

Parshas Chayei Sarah

This week's parsha, Chayei Sarah, is named for Sarah's life, even though it opens with her passing. The Torah tells us, "Avraham came to eulogize Sarah and to weep for her," and in the word V'Livkosah, the letter Chof is written smaller than the others. Many Mepharshim see this as a deliberate hint.

The Gemara in Bava Basra says Avraham had a daughter named Bakol who passed away. The Chafetz Chaim notes that when the small Chof is removed from V'Livkosah, the word becomes u'levitah—that Avraham was also crying for his daughter, a grief reawakened by the loss of Sarah. The Baal Haturim explains that the small Chof means Avraham didn't cry excessively, because he understood Sarah's passing as divinely timed. The Sforno adds that her mission was complete—she had brought Yitzchak into the world, securing the covenantal future—so Avraham cried, but with the awareness that her time had come.

The Kli Yakar offers several explanations. Typically, people cry first and eulogize later, but here it is reversed because Sarah's loss was felt more and more each day. Her Torah, her righteousness, her presence—these became more precious in their absence. Chazal also say that losing one's first wife is like witnessing the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, so Avraham's tears were tied not only to personal loss but to the weight of that symbolism. The Kli Yakar also references the small Chof as a hint to human mortality, rooted in the sin of the Nachash that diminished humanity. But this is not a reflection on Sarah

personally; as Rashi tells us, at 100 she was like 20 regarding sin—completely righteous. Her passing was simply the human condition, not a punishment.

What emerges from all these explanations is a portrait of the deep humanity of our Avos and Imahos. Avraham cried. He eulogized. He processed grief in his own way, balancing pain with understanding, sadness with faith. Sarah completed her mission in this world, and Avraham honoured her with both emotion and clarity.

The lesson for us is simple and profound: our humanity is not a contradiction to our Avodas Hashem. Our emotions, our tears, our struggles—they don't distance us from greatness. They are part of the path to it. Avraham and Sarah reached spiritual heights not by leaving their humanity behind, but by elevating it. And we, too, can serve Hashem through the fullness of who we are.

Good Shabbos