

Dvar Torah by Rabbi Chanoch Yeres

to his community at

Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

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CHAYEI SARA

This past week, the yahrzeit of Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks, former Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth was commemorated. It would only be appropriate to quote one of ideas of Rabbi Sacks to embody our sense of loss of such a great Jewish leader.

He wrote a fascinating point concerning this parsha, which in turn leaves us with insight to what this great man contributed to this world. He made note that the name of the Parsha seemed a paradox. It is called Chayei Sara, "the life of Sara", yet it begins telling the death of Sara. "Why is a parsha about death called life?" He answered so succinctly, that "not always but often - death and how we face it is a commentary on life and how we live it."

He went on to bring a deeper understanding of Sara based on a further paradox in the Parsha. On the verse "Sara's lifetime was 127 years: the years of Sara's life", Rashi comments that the word "years" is repeated to indicate that the years of Sara's life were all equally good. "How could this be remotely possible?" Rabbi Sacks asked. The text tells us of situations

fraught with moral hazards in Gerar, of her being infertile and having to deal with great strife with Hagar.

Rabbi Sacks gave a tremendous insight into our own perspective of things. "The answer is that to understand a death, we have to understand a life." He enhanced the idea by explaining how Avraham and Sara were among the supreme examples in all of history of what it is to have a "Why" in life. Their entire life was in response to a call, a Divine voice.

They followed that voice to leave their home and go live in a land with strangers and keep the faith and belief that living a life of righteousness and justice would began the process of establishing a nation in their homeland. That was their life mission. What mattered was their faith, not their often-troubled circumstances and challenges.

Rabbi Sacks ends off the insight with powerful words: "I believe that faith helps us find the "Why" that allows us to bear almost any "How". The serenity of Sara's and Avraham's death was eternal testimony to how they lived."

Rabbi Sack's numerous insights and Torah thoughts transformed our world into a one of thought, sensitivity, rich in vision and compassion. He assisted us in seeking out

the answers that make the world a better place to live. We remember this great individual and cherish all the great words of wisdom he endowed upon us. 🕯️

Y'HI ZICHRO BARUCH