

# Living Jewish



## Tell your Children

### Sons of Fatima

Although the Patriarchs and Matriarchs are entombed in Ma'arat HaMachpela (the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron), for 700 hundred years [1267-1967], the Muslims did not permit entry to the Jews, claiming that Avraham, Yitzhak and Yaakov belonged exclusively to them. They gave permission for Jews to ascend only until the seventh step of the outside Eastern stairway leading up to the tomb markers, and no further.

When Israeli forces liberated Hebron, Jerusalem, and other important Jewish sites in the Six-Day War, Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Nissim sent Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, then aged 38, to visit and inspect the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron, Rachel's Tomb in Beit Lechem (Bethlehem), and the Kotel HaMa'aravi (Western Wall) in Jerusalem.

When they were at the cave, a large group of soldiers entered. This was the first time anyone had been inside after the battles.

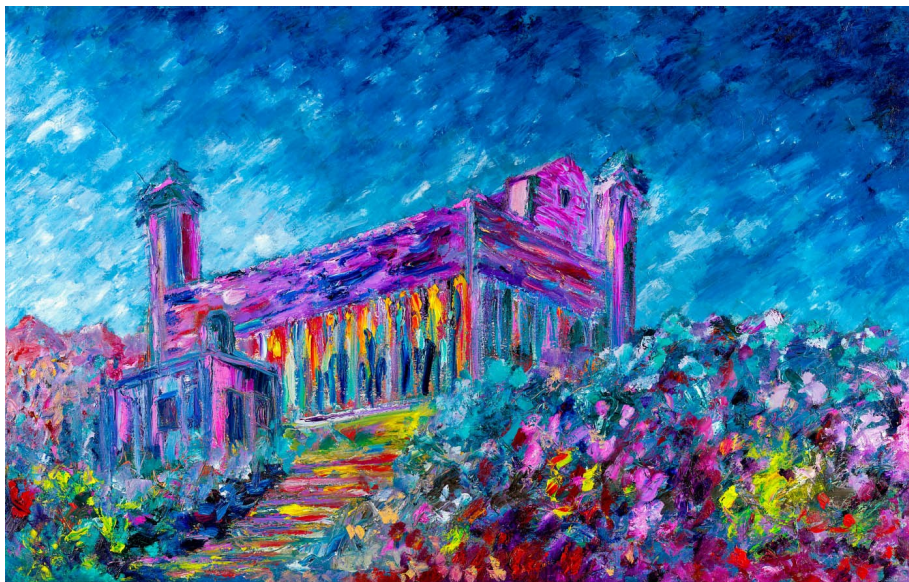
There were many high-ranking army commanders and numerous soldiers there, among them Yitzhak Rabin, Haim Bar-Lev and Uzi Narkiss. A number of prominent Rabbis were also present.

### Get Out!

Some of the soldiers were injured, some were hungry, and most of them were exhausted after days of fighting. They saw the rugs in the cave and lay down, soon falling asleep. Suddenly, the sheik in charge of the cave, a man named Jibri, came out and started shouting at the commanders and soldiers.

"Get out of this cave!" he yelled. "You have no respect for it! We Muslims wash our hands five times when we come here. We take off our shoes and honor this place. But you show no respect whatsoever! Your soldiers are eating here, sleeping here, walking on the rugs with their dirty boots. You have no respect for this place - leave!"

Apparently, he was right. What he said made sense. Everyone was silent... ex-



Ma'arat HaMachpela—the Cave of the Patriarchs  
by Moshe Braun, moshebraun.com

cept one.

### Sons of the King

Rabbi Eliyahu, who understood Arabic, as did most of the senior commanders, responded, "listen to me, Sheik. You know that if a servant comes before the king in soiled clothes, or serves him food on a filthy tray in front of all the king's ministers and servants, he will surely be put to death.

"But if the king's son was absent from his mother and father's home for many years, and his father spent many nights worrying about him and his mother crying for him, if that son was to return home after many years, how do you think the king would receive him? What if he simply wandered in without making an appointment? What if he showed up with torn, dusty clothes, and interrupted the king's conference with his ministers, crying, 'father, I came home?'"

"What if he approached his mother, the queen, calling, 'mother, I'm here?'"

"His mother and father would surely hug him, loving him, and thanking G-d with all their heart for his homecoming, even with his ripped, dirty clothes - because he is their son."

### Our Home

Rabbi Eliyahu looked the sheik in the eyes and said, "Avraham is our father, Sarah is our mother. We behave here as though in our own home.

"You, however, are the 'sons of Fatima', the children of the maidservant Hagar. You behave as is appropriate for a servant to behave, and we behave as is appropriate for children to behave!"

*continued on page three*

### Shabbat Times

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat
Jerusalem	3:57	5:15
Tel Aviv	4:18	5:17
Haifa	4:05	5:15
Beer Sheva	4:19	5:18
New York	4:15	5:16

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## Love after Marriage

This week's Torah reading, Chayei Sarah, elaborates on the description of the engagement and marriage of Isaac and Rebecca, recounting the miracles that showed that G-d had destined her to be Isaac's wife. It concludes by stating: "Isaac brought her into the tent... and she became his wife and he loved her."

With the latter sentence, the Torah is teaching us the fundamental approach that we should have toward love and marriage. Love comes after marriage not before.

For genuine love has little resemblance to the romantic love we hear about in today's society. Most of that type of love has self-gratification as its goal.

From that standpoint, when looking for a person to love, we seek out one who will make us feel good. Our motivation is selfish; we are looking for what we want and what we need.

### Genuine Love

Genuine love, our Sages tell us, is not dependent on any particular factor. It does not come because one's partner is attractive, interests are shared, or pleasant time is spent together. It is not dependent on what we can get out of the relationship.

Instead, genuine love involves self-transcendence, going beyond one's own desires and needs and dedicating oneself to the other person.

That's why genuine love involves marriage, a commitment that has no limits. Marriage is a three-partnered relationship, a bond between a man, a woman, and G-d.

If G-d is left out, the man and the woman will be entering a relationship based on what each one can get out of it, with each of them bartering with the other, giving and taking conditionally. In the long run, one's commitment is to oneself and not to the other person.

### What They Can Give

On the other hand, when a couple marries and sees G-d as an integral part of their marriage, their relationship rests on a foundation of self-transcendence.

How can two people come together as one? Because they step beyond their individual identities and focus on the spiritual core that they share.

Every soul is an actual part of G-d. When we highlight the G-dliness within our souls and within others, we will be able to look past the petty concerns that create strife and discord and connect to the spiritual core which is common to each of us.

When love follows marriage, it is an adult, mature commitment. Each partner cares for the other, not because of what they can get, but because of what they can give. They are dedicated to a life above their self-interest.

That's why they build a home and a family, showing that their relationship is not contained to themselves, but serves as a source of positive influence to their children and to all who visit their home.

### A More Fulfilling Love

Moreover, this type of love is not less satisfying than romantic love.

Yes, it will lack the roller-coaster ups and downs that romance affords, but the commitment will be deeper, more involving, and more genuine. Consequently, it will also be more fulfilling.

When two people build a home together in this manner, they will experience the tranquil joy that comes from simultaneously being in touch with one's self and transcending one's self.

*Based on the teachings of the Rebbe from Keeping in Touch; reprinted with perm. from Sichos in English. From our Sages reprinted from LchaimWeekly.org - LYO / NYC*

## From our Sages

... the years of Sara were one hundred and twenty-seven years (Gen. 23:1)

Sara is the only woman in the Torah whose lifetime is explicitly recorded. This is because she is considered to be the mother of the entire Jewish people, as it states (Isaiah 51:2), "And to Sara who gave birth to you."

(Zohar)

... the years of Sara were one hundred and twenty-seven years (Gen. 23:1)

Rashi comments, "all of her years were equal in goodness." Unlike some, Sara had no youthful mistakes or faults to correct by the time she approached old age. Each and every day of her life was utilized correctly and appropriately.

(Sefat Emet)

*And it shall be that the maiden to whom I will say, "let down your pitcher, I pray you, that I may drink," and she will say, "drink, and I will also give drink to your camels" (Gen. 24:14)*

This "test" of a potential bride for Isaac

was not chosen arbitrarily, for it involves the very nature of holiness. The main distinction between holiness and its opposite is that holiness is directed outward; it overflows, influences its surroundings and infuses them with life. The nature of unholiness, by contrast, is to take and acquire for itself.

When Eliezer saw that Rebecca not only gave him to drink but provided water for his camels, he took it as a sign that she belonged to the side of holiness, and was worthy of marrying the son of Abraham.

(Rabbeinu Bechaye)

### A Stable Marriage

Our Sages describe the challenge of making a good match between husband and wife as being "as difficult as the splitting of the Red Sea." The act of dividing water is easy; what's difficult is making each wave stand up on its own. Similarly, finding a partner to marry is the easy part; what's difficult is creating a stable marriage that will endure...

(B'Maagalei HaChaim)

## Considering Retirement

In a letter to Mr. Mel Landow, a famous philanthropist, who was considering retirement after his business took a turn for the worse, the Rebbe writes:

"With reference to retirement, it is self-evident that you should continue actively in the business world, which obviously will be good for your self confidence and in general, as well as for your wife and family.

"There is also a further point to this. You have been successful in business for many years, having put to good use the capacities and talents which G-d has bestowed upon you in a generous measure.

"It would therefore not be right, to say the least, not to utilize them fully in the future, for it would be tantamount to rejecting something which G-d has given you to make good use of.

"In other words, it is not merely a personal problem but one that also has other far-reaching implications."

*adapted from Derher*

# Chassidus page

## Retirement? Out of the Question!

It was in the months preceding the 11th of Nissan, 5732 (1972), when the Rebbe would celebrate his 70th birthday, and the Rebbe began receiving letters from well meaning people suggesting that perhaps the Rebbe should consider slowing down his activities.

At the 11th of Nissan farbrengen, the Rebbe addressed these concerns: "I have been asked, 'now that you have attained the age of 70, what are your plans? It would seem that this is an appropriate time to rest a bit...' My response to that is we must begin to accomplish even more.

"On the occasion of entering the 70s, this year we should establish at least 70 new institutions! I will be a partner with everyone who will undertake these projects. We will cover at least 10% of the expenses involved in establishing these 70 institutions. And don't worry if during this year we will start not 70 but 80, and maybe even 100. On the contrary—may blessings be bestowed upon all those involved. There will surely be no impediments as far as the 10 percent is concerned..."

This response seems obvious. After all, the Rebbe is responsible for all of the Jewish people and retirement is surely out of the question for him. But what about a businessman, or a Rabbi in a small town. Is retirement really not an option? After decades of hard work, don't they deserve to take it easy and enjoy the fruits of their labor?

Rabbi Moshe Rosen was the Chief Rabbi of Romania beginning in 5708 (1948).

The subsequent years under Stalin were very difficult, and even after Stalin died in 5713 (1953), being the Chief Rabbi of a Communist country was fraught with danger. By 5742 (1982), he had had enough. He was already 70 years old and felt that the time had come to retire and move to Eretz Yisrael. He brought this up to the Rebbe in yechidut (private audience).

The Rebbe said that he is surprised to hear of his plan to leave Romania. He brought examples from Rabbis in the United States who also wanted to emigrate to Eretz Yisrael but decided to stay and lead their communities. To stress this point, the Rebbe told him that when the newspapers reported that he was going to leave Romania, a Rabbi in South Carolina wrote to him that he is now also planning to retire.

Rabbi Rosen asked the Rebbe, "when can I finally relax with my family?" The Rebbe responded, "when you'll be my age we can discuss it." The Rebbe was then 80 years old.

Ten years later, when Rabbi Rosen was at the age that the Rebbe had been 10 years earlier, he returned to the Rebbe to discuss the issue again.

This yechidut took place on the 10th of Kislev, 5752 (1991), and it was the last yechidut the Rebbe granted to this day. As a result of this yechidut, an 80-year-old Rabbi Rosen returned to Romania and served his community until his passing

*adapted from Derher*

## Sons of Fatima

*continued from page one:*

The sheik turned red with shame. Not only did he have no rejoinder for the Rabbi, he had been called a "son of Fatima," son of the maidservant. He was insulted. He turned on the spot and stormed back into his room in a great rage.

The senior commanders there immediately turned to Rabbi Eliyahu, asking in horrified dismay, "why did you do that? We want to live in peaceful coexistence with the Arabs. Why did you have to upset him? You may have ruined everything!"

Rabbi Eliyahu replied firmly, "you have to tell them the truth. That's the only thing they understand."

The argument continued for a few minutes, until the door of the sheik's room suddenly opened. The sheik exited his room with his head down, approaching Rabbi Eliyahu in deference. "Oh wise one, oh master; please forgive me!" he cried out.

Rabbi Eliyahu didn't turn to him or even respond. He simply looked at the commanders and said, "you see what language they understand? I grew up among the Arabs from when I was a young child in the Old City of Jerusalem. Tell the truth and they will understand!"

*Source:* Adapted and supplemented by Yerachmiel Tilles from the book, Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu: A Legend of Humility and Leadership.

**Connection:** This week's Torah Reading, Chayei Sara, opens with Sarah's death and Avraham's registered purchase of the field in which the Machpela Cave is situated, and continues with the saga of arranging the match between Yitzchak and Rivka (Isaac & Rebecca).

*Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles of Tsfat is co-founder of ASCENT. His email list for stories is in its 28th year. To join the list a/o his WhatsApp group for Saturday night Audio, Video and Zoom stories, go to [AscentOfSafed.com](https://www.AscentOfSafed.com) or WhatsApp +972-526-770-137.*

## Moshiach Now

### Internalizing the Message of the Rambam

"A person should always see himself as being equally balanced between merit and sin, and the world also being equally balanced between merit and sin...If he performs one mitzvah, he tips his balance and that of the entire world to the side of merit, and brings deliverance and salvation to himself and others." (the Rambam)

Now every Jew has become personally responsible to bring Moshiach. It is therefore imperative to impress the Rambam's message upon each and every man, woman, and child; they must constantly remember that the destiny of the entire universe rests on their shoulders, and every action they do might be the one to tip the scale.

*(adapted from the teachings of the Rebbe, reprinted from Derher)*

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## When the Polls Climbed

*In a historic win, Donald J. Trump emerged victorious in the 2024 U.S. Presidential Election, making him the 47th President of the United States. In a public broadcast, political commentator Ben Schapiro attributed Trump's success to his davening at the Rebbe's Ohel.*

In a historic win, Donald J. Trump emerged victorious in the 2024 U.S. Presidential Election, securing the crucial electoral votes needed to surpass the threshold for the presidency, making Trump the 47th President of the United States.

The race was marked by intense campaigning in battleground states, with Pennsylvania emerging as the tipping point in the race. As results began to pour in, Pennsylvania remained one of the final key states in play, ultimately tipping the scales in Trump's favor. This victory represents a historic return to the Oval Office, marking Trump's second non-consecutive term as President.



In a widely viewed live report, political commentator Ben Schapiro attributed Trump's success to his visit to the Rebbe's Ohel on October 7th. He noted that just after Trump exited the Ohel, the polls started to climb in favor of Trump.

After narrowly escaping two assassination attempts, Trump publicly thanked G-d for saving him. His policies allow and support faith in G-d and observing His commandments. In his victory remarks early Wednesday morning, he likewise noted, "many people have told me that G-d has spared my life for a reason, and that reason was to save our country."

The following anecdote comes to mind: during the war with Napoleon, the Alter Rebbe was challenged by another Rebbe who questioned his support for the Czar who wasn't known to be virtuous. Why then does the Alter Rebbe promote him over Napoleon?

To which the Alter Rebbe replied, "*Fonyeh ganev, Fonyeh no'ef, Fonyeh rotzai'ach, ober er iz nisht ma'alim af Echod.*" True the Czar has his faults, but he does not conceal faith in Hashem.

*reprinted from Anash.org*

## Cooking Tip of the Week

### Pesto-Stuffed Mushrooms

Prepare portobello mushrooms by cleaning out the insides. Make a pesto sauce of 2 cups basil, 3 garlic cloves, 1 tbsp pine nuts or walnuts and 1/2 c olive oil. Mix in food processor and add 1 cup bread crumbs. Fill mushrooms with mix and add salt and pepper. Bake for 15 minutes at 200 C.

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## Halacha Corner – Praying for Rain

*If one traveled from Eretz Yisrael to the Diaspora between the 7th of MarCheshvon [the time when we begin praying for rain in Eretz Yisrael] and the 5th of December [the time we begin praying for rain in the Diaspora], is he to continue to say Vetan Tal Umatar (bestow dew and rain) in the Diaspora?*

If one traveled from Eretz Yisrael to the Diaspora between the 7th of MarCheshvon and the 5th of December, he is to continue to say Vetan Tal Umatar in the Diaspora. This applies even if he traveled on the night of the 7th of MarCheshvan and prayed Maariv beforehand.

If he is Chazan, he is to recite Vetan Tal Umatar in his private prayer, however, in his repetition of Shemoneh Esrei, he is to recite Vetan Bracha as is said in the Diaspora. There is no need to avoid being Chazan for this reason.

*By Rabbi Yaakov Goldstein, shulchanaruchharav.com*

**Question:** The question I have is regarding Charedim serving in the army. I understand that the issue is not simple or straightforward. I do believe that as a state we have been enabling minorities to not pull their weight. Those that do serve in the army have been called up three times already. Also, the option of receiving an exemption from the army when learning Torah full time, is a slippery slope of which one can be tempted to take advantage. I think this is a very important issue and I really would like to hear your thoughts on the subject.

**Answer:** At a farbrengen after the Six Day War the Rebbe asked: who is more worthy? Soldiers who protect at the front, or yeshiva students who protect the nation through Torah learning? The Rebbe answered that each is important. The Gemara tells us that King David's Torah learning facilitated Yoav's wars, and Yoav's wars facilitated David's Torah learning, in a Yissachar-Zevulun style relationship.

In the relationship between Yissachar and Zevulun, Zevulun is considered more important for supporting and thereby facilitating Yissachar's learning. "How much more so regarding the soldiers," the Rebbe said, "who put their lives on the line to protect their fellow Jews from their enemies?"

So too, the Rebbe spoke of the importance of Torah learning: "Just as it is not honorary in any sense of the word for a soldier to abandon his post-on the contrary, he is considered a deserter who has betrayed his country-so too, one who was appointed to sit and learn Torah day and night but decides that he too should fight and earn medals, if he leaves his perch where he learns and goes out to fight, he is considered a deserter and a traitor to his country. His Torah study is what saves the soldiers in war and wins the battle, and without it, he is leaving his brethren in a vulnerable position open to danger."

At the same time, one should not "take advantage." An individual once wrote to the Rebbe, asking for advice in obtaining a petur (exemption from the army) in order to go to work. The Rebbe answered by quoting the Gemara, "why do you think your blood is redder than another's?" If he would learn Torah, the Rebbe said, he would be eligible for a deferment, but what right does he have to go work while someone else puts his life on the line for his safety... (the above teachings excerpted from Derher)

In other words, Torah learning and army service are both essential elements for victory over our enemies. Both are "carrying their weight" - albeit in different ways. The more we *all* respect and value the contribution each person is making to the Jewish people, the stronger we will be as a nation.

*Aharon Schmidt, for questions and appointments, coachingandcounseling1@gmail.com*



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