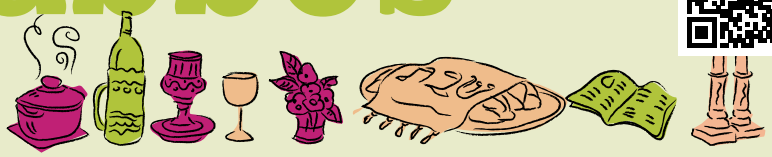
Celebrating our 2nd Anniversary!

Thank you to all the Sponsors and Donors who enabled us to reach this milestone

To receive this via email please email mc@markittech.com

OnegShabbos



North West London's Weekly Torah and Opinion Sheets

A Torah publication that enables local Rabbonim and Avreichim to share their insights and Divrei Torah on a variety of different levels, to provide something for everyone

כ"ה חשון תשע"ז | פרשת חיי שרה | 26TH NOVEMBER 2016

Shabbos Times	LONDON	MANCHESTER	GATESHEAD
הדלקת נרות	3:43 PM	3:43 PM	3:33 PM
מוצש"ק	4:55 PM	4:58 PM	4:51 PM

KINDLY SPONSORED לעילוי נשמת הש"ץ **שלמה בן אברהם משה** ז"ל לעילוי נשמת **חנה בת אלעזר** ע"ה

For questions on Divrei Torah please contact the Editor in Chief, **Rabbi Yonasan Roodyn** rabbiroodyn@jewishfuturestrust.com

To Sponsor a Week
please email mc@markittech.com
(Cost per week £500 which covers production costs)

Eternal Optimism

PARSHAH

Rabbi Dovid Roberts Rav, Kehillas Netzach Yisroel & Director of Education, Federation

The Sedra is called Chayei Sara, the life of Sara, despite the fact that it opens with news of her passing. Life, in Jewish thought is, of course, eternal, and by very definition, rooted in the realm of the spirit. What we refer to as life, is only a tiny, though crucial phase of the big picture. Living with that perspective is vital for a correct appreciation of the opportunities that physical life provides. Sara *imeinu* lives on, not only in *shamayim*, but her legacy endures in the temporal realm as well.

A well-known Midrash relates that once, when R' Akiva was teaching, his *talmidim* started to doze off, and so he posed a seemingly offbeat question to wake them up: why did Queen Esther merit to rule over 127 countries? The answer given is that her ancestor, Sara *imeinu* lived for 127 righteous years.

It would appear that, both the historical context of the episode, and the personal outlook of R. Akiva are instructive to help us understand the lessons of this Midrash. R' Akiva lived in the period immediately following the *churban* of the Bais Hamikdash – a time of great upheaval, of immense challenge. Devastation and exile were the overarching themes. Morale was at an all-time low. Our situation seemed hopeless. The toxic mix of despair and gloom was hard to resist. It was no ordinary slumber that R' Akiva's students were overcome with, but rather it was a lack of spiritual and emotional energy to deal with what seemed to be the overwhelming challenges they faced.

Esther's name derives from the words, "ואנכי הסתר אסתיר פני מהם", 'And I will surely conceal My face from them[1].' Although an earlier era in Jewish History, she too lived in a time when Hashem's presence was concealed. Nonetheless, Esther managed to remain strong, despite the formidable and degrading trial of being abducted as a consort to a gentile king, she retained her integrity and connection to Hashem, even able to summon *Ruach Hakodesh*, the true 'clothes of royalty' as Chazal explain on the *pasuk* ותלבש אסתר מלכות[2], she ultimately rose to rule over the entire world.

How? Because generations beforehand there was a Sara *imeinu* whose spiritual influence extended long into the future, to protect her children even amidst that Divine game of 'hide and seek', when Hashem makes it that much harder for us to peel back the layers of illusion, and reveal the reality of his sovereignty and dominion.

The Chiddushei HaRim explains that R' Akiva was telling his *talmidim* that no matter how bleak things look, they are never alone, they stand on the shoulders of the spiritual giants, our illustrious forebears, and could therefore still achieve great things.

R' Akiva was the eternal optimist, always able to focus on the positive, as evidenced by his ability to laugh, even whilst all around him were crying. Foxes frolicking in the holy ruins could be a source of inspiration and hope. The spectre of hundreds of funerals a day for his thousands of *talmidim*, until none were left, would have surely broken the spirit of any man. Yet, he was able to persevere and rebuild with a handful of new students, to preserve the *mesorah*. Even his own horrible martyrdom, too bitter a pill for even the malachim to swallow, was perceived, in his mind, as a day that he had been anticipating all his life! No wonder, therefore, that his erstwhile Rebbe, R Tarfon, enthralled by the indomitable spirit of R Akiva, declares[3] כל הפורש ממך כפורש מן החיים 'Anyone who leaves you, abandons life itself'. His dedication to truth and תורה, from the relatively advanced age of 40, where any lesser mortal wouldn't even have bothered starting to learn, needs to spur us on to achieve

Additionally, he was teaching them the value of time. Every day lived to the full by Sara *imeinu* represented the equivalent of a village or district. Generations later, her descendant Esther reaped the benefits of her industrious and full life. These two ideas, optimism and commitment, and utilising time well, are of course, inextricably linked. The Shaarei Kedusha explores the link between *atzlus* and *atzvus*, depression and laziness. One who is convinced of the purpose of life, will remain positive and upbeat, and act with haste, conscious of the precious and fleeting opportunities that physical life provides to cultivate our own slice of eternity.

1 Devarim 31:18
2 Esther 5:1
3 Kiddushin 66

Turn to the back page to see our Country in Focus

Welcome to our new readers in Mexico!

THE LONDON
YOM IYUN HALACHA
An intense full day of chavrusa learning/shiurim
(gemara to halachah l'maaseh)
Wednesday 14th December 2016
Local NW London Venue
Recreating the Yeshiva Beis Medrash experience for just 1 day
Morning/afternoon/evening sedarim. Open to all.
Book your day off work in time!
Email YomIyunUK@gmail.com
or call 07545 075040

RIDDLE OF THE WEEK

This week's riddle is in 2 parts:
Q. Without looking in a Chumash how many times does the name Eliezer appear in this week's parsha
Now after looking in a Chumash
Q. How many different ways does the Torah refer to Eliezer
Q. How many times **altogether** does Eliezer come in Chayei Sara and in the previous 2 sedros?

Answer on page 3. Any comments can be directed to bkahan47@yahoo.co.uk.

BY BORUCH KAHAN

NOW IN THE FOLLOWING PLACES
Yerushalayim, Amsterdam, Antwerp, Baltimore, Beit- Shemesh, Borehamwood, Budapest, Cancun, Edgware, Elstree, Gateshead, Gibraltar, Glasgow, Hale, Hong Kong, Ilford, Johannesburg, Lakewood, Larnaca, Las Vegas, London, Los Angeles, Manchester, Melbourne, Miami, Milan, New York, Oslo, Petach Tikva, Philadelphia, Radlett, Ruislip, Santiago, Sao Paulo, Southend, Tallinn, Tarzana, Toronto, Uman, Vienna, Zurich