

Parashat Chayei Sarah-The Mystery of the Imunot [the Mothers]



Introduction: Today's Parashat strangely enough is given the name which means "**the Life of Sarah.**" However, it begins with the fact that Sarah has just died. What then is this Parashat trying to convey to us? What we come to see in this reading is that the effect of a righteous life endures beyond death. Sarah's life was filled with difficulty, but it was the result of her character that made her special and produced the characteristics that would determine the Nation that would stem from her. Though we see her at times being harsh and severe, overall, **Sarah** is characterised as being **humble, meek, faithful**, devoted to Abraham and steadfast in her faith towards YHWH even to a fault to see the promise come true as we see with Hagar. It is our endeavour today to discover the uniqueness & mystery that surrounded **the imunot [the mothers]** of our faith & how Yahweh discerns His faithful ones.

Events of Our Portion:

1. Sarah dies at 127 years old & Abraham negotiates & purchases the field & buries Sarah in the Cave of Machpelah opposite Mamre.
2. Abraham summons his servant Eliezer to find a suitable wife for his son Yitschaq.
3. the servant travels to Mesopotamia [Aram-Nahrayim] to the city of Nahor & meets Rivkah [Rebecca].
4. Rivkah leaves to marry Yitchaq [Isaac] & was consoled over the loss of his mother.
5. Abraham then Marries Keturah & has 6 more children, dies at 175 years old & is buried in the Cave of Machpelah.
6. Ishmael's descendants detailed & dies at 137 years old.

The Uniqueness of the Mothers:



Unlike the Patriarchs of the faith who all lived during the lives of their sons & grandsons we do not see that with the Mothers. The great Sages however suggest that the **"Imanot"** (Mothers) could not overlap because they served a unique role before Yahweh which we will look at and so that is why **Sarah** needed to pass away before **Rivkah** (Rebecca) could replace her just as **Rivkah** had to pass away before **Leah** could assume her position.

There is however a profound reason! It is because there is a striking correlation between the role of the woman and the **Kohen Ha Gadol** (the High Priest).



The Kohen Ha Gadol (High Priest) presided over the **Beyth Ha Mikdash** (the Temple) while the woman presided over the Mishkan (Tabernacle) of the home.

Peace in the Home [Shalom Beyth]



The only difference between the Kohen (Priest) and the Woman lighting the Shabbat candles is the purpose. Her role in lighting the lamp relates to **Shalom Beyth** (peace in the home). Her divine role was to pray for her Husband & children especially at the time of the lighting of the **Shabbat Candles** to inspire & ignite the inner flame of faith in the home as she was a facilitator of set-apartness (Holiness) in the home.

Judaism believed that they were responsible for the **Shechinah** [the presence to rest over their homes & in Judaism it is believed that these were the three signs of the presence:

1. The lamp burned from Erev Shabbat to Erev Shabbat that never went out,
2. The bread remained fresh for a week representing the Lechem Hapanim (the bread of the presence)
3. The cloud was positioned over the tent reflecting the presence of the Shechinah,

We often fail to see just how uniquely blessed the Patriarchal families were, thinking that the **Shechinah** (the presence) did not appear until the days of Mosheh but from this understanding we see the special place that the **Mothers** played in the message of YHWH to the world. From all this I hope we can see the vital & honoured role these women played as they represented what would later be the **Kohanim** (Priests) especially the **Kohen Ha Gadol** (High Priest) in the **Mishkan** (the Tabernacle). I hope this also shows the great honour women of the home should feel today when they perform the lighting of the Shabbat Candles since there is no **Beyth Ha Mikdash** (Temple) today. Also, since they had this honoured position of being the High Priest in the home the sages suggest that we can now understand that their passing was necessary for the next to resume her position just as there can be only **one high Priest** at a time, but this is not so for the **Avot** (Patriarchal Fathers) who did overlap.

The Wondrous choosing of Rivkah:



Abraham's great faith in Yahweh is so wonderfully demonstrated by sending Eliezer who himself reveals the influence of a faithful house through his great prayer to Yahweh for a sign of great generosity. We see Rivkah coming to draw water a job for a servant.



Remember that the choice of Yahweh here was not based on her belief since we know from the story of Laban with Ya'acov [Jacob] that they had many household idols.



The Servant speaks to Rivkah

Yahweh's choice here was based on how she would respond to an unknown man's request.

Hospitality to the Stranger



The request of Eliezer was in itself not uncommon since it was customary in those days to offer a stranger a drink but something about **Rivkah** [Rebecca] was different since she responded with great generosity far beyond duty.

Unsurpassed Generosity



Just remember the servant had 10 Camels which could each consume **25 gallons (113 liters)** so her servant heart and great generosity is clearly revealed.

Gifts given to Laban's Family



After that great encounter we read that the servant meets the family of **Rivkah** (Rebecca) and retells the whole story again. Why do we need to hear the sequence of events again?

Eliezer's retelling the second time is not the same as we first reading so why is that the case. Has he a short memory or is there more we need to know?

Is it possible that the Torah wants us to note **the discrepancies** because this is the story hidden in the story?

When we know what these discrepancies are then we may not only understand the story better, but we will come to understand why the story is here.

1. The 1st discrepancy is in Abraham telling the servant to go to his homeland in search for the bride. In the retelling Eliezer says he was told to take a wife from his father's house.
2. On his journey Eliezer prays to Elohim as he wants some guidance to find the wife for Yitzchaq (Isaac). He asked for kindness for his master Abraham. When he retells the story, he says he asked Elohim to prosper his way. Why would he change it from kindness to being successful?
3. When Eliezer meets Rivkah (Rebecca) he 1st gives her jewellery and then asks her who she is but, in the retelling, he asks who she is and then gives the Jewellery.
4. In the first instance he thanks Elohim for not forsaking his kindness and his truth towards his master while in the retelling he says that Elohim has led him in the path of truth and leaves out **"Chesed"** or Kindness.

Why does Eliezer change the story? I want to suggest that Eliezer saw something that made him change the story. When Eliezer meets Rivkah (Rebecca) she returns home and Lavan (Laban) comes out to invite Eliezer into their home.

Eliezer however, quickly discovered that Lavan (Laban) did not value **"Chesed"** Kindness, so Eliezer quickly changes the story. The changes were to make this match more appealing to this wealth centred family. These people did not value kindness, so Eliezer removes this from the story. In the retelling of the story Eliezer focusses on family & wealth to suite the situation as that was their currency. Eliezer goes into great detail how Elohim had blessed Abraham with flocks, cattle, silver, gold & servants and then points out that Abraham had given all his wealth to **Yitzchaq** (Isaac). Eliezer understood that these people only care that their daughter is marrying into wealth and have no time for kindness.

Rivkah [Rebecca] truly exceeds in kindness when everyone around her does the opposite. She cares even about Eliezer's Camels. Who does that remind you of? Is that not Abraham who showed kindness? Abraham is the model seed who would build a Nation built on Kindness. **Rivkah** (Rebecca) is the perfect woman to carry the torch of Abraham's legacy as she has the internal strength to model kindness in a place where there is none. This story is the perfect blueprint for the Nation of Yisrael who are meant to value Kindness as should we.



Is this not the central theme of Yeshua ministry when he walked this earth & are not the letters of Shaul filled with encouragements of love, kindness & generosity the nature of the Kingdom totally unlike the nature the World projects.

Rivkah's Unseen Blessing:

I hope we can see the great truth that springs from **Rivkah's** [Rebecca's] great heart in these two blessings:



1.

The Instant Reward- Rivkah's actions first caused the servant to shower her with worldly blessing. A golden nose ring, ½ oz of silver, Two bracelets worth 5 oz of gold. Truly generosity does bring an instant reward for us too in the joy and peace we receive when we give from a generous heart.

2. **The True Eternal Blessing-** Her true meek and humble heart is beautifully demonstrated when Rivkah [Rebecca] willingly goes with this servant whom she does not know, to a man and a Land she does not know.



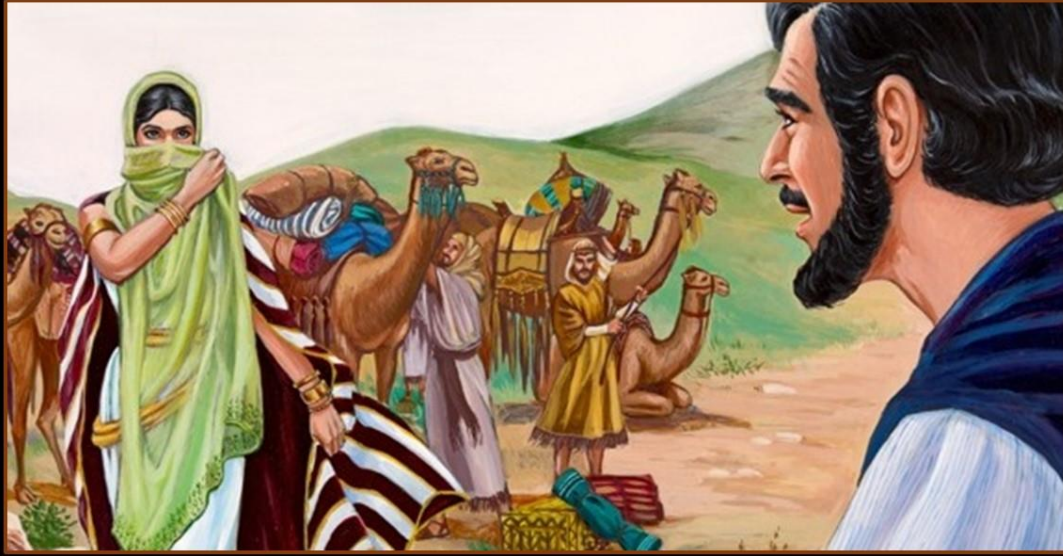
Most importantly she is making the greatest choice of her life which is to serve an Elohim she has not known but it is her heart that is so gracious and generous that enables her to go on this epic journey and it is her heart that Yahweh perceives. Yahweh in His grace & kindness sees her kindred spirit and gives her His greatest blessing in that she becomes the first Lady to the family of faith and is therefore destined to receive Yahweh's greatest gift that He promised would bless all the families of the Earth who was of course our Master & Saviour Yeshua the author and perfecter of our faith.

Conclusion

This message shows that Elohim looks for the generous heart because He is the greatest source of generosity and is moved by such a heart.

Galatians 6:9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Rivkah meets Yitschaq



This epic story finally concludes with Rivkah meeting Yitschaq [Issaac] after which their marriage is consummated.

However, this story has so much more. From the life of faith surely Abraham represents Our heavenly Father, Yeshua his son who has inherited everything & who is often called the bridegroom in the Netzarim writings with the Ruach Ha Kodesh [the Holy Spirit] the servant seeking the bride in a foreign land filled with Idols & selfish ambition. If we are the betrothed of our Master the character found in this wonderful story should be our highest goal. Is it not our greatest hope to see ourselves joined to our Master forever in fellowship?

Amein!

Netzarim Ketuvim: Luke 24:1-11

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Luke 24:1-11

In this reading I hope we can see the truth that our Torah portion expresses in that it is the women of faith that first had the revelation of our Master's resurrection. Why is this so? Is it possible that these women had the same nature of Rivkah being humble of Spirit with an openness to believe the truth of the risen Master? We read in their exceeding joy they remembered the words the master had told them & they quickly ran to tell the Disciples the good news but what was the response of the disciples. Sadly, the Disciples found it much harder to believe & thought these women were dreaming or emotionally unstable over their great loss. However, we find that Yeshua so honoured these humble women by revealing this most wonderful truth to them first as the foretaste of those who would believe. This is the true nature & mystery of all the people of faith that become born again into the Kingdom. Their hearts must by the power of the **Ruach Ha Kodesh** [the Holy Spirit] be softened to believe, a characteristic we truly see in **Rivkah** [Rebecca] to her praise as representative of the women of faith.

Amein! Shavua Tov Aleichem [A Good Week Unto You]