

# REAL TIME

*by Rabbi Raymond Beyda*

The first major chapter in the history of the Jewish people ends in this week's Parasha with the deaths of our first matriarch and patriarch, Sarah and Abraham. The Torah records the span of the life of Sarah with the repetitious phrasing "100 year and 20 year and 7 years the days of the life of Sarah." Our commentators point out that the repetition is used to teach that all of her days were "equally good." In referring to the old age of Abraham the Torah states, "And Abraham was old, he came with his days." Again the Torah uses intentionally awkward language in order to teach us a vital lesson.

There was once a man who visited a village far from his home. In touring all the different parts of the town he went to the cemetery and noticed something very unusual. Each of the tombstones was marked the age of the person who lay in that spot. The date of passing was not etched in the stone as the visitor was used to seeing in other places to which he traveled. Instead, in this town the markings listed the years, months and days that the person lived. That in itself would be enough to baffle the traveler but he also noticed that the ages of the departed were all extremely young. One stone read 7 years, 4 months, 6 days. Another read 20 years, 6 months, 3 weeks and 2 days. In fact none was more than 30 years of age when he had passed on to the next world. Upon his return to the heart of the village he noticed that many people looked older than those that were buried in the cemetery. His inquiry yielded no fruit until he approached a member of the Hebra Kadisha -- the burial society. His question received a startling answer.

"We don't record the amount of time a person spends on this earth on their grave," said the helpful gentleman. "We record the REAL TIME spent in the performance of Torah learning, misvot performance as well as time spent doing acts of kindness for others. After we total up all that time, we engrave the REAL LIFE of the person on the stone."

The lesson is clear. A person is given life in order to achieve and grow. The time spent successfully performing what the Torah requires of the human being is what is considered the "life" of the person. The time spent on trivialities may be the good life but in Torah terms it is not living. The verse says "And these are the days of the years of the life of Abraham--asher hai--that he lived." The ideals portrayed by our forefathers in the "story" portions of our holy Torah are the goals we all must strive to duplicate. We all must do our best to spend the precious moments of our earthly lives in productive ways as taught by the Torah. Then, we too, will earn the merit to "come with all of our days".

Shabbat Shalom

## **DID YOU KNOW THAT**

On Shabbat making a noise with any device designed for that purpose is forbidden. The prohibition covers bells, rattles, flutes and whistles. All devices of this nature are muktzeh and may not be moved except in special circumstances as outlined in the laws of muktzeh. Whistling with one's mouth is permitted. One may give a baby toys that make noise when shaken or squeezed even though such toys are muktzeh but an adult may not make the noise with a rattle or such toy even to amuse the baby.

*[Source Shemirath Shabbath K'hilkhetah chapter 16:2,3]*

## **HIGHLIGHT FROM HOK L'YISRAEL**

The Zohar states that when the Jewish people accept the Shabbat and recite the words "he spreads the Succah of peace" ["pores Succat shalom"] a great holiness descends from Heaven upon the Earth and covers the Jewish people like a mother protecting her children. They are then blessed with a special additional soul, which makes them feel joy. They are also protected from the troubles that are usually all around. On the night of Shabbat a person should taste from all of the delicacies so as to demonstrate that this Succah of peace is all encompassing.

*[Source Zohar Beresheet page 48a]*

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