

**LIVING WITH THE PARSHAH 5779**

**PARSHAS CHAYEI SARAH**

**By HARAV YAAKOV FEITMAN**

**KEHILLAS BAIS YEHUDAH TZVI**

We are living through difficult time. Let us take a bit of *chizuk* from the Parshah and then look again at recent events. The Parshah begins by telling us that Sarah Imeinu lived for 127 years. Rashi tells us that they were all equally good years. Many meforshim ask “How could this possibly be said about Sarah’s life? Surely, she suffered so many childless years, was abducted several times and endured many other hardships.” The most famous answer given (such as by the Sefas Emes 5656) is that for Sarah, whatever Hashem sent her was the right thing. She willingly accepted with love whatever Hashem decreed should occur. Indeed, the Chovos Halevavos (Shaar Yichud Hamaaseh 5) teaches that this *midah*, of being able to accept everything from Hashem equally, is the greatest trait of all. The Radomsker Rebbe zt”l (Tiferes Shlomo, Shemos) says that all of the righteous people in our history conducted themselves in this way. They did not overreact to difficulty by excessive sadness or depression or go wild with joy when things went well. They simply accepted everything from Hashem as the right thing at the right time.

There is a famous story in Chassidic circles about the two great brothers, Rav Shmelka of Nikolshberg and the author of the Hafla’ah. They asked their rebbe, the Magid of Mesezerich, how can the Gemara say that one must make the bracha on bad tidings, *chas vesholom*, with the same joy as the bracha upon wonderful news? How is this possible? The Magid sent them to Reb Zushiah of Hanipoli to discover the answer. He was a poor man who sat near the stove in the Bais Hamedrash racked with pain. When approached by the two brothers, Reb Zusiah responded that there must be some mistake. “I cannot answer your query,” he responded, “since I have never had a bad day. How would I even know how to make the bracha on something bad?” The brothers obviously had the answer to their question without even raising the issue. This was Sarah Imeinu as well. She never had a bad day, as far as she was concerned and so “they were all equally good.” The Chidah offers a sign that that this is the theme of the Parshah. The first word is *chayei* which is a palindrome (can be read backwards and forwards) symbolizing that for Sarah, if things were going well (forwards) or not (backwards), she was always the same Sarah Imeinu.

Last week we all learned of the horrific murder of eleven precious innocent souls by an anti-Semite who slaughtered them in Shul. Countless meetings have taken place to deal with issues about safety, security and protection of our Shuls and schools. However, now – a week later – it is time to reaffirm our faith, *emunah* and *bitachon* in Hashem, beyond all physical considerations. First of all, as we say in the Hagadah, “*b’chol doer vedor omdim aleinu lechaloseinu* – in every generation they rise up to try to annihilate us but Hashem saves us from their hands.” The Tiferes Shlomo asks, Why didn’t the Torah reveal exactly what Avrohom Avinu said in his hesped on Sarah? He answers that when Avrohom Avinu saw that the Satan was attempting to use Sarah’s sudden death as an opportunity to weaken people’s faith, he refrained from even speaking about Sarah any more. For us, also, sometimes silent acceptance of Hashem’s will is the most eloquent statement of all. May we hear only

**A GUTTEN SHABBOS AND A GUTTEN CHODESH**

## HALACHA OF THE WEEK 5779

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KEHILLAS BAIS YEHUDAH TZVI

*This week we will discuss some of the lesser-known Berachos we recite periodically and some tefilah questions*

**Question:** My father told me that when I was a baby we were in a car accident and I was miraculously saved from harm. Should I make a bracha now when I pass by that spot on the highway?

**Answer:** Yes. The Shulchan Aruch (218:4) rules that one who was saved by a *nes* should always recite a bracha when returning to that spot and so should his children and grandchildren. Rav Wosner zt"l (Shevet Halevi 3:163:4) adds that this holds true even for someone who was a baby and does not remember the event. This should only be done every thirty days and a son should say *she'asa nes l'avi* and a grandson should say *la'avosei* or *la'avi aba*.

**Question:** Does a child or his parent bentsh gomel when he was saved from danger?

**Answer:** The Mishnah Berurah (219:3) is of the opinion that neither a child nor his parents bentshes gomel. The reason seems to be based upon the Pri Megadim that since the text of bentsching gomel uses the phrase *hagomel l'chayavim...* and a child is not considered to be culpable or guilty of anything, we do not recite hagomel for him. However, the author of the Torah Temimah, Rav Boruch Halevi Epstein (in his Sefer Boruch She'amar) rules that a child or his parent should bentsh gomel. One may rely upon this opinion but the consensus of Poskim follows the Mishnah Berurah. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l (Halichos Shlomo, Tefilah 23:8) suggests that in all cases of doubt about bentsching gomel, one should have in mind to thank Hashem for the rescue in the last bracha of Birchas Hashachar "*Hagomel chasodim Tovim l'amo Yisrael.*"

**Question:** Does the bracha on lightening ever include thunder as well or vice versa?

**Answer:** The Mishnah Berurah (227:12) rules that one must make the bracha on thunder or lightening within approximately three seconds (*Toch kedei dibur*) of the event. However, Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman zt"l (Kobetz Moriah 123) adds that if one saw lightening and heard thunder within 3 seconds, he should not make another bracha since the *oseh maaseh Bereishis* suffices for both.

**Question:** May one daven for a miracle?

**Answer:** The Mishnah Berurah (230:1) writes that after thirty days gestation we do not daven for a change of gender in a baby since this is asking for a miracle. However, the Rama (682:1) rules that if one forgot Al Hanisim for Chanukah, one may recite "May Hashem do miracles for us...." The Shaarei Teshuvah (187:2) answers the discrepancy by stating that at the time of the Chashomayim, there were definitely miracles but they happened in a way which seemed to be natural. Furthermore, we may daven for an entire group to have a miracle but not for an individual.

**Question:** Does a Bar Mitzvah boy make a Shehechyanu on his tefillin?

**Answer:** Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l (Minchas Shlomo 2:4:33) used to give tefillin to his sons when they actually turned 13 so that they could make a Shehechyanu which would cover the owning and wearing of the tefillin.

**A GUTTEN SHABBOS AND ROSH CHODESH**