



GROWTH

At The

SHABBAT TABLE

PARSHAT CHAYE SARAH

The Trap

The *Netivot Shalom* has a fascinating piece on this parsha. He starts with a number of questions. Firstly, why does the parsha relate the years of Sarah's life as "100 years, 20 years, and 7 years"? Why not just tell us 127? Furthermore, when the Torah mentions that Avraham mourned Sarah, it says "*velivkotah*" with a small letter *chaf*, from which Chazal derive that he only cried minimally. Why did he only cry a little, and for what reason did the Torah relate this? Moreover, Rashi tells us that "once she heard the news that her son was almost slaughtered, Sarah's soul departed this world." Why was the *nisayon* of the *akeda* too much for her to bear? Chazal tell us that Sarah was an even greater prophet than Avraham, and Avraham passed the test!

The *Netivot Shalom* offers an insight that provides clarity. As we know, one of the *yetzer hard's* tactics is to make a person regret having done a mitzvah or having passed a test. When a person falls into this trap, he loses reward for the mitzvah he did, since he regretted it. In this way, Satan has the last laugh.

Rashi was not saying that Sarah died *because* of the *akeda*, as indeed, she was on an even higher level than Avraham. Rather, she simply died after she happened to have been told the news. That moment just happened to already be "her time to go." However, the Satan used this as an opening to get his last laugh. Taking advantage of the circumstances, he tried to make it appear that Sarah died *because* Avraham passed the test of the *akeda*, so that Avraham should regret his great mitzvah. Nevertheless, Avraham stood strong and passed the test – he had no regrets. He knew he did the right thing, and that Sarah's time had inevitably come.

This answers all the questions posed above. The Torah emphasizes the years of Sarah's life to indicate that her life was complete – i.e. the *akeda* wasn't really the cause of her death. And Avraham merely cried a little to show that he was not regretting his mitzvah like the *yetzer hara* wanted him to; the tears he shed were just to mourn Sarah alone, and not his actions. And, finally, being that her death wasn't actually due to the *akeda*, Sarah indeed did not end up failing the test.

And thanks to Avraham not regretting his incredible mitzvah, the *zechut* of *akedat Yitzchak* remains for his descendants to this day. Just imagine how catastrophic a moment of regret would have been...

Refuah Sheleimah, b'toch she'ar cholei Yisrael:

Ariel Ben Frida Rachamim Ben Shifra Nina Bat Fenya Frida Bat Yaffa
Gabriela Bat Leah Miriam Bat Bakol Yosef Haim Ben Elana Chana Bat Malka
Daniel Ben Shoshana Ariella Bat Hila Yitzhak Ben Naama Menachem Ben Miriam

A Personal Angel

R' YY Jacobson recounted a moving story of Sol Teichman, an extremely kind and generous Jew with a heart of gold who passed away recently and was loved by all who knew him in Los Angeles, where he lived.

Once, someone asked him, "Sol, why are you always giving everybody? Why does no one leave your home empty-handed?" He proceeded to share a personal, touching incident. "I came from Munkacs. In 1944, we were sent in cattle cars to Auschwitz. I was waiting on line, with countless other suffering Jews. I didn't know that at the end of the line, there was a selection, and that Joseph Mengele, yimach shemo, sent some Jews to the right and others to the left. A bearded man wearing a kippah approached me; I've never met him before in my life. He asked me where I'm from. 'Munkacs,' I replied. 'When were you born?' he asked me. I told him I was born in 1927. 'Na,' he shrugged. 'You were born in 1925.' I confusingly corrected him: 'No, no, I was born in 1927.' The man exclaimed, 'I remember your brit milah! You were born in 1925!' I corrected him once again, after which he retorted, 'How do you know?!' I explained to him that this was what my father had told me. 'He made a mistake... or maybe you didn't hear your father correctly. I was there when you were born in Munkacs – you were born in 1925.' I found myself staring at the man in complete bewilderment as he argued with me about my own birthday! At some point, he reiterated: 'Trust me... you were born in 1925. And now, I'm going to ask you the question again. When were you born?' I finally told him: '1925.' He looked me in the eye and said, 'Good. Remember, you were born in 1925.' Shortly thereafter, he disappeared. I then found myself standing before the Angel of Death himself. He looked at me, and asked me, 'When were you born?' I told him I was born in 1925. He then motioned with his thumb for me to go to the right, where I was taken to the barracks to work. A few hours later, I discovered that those who were born in 1927 or later were automatically and immediately sent to the gas chambers. I realized that this man, who I've never met before and claimed to have been at my brit, was literally the angel who had saved my life. I'm only here today, and have merited to even build a family, because of him."

Sol then remarked, "And some time ago, I was thinking: what is my wish for myself in my own life? I said to myself: 'I had an angel who appeared at my feet in Auschwitz, and raised me from the brink of death to life. I still don't know who that person was, but it's almost irrelevant. For me, he was an angel.' I then said to myself: 'I want to be such an angel for other people. Just like I had an angel, who, in those bleak and dark moments, was there for me, I want to be that angel for other people so that when they think back about the greatest moments of their lives, they should know that they, too, had an angel save their lives.' That's when I made the decision: nobody will leave my home without having first received encouragement, love, and help, whether it be financial, emotional, or other. I want to be that angel for others, as I have had an angel there for me..."

"Were you just born Jewish, or were you born to be a Jew?"