

Shearith Israel  
**SPANISH &  
PORTUGUESE**  
Synagogue of Montreal  
Est. 1768

# SHABBAT BULLETIN

November 19, 2022 | 25 Heshvan, 5783



## Dvar Torah

**HAYYEI SARAH**  
A Three-Year-Old Bride?  
By: RABBI MARC D. ANGEL

While studying this week's Torah portion, students were told by their teacher that Rivka was three years old when she married Yitzhak--who was forty years old. A student asked: how was it possible for a three-year-old girl to be strong enough to water camels? If she were so young, how could she have made a decision to get married? Is it reasonable to think that a forty-year-old man like Yitzhak would marry a three-year-old girl? The rabbi responded: if our sages say that Rivka was three years old, that's how old she was! There is no room for further discussion.

Actually, there is a lot more room for discussion. And the discussion needs to be on the nature of midrashic statements. The teacher cited above--like so many others--seems to think that midrashic statements must be taken to be factually correct and must be understood as being literally true. Yet, such an approach requires students to accept many strange and even contradictory statements. In his introduction to Perek Helek, Rambam inveighed against those who insisted on the literal veracity

of midrashim, even when the midrashim veered from reason and scientific fact: "This group of impoverished understanding--one must pity their foolishness. According to their understanding, they are honoring and elevating our sages; in fact they are lowering them to the end of lowliness...By Heaven! This group is dissipating the glory of the Torah and clouding its lights, placing the Torah of God opposite of its intention."

When we study and teach midrashim/aggadot, we must be sophisticated enough to view these passages in their literary and rhetorical context. We must understand the nature of symbolic language and the use of hyperbole.

The calculation that Rivka was three years old at the time of her marriage to Yitzhak assumes that the Akeidah, the death of Sarah and the birth of Rivka all happened on the same day. There is no historical reason to believe this is so. The Torah itself never specifies how much time elapsed between these events. The midrashic statement that Rivka was three is actually a way of saying that she was at least three--but may well have been older. Indeed, the Tosafot (Yevamot 61b, on the words "ve-khein hu omer") reports a rabbinic

calculation which concludes that Rivka was fourteen years old at the time she watered the camels and married Yitzhak. Thus even within rabbinic tradition there is a difference of opinion about Rivka's age.

The view that she was three years old apparently wishes to underscore the unusual, even miraculous, qualities of Rivka, just as a midrash has Abraham discovering God at the age of three. There is no way our sages could have known that Rivka or Abraham had been three years old: this was their way of stressing how unusual these individuals were.

No parent or teacher should insist that a child or student must believe that Rivka was three "because Hazal say so." Hazal also said she was fourteen! Midrashic statements are often made to convey a lesson, not to record historical fact. We should not compel people to accept the literal veracity of the midrash that has a three-year-old Rivka marrying a forty-year-old Yitzhak. To accept such a statement is not only religiously unnecessary, but morally repugnant.

Shabbat shalom,  
REVEREND HAZAN DANIEL BENLOLO

Abraham and his descendants: just as Isaac's life seemed to be in peril, were he not saved by a last minute reprieve from an angel, so "the Holy One was angered by this treaty, for the land of the Plishtim [i.e. Gaza and environs] was included in the territory of Israel... and that's why God tested Abraham, and caused him anguish [by telling him to sacrifice Isaac]..."

To be fair, to the best of my knowledge, Rashbam is the only one of the classic early commentators with that point of view, but never-the-less it is a point worth considering.

In this week's parasha of Hayei Sarah, the first thing Abraham does is to demonstrate his ownership of the Land, by purchasing property, despite the exorbitant price being requested by the Hittite!

May the leaders of Israel and its allies have the wisdom to do what is right!

Shabbat shalom.

## SHABBAT SHALOM

**Start/Debut**      **End/Fin**  
**4:03 p.m.**      **5:09 p.m.**

**PARASHAT HAYEI SARAH**  
**HERTZ PAGE 80**  
**HAFTARAH KINGS**  
**HERTZ PAGE 90**

**SHABBAT SERVICES**  
**SHAHRIT: 8:30A    MINHA: 3:45P**

### WEEKLY SERVICES SCHEDULE

**Sunday**  
Shahrit: 8:30A    Minha: 4:00P  
**MONDAY - THURSDAY**  
Shahrit: 7:30A    Minha: 4:00P  
**Friday**  
Shahrit: 7:30A    Minha: 3:45P

### CHEVRA SHAAS Service Schedule

**SHABBOS, November 19<sup>TH</sup>**  
Schachris 9:30 a.m.

**SUNDAY, November 20<sup>TH</sup>**  
Schachris 8:00 a.m.

## ROSH HODESH KISLEV

**THURSDAY/JEUDI NOV. 24 NOV.**  
**FRIDAY/VENDREDI NOV. 25 NOV.**

**TORAH CLASS**  
Join **ANDRE ROTCHEL** every  
Shabbat after services  
Beit Hamidrash - Refreshments

To contact **Reverend Hazan**  
**Daniel Benlolo:**  
cantorbenlolo@thespanish.org  
(514) 892-2859

Spanish and Portuguese Youth

EVERY SHABBAT

## SHABBAT KIDS CLUB

AGES 3-11  
GARDERIE ORSHELI DAYCARE  
10:00 AM - 11:30 AM

PARASHA    STORIES  
GAMES    CRAFTS  
SONGS    PRIZES

Spanish and Portuguese Youth

## KIDS SHABBAT TAKEOVER

HEY PARENTS! The kids are running the show!

**WHEN?**  
November 12th, 2022  
January 28th, 2023  
March 18th, 2023  
May 6th, 2023  
June 17th, 2023

**WHERE?**  
Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue  
4894 St-Kevin Ave, Montreal, QC H3W 1P2

**FOR ALL AGES**  
Join us for a fun song filled, children led service. Followed by a kid friendly kiddush.

Please contact Julia Peress, julia@thespanish.org, if your child would like to participate in the service.

## QUOTE OF THE WEEK

To hear is human... to listen is divine.

| Aish HaTorah

## OPINION

**Chevra Shaas**  
Words From  
**Rabbi Menahem White**  
HAYYEI SARAH 5783

Due to a computer glitch (on the part of my computer) my "Blog" for Va-yeira' was not published last week. Since it remains most relevant, especially in light of the recent vote at the UN concerning the Intenational Court of Justice (sic!), it is appropriate to reprint it for this week, with a few changes and an addition:

Two weeks ago, I referred to the sharp divide among Israelis concerning the Israeli election, and in that context mentioned Rashi's comment as to the purpose of the whole Book of Genesis: to show the connection of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel. Last week, we had the American mid-term elections, and the concern of many Jews was how the outcome could affect America's relation to Israel.

So, here is a thought that I have discussed in CS in years past, and deserves repetition now:

Last week's parasha tells of (a) in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> aliya, the birth of Isaac: mirabile dictu, for he was born to a mother who was a most senior citizen, and who even in her younger years had been unable to conceive.

(b) in the 6<sup>th</sup> aliya, we read that Avraham made a peace treaty with Avimelech, king of the residents of Gaza.

When I was younger, I always assumed that we can see from here the importance of making peace treaties.

(c) But then, in the 7<sup>th</sup> aliya, HaShem tells Avraham to sacrifice this son Isaac. What!? How can that be?

Well, the great commentator Rashbam (grandson of Rashi,) notes the juxtaposition of the two stories: namely, the peace treaty and the birth of Isaac. Rashbam says that this is a lesson for



### S.&P. Shabbat Kiddush is Sponsored by:

Sandy & Albert Mashaal, in memory of her parents, Eliahou & Evelyn Kazam z'l.

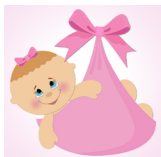
### S.&P. Seudah Shlishit is Sponsored by:

Chantal Brahmi & Thomas Cadieux, in memory of her mother, Anna Elofer z'l.

### C.S. Shabbos Kiddush is Sponsored by:

The Congregation

## Mazal Tov To



Great grandmother, **Evelyn Shahin**, on the birth of a new baby great granddaughter in Israel, daughter of **Adina & Nate Mahalli**, granddaughter of **Jack & Rita Shahin**.



Un Grand Mazal Tov à **Sarah Suissa** et **David-Alexandre Wolf**, pour la naissance de leur garçon, aux heureux grands-parents **Rachel et Marc-Alain Wolf**, **Yossi et Wilma Suissa**.

## INSIGHTS

## Jewish Wisdom HALAKHA

SHUCKLING: WHY DO JEWS ROCK WHILE PRAYING? REV. HAZAN DANIEL BENLOLO

Dear friends, let me share with you this piece of wisdom. The Swaying Candle - By Yehuda ShurpinIf

You've watched Jews during Torah study and prayer; chances are that you saw some of them rocking back and forth. This swaying, or shuckling, as it is known, is so widespread that the classic Jewish work on philosophy, the Kuzari (also known as "In Defense of the Despised Faith"), written by Rabbi Yehuda Halevi in 1140 CE. In truth, there are multiple reasons for shuckling, and not all reasons apply to both learning and prayer. Additionally, there are times when it may be inappropriate to shuckle.

**In Jewish Law** In the words of Rabbi Moshe Isserlis; People who are meticulous in their observance customarily sway when they read the Torah, recalling the Giving of the Torah that was accompanied by trembling, as it is written, "The people saw and shuddered." This is also customary when praying, as implied: "All my bones [entire being] shall say, O L-rd, who is like You?" In other words, when we praise G-d during prayer, we do so with our whole selves: the mind, heart and mouth express the prayer through speech, and the rest of the body does so by moving. Every fiber of our being is involved in connecting to our Creator.

**Petrified Before the King** Others, however, claim that when standing in prayer before the King of Kings, one should stand still, just as one would do before a mortal monarch, not daring to move. Accordingly, many are of the opinion that only in the lead-up to the Amidah, during the Pesukei DeZimrah ("Verses of Praise"), is it proper to sway back and forth. However, during the actual Amidah, when standing as if before a king, it is improper to sway back and forth. (Some still sway very slightly at the conclusion of each blessing, in the spirit of the verse "Before My name, he trembled.") So, what are we to do? The rabbis suggested that everyone follow his custom, doing whatever will help him or her achieve maximum concentration.

**The Candle of G-d** The Zohar quotes Proverbs, "The soul of man is a candle of G-d." The Torah is a flame, and when Jews learn Torah, the "candle of G-d" (the soul) is lit on fire. Just as a flame doesn't stand still, so too the Jewish soul, when lit, constantly moves about. And just as the flame constantly sways and flickers as it attempts to tear free of its wick and ascend on high, so too our soul is engaged in a constant effort to escape the corporeality of this mundane world and cleave to its G-dly source. SHABBAT SHALOM!!!

## Congregation Maghen Abraham

*PERASHA CHAYEI SARAH - Thoughts: Mayer Sasson*

... Avraham had become old and advanced in days and Hashem blessed Avraham in everything."(24, 1)

**Hashem and His Court** Our Sages ob'm tell us that it is well known that the Name of G-d Elokim is the Name of the Trait of Justice while the Name Hashem is Name of total Kindness and Mercy. But our Sages say that when the word "and" is added on to the name of Hashem "ה' - then it means "Hashem and His Court", which is the combination of the Trait of Mercy with the Trait of Justice, where both of them agree to the same thing.

We can ask: Before Avraham sent Eliezer (to find a mate for Yitzchak), the verse says "... Avraham had become old and advanced in days and G-d blessed Avraham in everything." Why does it say "and Hashem" blessed Avraham in everything? What does "Hashem and His Court" have to do with Avraham Avinu?

We will start the explanation with the disagreement between Eliezer and Lavan and Betuel. When Eliezer, Avraham's slave, came to their home and wanted to take Rivka for Yitzchak, Betuel said to him, "Let the maiden abide with us a year or ten months, after that she may go." But Eliezer told him, "Detain me not and G-d has made my way so prosperous". The Chatam Sofer explains: "W know that the evil powers have no power over the name of Hashem, which is the Name of Kindness and Mercy. Its main source of power is from the name Elokim which is the Trait of Justice."

Accordingly, the Chatam Sofer says, it is clearly understood why Lavan and Betuel said to Eliezer "the matter has proceeded from Hashem, we cannot say anything to you bad or good." Since the matter proceeded from Hashem, and we have no power over this Source, we therefore cannot delay Rivka and therefore, "Here is Rivka before you, take her and go." But in their great wickedness they wanted to outsmart

him and they said, "Let the maiden abide with us a year or ten months, after that she may go." – for they thought that perhaps in that time they would succeed in arousing the Trait of Justice from the Name Elokim in order to hold back the match of Yitzchak and Rivka.

But Eliezer, who grasped the depth of their evil thought, told them wisely that they were wasting their time for nothing, and he therefore said, "Detain me not ". Do you perhaps think that you will succeed in arousing the Trait of Justice and holding back this match? Certainly not! Because "and G-d has made my way so prosperous".

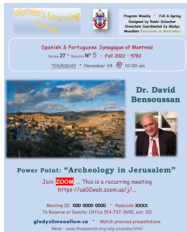
Eliezer told them "and Hashem"- i.e. Hashem and His Court – both the Trait of Mercy and the Trait of Justice have agreed to this match of Yitzchak and Rivka. Therefore, there is no point of waiting thinking that you may succeed in arousing the Trait of Justice regarding this match – and he therefore told them, "let me go away so that I may go to my master". But we still have to understand – how did Eliezer know that the Trait of Justice also agreed with the Trait of Mercy regarding this match?

We can therefore say that that is why the verse said first "... Avraham had become old and advanced in days and Hashem blessed Avraham in everything."As we have said, wherever it says "and Hashem" it means "Hashem and His Court" That means that Avraham had merited to be blessed "in everything" – both the Trait of Mercy as well as the Trait of Justice. Eliezer therefore understood that since he was a messenger of Avraham, certainly Avraham has merited, in this match as well, that the Trait of Justice was agreeing with the Trait of Mercy – and so he said to Lavan and Betuel "detain me not, and Hashem has made my way so prosperous.

SHABBAT SHALOM!!!



# Upcoming Events



**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24 | 10:00A - 12:00P**  
WLG: ARCHEOLOGY IN JERUSALEM  
WITH DR. DAVID BENSOUSSAN

Zoom ID 849 4697 5701 PW: FALL22  
RESERVE OR DONATE To WLG: (514) 737-3695



**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24 | 7:00P - 10:00P**  
COCKTAILS & SUSHI - HOSTED BY: KAREN & OREN GABBAY OF THE *BABYLONIAN IRAQI COMMUNITY* INVITE YOUNG ADULTS TO RE-MEET AND RE-GREET WITH DRINKS & LITE EATZ.

\$36 PER GUEST - REGISTRATION REQUIRED



**Tuesday, November 29 | 7:00P - 9:00P**  
254<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting (in-person attendance [Registration Mandatory] - Aintabi Hall).

You are cordially invited to join our President, Officers & Board of Trustees. Meet the Board & share your vision for our synagogue.



**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30 | 10:00A - 12:00P**  
WLG: WATER BREAD & MUSIC - WITH REVEREND HAZAN DANIEL BENLOLO

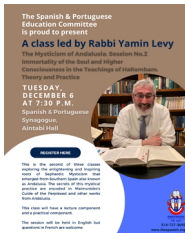
Zoom ID 849 4697 5701 PW: FALL22  
RESERVE OR DONATE To WLG: (514) 737-3695 x101



**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1 | 4:30P - 6:30P**  
SPY: KIDS' CHALLAH BAKE

Join us for an afternoon of meaningful Shabbat themed activities; kippah decorating, challah cover decorating, song, stories and more.

*Registration Required:* [www.thespanish.org](http://www.thespanish.org)



**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6 | 7:30P - 9:00P**  
EDUCATION COMMITTEE: THE MYSTICISM OF ANDALUSIA: SESSION 2 - IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL & HIGHER - WITH RABBI YAMIN LEVY.

2<sup>nd</sup> of 3 classes exploring the enlightening & inspiring roots of Sephardic Mysticism - session in English, questions in French are welcome..

*Registration Required:* [www.thespanish.org](http://www.thespanish.org)