle was required. The blessing required a separate action on the part of Abraham.

Clearly, the birth of Isaac was a catalyst in Abraham and Sarah's relationship to the world. Isaac is unique because he was the first child born as a Jew. His birth - and its consequences - serves as a paradigm for the birth of the Jewish people - and the consequences thereof. Specifically, one of the fundamental aspects of Isaac's birth - and therefore the birth of the Jewish people at Sinai, with the giving of the Torah - was its effect on the nations of the world. That effect has two aspects, one connected with the miracles associated with Abraham, one connected with the miracles associated with Sarah.

Now, it's well known that there are seven Noachide commandments - seven commandments that apply to all mankind. According to Maimonides, Moses was instructed by G-d to compel the nations to accept these seven commandments. Further, any non-Jew who accepts and observes the seven Noachide commandments is a righteous gentile, and has a share in the World to Come. However, his acceptance must be based on the fact that G-d commanded them in the Torah and knowledge of them came through Moses.

Since the Torah and its mitzvos were given solely to the Jewish people, we may well ask why the Jewish people have to compel the nations of the world to accept the Noachide commandments, or why the non-Jew must observe them because they are commanded in the Torah.

The question may be answered thus: because Creation exists for the sake of Israel and for the sake of Torah, after the birth of the Jewish people and the giving of the Torah, every commandment to the world at large must be through the mediation of Israel and the Torah.

Looking more closely at Maimonides, we see that there are two ways in which the Jewish people can get the nations to accept the

seven commandments incumbent upon them. On the one hand, the Jewish people can compel the nations (verbally as well as physically) to accept the commandments. Or, the influence may be indirect, so that the nations recognize on their own the necessity of keeping their seven mitzvos, since they were also given by G-d in the Torah.

These two methods, compelling and persuading, have a role in the times of Moshiach as well. Maimonides explains that Moshiach, after the ingathering of the Jewish people, will correct the world, so that so that all the peoples of the world will serve G-d together. Later, Maimonides says that in the times of Moshiach there will be neither hunger nor jealousy, etc., and the business of the world will be to know G-d.

In the first case, Moshiach compels the nations to acknowledge G-d's sovereignty and presence; in the second, as a result of the tranquility and security of the Jews, the nations recognize the G-dliness in the world on their own.

These two methods parallel the different types of miracles that accompanied Abraham and Sarah as a result of the miraculous birth of Isaac. Abraham, being the father of many nations (which is what the word "Abraham" means) had to be directly involved, compelling the nations over the course of time to acknowledge G-d's sovereignty. Sarah, on the other hand, was a ruler (the name "Sarah" meaning princess, in a general sense), removed, like a monarch, from a direct connection. The effect of her miracle followed automatically, like a royal decree, without her involvement or interference.

And at the end of exile, with the coming of Moshiach, this fundamental purpose of the birth of Isaac will finally be perfected. Then, since the revelation of G-dliness to the Jewish people will be complete, their influence on and recognition by the nations of the

world will be a necessary consequence, so that "the world will be filled with knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the ocean bed."

(Based on Likkutei Sichos 35, pp. 94-100)

IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR DEAR MOTHER

Mrs. Matil bat Reb Volf Ber עייה Chira

Passed away on 23 Mar-Cheshvan, 5777

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