

PARSHAS CHAYEI SARAH

by Gedalia Litke

1. Avrohom came to eulogize Soroh and to cry for her (v'livkosah). 23:2. The Ba'al HaTurim notes that the word v'livkosah is written with a small 'kaf', indicating that Avrohom did not cry as fully or completely as he might have; his crying was in some sense curtailed. Why should this be so?

2. This pasuk begins by saying that Soroh died, and continues by saying that Avrohom came to eulogize Soroh and cry for her. A well known question on this pasuk is why is it necessary to repeat Soroh's name explicitly in the second part of the pasuk; it could simply have said Soroh died and Avrohom came to eulogize her and cry for her, using pronouns instead of her name.

While the death of a private citizen always brings bereavement to the family members, the death of a person of public stature brings bereavement both to the family members and to the public. The public element of the eulogies is for the community to acknowledge and appreciate the contributions made by the deceased and the loss which now results - in Soroh's case this would be her role in teaching monotheism. The private element is for the family members to acknowledge and appreciate the deceased - in Soroh's case this would be her role as a wife and mother.

Soroh is the name given to Sorai in recognition of her capacity to be a princess or aristocrat among the nations of the world. It is her public name. Avrohom understood that the purpose of the public eulogies was for the public to appreciate their loss. For this reason he curtailed his private crying, at least in public, so that the emphasis on her public role would be properly emphasized. And this is also why the pasuk emphasizes 'Soroh', her public name.

[This is based on shiurim of HoRav Yochanan Zweig, Shlita.]

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