This Week in Jewish History

Rachel Hirsch – Pioneer Physician and Observant Jew

Born on 15 September 1870 in Frankfurt am Main, Rachel Hirsch, relative of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch and founder of Torah im Derech Eretz movement (Yavneh's Ideology!) combined her strong faith with a remarkable career in medicine. She became one of Germany's first licensed female physicians, studying in Zürich and Strasbourg at a time when most universities excluded women. Later, she became head of the polyclinic at Berlin's Charité Hospital, breaking barriers in a male-dominated profession. Most notably she conducted important research into renal physiology (kidney function), publishing widely in medical journals and advancing understanding of urinary and metabolic processes. Despite facing prejudice because of her gender and heritage, Hirsch remained committed to her Jewish values, and in 1938 she emigrated to England, where she continued to support her community and practice medicine.

Question for the Table - How might Rachel Hirsch's observance and values have shaped her courage and determination in medicine? What lessons can we learn today from someone balancing faith with professional ambition?

Notices

Next week's timetable will be **Week B**
Shacharis starts on **Friday 8:10**

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השבוע ביבנה

#017 חיי שרה Start: 3:58 End: 5:06

In Toras Yavneh Last Week Mr Stephen Elias, Chair of Governors of Yavneh and King David High School, spoke about the lessons we can learn in parshas Vayera.

This Week in Leil Shishi we learned about different types of Halochas of Kashrus. Followed by Pizza!

Mazal Tov to Izzy Addleman on his Bar Mitzvah this Shabbos!

Seeing the Depth Within Yishmael

Rabbi A Shwartz

In this week's parashah, Chayei Sarah, we encounter a section that might seem, at first glance, insignificant; a detailed list of the sons of Yishmael. Yet, as the Torah teaches, no word is extra. Every letter is part of H-shem's Name, and through each verse, H-shem communicates with us. When we learn Torah, we aren't just studying history or laws; we are entering into a relationship with H-shem, listening to His voice through the sacred text.

So why does the Torah emphasize the genealogy of Yishmael? The answer, our commentators suggest, is that H-shem wants us to understand the spiritual depth within Yishmael, the son of Avraham, who, like his brother Yitzchak, carries part of that holy heritage. Though Yishmael's descendants often stood against Israel, the Torah still records their names because there is potential for good even within what appears negative.

The Midrash teaches that Yishmael took pride in his mesirut nefesh, his willingness to sacrifice for H-shem. At age thirteen, he chose circumcision consciously, declaring his faith and commitment. His very name, "Yishmael" ("G-d will hear") reminds us that H-shem listens to sincere prayer, even from those far from righteousness.

The challenge for us is to recognize the spark of holiness hidden within what seems dark. Even as we confront evil in the world, we must not forget that all humanity was created b'tzelem Elokim, in the image of God. The korbanot offered on Sukkot for the seventy nations express this same idea: that every nation has a divine purpose, and we pray for the day when all will serve H-shem together.

According to our sages, Yishmael ultimately repented at the end of his life. His story reminds us never to give up on anyone. One day, may the descendants of Yishmael join with the children of Yitzchak in fulfilling Avraham's legacy: bringing the knowledge of the one true G-d to the world.

A Life that Lasts

Yitzchok Giffin- Year 12

The Rebbe asks: why is this week's portion called Chayei Sarah-"the life of Sarah"-when it begins with her passing? He explains that true life in Torah is not defined by physical existence but by the enduring influence one leaves behind. Sarah Imeinu's "life" did not end with her death; it continued through the values she instilled in her family and the divine mission she set in motion. Her legacy of faith, kindness, and dedication to Hashem became eternal, living on through Yitzchak and every Jewish generation that follows.

Immediately after her passing, Avraham secures the Ma'aras HaMachpelah as her burial site, insisting on purchasing it at full price. The Rebbe teaches that this act symbolises permanence- Avaraham was not content to receive holiness as a gift; he made it his own through effort and commitment. In the same way our spiritual growth cannot rely solely on inheritance or inspiration from others; we must invest ourselves personally to make holiness truly ours.

Later in the parashah, Avraham sends Eliezer to find a wife for Yitzchak, ensuring that the next generation would carry Sarah's light forward. Rivkah's kindness at the well mirrors Sarah's own devotion, showing that her "life" continues in those who embody her values. From this, the Rebbe teaches that the truest measure of life is the extent to which it inspires others to live with faith, love, and purpose. Sarah's life never ended-it only expanded.