



November 14-15, 2025

כד חשון תשפ"ו

Candle Lighting 4:31 PM

**Parashat Chaye Sarah** חיי שרה Genesis 23:1-25:18

Stone - p 106

Hertz - p 80

Etz Hayim - p 127

**Haftarah** - First Kings 1:1-31 מלכים א

Stone - p 1136

Hertz - p 90

Etz Hayim - p 143

**Kiddush** luncheon is sponsored by  
Anonymous

**Shabbat** ends 5:30 PM

## **TRADITIONAL CONGREGATION**

Rabbi Seth D Gordon - Rabbi.Gordon@yahoo.com  
Marian S. Gordon, Executive Director - traditionalcong@gmail.com

## **WEEKDAY AND SHABBAT SERVICES**

Tuesday - 6:30 PM

**Shabbat** - 9:30 AM

### **Board of Directors:**

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*We welcome new members!*

If you or someone you know would like to receive membership information,  
please contact our office at 314-576-5230  
or traditionalcong@gmail.com

## On This Week's Parashah - Chaye Sarah

The sedra of Chayei Sarah focuses on two episodes, both narrated at length and in intricate detail. Abraham buys a field with a cave as a burial place for Sarah, and he instructs his servant to find a wife for his son Isaac. Why these two events? The simple answer is because they happened. That, however, cannot be all. We misunderstand Torah if we think of it as a book that tells us what happened. That is a necessary but not sufficient explanation of biblical narrative. The Torah, by identifying itself as Torah, defines its own genre. It is not a history book. It is Torah, meaning "teaching." It tells us what happened only when events that occurred then have a bearing on what we need to know now. What is the "teaching" in these two episodes? It is an unexpected one.

Abraham, the first bearer of the covenant, receives two promises – both stated five times. The first is of a land. Time and again he is told, by God, that the land to which he has travelled – Canaan – will one day be his.

(1) Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the Lord who had appeared to him. (Gen. 12:7)

(2) The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north, south, east and west. All the land that you see, I will give you and your offspring forever . . . Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you." (Gen. 13:14-17)

(3) Then He said to him, "I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees to give you this land to take possession of it." (Gen. 15:7)

(4) On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates – the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites." (Gen. 15:18-21)

(5) "I will establish My covenant as an everlasting covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give you as an everlasting possession to you and to your descendants after you; and I will be their God." (Gen. 17:7-8)

The second was the promise of children, also stated five times:

(1) "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great and you will be a blessing." (Gen. 12:2)

(2) "I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted." (Gen. 13:16)

(3) He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars – if indeed you can count them" Then He said to him, "So shall your offspring be." (Gen. 15:5)

(4) "As for Me, this is My covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations." (Gen. 17:4-5)

(5) "I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars of the sky and as the sand on the seashore." (Gen. 22:17)

*(con't next page)*

These are remarkable promises. The land in its length and breadth will be Abraham's and his children's as "an everlasting possession." Abraham will have as many children as the dust of the earth, the stars of the sky, and the sand on the sea-shore. He will be the father, not of one nation, but of many. What, though, is the reality by the time Sarah dies? Abraham owns no land and has only one son (he had another, Ishmael, but was told that he would not be the bearer of the covenant)

The significance of the two episodes is now clear. First, Abraham undergoes a lengthy bargaining process with the Hittites to buy a field with a cave in which to bury Sarah. It is a tense, even humiliating, encounter. The Hittites say one thing and mean another. As a group they say, "Sir, listen to us. You are a prince of God in our midst. Bury your dead in the choicest of our tombs." Ephron, the owner of the field Abraham wishes to buy, says: "Listen to me, I give you the field, and I give you the cave that is in it. I give it to you in the presence of my people. Bury your dead."

As the narrative makes clear, this elaborate generosity is a façade for some extremely hard bargaining. Abraham knows he is "an alien and a stranger among you," meaning, among other things, that he has no right to own land. That is the force of their reply which, stripped of its overlay of courtesy, means: "Use one of our burial sites. You may not acquire your own." Abraham is not deterred. He insists that he wants to buy his own. Ephron's reply – "It is yours. I give it to you" – is in fact the prelude to a demand for an inflated price: four hundred silver shekels. At last, however, Abraham owns the land. The final transfer of ownership is recorded in precise legal prose (Gen. 23:17-20) to signal that, at last, Abraham owns part of the land. It is a small part: one field and a cave. A burial place, bought at great expense. That is all of the Divine promise of the land that Abraham will see in his lifetime.

The next chapter, one of the longest in the Mosaic books, tells of Abraham's concern that Isaac should have a wife. He is – we must assume – at least 37 years old (his age at Sarah's death) and still unmarried. Abraham has a child but no grandchild – no posterity. As with the purchase of the cave, so here: acquiring a daughter-in-law will take much money and hard negotiation. The servant, on arriving in the vicinity of Abraham's family, immediately finds the girl, Rebecca, before he has even finished praying for God's help to find her. Securing her release from her family is another matter. He brings out gold, silver, and clothing for the girl. He gives her brother and mother costly gifts. The family have a celebratory meal. But when the servant wants to leave, brother and mother say, "Let the girl stay with us for another year or ten [months]." Laban, Rebecca's brother, plays a role not unlike that of Ephron: the show of generosity conceals a tough, even exploitative, determination to make a profitable deal. Eventually patience pays off. Rebecca leaves. Isaac marries her. The covenant will continue.

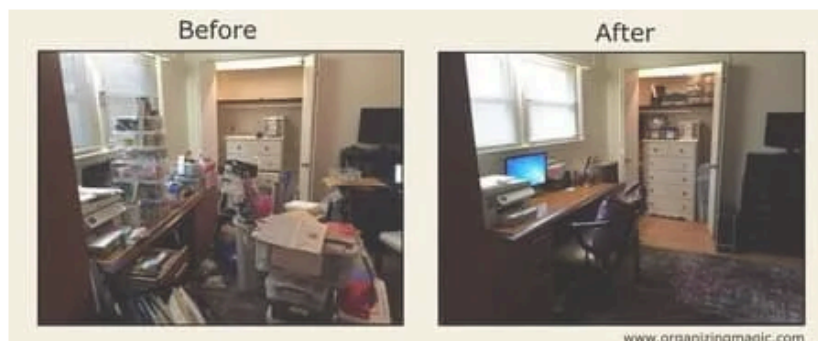
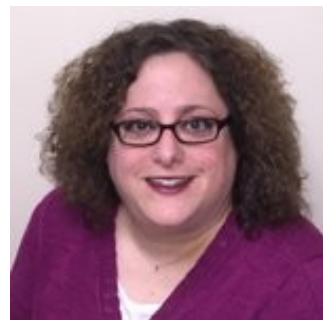
These are, then, no minor episodes. They tell a difficult story. Yes, Abraham will have a land. He will have countless children. But these things will not happen soon, or suddenly, or easily. Nor will they occur without human effort. To the contrary, only the most focused willpower will bring them about. The Divine promise is not what it first seemed: a statement that God will act. It is in fact a request, an invitation, from God to Abraham and his children that they should act. God will help them. The outcome will be what God said it would. But not without total commitment from Abraham's family against what will sometimes seem to be insuperable obstacles.

A land: Israel. And children: Jewish continuity. The astonishing fact is that today, four thousand years later, they remain the dominant concerns of Jews throughout the world – the safety and security of Israel as the Jewish home, and the future of the Jewish people. Abraham's hopes and fears are ours. (Is there any other people, I wonder, whose concerns today are what they were four millennia ago? The identity through time is awe inspiring.) Now as then, the Divine promise does not mean that we can leave the future to God. That idea has no place in the imaginative world of the first book of the Torah. To the contrary: the covenant is God's challenge to us, not ours to God. The meaning of the events of Chayei Sarah is that Abraham realised that God was depending on him. Faith does not mean passivity. It means the courage to act and never to be deterred. The future will happen, but it is we – inspired, empowered, given strength by the promise – who must bring it about.

***Shabbat shalom,***  
**Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l**

# *"Organizing & Downsizing"*

with Jodi Granok, Certified  
Professional Organizer  
Brunch & Program,  
Sunday, November 23, 2025  
10:00 AM



**Downsizing your home? Just need to get rid of "stuff" and don't know where to begin? Need help organizing paperwork? Jodi has answers and systems for you!**

**Join us at 10:00 AM for a light brunch,  
followed by Jodi's program.  
No charge - (Share the Fare donations are appreciated)**

**Register at  
<http://bit.ly/3X1yViR>**

**"She is very informative and a great speaker. Everyone that attends will walk away with a great idea to 'get rid of junk.'"**

**Annette Heller, TradCong member  
who has attended Jodi's presentations**



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- REMINDER -

**IT'S NEVER  
TOO LATE TO  
DO SOMETHING  
IMPORTANT...**

...like make a High Holyday Pledge!

If you've not yet declared a 5786 pledge,  
please contact Marian or Ellis.  
Your support is so important to  
everyone at Traditional!!

**THANK YOU!!**

## PRAYER

Throughout the ages you blessed us, God,  
With women who tended the altars of our faith.

*Through these noble women Israel was redeemed;  
Because of them Israel survived.*

They have inspired and guided our youth;  
They have preserved and transmitted Your word.

*The women in our generation, like those in the past,  
Keep Israel an eternal witness to You.*

They, like Sarah, zealously guide their young,  
Keeping them constant and steadfast in faith.

*And thus our children remain  
Ever devoted to You.*

Like Rebecca, plucked from hearth and home  
To take up the baton of Sarah's journey,

*They join the knowledge of the past with the understanding of the present,  
Transforming it into the vision and hope of the future.*

Like Rachel, they are deeply concerned  
For the children of Israel wherever they dwell,

*Sharing their glory, feeling their pain,  
Providing succor and safety for those in need.*

They, like Hannah, who joyfully brought  
Her young Samuel to *Shiloh* for service to God,

*Bring their children also in the tender years,  
For guidance and light to this House of God.*

To learn the traditions, the teachings, the law;  
To learn of prophets and sages, of martyrdom and nobility.

*Through such noble women shall Israel be redeemed;  
Through the merits of their children shall Israel survive.*

**Unknown**

## THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

True love does not come by finding the perfect person, but by learning to see an imperfect person perfectly.

**Jason Jordan**