

Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin

Holistic Torah for Women on the Land



Elul 5776 / 2016

The Rosh Hashana Shofar Calls Us to Complete

Sarah's Cries Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum

We blow the shofar on Rosh Hashana to remember Avraham's near sacrifice of his favorite son. The ram's horn is an allusion to the ram that he sacrificed instead of Yitzchak. Avraham's merit in the near sacrifice of Yitzchak is well-known, but what about Sarah? Did she play any part whatsoever in this self-sacrificing act? Did she even know about it? Sarah and Avraham always worked as a team, and Sarah stood by her husband's side throughout all of his great accomplishments. Yet we never hear anything about Sarah's merit in the *Akeida*. Could it be that she had no part in her husband's greatest, most exemplary deed?

The Midrash explains how every verse in the *Woman of Valor* (*Mishlei* 31:10-31) was Avraham's eulogy for Sarah (*Midrash Tanchuma, Parshat Chaye Sarah*, chapter 4). When it states, "She rose while it was still night" (*Mishlei* 31:15), it indicates that when "Avraham rose early" (*Bereishit* 22:3), Sarah rose even earlier and went on the way to escort them (*Etz Yosef*). The Torah describes Avraham rising early twice: when he sent away Yishmael and at the *Akeida*. Perhaps this implies that Sarah accompanied Avraham not only when he expelled Yishmael but also on his way to sacrifice Yitzchak.

Sarah's cries link the wails of mourning for the dead with the ecstasy of birth

The name, 'Sarah' comprises the initials of **Shofar Rosh Hashana**, signifying an intrinsic connection between Sarah and the Shofar. The Midrash, in fact, links Sarah's death cries with the sound of the Shofar. Satan went to Sarah and asked, "Did you hear what happened?" She answered, "No." He said, "Avraham took Yitzchak, his son and slaughtered him, offering him up on the altar as a sacrifice." Sarah broke down and cried out three wails corresponding to the three blasts of the Shofar, then her soul burst forth from her and she died (*Midrash Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer*, chapter 31). The Rosh Hashana Shofar is meant to help us re-enter the state of Sarah's pain. She died in a cry that bridges the ecstasy of grief and celebration. When we hear the Shofar on Rosh Hashana we are called to enter into Sarah's state of mind and complete her cries.

If Sarah already intuitively sensed the *Akeida* when she rose in the middle of the night, to prepare the provisions for Avraham and Yitzchak, why would she die from shock when she heard about it? How is it possible that this righteous woman, an even greater prophet than Avraham, could so easily fall prey to the tricks of the Satan?



Sarah's death was not the result of shock but rather she deliberately handed over her soul at the very climax of the *Akeida*. Sarah perceived the great holiness of the unification at Yitzchak's near sacrifice. Since she was unable to walk from Hebron to the Temple-mountain in Jerusalem, she decided to participate from afar by giving over her soul in love and purity in the moment of this great holiness (*Sefer Avodat Hashem, Parashat Chayei Sarah*).

The Zohar explains that Yitzchak was born with a feminine soul and an essential attachment to his mother Sarah. During Yitzchak's near-death-experience, at the *Akeida*, the feminine aspect of his soul departed and he received his masculine soul, which enabled him to detach from his mother and become ready for marriage (*Shem M'Shmuel, Parashat Vayera* 5681). Since Yitzchak's feminine soul was intrinsically attached to his mother, therefore when his feminine soul left him, Sarah's soul also had to depart from this world. This explains why Sarah had to pass on during the split second before Avraham was told to put down his knife.

Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin, Village of Bat Ayin, Gush Etzion 90913, Israel

(972-2) 993-4945 | info@berotbatayin.org | www.berotbatayin.org

Rebbetzin's D'var Torah (cont'd from page 1)

Perhaps we may venture to say that there is an aspect of Sarah's role in the *Akeida* that was even greater than Avraham's. While "Avraham got up early in the morning," "Sarah rose" even beforehand "while it was still night." In a super-conscious way, Sarah "knew" even before Avraham. While Avraham was willing to sacrifice his favorite son and allow him to **die**, Sarah was willing to sacrifice her own soul to enable her only son to **live** and procreate. Through her death, she birthed his masculine soul, giving over her life

for the sake of letting Yitzchak beget life and become his independent ultimate married self, raising his own family. In this way Sarah's cries, from which we model the sounds of the Shofar, link the wails of mourning for the dead with the ecstasy of birth. They emanate from the very deepest place where life and death are one.

You have the ability to continue Sarah's self-sacrifice for the sake of building Torah families in the Land of Israel. You can make a great difference without having to

give over your own life. Through your generous donation to support Women's Torah learning in the Land of Israel, may you merit life both in this world and the next. By donating to Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin you are supporting the Jewish families of tomorrow.

Shana Tova, Tikateivu V'Tichateimu l'Alter Chayim Tovim!

May you be inscribed in the Book of Life!

With Blessings of the Torah & the Land, Chana Bracha Siegelbaum

The Student Experience: "Finding Myself within Judaism"

A piece of my heart is buried in Bat Ayin. Among the natural springs, between the abundant fig trees, a piece of my heart remains, patiently pulsing, waiting for me to return to the place which made such a lasting imprint on my soul. Wherever I am, wherever I go, a bit of Bat Ayin, stays with me, close and comforting, forever giving me strength and purpose.

For the past nine months, the hillsides, paths, and winding streets of Bat Ayin became my familiar and encouraging home. I arrived mid-August, stepping a tentative toe into what would become my most sanctified learning space, shelter, and home. It was a place to explore, a place to water the garden and watch it grow, along with the seeds of my incessantly searching Jewish *neshama* (soul).

My goal was short term, to prepare for the High Holidays by immersing myself in B'erot's Elul program. This experience turned out to be an incredibly enriching exploration of the meaning of *teshuvah* (repentance), a spiritually enlightening reflection and chance to look back over the past year, just in time for the climax of Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur. Yet, when the holidays passed, I yearned

for more. More questions arose and I could not deny that I was learning a tremendous amount, shedding light on many neglected topics. I extended my stay, working my way through the year, finding my voice throughout the Jewish calendar.

Living at the *midrasha*, in caravans, just steps outside the classroom, I finally had permission to live the simple life that enabled me to focus on studying Torah. Without distractions, I was able to fully connect to the ancient texts and history, learn from inspiring and diversely knowledgeable teachers, and delight in the rich community life present in Bat Ayin. As my understanding of Judaism deepened, every day I caught glimpses of the captivating jewels wholly observant life has to offer. I found the source of all sparks, stoking my desire and continued pursuit of Jewish learning, reflected in the bright and flowing scarves of Bat Ayin women, through the uplifting Friday night *Kabbalat Shabbat*, and at the beautiful Shabbat tables of many generous Bat Ayin families.

It was the unexpected and unpredictable that made my experience so meaningful. Unique relationships and lasting support

were formed with every fascinating and bright-eyed woman who joined us. Every corner of my life felt like an encouragement on the path to finding myself, within Judaism, and within the breathtaking Holy Land.



At B'erot Bat Ayin, I learned about the immense potential of the Jewish soul and a deeper perspective of our ancient mystical history. I learned how to read Rashi, Rambam, Rebbe Nachman and how to properly bless over my food. I even learned how to take tithes before tasting our homegrown produce. I learned how to connect to the G-d-given land and take part in a pride, so often forgotten among my people. I learned about myself, while hearing the wisdom-laced stories of so many others. I learned that I am never alone and that to be a part of *Am Yisrael* is a lifelong gift, we can be grateful to unravel at every chance.

Fond Farewell to Rav Benarroch & Welcome to Rav Zeff!

We are never truly aware of everything that one person does and gives to our students, especially in B'erot's many-faceted work environment. The effect of a single staff member – a single teacher is completely incalculable.

Over the last 15 years, in addition to serving as our conversion Rabbi, Rabbi Yosef Benarroch has been one of Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin's core rabbis, educators and advisors. As he departs to accept a rabbinical post in his hometown of Winnipeg, Canada, we want to extend our deep gratitude for everything he has added to the B'erot family over the years. Although Rabbi Benarroch's presence will be sorely missed, we at B'erot Bat Ayin wish him only success on his next journey in the Torah world!



With his ever-present smile, whether teaching Parashat Hashavua, halacha, or Pirkei Avot, students of all ages are inspired and grow closer to Torah and mitzvot in one way or another partly due to his influence. He is tirelessly dedicated to students who wish to convert through B'erot Bat Ayin, advocating for them in so many ways – multiple direct phone calls to the Beit Din, early morning runs to the conversion offices to inquire about conversion files, personal meetings with students, just to name a few.

Beyond his direct functions as an educator, Rabbi Benarroch could often be seen making runs around Jerusalem to “pick up just a few things” at the print supply store, dropping off or collect luggage for incoming students travelling from Jerusalem, delivering or picking up books from the publisher...the list goes on and on! For all of the things we never knew he did to support B'erot without being asked, we really cannot say thank you enough!



As Rabbi Benarroch departs, we are excited to welcome Rabbi Joel Zeff back as B'erot's new Rabbi. For many years, Rabbi Zeff enhanced our program greatly as a popular teacher. In the past, he has held several key positions in David Shapell College of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem and as the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat HaMivtar, Israel. We are

honored that among his many job offers, Rabbi Zeff chose to work for Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin, as he truly believes in our vision.

Mazal Tov!

Weddings

Raphaela Ades (Carnevale) Berman | Tzippi (Bell) Berman | Murielle (Hadid) Ben David | Hadar Eliraz (Bergman) Mizrachi | Ra'ayah Devorah (Blackman) Katsch | Sarah (Lizer) Solomon | Rachel Esther (Grayson) Goldstein | Sarah (Teller) Epstein | Rachel (Frazin) Sofaer | Sarah (Heiman) Friedlander

Births

Liba Rosen | Tova Kirsch | Benita Zive | Eliana Royzen | Leah David | Alyssa Wernick | Shirli Boroda | Daniela Chaya Madai | Gavriella Motta Ramirez | Ines Cindra Levin | Gani Goodman | Ziesel Miriam Rahimi | Erika Orli Mandel | Michal Kleinburg | Rivka Adina Kanush | Chaya Komar

Aliyah

Sara Katsoff | Miki Taylor | Hannah Furie

Check out our website for Torah, news, upcoming programs, seminars and Shabbatons... Sign up for our weekly parsha newsletter....

www.berotbatayin.org



Donation Opps!

Sponsor a Student, Program, Project, or Event:

Year scholarship	\$10,000
Half-scholarship	\$5,000
Two-Week program	\$1,800
One-Week seminar	\$1,000
Month partial scholarship	\$500
Torah class for month	\$360
Rosh Chodesh program	\$180

Dedicate New Building:

Classroom	\$15,000
Renovate Caravan	\$10,000
Panoramic Windows	\$4,000
Security Doors	\$2,500
Windows large	\$1,800
Windows small	\$1,000

Dedicate Garden Project:

Flower Garden	\$3,600
Strawberry Field	\$2,500
Herb Garden	\$2000

Dedicate:

Parasha Meditation Book	\$100
Parasha Magazine	\$36

Donations of any amount change lives!

**As the year is coming to a close, open up your heart & hand,
To support Holistic Torah for Women on the Land!**

**Join our Chai Club (monthly donations) \$18, \$36, \$54
or Make a One Time Donation...**

Donation Instructions: Please note: Only donations made to **American Friends of MBBA** are tax deductible in the **U.S.A** (and can be paid off over a number of years).

1. For a tax-deductible donation in U.S.A.: Please make checks payable to: American Friends of MBBA, c/o Judy Josephs, 98 St. Mark's Place Apt #1C, New York, NY 10009-5803

2. For a tax-deductible donation in Canada: Please make checks payable to: The Tzaddik Foundation, c/o Miriam Kreisman, 6592 C. Kildare, Montreal, Quebec H4W 2Z4

3. Donate through our Website (credit card or paypal)

www.berotbatayin.org/donate/