

Kummunique - Kumah's Shabbat and Holiday Bulletin

Issue 7, Parshat Vayeira 5766

Shalom! We are proud to present another issue of Kummunique. This issue is filled with Aliyah and Eretz Yisrael inspiration - so enjoy!

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1. "Mazel Tov!" by Malkah Fleisher

It's a boy! Sarah, our Matriarch, gives birth to our Forefather, Isaac, after a few decades of sorrow, maternal loneliness, and the jealousy of her handmaiden's accomplishment. Imagine having your first child after 75 years of trying - I'm sure you'd throw quite a party. Now multiply that by Avraham's tribal leadership, wealth, and awareness of direct G-dly intervention, and you have the bris of the millennium.

According to the Torah (and commentaries), Avraham and Sarah did indeed hold a huge thanksgiving celebration, and invited all the locals - heathens and all. Featured in the grandiose feast may have been the humble chickpea, in a dish known as Arbis. Some say that chickpeas are served at a Shalom Zachor or a brit as a consolation for having forgotten all the Torah the baby was taught in the womb (every Jew is said to be taught the entire Torah in the womb by an angel, who then flicks the baby on the upper lip immediately before he's born, making the child forget all the Torah he learned). This forgetting of the Torah is a certain kind of death - which we are reminded of by the

chickpeas, which are also traditionally served in houses of mourning because they are round, like the world, like the cycle of life.

You might also know that chickpeas are packed with folic acid, a crucial vitamin in the diet of nursing mothers. So if you're partial to Rashi's commentary in this week's parsha (see Yishai's article this week), Sarah probably loaded up her plate a few times with this simple, tasty dish. Soon by you!!

Arbis

4 pounds dried chickpeas

4 Tbsps. salt

2 tsps. white pepper (or black)

(adjust the seasonings to your taste, and include anything else you might like - cumin, garlic powder, ground coriander)

Begin a day in advance, if possible. Rinse the chickpeas thoroughly. In a large bowl, cover with enough water to cover by about an inch and a half, and soak uncovered for at least 2 hours. Drain. Put into a big pot and fill with water to cover. Add salt and pepper, and cook about 3 hours or until the skins begin to peel - try not to overcook. While still warm, drain thoroughly in a colander. Place in a large bowl, and season to taste. Serve to well-wishers and grandparents - Mazel Tov!

2. "Feeding the World" by Yishai Fleisher

G-d promises Abraham and Sarah that they would have children. It seemed impossible, for the couple had passed the time of childbearing. Yet G-d made a miracle and gave Sarah back her softness and Abraham his strength. To the surprise of Abraham and Sarah, and all the people around them, Sarah did indeed give birth to a son, and they named him Yitzchak. The prophecy of the Abrahamic seed continuing through Sarah's son spread fear amongst the nations. They knew that G-d had promised that the land of Canaan would be inherited by the seed of Abraham - and now those prophecies began to come true.

3. And Abraham named his son who had been born to him, whom Sarah had borne to him, Isaac.

4. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him.

5. And Abraham was a hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born to him.

6. And Sarah said, "God has made joy for me; whoever hears will rejoice over me."

7. And she said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children, for I have borne a son to his old age!" (Chapter 27)

How many children did Sarah nurse? Did she not have only one son, one boy, one child? Why then does she say "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children" - "children" in plural?

Rashi, the great commentator sees this problem and says on the verse:

"Sarah would nurse children" Why is children in the plural? On the day of the feast, the princesses brought their children with them, and she (Sarah) nursed them, for they were saying, Sarah did not give birth, but brought in an abandoned child from the street.

And on a related verse the Torah states:

"And I will bless her, and I will give you a son from her, and I will bless her, and she will become [a mother of]nations; kings of nations will be from her." (17:16)

Rashi explains:

"and I will bless her" with breast feeding, when she required it, on the day of Isaacs feast, for people were slandering (Abraham and Sarah) by saying against them, that they had brought an abandoned child from the street and were saying, He is our son. So each (woman present at the celebration) brought her child with her, but not her wet nurse, and she (Sarah) nursed them all. That is what is said: (21:7): Sarah has nursed children.

The nations were calling Sarah a liar!

The nations were calling Sarah a thief!

They were accusing Sarah of taking an abandoned child that really belonged to them.

There is no way she could really have given birth in her old age - she must have stolen that child!

But G-d made a miracle, and Sarah was able to breast-feed all of the other nations' children - proving that she was capable. Like Chanukah's miracle of the oil, Sarah never ran dry!

And why is this important? Why should we keep the miracle of the breast-milk in our mind today?

Because just as the nations of the world accused Sarah of stealing their baby, so too do they accuse the Jewish people of stealing their Land.

And just as the baby-theft story was a lie, so too is the Land-theft accusation a lie.

And just as Sarah breast-fed all the nation's children, so too will the Jewish people will bring forth light to all the nations from Zion. Sarah's maternity towards the crying baby-goyim is an expression of Ohr Lagoyim, being a light unto the nations. Sarah nurtured these children and filled them with the ultimate gift: Chalav Yisrael - wisdom and truth that emanates from Zion and Jerusalem, a Land flowing with Milk and Honey!

G-d told Abraham: "all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you." (Gen 12:3)

The blessing of the Jewish people on the Land of Israel, is a blessing for all the nations of the world!

3. "Kever Rachel Trip Breaks Barriers"

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/news.php3?id=92913>

Huge concrete slabs, myriads of people, and two thousand years of exile did not stop a special trip of English speakers from reaching Kever Rachel - the Tomb of the Biblical matriarch Rachel.

The 11th of the Jewish month Cheshvan is the "Yahrtzeit" (anniversary of the passing) of the Matriarch Rachel. On this date each year, thousands of Jews converge on Rachel's Tomb to pray and to give homage to this great Biblical persona, the only woman in the Torah to be called a shepherdess. Arutz Sheva, Kumah, and the Jerusalem Capital Development Fund felt this was the perfect opportunity to bring together English speakers in Israel on a special trip. Billed under the banner "Have You Visited Your Mother Lately?" and with a subsidized price of 20 NIS, the trip was quickly booked up.

"We wanted to create a trip where new Olim (immigrants) can come to Kever Rachel and say to her, 'You can stop crying for us, because we've come home' said trip organizer Yishai Fleisher "When I asked how many people in the bus are Olim, most of the hands went up, and in my mind that was the real success - to bring all these Jews who have decided to come home to visit their mother."

Chaim Silberstein of the Jerusalem Capital Development Fund streamlined the access pass for the bulletproof bus and then took the group to the properties whose purchase his organization facilitated. Chaim told the story of how Rachel's Tomb was saved from the clutches of the Palestinians:

"During the Rabin administration, Kever Rachel was slated to fall into 'Area A', that is, under full Arab civil and military control. Upon seeing this, Knesset Member Chanan Porat decided that he must speak with Rabin in the hopes of changing his mind. As Chanan Porat was walking to Rabin's office, Knesset Member Rabbi Menachem Porush asked Porat where he was going. Hearing that Porat was about to fight for Kever Rachel, Porush asked to join in the meeting. At Rabin's office, Chanan Porat was diligently explaining the ins and outs of the security situation at Kever Rachel and making rational arguments that did not seem to move Rabin.

"Suddenly Rabin looked at Porush and saw that he was crying. Porush held Rabin's hands and with tears streaming down his face, said: 'Yitzchak, it's Mamma Rachel, Mamma Rachel.' At that moment Rabin's heart opened, and he altered the map so that Kever Rachel would remain in Jewish hands."

Silberstein also revealed that there are plans for growth at Rachel's Tomb - such as a Bat Mitzva center that would draw Jewish families from throughout the world on a pilgrimage to celebrate a Jewish girl's rite of passage to womanhood. "Rachel Imeinu (our Matriarch) is the paradigm of the Jewish people's selfless devotion to our G-d and our nation - people must be allowed to come here."

After the tour of the properties, the group went on to some personal prayer time. The halls adjacent to the actual grave were packed, but no one in the group seemed to complain about the cramped conditions. Shlomo Goodman, who made Aliyah from Lancaster, Pennsylvania and now lives in Maaleh Adumim, said: "I was intellectually prepared, and knew what Kever Rachel was all about, but the knowledge did not prepare me for the spiritual and emotional reality of the place. Without thinking, I was overcome, I went in there, and there wasn't a dry eye."

Following the hour-long prayer session, the group reconvened outside the complex and boarded the bus. The Kever Rachel part of the trip was over, but now the group needed some time to let the things they saw and felt settle in. The bus took the group to a park in the Gilo neighborhood that featured a spectacular view of Jerusalem. Lunch was brought out, including six bottles of the wine from the Beit El winery.

Yitz Berlin, who had come on Aliyah less than a week before from Baltimore, Maryland, said: "I enjoyed meeting the Arutz Sheva group, especially the faces behind Israel National Radio; it was a great welcome to Eretz Yisrael."

The Torah writes that Rachel, the beloved wife of Jacob, died when giving birth and was buried in Bethlehem on the road to Efrat, south of Jerusalem. Later, in the Book of the prophet Jeremiah, Rachel is heard weeping for her exiled children:

Thus says G-d: A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more. Thus says G-d: Refrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears; for your work shall be rewarded, says G-d; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. There is hope for your future, says G-d; and your children shall come again to their own border. [Veshavu Banim Le'Gvulam] (31:15-17)

4. "More Brits Mulling Making Aliya" by David Byres

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1131955261592&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>

A growing number of British Jews are considering making aliya or buying properties in Israel because of a growing climate of anti-Semitism, one of the countrys community leaders has said.

Alan Aziz, executive director of the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, spoke to The Jerusalem Post after more than 8,000 people attended a massive exhibition it organized to promote aliya a rise from 5,000 the year before.

The London event, called From Israel with Love, contained more than 175 exhibits on how to make aliya, where to go traveling in Israel and how to buy an Israeli property. It also included booths celebrating and promoting Israeli culture and lifestyle.

As well as celebrating Israeli culture, a number of visitors to Sundays event were interested in Israeli real-estate and possible emigration.

I am sure that increased anti-Semitism is part of [the reason], Aziz said. People have said to me that the level of anti-Semitism is creeping up. In many ways it is disguised, but it is still recognizable. It is, perhaps, less in the mind-set of British people than elsewhere in Europe, in countries such as France but it is still there.

The fear of anti-Semitism in Britain was highlighted by Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks. Last month, in a special message to mark Rosh Hashana, he warned of a new wave of anti-Semitism, saying, There have been times, the first in my memory, when it has been uncomfortable to be a Jew in Britain.

In the message, Sacks condemned calls made by Sir Iqbal Sacranie, secretary-general of the Muslim Council of Britain, to abolish Holocaust Memorial Day and also cited remarks with anti-Semitic undertones by academics who unsuccessfully attempted to initiate a national university boycott of Israel earlier this year.

Fears of terrorism and Islamic extremism increased over the summer. The British government and Londons Metropolitan Police have repeatedly warned that other attacks are likely after July 7s quadruple bomb attack that killed 52 London commuters, and Prime Minister Tony Blairs attempt to introduce new 90-day detention-without-charge powers for suspected terrorists was defeated in Parliament last Wednesday after a massive rebellion by many of his lawmakers.

Aziz indicated this, too, could have had a bearing on why so many people expressed an interest in buying property in Israel or moving there.

Now is a time when people are concerned about what's going on in the world, both in Britain and outside, he said. It has definitely had an impact, he said, adding that the Zionist Federations event was the biggest Jewish event held in the UK during the last year.

We had 5,000 people last year, but we had over 8,000 this time, he said. I do not have the statistics on aliya files or on the number of properties that were sold, but there were certainly a number of them. But all the exhibitions, whether they were promoting moving to Israel, traveling to Israel or going on holiday, generated a huge amount of interest.

According to numbers from the Jewish Agency, 413 people made aliya from the UK in the first 10 months of 2005, an increase of 11 percent over the same period last year. This is the highest 10-month total since the intifada began. In comparison, 435 people made aliya from the UK in 2004 and 402 in 2003.

5. "Hi Yishai,"

I'm not sure if you remember my email - it was about 2 years ago - I wrote to you and Eli under the moniker "Aryeh Yehuda". At the time I was really concerned that my bashert didn't share the same love for Eretz Yisrael as I do, and I'd despaired about ever making aliyah.

You guys gave me such wonderful and encouraging advice on your show. One thing that you said I still remember vividly, it was "perhaps you've been chosen to bring her closer to Israel and to God. Be joyous, be a Jewish hero!"

Well, my bashert and I were married in a wonderful traditional ceremony this past summer, and we've really laid the foundations for a warm loving Jewish home here in Washington DC. We're very involved in our local Orthodox shul, we've kashered our kitchen, we're learning Torah and growing together, and just everything is incredibly wonderful.

And we haven't forgotten the Land. Just last month, over the chagim, we had a crazy, incredible, fantastic, spiritual-physical-intellectual extravaganza of a honeymoon in Israel. All in all, we were in Jerusalem, Tsfat, the Carmel Mtn region (En Hod), and the Golan (Maale Gamla) for 17 days. Hiking, praying, eating (my Gd, the fruits & vegetables!), even sleeping in & waking up late had such a sense of complete-ness, fullness, (and yes, holiness) that we can't even begin to explain in words.

We were so very sad to leave ('sad' is an understatement). We didn't want to leave. When we came back to DC, we looked around the streets, the people, and kept asking each other "okay, now WHY do we live HERE?"

So now we're trying to figure out ways to come live in Israel for a year. And we've signed up for Hebrew classes. It's astounding, really. I think that maybe your analysis on the air those many months ago hit the nail on the head.

We're coming back to Israel. We're coming home. It may not be tomorrow or next month or next year, but we're on the road back home.

Thanks guys - enjoy our web album here - and you still most definitely ROCK!

Kol HaKavod,
Eric aka "Aryeh Yehuda"