



Shabbat Announcements

Parshat Chayei-Sarah

November 15, 2014 22 Cheshvan,

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks on Parshas Chayei Sarah

TORAH
ARTSCROLL, 106
HERTZ, 80

HAFTORAH
ARTSCROLL, 1136
HERTZ, 90

A while back, a British newspaper, The Times, interviewed a prominent member of the Jewish community – let's call him Lord X – on his 92nd birthday. The interviewer said, "Most people, when they reach their 92nd birthday, start thinking about slowing down. You seem to be speeding up. Why is that?"

Lord X's reply was this: "When you get to 92, you start seeing the door begin to close, and I have so much to do before the door closes that the older I get, the harder I have to work."

Something like that is the impression we get of Abraham in this week's parsha. Sarah, his constant companion throughout their journeys, has died. He is 137 years old. We see him mourn Sarah's death, and then he moves into action.

He engages in an elaborate negotiation to buy a plot of land in which to bury her. As the narrative makes clear, this is not a simple task. He confesses to the local people, Hittites, that he is "an immigrant and a resident among you," meaning that he knows he has no right to buy land. It will take a special concession on their part for him to do so. The Hittites politely but firmly try to discourage him. He has no need to buy a burial plot. "No one among us will deny you his burial site to bury your dead." He can bury Sarah in someone else's graveyard. Equally politely but no less insistently, Abraham makes it clear that he is determined to

buy land. In the event, he pays a highly inflated price (400 silver shekels) to do so.

The purchase of the cave of Machpelah is evidently a highly significant event, because it is recorded in great detail and highly legal terminology, not just here, but three times subsequently in Genesis, each time with the same formality. Here for instance is Jacob on his deathbed, speaking to his sons: "Bury me with my fathers in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite, the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre in Canaan, which Abraham bought along with the field as a burial place from Ephron the Hittite. There Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried, there Isaac and his wife Rebekah were buried, and there I buried Leah. The field and the cave in it were bought from the Hittites." (Gen. 49: 29-32)

Something significant is being hinted at here, otherwise why mention, each time, exactly where the field is and who Abraham bought it from?

Immediately after the story of land purchase, we read, "Abraham was old, well advanced in years, and God had blessed Abraham with everything." Again this sounds like the end of a life, not a preface to a new course of action, and again our expectation is confounded. Abraham launches into a new initiative, this time to find a suitable wife for his son Isaac, who by now is at least 37 years old. Abraham leaves nothing to chance. He does not speak to Isaac himself but to his most trusted servant, whom he instructs to go "to my native land, to my birthplace," and find the appropriate woman. He wants Isaac to have a wife who will share his faith and way of life. Abraham does not specify that she should come from his own family, but this seems to be an assumption hovering in the background.

As with the purchase of the field, so here, the course of events is described in more detail than almost anywhere else in the Torah. Every conversational exchange is recorded. The contrast with the story of the binding of Isaac could not be greater. There, almost everything – Abraham's thoughts, Isaac's feelings – is left unsaid. Here, everything is said. Again, the literary style calls our attention to the significance of what is happening, without telling us precisely what it is.

The explanation is simple and unexpected. Throughout the story of Abraham and Sarah, God had promised them two things: children and a land. The promise of the land ("Rise, walk in the land throughout its length and breadth, for I will give it to you") is repeated no less than seven times. The promise of children occurs four times. Abraham's descendants will be "a great nation," as many as "the dust of the earth," and "the stars in the sky"; he will be the father not of one nation but of many.

Despite this, when Sarah dies, Abraham has not a single inch of the land that he can call his own, and has only one child who will continue the covenant, Isaac, currently unmarried. Neither promise has been fulfilled. Hence the extraordinary detail of the two main stories in Chayei Sarah: the purchase of land and the finding of a wife for Isaac. There is a moral here, and the Torah slows down the speed of the narrative, so that we will not miss the point.

God promises, but we have to act. God promised Abraham the land, but he had to buy the first field. God promised Abraham many descendants, but Abraham had to

Times	
Candle Lighting	4:19 pm
Friday Mincha	4:20 pm
Hashkama	8:00 am
Parsha Shiur	8:30 am
Main Shul	9:00 am
Beit Midrash	9:15 am
Youth Minyan	8:30 am
Shiur	3:45 pm
Mincha	4:15 pm
Shabbat Ends	5:27 pm
Sunday Nov., 16	7:30/8:30 am
Mon., Thur.	6:35/7:45 am
Tues., Wed., Fri.	6:45/7:45 am
Mincha	4:15 pm
Latest Times for Shema/Shemoneh Esrei	
November 15	9:11/10:01am
November 22	9:16/10:04am
Next Shabbat Toldot	
Candle Lighting	4:14 pm
Mincha	4:15 pm

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Rabbi Polakoff's Shabbat Drasha, through 5775, is sponsored in memory of Pinchas ben Yosef z"l

ensure that his son was married, and to a woman who would share the life of the covenant, so that Abraham would have, as we say today, "Jewish grandchildren."

Despite all the promises, God does not and will not do it alone. By the very act of self-limitation (tzimtzum) through which He creates the space for human freedom, He gives us responsibility, and only by exercising it do we reach our full stature as human beings. God saved Noah from the flood, but Noah had to make the ark. He gave the land of Israel to the people of Israel, but they had to fight the battles. God gives us the strength to act, but we have to do the deed. What changes the world, what fulfills our destiny, is not what God does for us but what we do for God.

That is what leaders understand, and it is what made Abraham the first Jewish leader. Leaders take responsibility for creating the conditions through which God's purposes can be fulfilled. They are not passive but active – even in old age, like Abraham in this week's parsha. Indeed in the next chapter, to our surprise, we read that after Sarah's death, Abraham takes another wife and has eight more children. Whatever else this tells us, and there are many interpretations (the most likely is that it explains how Abraham became "the father of many nations"), it certainly conveys the point that Abraham stayed young the way Moses stayed young, "His eye undimmed and his natural energy unabated." Though action takes energy, it gives us energy. The contrast between Noah in old age and Abraham in old age could not be greater.

Perhaps though the most important point is that large promises – a land, countless children – become real through small beginnings. Leaders begin with an envisioned future, but they also know that there is a long journey between here and there and we can only reach it one act at a time, one day at a time. There is no miraculous shortcut, and if there were, it would not help. It would make achievement like Jonah's gourd, that grew overnight, then died overnight. Abraham acquired only a single field, and had just one son who would continue the covenant. Yet he did not complain, and he died serene and satisfied. Because he had begun. Because he had left future generations something on which to build. All great change is the work of more than one generation, and none of us will live to see the full fruit of our endeavors. Leaders see the destination, begin the journey, and leave behind them those who will continue it. That is enough to endow a life with immortality.



GNS Yoetzet Halacha Dena Block welcomes your questions about mikvah, observance of taharat mishpacha (halacha relating to married life) and women's health, as it connects to Jewish law. Reach out to her at:
Phone: (516) 320-9818
Email: gnsyoetzet@gmail.com All conversations/ emails are strictly confidential.



Great Neck Synagogue
Shabbat Activities Program
26 Old Mill Road, Great Neck, NY 11023
516-487-6100

Dale Polakoff, Rabbi
Ian Lichter, Assistant Rabbi
Dr. Ephraim Wolf, z"l, Rabbi Emeritus
Zeev Kron, Cantor
Eleazer Schulman, z"l, Cantor Emeritus
Rabbi Sholom Jensen, Youth Director
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Dr. Hal Chadow, President
Harold Domnitch, Chairman of the Board
Dena Block, Yoetzet Halacha 516-320-9818

HELP OUR SHUL GROW

As the Jewish community in Great Neck continues to grow, we ask our members to help us identify and reach out to new people and families that move into the community. If you know of people new to Great Neck please contact Mark Twersky or the chairs of the New Members Committee, **Debbie Chadow, Katie Lichter and Nadine Shatzkes**

The New Members Committee may also contact you to reach out to prospective new members who have moved into your neighborhood. Please help us give a warm welcome to new families by extending a Shabbat meal invitation or by making a friendly phone call. Please welcome the following new members of our community:



- *Ronen and Tali Abergel**
- *Joy and Joseph Allens**
- Ravit and Eli Azulay**
- Deborah and Bobby Balakhaneh**
- *Irene Dicker**
- Jennifer Dienstag**
- *Adam & Dahlia Dressler**
- *Ben & Rachel Feintuch**
- *Kathy and Josh Gold**
- *Karen and Jason Hammerman**
- *Sharonal and Aaron Hanasab**
- *Dr. Barbara Kapelman**
- Aliza and Aryeh Karkowsky**
- Jacqueline and Mark Kaufman**
- Barrie and Josh Lev**
- *Harriet and Harry Lumerman**
- *Zarina and Edward Mehrfar**
- Erica and Steven Parilis**
- Melissa and Baruch Pelcovitz**
- Dr. Jackie and Michael Rudick**
- Esther and Shahriar Samady**
- *Elanna and Gregory Stashower**
- *Jessica and Noah Steinberg**

***Members of GNS**

SAVE THE DATE
63RD ANNUAL GNS DINNER
SATURDAY EVENING
DECEMBER 13

HONORING
RABBI IAN & KATIE LICHTER
FATHER & DAUGHTER
LESLIE KAHN & MICHELLE BERMAN

BONEH HABAYIT
NADINE SHATZKES

Death to Burial: Spiritual and Practical

RABBI DALE POLAKOFF &

JERRY WEINSTEIN, eve

HEAD OF THE CHEYRA KADISHA OF GREAT NECK

Presented by the GNS Men's Club

This class will meet on 4 consecutive Tuesday evenings at 7:30 pm beginning on November 4. Classes will be held on the 11th, 18th and 25th.

FRIDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 21

GNS SHABBAT DINNER & GUEST SPEAKERS SERIES
2014-2015 Season Premiere!

Guest Speaker:
YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI

Contributing Editor, The New Republic
Senior Fellow, Shalom Hartman Institute



Rabbi Yossi Halevi is a senior fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute, a member of the Institute's Global Project, co-director of the Institute's Leadership Initiative, and a contributing editor to The New Republic. Yossi is a frequent contributor to the special pages of leading North American newspapers. He is also a recognized thought leader on the intersection of religion and politics. He is author of "The Idea of God: An Orthodox Jewish Perspective on the Role of Faith in the Age of Reason" and "The Idea of God: An Orthodox Jewish Perspective on the Role of Faith in the Age of Reason". He is also author of "The Idea of God: An Orthodox Jewish Perspective on the Role of Faith in the Age of Reason".

Copies of "Like Dreamers" are available for pre-order from the synagogue office and will be signed following shabbat.

RESERVATIONS
REQUIRED BY
Tuesday,
November 18

\$36/PERSON
\$25/TEEN
\$15/CHILD
\$125 FAMILY MAX

SPONSORSHIP
OPPORTUNITIES
AVAILABLE
Contact The
Synagogue Office

RSVP: 516.867.8100
info@syn.org
WWW.GNS.ORG



26 Old Mill Road
Great Neck, NY 11023

RESERVE NOW DON'T BE LEFT OUT



WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL CLINIC



The Israel Sport Center for the Disabled is hosting a wheelchair basketball clinic for able-bodied middle-school boys & girls

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12TH

7:00-8:00 PM

Great Neck Synagogue Gym (26 Old Mill Rd.)

Suggested tax-deductible contribution of \$18 per person.
Generosity is greatly appreciated!

Cost to replace a simple wheelchair is \$2000.
Our goal is replace 200 wheelchairs per year (\$400,000)

Sport wheelchairs will be available for all players



Register & donate: www.afiscd.org

For more information

Email: Reubin_Askowitz@afiscd.org or Stu_Nitzkin@gmail.com
Or call Reub Askowitz @ 212.507.5434

This year for Thanksgiving
You can really give thanks and be giving!
Buy a Thanksgiving Dinner for a
resident at Arrandale Senior Housing
and make your parents proud of you.
\$18 can sponsor a dinner
in honor of/in memory of your parents

Name: _____

Phone #: _____

Email: _____

Meals purchased in memory/ in honor of: _____

Amount enclosed: _____

We are also looking for a limited number of volunteers (ALL AGES) to help serve the dinner, clean up, play music, sing & talk to the residents

I would like to volunteer on Thursday, Nov 27th 11:30 - 2 pm

Food Server: _____ Other Tal-ent: _____

Volunteer Names & Kids' Ages: _____

Co-Sponsored by: GNS Hunger Initiative, Sisterhood & Women's Tefila

For more info: call Nechama at 516-773-3572 or email lisslev@verizon.net

Please return to: GNS 26 Old Mill Road Great Neck, NY 11023



ANNOUNCEMENTS

MEN'S CLUB

SUN. NOV. 23, 10:00 am: A breakfast and Talk by **Prof. William Helmreich** on the Jewish aspects of his highly successful new book, *"The New York Nobody Knows: Walking 6,000 Miles in the City"*. You will be enlightened and entertained. All welcome.

SUN. DEC. 7, 10:00 am: We are thrilled that **Hank Scheinkopf**, noted political, public affairs and corporate media consultant, will be speaking on, *The mid-term elections are over: what's new?* Mr. Scheinkopf has managed on many political campaigns, including those of President Clinton and Mayor Bloomberg. All welcome.

THANK YOU

The Men's club and Sisterhood would like to thank the sponsors **Lorraine & Harold Domnitch, Meryl & Mark Friedman, Beth & Marc Gottlieb, Donna & Joe Hecht, Erica & Eliot Heisler, Irene & Leslie Kahn, Louise & Len Kahn, Joan & Henry Katz, Diane & David Rein, Rivka & Carl Rosenberg, Michelle & Norman Rutta, Heather & Jerry Siegelman, Orly & Alan Steinberg and Marcia & Yacov Toledano** of The Murder Mystery Night.

WOMEN'S TEFILA

PARENTS who would like to schedule a Women's Tefila Bat Mitzvah for their daughter can contact **Annie Mendelson**, annieemm@optonline.net.

RAFFLE PRIZES WANTED

We are now collecting raffle prizes for the GNS Annual Dinner scheduled for Saturday evening, December 13th. We strongly encourage you to donate credit card points for prizes that can include airline tickets and hotel accommodations. We are also looking for prizes such as timeshare vacation places, beautiful jewelry, fur, electronics, judaica, gift certificates, internship opportunities, theatre and sports tickets, camp discounts, as well as other prize donations that you might have that will make our dinner extra special! Please submit your raffle prize donations to Mark Twersky at mtwersky@gns.org. Thank you very much!

SCHOLAR'S PROGRAM

Yossi Klein Halevy will be our featured speaker on Friday evening, **Nov. 21**. Please make reservations for the dinner on the website, call the shul office or email jfrisich@gns.org.

THANKSGIVING CHESED OPPORTUNITY

This year for Thanksgiving, you can really give thanks and be giving! Buy a Thanksgiving Dinner for a resident at Arrandale Senior Housing and make your parents proud of you. We are also looking for a limited number of volunteers (ALL AGES) to help serve the dinner, clean up, play music, sing & talk to the residents. Co-Sponsored by: GNS Hunger Initiative, Sisterhood & Women's Tefila. For more info: call **Nechama** at 516-773-3572 or email lisslev@verizon.net.

BI-ANNUAL OHEL SHABBATON

The bi-annual OHEL Shabbaton is scheduled for **Dec.5-6**. The schedule will include a dinner at GNS for all hosts as well as an Oneg after dinner on Friday night. If you would like to sign up to be a host (3-4 people), please speak to Rabbi Lichter at ilichter@gns.org.

NEW GLATT KOSHER RESTAURANT IN TOWN

We encourage the community to patronize the new restaurant in town, **Lamed Vav, 20 South Station Plaza, under the VHQ.**

LOST & FOUND

If you lost a Medeco house key, you can pick it up from the office.

SNOW BIRDS

Please let the synagogue know when you are leaving asap.

WITHIN OUR FAMILY

Mazal Tov to Joan & Henry Katz on the Bat Mitzvah of their granddaughter **Orlee** daughter of **Sara & Kenny Sadinoff**.

Mazal Tov to Cantor Zev & Bracha Kron on the Bat Mitzvah of their granddaughter **Hindy**, daughter of **Rivie & Moishe Moskovits**.

Mazal Tov to Dahlia & Adam Dressler on the birth of a son.

Mazal Tov to Pia & Michael Shlomo on the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter **Davida Esther Shlomo**.

As of now all credit card charges will be subject to a surcharge.

COMMUNITY NEWS

AMERICAN FRIENDS OF MAGEN DAVID ADOM

American Friends of Magen David Adom's Annual New York Benefit Dinner Will take place on Tues. Dec., 2. The event will be at Chelsea Piers and Barbara Walters will be the honoree. For more info please contact Chelsea piers and **Barbara Walters** is being honored. People can contact **Carol Buckmann** (Siegel5301@yahoo.com) or **Karen Stein** at 212-757-1627 for more information,

SPECIAL CHESED OPPORTUNITY

Fire completely destroyed apt where 6 girls were living. Thank G-d no one was injured but all contents lost. Need new or gently used household items, furniture / furnishings, winter wear, etc . Please contact the Lunzers (hindilunzer@gmail.com or at [516 829 4034](tel:5168294034)). Thank you.

PIES FOR PREVENTION

Do you like to BAKE OR Do you prefer to EAT CAKE? Either way, you can help others. Pies for prevention is offering delicious pies for your Thanksgiving meal. You can volunteer to bake them in your kosher home for us to sell, or you can buy them from us for your Thanksgiving meal. All sales will support Sharsheret's unique program helping young Jewish women and their families dealing with ovarian cancer. If you would like to VOLUNTEER to be a baker, call TOVAH at 516-314-7135 or email at twerber@gmail.com. Info for buying pies coming soon!

Y A H R Z E I T

Saturday, 22 Cheshvan

Lisa Kaufman for Erica Josephs
Mary Flax for Max Pasvolnsky

Sunday, 23 Cheshvan

Joseph Sokol for Ida Warren
Deborah Hollander for Ida Warren

Monday, 24 Cheshvan

Mousa Ebrahimian for Rahel Ebrahimian
Mahin Mardkha for Rahel Ebrahimian

Tuesday, 25 Cheshvan

Murray Honig for Sylvia Honig
Wednesday, 26 Cheshvan
Yve Fouladi for Michael Fruhling
Nina Gourdji for Ezra Nuriel
Osnass Shein for Hode Pinsovitz
Andrew Zinaman for Judith Zinaman

Thursday, 27 Cheshvan

Ellen Modlin for Marilyn Hose
Stanley Lupkin for Sylvia Lupkin
Paul Marcus for Sylvia Marcus
Leon Miller for Symma Miller
Paul Weinberg for Jerry Weinberg
David Werber for Jacob Werber
Martin Werber for Jacob Werber
Millie Werber for Jacob Werber

Friday, 28 Cheshvan

Shulamid Gavronsky for Bertha Kopelowitz
Elana Flax for Janie Matzkin
Cheryl Sneag for Janie Matzkin