



Chayei Sarah - Marriage, Death, and Commerce

First Funeral?

There are some standard daily and life cycle events that occur in this *parsha* for the first time in the Torah. With the description of Sarah's burial and eulogy we have the first accounts of a death, burial, and eulogy. Up until this point the Torah simply stated the age at the time of a person's death – there was no description of the *hesped*, *levaya* or burial. If these events were not significant enough to be mentioned up until now, why are they discussed about Sarah Imeinu?

First account of married life?

But more so, life as a couple is never described in the Torah up until now, if the wife is even mentioned at all. Avraham and Sarah are really the first account of the life a couple led together. They are mentioned together in Charan, up until the end when Avraham Avinu showed his love and respect for Sarah by burying her with full honors, eulogizing her, and mourning her passing.

First Real Estate Deal?

The acquisition of Me'aras HaMachpela is the first business deal mentioned in the Torah. Chazal see great importance in this acquisition. The "Benei Cheis" who witnessed this transaction are mentioned multiple times to honor them "*Mevarer mekcho shel Tzadik*"- for attesting to the acquisition of a Tzadik. In the same spirit, after the acquisition was complete, the posuk says "Rise did the field of Efron...." (23:17) Rashi explains that the field was elevated in status being previously owned by a commoner (Efron) and now owned by a king (Avraham). What's so special about this deal?

First Man and Woman, first Shalom Bayis issue

These concepts have their parallel in man and woman. Avraham and Sarah weren't exactly the

first couple to be discussed in the Torah. There is another description of a couple's life, Adam and Chava, but immediately after their 'marriage' the narrative ends with the sin of the *Etz Ha'Da'as*, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. After Adam sinned, he separated from Chava for a hundred and thirty years. The first sin caused a crisis in their marriage. What is the connection between he and her succumbing to the sin of the *Etz Ha'Da'as* and the rift that came between them as a couple?

What do making a living and death have in common?

The answer lays in analyzing the known outcomes of the original sin. There were two major consequences: Now there is death in the world and man no longer be able to live forever in his first lifetime, only after the resurrection. The other consequence was the curse of "by the sweat of your brow you will eat bread". Man, now must work hard for a living and even just to survive. What is the common denominator between these two consequences? The answer is **fragmentation**.

Fragmentation and commerce

Death is where Body and Soul ultimately part, and why? Because even in their lifetime they are fragmented and never wholly one. That's why their brief togetherness will come to an end. What is the essence of the hard work that man has to do to survive? To root out interfering impurities and to draw together the pieces needed. In agriculture it's to combine the seeds with the earth and the water on the one hand and to rid the soil of the thorns and weeds on the other. This means pulling together the positive ingredients and rooting out the negative ones that would stop the positive ingredients from

bonding together. To prepare bread the flour must be sifted from impurities and then mixed with the water and the other ingredients. That's how clothes are made, and shoes are produced. **Everything requires assembly** while rooting out the impurities that may hamper the assembly.

Commerce

One man cannot do it all. The simple solution is the marketplace where each one will exchange what he has for what he needs. The marketplace is a place of **unity** where people **pulls together by acquisition the pieces that they need and dispose of the excess that they don't want.**

Man is to Woman like soul to the body

The relationship of the soul to the body is male to female type of relationship. This is illustrated by the halachic concept "*ishto k'gufo* – a wife is like one's body." If the wife is like the husband's body, then he is like her soul.

Hashem blew the **soul** of life into Adam, and later fashioned a portion of Adam's **body** into a woman. Of course, woman has a soul, and man has a body, but the integrated unit of a person is called Adam "and he called them Adam." In this whole form man is the soul and woman is the body.¹

Chazal say '*Isha ksheira osa ratzon ba'la'* – a fitting wife does the will of her husband. The husband provides the goals and ideals, while the woman brings them out practically in the home. This concept also expresses the soul and body relationship. As Rebbi explained with a metaphor to Antoninus, the soul is like a handicapped sighted person and the body is like a blind able-bodied man. The sighted cripple rides **on top** of the able-bodied man, giving him direction to pull off the caper. The soul provides direction, and the body performs the actions.

As stated, the first sin created a major schism between body and soul. The very fact that death is a fact of life shows that it has never been reconciled. And of course, there is a problem with *shalom bayis* as well, a schism between man and wife.

The sin caused a *p'gam ha'tzelem*, a flaw in man's divine image, and that image is only complete when a man and woman are fully united. A person with no wife has no *simcha*, no Torah, and no *bracha*. An unmarried man is referred to as *palga d'gufa*, a half entity. They must be together. By causing a flaw in his divine image, Adam created a schism of body and soul, which in turn affected the relationship between man and wife.

The body and soul were now out of alignment, and man and woman became separated. It now takes a lot of work to have a good marriage. Unlike the way Adam was handed his bride, today to get married you must find your wife. We must chase after the woman, and the *Gemora* tells us why "it is incumbent on the owner of the lost object to search for it." Why is his woman lost? It is because of this fragmentation between man and wife generated by the original sin.

Acquiring One's Other Half

An act of *kidushin*, forming the Jewish marriage bond, requires witnesses. The question is asked: How was Adam was able to marry Chava in this way when there was no one else to witness their marriage? The truth is the question does not start. They were in naturally married. *Kedushin* functions to make a woman designated to one man alone. If there is more than one man, this is necessary. But in Adam and Chava's case there was no alternative. They were *mekudash*, set aside for each other, by default.

But there is a more profound reason which goes along with the above. We need *kedushin* because we are fragmented, and we overcome this

¹ Another allusion to this is from the verse: "*Ki b'ka Hashem tzur olamim* – for in *Ka Hashem* rock of the worlds." The *Gemora* explains that Hashem created the higher worlds with the *yud* of the name "*Ka*," and the lower worlds with the *hey*. *Chazal* say that when man and woman are at piece, the divine presence rests between them, and if not, there is a destructive fire. The *Shechinah* refers to the *yud* of *ish*, man, and the *hey* of *isha*, woman. We see that man is associated with the higher worlds.

separation with the act of *kedushin*. Therefore, it is called *kedushin*, sanctification. There was a degree of *chilul*, an aspect of profanity that caused this schism. The root of the world *chol* is *chalal*, space. There's a space, a separation that must be overcome with the act of *kedushin*, the formation of a marriage bond. *Kedusha* is the glue that overcomes it. *Kedushin* is not just a license, it is an acquisition! This is a higher form of acquisition, beyond what happens in the market place. In the market place you acquire what you need for survival. This is acquiring your soul mate! The *kinyan* that goes along with *kedushin* is an act of rejoining two halves which allows the divine image to become complete again. This allows for a partial rectification of the schism which was caused with the sin of the *Etz Ha'Da'as*.

Avraham and Sarah, Together Again

With the above explanation, we can see why the Zohar on this week's *parsha* refers to **the holy body of a *tzaddik* as "Sarah", and his *neshama* as "Avraham"**. His body has expressed the will of the soul to cleave to Hashem by actively performing *mitzvahs* in this world.

The same way Avraham loved his wife dearly, and attended to her and eulogized her when she passed on, when the *tzaddik* dies his *neshama* comes to the body and cries over it. The body and soul are married to one another.

Here lies the secret to why the *tzaddik* is called alive even when dead, and the *rasha* is called dead even in life. It is because the soul of the wicked is not bonded to its body like that of the *tzaddik*. The *tzaddik's* body is bound to its soul even in death, as they both exist for the same spiritual purpose.

The *tzaddik's* body does the will of the soul, they are totally one. Even in death they are not truly separated, as they will soon reunite. In fact, the Chazal tell us that an aspect of life energy, '**Havlah D'Garme'**, remains within the bones of the *tzaddik*.

Not so the body of the wicked. It is not in line with the divine, and there is no peace between

them. The *Midrash Shochar Tov* says that many times a day the soul wishes to leave the body of a *rasha*, but Hashem convinces it to remain. The *rasha* is like a dead man, for his *neshama* is never truly bonded to his body.

Avos and Imahos fixing for Adam and Chava

Avraham and Sarah were the progenitors of the Jewish nation. Its purpose and destiny are to rectify the world, culminating with the arrival of the Mashiach. Avraham and Sarah's lives were dedicated to this goal of fixing Adam and Chava's sin. Their glorious example of married life served as a rectification of this sin by itself.

There is no discussion of married life in the Torah prior to this exalted couple because the spiritual bond between man and wife had not been restored until Avraham and Sarah united. Up until then human marriage was almost like any other animal relationship, its main purpose was propagating the human species.

Paralleling this lack of unity between man and wife, prior to Avraham and Sarah the body lacked any soul aspect. When it expired it was treated like an old piece of machinery, to be sent to the junk yard. The body did not receive the respect due to a vessel bonded to the *neshama*. Undeserving of final respects, it was just a vessel that had run down and needed to be disposed of. The body and soul were two separate entities.

Avraham and Sarah's mission was to rebuild the *tzelem* by forming a nation that lives in holiness. Therefore, the Torah describes their marriage in so much detail, how he loved her and cried for her, how even in death they did not part. Therefore death, eulogy and burial are discussed for the first time.

Me'aras Hamachpelah, Couples and Doubles

But what really brings out these unique ideas is the *Me'aras HaMachpelah*, the doubled cave. More than just demonstrating Avraham Avinu's tremendous respect for Sarah with a special burial site, the cave is rich in symbolism.

Its double nature alludes to the double payment received when something stolen, something lost to you, is returned **plus more**². It is a double cave because for the Jew the day of death and burial seems like a loss, but it is the place where he will find himself again **but in the superior state of immortality** thus 'receiving double'.

There are two opinions that describe the way the cave was doubled. One states that there is a chamber within a chamber, whereas the other maintains that there are two floors, a "*bayis v'alayah*, house with a second story." Both opinions serve as metaphors for the *neshama's* relationship to the body. The first opinion parallels the *Gemora* in *Brachos* which states that the *neshama* sits within "the inner most chambers". The soul is internal, whereas the body is external.

The second opinion parallels the chapter in *Baba Metziah* entitled "*Habayis V'Ha'alayah – A House with a Second Story.*" The *Gemora* there discusses a case where a house is jointly owned, one partner owning the ground floor, and one owning the second. If the house collapsed, and the person below only built the ground floor, not allowing the second to build further, then the man living on the higher floor may live in the house until the man who owns the house allows for further construction. The *Gemora* states "The house is subservient to the higher floor." This is an allusion to the body, which is beholden to the soul.

The dual factor of the cave represents all the concepts discussed, and ties them together. This dual aspect overcomes the original fragmentation. The two separate entities – body and soul, man and wife – are bound together as double units. They form *zugot* – pairs, couples. Four couples are buried in the cave of Machpelah, the cave of doubles. **The acquisition of the cave, was 'mekcho shel Tzadik' a acquisition that a tzadik does: not for pragmatic needs but rather to mend the cosmic fragmentation!!**

This is the secret behind why Kidushei Kesef, the most common form of Kiddushin, which most obviously resembles acquisition, is derived from the acquisition of Me'aras HaMachpela, Kicha m'sdeh

Efron!

We now see why the act of *kinyan* comes up here for the first time and its cosmic significance, along with Avraham and Sarah's relationship, and Sarah's eulogy and burial. Good Shabbos.



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² *Machpeila* has the same root as "*keifel*," the double payment the thief must pay.