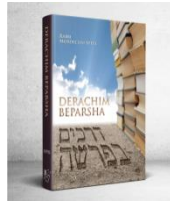


**דרכים
בפרשה
חיי שרה**

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יהיו חיי שרה מאה שנה ועשרים שנה ושבע

שנים שני חיי שרה - Sarah's lifetime—the span of Sarah's life—came to one hundred and twenty-seven years.

לכך נכתב שנה בכל כלל וכלל, לומר לך שכל אחד נדרש לעצמו, בת ק' כבת כ' לחטא, מה בת כ' לא חטאה, שהרי אינה בת ענשין, אף בת ק' בלא חטא

Quoting the Midrash, Rashi explains that the word **שנה** in-between the amount of years of Sarah comes to teach us that בת ק' כבת כ'. Just as a twenty year old is clean from sin (re: liability), similarly Sarah was clean from sin at one hundred years of age.

I heard from Rav Mordche Druk z"l another explanation of this Midrash. Sarah Imeinu's approach to life was that her twenty was like her one hundred. What does this mean? He explained that if you look at Tehillim 100, מזמור לתודה, Dovid Hamelech talks all about giving thanks to HaShem with joy and gladness for everything; serving HaShem with happiness; singing to Him; knowing all about Him, and that we are His. This entire familiar *kapittel* is an approach to life: The choice to be happy in appreciation of the life which HaShem has given us.

But what about the tough times? Looking earlier in Tehillim at *kapittel* 20, Dovid Hamelech writes, **יהי ענך ה' ביום צרה** - may HaShem answer you on the day of distress. Rav Druk explains that for Sarah Imeinu, her approach of happiness was the same in stressful times as in times of joy. Her *kapittel* 20 was said with happiness just like her *kapittel* 100. They were כולן שווין לטובה - she looked at every scenario like it was good.

On a practical level, how does one reach such a level? If we want to understand this even on a basic level, we must pay attention to the happy times described in *kapittel* 100. When good occurs, **לה' כל הארץ** - we must *“Raise a shout out to HaShem”*. Are we letting good things happen to us without acknowledgment of the One that caused it? If we would stop and think about the constant *chessed* that HaShem continuously does for us, we would see things differently. There would be a different appreciation of life.

ה' בשמחה - *serve HaShem with joy*: If we are happy in our *avodas HaShem*, and thankful for each chance to perform a *mitzvah*, we will begin to look at everything with a new appreciation. Suddenly we will see all that occurs as another opportunity to serve Him. With a true joy in serving HaShem, one can actually be motivated to burst out in song; i.e. **באו לפניו ברננה** - *come into His presence with shouts of joy*. Of course, when one views the mitzvos as a bother and a pain, there will be no singing, and most likely, that person will not even sing in the good times.

הוא אלקים - *Know that HaShem is our G-d*. The word **דעו** comes from **דעת**, which refers to an intimate knowledge. Our knowledge of HaShem must be on a much higher level than what we learned as children. We must come to a knowledge and an awareness of HaShem on a level as that of which one is aware of their spouse. **אלקים** refers to *midas hadin*, and **ה'** refers to *midas harachamim*. If we are completely cognizant of HaShem's direct involvement in our lives, we will be able to see that **הוא אלקים**; *din* and *rachamim* are one and the same and all comes from the same Place. Therefore, when *din* seems to occur, we can rest assured knowing that **הוא עשנו (ולא) [ולו] אנחנו** - *He made us and we are His, and He will take care of us*.

In keeping all of this in mind, **באו שעריו בתודה** - *enter His gates with thanksgiving*. One cannot

truly be grateful for something unless they have an appreciation of what was done for them. If we stop and think about the constant chessed being done for us, then our approach, i.e. the way we enter His gate will be one of happiness.

הוא-עשנו כי-טוב ה' לעולם חסדו -*For HaShem is good, His chessed endures forever.* The key to realizing this chessed is looking around through the lens of positivity, and thankfulness. Rav Avigdor Miller z"l would say that when one loses a tooth, it is an opportunity to say thank you for the rest of the teeth. Furthermore, one can look at everything else that they do have and be more appreciative.

Finally, utilizing the knowledge that הוא-עשנו -*If we appreciate that Hashem made us, then we also know that HaShem won't just throw us away, and that is a great level of bitachon.* When this becomes a focus in our lives, everything is different. We see things and understand them differently than others will. There will be so many reasons to sing. Even the challenges that we must go through will cause happiness. Dovid Hamelech writes in Tehillim (32) -*רבים מכאובים לרשע והבוטח בה' חסד יסובבנו*

many are the pains of the wicked, but for the one that trusts in HaShem, he is surrounded with kindness. The simple explanation is that while the rasha suffers, HaShem is busy giving good things for the tzaadik. Perhaps we can explain this in a different manner as follows: Take two people, a rasha and a tzaadik, both going through the exact same difficult scenario. The rasha sees it at face value. Life is terrible; so much pain and suffering, "where is HaShem in all this," etc. etc. On the other hand, for the tzaadik, because he is full of bitachon, trusting that everything that HaShem does is for the very best, for him it is a completely different experience. When he looks around at his surroundings, all he sees is a world of chessed. *הבוטח בה' - the one that trusts in HaShem, חסד יסובבנו - he realizes that he is truly surrounded by chessed.*

Bearing all this in mind, we now understand the praise that we give for Sarah Imeinu. With all the difficulties of her life, she was able to sing to HaShem. For her, kapittel 20 was just like kapittel 100!

מרדכי אפפעל, Good Shabbos,