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המאור

Light reading
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Parshas Chayei Sarah, Cheshvan 5785

Tiferes Shlomo on the Parsha

ייהיו חיי שרה כו' ותמת שרה בקרית ארבע
And the life of Sarah was... and Sarah died in Kiryas Arba which is Chevron

Many of the commentaries address why the Parsha that describes Sarah's death begins with and is called "the life of Sarah". Below we share a novel explanation of the Tiferes Shlomo.

The true joy of Tzaddikim is to cleave to Hashem with Mesiras Nefesh. They live their entire lives prepared to sacrifice themselves for Hashem's sake and to die Al Kiddush Hashem.

This is alluded to in Tehillim where king David says "rejoice the soul of Your servant, because I lift up my soul to You." The joy that king David sought was the opportunity to offer up his soul to Hashem.

The Torah is attesting that the entire "life of Sarah" was ותמת שרה "and Sarah died", meaning that all of her life was lived with Mesiras Nefesh and the readiness and desire to sacrifice her life for Hashem.

When Sarah wanted to send Yishmael away, Hashem told Avraham to listen to the voice of his wife; כל אשר תאמר אליך שרה שמע בקולה. This verse can also be read as whatever Sarah says to you "Shema" is in her voice.

The Kavana of the declaration of the Shema, which is recited by martyrs, is an expression of Mesiras Nefesh. The Posuk is telling us that everything Sarah said and did, was an expression of the Kavana of the Shema

This idea is expressed in the continuation of the Posuk. Kiryas Arba - literally the City of Four, alludes to the holy Four-Letter Name of Hashem. Chevron comes from the root חב"ר, meaning to join or connect.

During Exile, the Name of Hashem is not complete. Sarah lived her life of Mesiras Nefesh for the sake of Hashem's Name, that it should be complete once more.

Using our Time to the Max

Imagine you were given \$86,400 each day, deposited into your bank account. This money could be spent at your discretion, but with one proviso - there is no roll-over. Whatever is not spent, is lost.

Each day we are given 86,400 seconds, 24 hours to use as we choose. The time we don't use out to the fullest, is lost and can never be returned.

On their death-bed, No one looks back and says "I wish I had made more money". Often our biggest regret is lost time and what more we could have accomplished in life. The irony is that we get so caught up in "things" and "stuff" that our most precious gift is under-utilised or wasted.

Rabbi Shlomo Ibn Gabirol encapsulates this in a powerful idiom; אדם דואג על איבוד דמיו ואינו דואג על איבוד ימיו, דמיו אינם עוזרים, ימיו אינם חוזרים. "Man worries about the waste of his money, but does not worry about the waste of his years, (ultimately) his money does not help and his years do not return".

Life is filled with distractions, which in the technological era have only become more exacerbated. A recent study in the USA estimated that the cost of lost productivity due to employee use of social media totalled over \$650 billion per year!

It may take just one minute to look at an SMS, twitter or Facebook post, but the minutes add up. If you multiply this across the year and across the entire workforce, the collective impact is staggering. After the interruption, it takes up to 20 minutes to properly refocus on the task at hand. This is just the financial cost. But imagine the human cost. What could have been accomplished in this lost time?

And the distractions don't just invade our workspace, they also impact other more important areas or our lives, such as our relationships with those closest to us.

In this week's Parsha we read how Avraham was advancing in years. The phrase used, בא בימים, literally means "coming with days". The commentaries note that Avraham came with his days and was able to account for the accomplishments of each day. Every moment was lived with meaning and purpose and utilised to the fullest in the service of his Creator.

On Yud Shvat 5730, the Rebbe related the following personal anecdote:

Late one night, the Rebbe entered the Friedrike Rebbe's study in Leningrad. The Friedrike Rebbe had just finished holding private audiences and would be leaving in an hour and a half to catch a train for an important meeting in Moscow. The trip was fraught with danger, yet he calmly sat organising papers as if nothing else was happening.

Observing this, the Rebbe could not contain his surprise and asked his father-in-law, "I know that Chabad Chassidism is based on the principle that "the mind rules the heart", but to such an extent?"

The Friedrike Rebbe replied, "we cannot make our days longer and nor can we add additional hours to our nights. But we can maximize how we use our time, by regarding each segment of time as a world of its own. When we devote a portion of time, whether it is an hour, a day or a minute, to a certain task, we should be totally invested in what we are doing, as if nothing else exists in the world."

This is the key to what the Rebbe Maharash referred to as 'Hatzlacha Bizman' - success in how we use and maximise our time.

If it's the time allotted to Davening or a shiur, a task at work, or when we set aside to time to spend with our spouse, our children or a friend, we need to block out all distractions as though nothing else exists. We then need to be completely present in the moment with our full focus, attention and engagement.

Amongst Chassidim, it was common practise to make a Cheshbon Nefesh, an accounting of the day, when reciting the bedtime Shema.

What did I achieve today? How did I grow today? What good deeds did I do today? How did I help others today? And most importantly how can tomorrow be better than today?

We may not be able to account for every second or every minute. We might not be able to avoid or shake free of distractions completely. But the lesson of Avraham Avinu. If we want to be more productive, live with purpose and make our days count, we have to be present and live in the moment.

Renting from the Police to Make an Eiruv - Part 2

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In the last edition, we discussed the requirement to rent the right of use of the homes of non-Jews within the Eiruv, for the Eiruv to be effective. The rental can also be performed with the employee of the home-owner.

Instead of renting from each non-Jew individually, one can rent the right of use from the government or authority such as the police if they have rights of entry to the houses within their jurisdiction.

What if the non-Jew or their employee dies

If during the duration of the rental, the non-Jew rents their house to another non-Jew, a new Sechiras Reshus is not required¹. However, if the non-Jew dies or sells their home, a new Sechiras Reshus is required from the new owner or inheritor².

If one rented the Reshus from an employee (who lives with the owner) for a set time-duration, even if the employee ceased to work within the time period or was terminated or died³, the rental remains in effect⁴.

The rationale is that renting from the employee is considered as though one has rented from the Baal Habayis themselves and it is as though they consented to the rental for this duration⁵.

If the rental was performed with the employee without specifying a time-period, once the employee ceases to work for the owner, the rental is terminated. The reason is because presumably the Baal Habayis would only empower their employee to "rent out" their property while they are still in their employ⁶.

If the king or government officer dies

The same Halachos apply when renting from the treasurer or officer of the king, where the officer is terminated and no longer receives a salary from the treasury or dies.

If the rental was for a fixed time-duration, it would remain in effect for the period of the rental⁷ whereas if no time-duration was specified, the Sechiras Reshus would expire. Eshel Avraham⁸ writes that a rental that is specified to be "forever" is considered like a rental with a fixed duration.

The Chacham Tzvi⁹ writes that only a rental for a short duration of one or two years¹⁰ would continue to remain in effect after the treasurer or officer ceases to be employed. However, a long fixed-duration Sechirus would cease to apply. This is because pre-

sumably the king would not consent to their officer entering a lengthy arrangement. (Even though during the employ of the officer, we do not require the consent of the king).

He further writes that if the king dies, even if the treasurer is still alive, the Sechirus is terminated unless they are appointed by the new king.

Ginas Veradim¹¹ argues with the ruling of the Chacham Tzvi and "even a rental of 200 years" would continue to be effective for the full term after the death of the treasurer. Even if the king dies, the Sechirus would continue. This is because the monarchy still continues and the new king is bound to fulfil the enactments of the previous king.

(The above applies only in the case of a Sechirus which had a fixed time duration. An unspecified rental would lapse on the death of the king¹².)

The Minchas Elozor¹³ writes that the Chacham Tzvi wrote about the kings in his time who had absolute power. In the times (and location) of the Minchas Elozor, the land was owned by "the municipality" (the Shtot) and the king was merely the senior-most figure of the government, who himself took a salary from the treasury.

Therefore, no new Sechirus is required after the death of the king, because the king is merely a representative of "the land" which "does not die". He says the same is true "in all free lands".

This discussion is relevant in modern-day Eiruvim, where the Sechiras Reshus was made with the Police commissioner or the head of the fire department and they subsequently retire.

The Sechirus is not performed with them as an individual, but rather as a representative of the authority that they represent. Therefore, their actions continue to have full force even after retiring. Presumably based on this logic, the Sechirus would continue to be effective even if it did not specify any time-duration.

Change of government

If there is an overthrow of the government system, the Sechirus certainly ceases and a new Sechiras Reshus is required. The Minchas Elozor¹⁴ writes that in his time, the king was removed and a free-country was established with a democratically-elected government and a new Sechiras Reshus should be made.

Presumably he is referring to the 1918 revolution in Hungary, where the Monarchy was overthrown and replaced by a short-lived democratic republic.

In a democratic system, even if elections bring a change of government, the Sechiras Reshus continues to be effective. Unlike an overthrow, a new elected government is required to honour and maintain the actions of the former government.

(This is especially so when the Sechirus was performed with the police, since the police continues to maintain their authority irrespective of who the government is).

Practical Sechiras Reshus points

Practically, the Sechiras Reshus should have a specified time duration. It can be made for an extended period of time. It is also advisable to specify that if we forget to renew the Sechirus at the end of the time-period, it is assumed to continue to be in effect indefinitely. It is also advisable to make a Sechirus for the entire city, so that if the Eiruv is ever extended, the new areas are covered by the Sechirus.

There is a great advantage to making the Sechiras Reshus from the government (as opposed to individual non-Jews) in a place where there are Jews who do not believe in the laws of Eiruv. Since they are Jewish, one cannot rent from them¹⁵. But since they do not believe in the laws of Eiruv, they will not likely be Mevatel their property and one cannot be Mezakeh them. Renting their property from the government circumvents this problem¹⁶.

Kaf Hachaim¹⁷ writes when making the Sechirus from the king's officer, the custom in Salonika and Yerushalaim was to that the heads of the Jewish community would take the keys of the city home for one night. Since even a weak Sechirus suffices, this is only an extra Hiddur.

- Rashba Teshuvos Meyuchasos 207
- Ta"z 382:10, Elya Rabbah 382:9, Shulchan Aruch Harav 382:11
- Kaf Hachaim 382:72
- Rashba Teshuvos 5:6, Shulchan Aruch Harav 382:17
- Ta"z OC 382:15
- Kaf Hachaim 382:73
- The Beis Yosef writes that this is so even if the employee kept the money of the rental for themselves, because presumably the king was not Makpid
- 382:10
- Siman 6
- This time duration is specified by the Rashba quoted in the Beis Yosef
- OC Klal 2 Siman 22-23
- Kaf Hachaim 382:79
- 4:14
- ibid
- The Takana of renting was only made for non-Jews. Based on Rambam writing about Tzedukim
- Ginas Veradim OC 3:22. See Shoel Umeishiv Tinyana 2:62 why this works 'against the will' of the owner
- 382:78

