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Better Together
Maimonides Hebrew Day School
Hiddur Penei Zaken - Honoring the Elderly Giving & Getting

מִפְּנֵי שִׁיבָה תִּקּוּם, וְהִדָּרֶת פְּנֵי זָקֵן; וְיִרְאֶת מְאֻלָּקִיךָ, אֲנִי ה'.

You shall rise before the aged, and show deference to the old; You shall fear your G-d: I am Hashem.
Vayikra 19:32

- "To the foolish, old age is winter. To the wise, old age is harvest time."
- How to recognize the "boomerang effect" of chesed and be inspired by it.
- To inspire and motivate yourself to make a difference in the lives of others.
- Where in Jewish tradition acts of kindness are promised to boomerang back to us in beautiful ways.

**וְנָתַנּוּ. אם תקראנו למפרע יהי' ג"כ ונתנו לך כל מה שאדם נותן
לצדקה יחזור אליו ולא יחסר לו בשביל זה כלום.**

They Shall Give if you read this word backwards it will also read ונתנו . This tells you that what a person gives to charity will come back to him; he will not be missing anything as consequence of giving. Baal Haturim

•שאלו את רבי אברהם אבן עזרא בזו הלשון:

"אבי אל חי שמך למה מלך משיח לא יבא".

•והתשובה שהוא ענה להם לשאלה:

"דעו מאביכם כי לא בוש אבוש, שוב אשוב אליכם כי בא מועד"

Upon the word *venasenu*, there is a *kadma ve'azla*, to hint at the Gemara (Shabbos151b): R. Chiya said to his wife: When a poor man comes, be quick to offer him bread, so that others may be quick to offer it to your children. where "be quick" is *akdimu*, related to *kadma*. And behold, the word *venatenu* is a palindrome, and can be read *venatenu* backwards and forwards as *venatenu*. For also the one who gives, at times requires that others give him. And this is what is hinted by the *kadma veazla*, "be quick to offer bread to a pauper, so that others will be quick, etc." Therefore preempt and give him. Gaon of Vilna

(ליקוט) ונתנו איש כופר ופכו . על חיצה
ונהו קדמא ואזלא לרמוח על
מאמר ז"ל (שבח קנא) . אקדימו ריפחא
לעני' כו' גלגל הוא החורז בעולם . והס
מלת ונתנו . גם לחזור היא וקראת ונחנו .
וקראת כן פנים ואחור . כי גם הנותן פעמים
ילערך שיהנו לו . והו שרמו ונתנו בקדמא
ואזלא אקדימו רפחא לעניא כי כיכי דליקדמו
כו' . לכן הקדם אחס ותן לו (ע"כ) :

Give a coin to a pauper, although you do not owe him anything.

G-d will reciprocate in kind, granting you abundant blessings, although He owes you nothing.

- Adapted from a letter of the Rebbe

Why is Service Learning Important? Mutual benefit Give and get נתן Natan palindrome

Give some examples of your own:

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The Sea of Galilee & The Dead Sea

As you probably recall, the Dead Sea is really a Lake, not a sea. Its so high in salt content that the human body can float easily. You can almost lie down and read a book! The salt in the Dead Sea is as high as 35% – almost 10 times the normal ocean water. And all that saltiness has meant that there is no life at all in the Dead Sea. No fish. No vegetation. No sea animals. Nothing lives in the Dead sea. And hence the name: Dead Sea.

Turns out that the Sea of Galilee is just north of the Dead Sea. Both the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea receive their water from river Jordan. And yet, they are very, very different. Unlike the Dead Sea, the Sea of Galilee is pretty, resplendent with rich, colorful marine life. There are lots of plants. And lots of fish too. In fact, the sea of Galilee is home to over thirty different types of fishes.

Same region, same source of water, and yet while one sea is full of life, the other is dead. How come?

Here's apparently why. The River Jordan flows into the Sea of Galilee and then flows out. The water simply passes through the Sea of Galilee in and then out – and that keeps the Sea healthy and vibrant, teeming with marine life.

But the Dead Sea is so far below the mean sea level, that it has no outlet. The water flows in from the river Jordan, but does not flow out. There are no outlet streams. It is estimated that over 7 million tons of water evaporate from the Dead Sea every day. Leaving it salty. Too full of minerals. And unfit for any marine life.

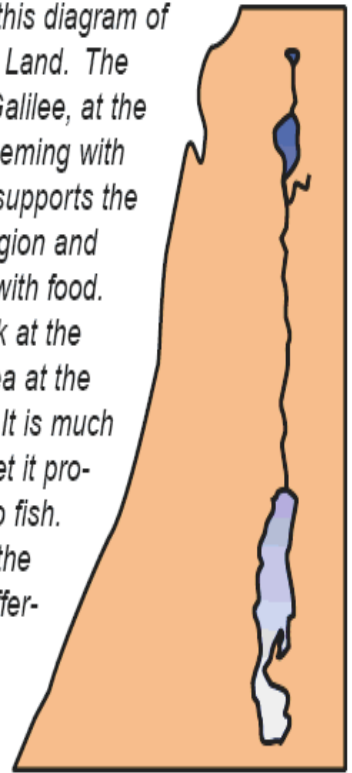
The Dead Sea takes water from the River Jordan, and holds it. It does not give. Result? No life at all. Think about it.

Life is not just about getting. Its about giving. We all need to be a bit like the Sea of Galilee. We are fortunate to get wealth, knowledge, love and respect. But if we don't learn to give, we could all end up like the Dead Sea. The love and the respect, the wealth and the knowledge could all evaporate. Like the water in the Dead Sea.

Sea of Galilee , If we get the Dead Sea mentality of merely taking in more water, more money, more everything the results can be disastrous.

Good idea to make sure that in the sea of your own life, you have outlets. Many outlets. For love and wealth – and everything else that you get in your life. Make sure you don't just get, you give too.

Look at this diagram of the Holy Land. The Sea of Galilee, at the top, is teeming with life that supports the entire region and beyond with food. Now look at the Dead Sea at the bottom. It is much larger, yet it produces no fish. What is the major difference between them?



Answer: The Sea of Galilee receives water from various sources as does the Dead Sea, yet the Sea of Galilee gives away much of its water via the Jordan River. The Dead Sea tries to keep all the water it receives and gets bigger–yet it is dead.

The beautiful Israeli city of Netanya derives its name from the Hebrew word 'natan' – to give.

Back in 1912, Nathan Straus, the famous American businessman, visited the Holy Land.

Nathan missed his boat back to America via England. That boat was the Titanic. Straus felt such gratitude to the Almighty for sparing his life, that in turn, he became devoted to generously building up Israel . He thus fulfilled the giving nature of his Hebrew name, "Natan."

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NATHAN STRAUS, NETANYA AND THE TITANIC

At the turn of the twentieth century, two of the wealthiest and most famous men in America were a pair of Jewish brothers named Nathan and Isidor Straus. Owners of R.H. Macy's Department Store and founders of the A&S (Abraham & Straus) chain, the brothers were multimillionaires, renowned for their philanthropy and social activism.

In 1912, the brothers and their wives were touring Europe, when Nathan, the more ardent Zionist of the two, impulsively said one day, "Hey, why don't we hop over to Palestine?" Israel wasn't the tourist hotspot then that it is today. Its population was ravaged by disease, famine, and poverty; but the two had a strong sense of solidarity with their less fortunate brethren, and they also wanted to see the health and welfare centers they had endowed with their millions. However, after a week spent touring, Isidor Straus had had enough.

"How many camels, hovels, and yeshivas can you see? It's time to go," Isidor decreed with edgy impatience in his voice. But Nathan refused to heed his brother's imperious command. It

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wasn't that he was oblivious to the hardships around him; it was precisely because of them that he wanted to stay.

As he absorbed firsthand the vastness of the challenges his fellow Jews were coping with, he felt the burden of responsibility. "We can't leave now," he protested. "Look how much work has to be done here. We have to help. We have the means to help. We can't turn our backs on our people."

"So we'll send more money," his brother snapped back. "I just want to get out of here."

But Nathan felt that money simply wasn't enough. He felt that the Jews who lived under such dire circumstances in Palestine needed the brothers' very presence among them: their initiative, their leadership, and their ideas. Isidor disagreed.

The two argued back and forth, and finally Isidor said, "If you insist, stay here. Ida and I are going back to America where we belong." The two separated. Isidor and his wife returned to Europe, while Nathan and his spouse stayed in Palestine, traveling the country and contributing huge sums of money to the establishment of education, health, and social welfare programs to benefit the needy. Nathan also financed the creation of a brand-new city on the shores of the

Mediterranean. And since his name in Hebrew was Natan, and he was the city's chief donor, the founders named it after him and called it...Natanya.

Meanwhile, back in Europe, Isidor Straus was preparing to sail home to America aboard an ocean liner for which he had also made reservations for his brother, Nathan, and his wife. "You must leave Palestine NOW!" he cabled his brother in an urgent

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telegram. "I have made reservations for you and if you don't get here soon, you'll miss the boat."

But Nathan delayed. There was so much work to be done that he waited until the last possible moment to make the connection. By the time he reached London, it was April 12 and the liner had already left port in Southampton with Isidor and Ida Straus aboard. Nathan felt disconsolate that he had, as his brother had warned, "missed the boat." For this was no ordinary expedition, no common, everyday cruise that he had forfeited, but the much ballyhooed maiden voyage of the most famous ship of the century. This was the Titanic.

Nathan Straus, grief-stricken and deeply mourning his brother and sister-in-law could not shake off his sense that he had had a rendezvous with history. The knowledge that he had avoided death permeated his consciousness for the rest of his life, and until his death in 1931, he pursued his philanthropic activities with an intensity that was unrivaled in his time.

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ראוין כל ישראל לישב בסוכה אחת

על שלושה חגים העולם עומד

שבועות - עמוד התורה, פסח - עמוד העבודה, וסוכות - עמוד גמילות חסדים

סוכה

"אע"פ שאמרו אין אדם יוצא ידי חובתו בלולבו של חברו, אבל יוצא אדם ידי חובתו בסוכתו של חברו, דכתיב: **"כל האזרח בישראל ישבו בסוכת"** - מלמד שכל ישראל ראוין לישב בסוכה אחת (בסכת כתיב). "סוכה (כז ע"ב)

ארבעה מינים

ובמדרש (ויק"ר ל יב) המשילו את ארבעת המינים לארבעה חלקים בעם ישראל: "פרי עץ הדר - אלו ישראל. מה **אתרוג**, יש בו טעם ויש בו ריח - כך ישראל, יש בהם תורה ויש בהם מעשים טובים. **כפות תמרים** - אלו ישראל. מה התמרה, יש בה טעם ואין בה ריח - כך יש בישראל שיש בהם תורה ואין מעשים טובים. **הדס** - יש בו ריח ואין בו טעם. אלו ישראל, שיש בהם מעשים טובים ואין בהם תורה. **ערבי נחל** - אלו בני אדם שאין בהם לא תורה ולא מעשים טובים. אמר הקב"ה: יוקשרו **אגודה אחת** והם מכפרים אלו על אלו."

הקהל

"מקץ שבע שנים במועד שנת השמיטה בחג הסוכות, בבוא כל ישראל ליראות את פני ה' א-להיך... הקהל את העם, האנשים והנשים והטף וגרך אשר בשערך, למען ישמעו ולמען ילמדו ויראו את ה' א-להיכם ושמרו לעשות את כל דברי התורה הזאת. "דברים (לא י"ב): קבלת תורה מחדש בהר סיני "גרים שאינם מכירים חייבים להכין ליבם ולהקשיב אזנם לשמוע באימה ויראה וגילה ברעדה כיום שניתנה בו בסיני. "הרמב"ם בסוף הלכות חגיגה (פ"ג ה"ו): ובסיני עמדו ישראל במדרגה גבוהה של אחדות - **"כאיש אחד בלב אחד"**

פרי החג

שבעים פרים - כנגד שבעים אומות, ובימי המקדש היו מגינים עליהם מן הייסורים. וביום האחרון של חג מקריבים פר אחד. "פר יחידי למה? כנגד אומה יחידה", שהיא ישראל, שיסוד האחדות הוא מהותם.

ניסוך המים

ניסוך המים הוא הלכה למשה מסיני, רמז מן התורה (תענית ב ע"ב). בעוד שבכל יום מנסכים יין עם תמיד של שחר, הרי בכל שבעת ימי הסוכות היו מנסכים מים. מים הם יסוד ה**חסד** - "שלח לחמך על פני המים כי ברוב הימים תמצאנו". - המכנה המשותף של כל החיים, וכולם צריכים להם, בהם גומלים חסדים לעיף ולצמא במדבר. את אוצר הטוב הזה - המטר - נותן הקב"ה בחסד.

מצוות ערבה

ערבה, כניסוך המים, היא הלכה למשה מסיני. גם בה מצאו רמז מן התורה כמבואר בגמרא (סוכה לד ע"א): "וערבי נחל" (לשון רבים) - אחת ללולב ואחת לזוקפה בצידי המזבח. מכל המינים נלקחה דווקא הערבה לקיום מצווה נוספת, על אף שהיא הירודה ביותר מכל ארבעת המינים: אין בה טעם, ואין בה ריח. אולם היא מייצגת את היסוד המשותף הפשיטות שמאחד כלל ישראל.

אושפיזין

ממנהגי ישראל לזמן לסעודה בסוכה: אברהם, יצחק, יעקב, משה, אהרן, יוסף ודוד; בכל יום מזמינים אחד מן האורחים החשובים הנ"ל. מנהג זה מקורו בזוהר (דף קג ע"א): דווקא בסוכת החג בצל עליון מתארחים בסעודתו גדולי האומה, ועל ידם מקיים הוא את מצוות הכנסת אורחים לעילא ולעילא. שמחת החיבור בין אבות לבנים, ובין בנים לאבות מתאימה ביותר לחג.

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ראוין כל ישראל לישב בסוכה אחת

בְּסֻכּוֹת תִּשְׁבוּ, שִׁבְעַת יָמִים; כָּל-הָאֶזְרָח, בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל, יֵשְׁבוּ, בְּסֻכּוֹת. לְמַעַן, יָדְעוּ דִרְתֵּיכֶם, כִּי בְּסֻכּוֹת הוֹשַׁבְתִּי אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּהוֹצִיאִי אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם:

The Zohar explains that the seven clouds allude to the seven emotional attributes. The first of the seven clouds corresponds to the first attribute, chesed, loving-kindness. This is the attribute of Aaron. Just as the six middos flow from chesed, so too, the six other clouds came forth from, and followed, the cloud of chesed. The Torah underscores this idea by spelling sukkos once with a Vav, in the second sentence of our verse. Vav, has a gematria of six, alluding to the six clouds surrounding the Israelites. However, in the first sentence, the word sukkos appears twice, and without a Vav. These two appearances allude to the two aspects of the chesed / scout cloud, since it was a cloud during the day, and a blazing fire at night.

Aharon's love of peace, his love for all, and his efforts to make peace between them are themselves internal clouds of glory. Mirroring them from heaven, external clouds of glory encompassed Israel and protected them. Physical booths are the handiwork of man, whereas clouds of glory are sent from heaven. The truth, however, is that even the clouds of glory are connected our human action. For the clouds of glory only encircled the people after they had established peace and harmony among themselves.

Three mitzvos express loving-kindness: Yom Kippur, the Four Species, and Sukkos. Each of these mitzvos, in turn, allude to three levels of love or unity. On Yom Kippur, people who rarely attend synagogue come and join the community service. At the beginning of the Kol Nidrei service, we say the Rabbinic decree that the “righteous” may pray together with the “transgressors”. Even though they’re permitted to join together, it still implies that there are two kinds of people: the righteous and the transgressors. This first level of unity or love, therefore, is incomplete.

A greater love is expressed in the mitzvah of the Four Species. The lulav represents the Torah scholars. The esrog, represents the Torah scholars who also perform good deeds. The hadas, represents those who perform good deeds but lack Torah knowledge. Finally, the aravah represents one who neither studies Torah nor performs good deeds. We firmly bind these four plants together to form a single cluster. This is a greater level of love; not only are different kinds of people joining, as in the Yom Kippur service, but here, all are closely bound in unity. Yet, even within this cluster, there are still four discernible categories.

The greatest level of love is when people sit together in a sukkah. As the Talmud says, “It is proper that all Jews sit in one sukkah.” When we sit in a sukkah eating, drinking and rejoicing, we don’t discern between each other. Rather, all Jews sit together as one, without labels or distinctions. Better Together!

Lulav Room for Elderly - When the first day of the Sukkos fell out on Shabbos, the entire nation would make sure to bring their lulavim to the Temple Mount before Shabbos. Lay-leaders there were given the responsibility of watching over all the lulavim; these took them from the people, and arranged them in the covered hall of columns. Older people, who could not bear the squeeze and press of the large crowds who came to receive their lulavim in the morning, would place theirs in a room which was provided for them.

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A Better Together Torah Thought : Two sides of the Coin

וְאַבְרָהָם וְשָׂרָה זָקְנִים, בָּאִים בַּיָּמִים

"Avraham v'Sara zekeinim ba'im bayamim " Avraham and Sarah were old, well on in years." If Avraham and Sarah were old, isn't it obvious that they were well on in years?

But the Hebrew word **בָּאִים** "ba'im" literally means "entering" **בַּיָּמִים** "in the days." The literal translation of the verse is: "And Abraham and Sarah were old, they entered in the days..." They connected with each moment and held it dear. They embraced time and allowed themselves to be embraced by it. They were always totally "there," whenever and wherever they were.

The first half of the verse refers to the basic amount of years that Avraham and Sarah lived, the Quantity. The second half informs us the Quality of those years. They were no stranger to hardship; they were often its host—but they never sought escape. They didn't hide when faced with difficulties; they dealt, as best as they could. Since they "entered in the days" they brought Mitzva spiritual energy into each day, they always stayed youthful and energetic.

Two sides of the coin

Youth versus old age could each make a convincing case of their superiority. Youth would point out how new and exciting it is to start life. The great youthful potential, joy and excitement. The benefits of being in their prime the peak of health and all the possibilities that opens up. Youth is also usually more energetic and happy.

But old age gained much experience, and the wisdom born of experience. Old age can also claim to be more spiritual, for, as physicality wanes and bodily pleasures weaken, can be more focused on higher pursuits. For the most part, old age is also more patient and tolerant. " Youth is wasted on children" Wouldn't it be great, though, to access the wisdom and experience of old age while we are still young? And wouldn't it be wonderful to hold on to the energy and excitement of youth even as we reach old age?



Avraham Avinu's coin, says the Talmud (Bava Kamma 97a), had an elderly man and woman on one side and a young man and woman on the other. Tosafot says it was not a picture, but the words **זָקֵן וְזָקֵנָה** "zakein and zekeinah" were inscribed on one side and the words **בָּחֹר וּבְתוּלָה** "bachur and betulah" on the other. Rashi comments that the young couple referred to was Yitzchak and Rivkah, but the Maharsha suggests that the young man and woman were indeed also Avraham and Sarah.

The coin expressed how Avraham and Sarah began as an elderly couple, but then returned to a youthful state having a child when he was 100 and she 90.

This amazing coin expressed not only this one-time miracle but a constant state they preserved all the years of their lives. That miraculous return to physical youthfulness happened in the merit of Avraham and Sarah holding on to their inner youthfulness during old age and tapping into the

wisdom, patience, and spirituality of old age even while young.

Better Together is an great opportunity for our Students and Seniors to realize that they are indeed both sides of the same coin.

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From the Sources:

„ואברהם זקן בא בימים" (כד:א) — אחז"ל במדרש: עד אברהם לא היתה זקנה. בספר „הדרש והעיון" פירש, דלאנשים שחיים חיי גשמיות בוודאי נעימה יותר הילדות, יען אז יש אפשרות להנות מתענוגי עולם הזה. אבל משבא אברהם אבינו והראה שעיקר החיים הוא הרוחניות ועבודת ה' אז התחילו להכיר שיש יתרון לזקנה על הילדות, כי תלמידי חכמים כל מה שמזקינים דעתם מתישבת עליהם, וחכמה נתוספת בהן (שבת קנב.).

רבי ברכיה בשם ר' חלבו אמר שיצא מוניטין שלו בעולם. ארבעה הם שיצא להם מוניטין בעולם:

• **אברהם** - "ואעשך לגוי גדול" יצא לו מוניטין ומהו מוניטין שלו **זקן וזקנה** מיכן **בחור ובתולה** מיכן.

• **יהושע** - (יהושע ו, ב): "וַיְהִי ה' אֶת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וַיְהִי שְׁמֵעוֹ בְּכָל הָאָרֶץ" יצא לו מוניטין בעולם מהו שור מיכן וראם מיכן ע"ש (דברים לג, י): "בכור שורו הדר לו וקרני ראם קרניו".

• **דוד** - (דה"א כה, י): "ויצא שם דוד בכל הארצות" יצא לו מוניטין בעולם ומה היה מוניטין שלו מקל ותרמיל מיכן ומגדל מיכן ע"ש (שיר ד, ד): "כמגדל דוד צוארך"

• **מרדכי** - (אסתר ט, ד): "כי גדול מרדכי בבית המלך ושמעו הולך בכל המדינות" יצא לו מוניטין ומה מוניטין שלו שק ואפר מיכן ועטרת זהב מיכן.

R. Berachya said in the name of R. Chelbo: [The verse means] that his "monetin" went out in the world. In the language of the Midrash, "Monitin" means coins, similar to the term used in many other languages – Money, Moneta and Monnaie. According to the Midrash, since a coin travels the world, "He who has a coin bearing his name..... is known and recognized by all." In modern Hebrew, "Monitin" means reputation or renown. There are four whose monetin went out in the world:

Avraham: I shall make you a great nation; his monetin went out. And what is his monetin? An old man and woman on one side; a lad and a maiden on the other.

Yehoshua: "And God was with Yehoshua and all the land heard of him" (Yehoshua 6,27); his monetin went out. And what was his monetin? An ox on one side; an antelope on the other.

David: "David's name went out in all the lands" (1 Chronicles 14,17); his monetin went out. And what was his monetin? A staff and knapsack on one side; a tower on the other, as is written, "Your neck is like the tower of David" (Shir HaShirim 4,4).

Mordechai: For Mordechai was great in the king's house and all the lands heard of him" (Ester 9,4); his monetin went out. And what was his monetin? Sackcloth and ashes on one side; a gold crown on the other.

An old man and woman on one side; a lad and a maiden on the other. These are, apparently, a sort of symbol of Avraham's "reign," of his accomplishment in life. It would seem to be the equivalent of a coat of arms. What then does the old couple on one side and the young one on the other symbolize? Both sides of the coin represent Avraham and Sara. They were, literally, on the one hand old, and on the other hand they themselves were a lad and a maiden. Avraham - and of course Sara as well, were literally remade, rejuvenated. This is stated explicitly by Sara herself, when wondering about the promise of the visiting angels - "After being worn out, shall I experience youth?"

Remember, both Avraham and Sara are given new names at the Brit Bein HaBetarim. In order for them to have children, in the manner of Rashi's interpretation, they have to be rejuvenated themselves, made young and fresh again.

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Although Serach bas Asher's name appears only twice in the Chumash, she contributed to a number of seminal events in the history of Klal Yisroel.

Eternal Life

Her name first appears in the count of Yaakov's children as they go down to Egypt וּבְנֵי אֲשֶׁר, יִמְנָה וְיִשְׁוֹה וְיִשְׁוִי (Bereishis 46:17), "Asher's children were Yimnah, Yishvi, Veria, and Serach their sister. Beriah's children were Chever and Malkiel." She is next mentioned when the Jews were counted to see how many had survived the plague in Shittim שְׁרַח בֶּת-אֲשֶׁר, וְנָשָׁם (Bamidbar 26:46), "The name of Asher's daughter was Serach." From this, it seems clear that Serach lived throughout the hundreds of years in Egypt.

As the Braisa deSeder Olam Rabah (chapter 9) says, "Serach bas Asher was among those who entered Egypt and among those who left it. From those who entered Egypt as it says, 'And Serach their sister.' And she was among those who entered the Land as it says, 'The name of Asher's daughter was Serach.'" the Medrash says, "She opens her mouth with wisdom" (Mishlei 31:26), this is Serach bas Asher who never tasted the taste of death."

What did Serach do to deserve this enormous privilege? Discussing those people who never died, the Medrash Hagadol (Bereishis 46:25) states, : 'מפני ששמחת אותי בתי, והחית את רוחי, לכן אברך אותך'. "Serach bas Asher [is among them] because she said to Yaakov, 'Yosef is alive.' Yaakov said to her, 'This mouth that related to me the news that he is alive, will never taste the taste of death!'"

Why does the above Medrash describe her as wise? The brothers approached her to reveal to Yaakov that Yosef was still alive without him dying from shock. She broke the news to him subtly, either by hinting it to him in an intonation of surprise as he was davening (Can Yosef indeed be alive!), or by singing the words, "Yosef is alive," as a song. It is worth noting that other Midrashim describe her and others not as ever tasting the taste of death, but as entering the Garden of Eden during their lifetimes.

Role in the Redemption

כלם [סודות הגאולה] לא נמסרו אלא לאברהם אבינו ואברהם מסר ליצחק ויצחק מסר ליעקב ויעקב מסר סוד הגאולה ליוסף שנאמר: "ואלהים פקוד יפקוד אתכם". ויוסף בנו מסר סוד הגאולה לאחיו ואמר להם: "פקוד יפקוד אלהים אתכם". ואשר מסר סוד הגאולה **לסרח בתו**, וכשבאו משה ואהרן אצל זקני ישראל ועשו האותות לעיניהם הלכו אצל סרח בת אשר אמרו לה: בא אדם אחד אצלנו ועשה אותות לעינינו כך וכך. אמרה להם: אין באותו ממש. אמרו לה: והרי אמ' פקוד יפקוד אלהים אתכם. אמרה להם: הוא האיש העתיד לגאול את ישראל ממצרים, שכן שמעתי מאבא פ"א פ"א פקוד יפקוד. מיד האמינו העם באלהיהם ובשלוחו שנאמר: "ויאמן העם וישמעו כי פקד ה' את עמו".

The Yalkut Shimoni (Bereishis 12:64) records how, thanks to her longevity, Serach played a key role in the redemption from Egypt: "Avrohom passed these [signs] to Yitzchok, Yitzchok to Yaakov, Yaakov to Yosef, and Yosef to his brothers when he said to them, 'When G-d surely redeems you, etc.' (Bereishis 50:24). Asher ben Yaakov passed the secret of the redemption to Serach his daughter. When Moshe and Aharon came to the elders of Yisroel and did the signs before them, the elders of Yisroel went to Serach bas Asher and said to her, 'A certain man has come and made such and such signs before us.' She said, 'These signs are immaterial.' They said, 'But did he not say, 'I will surely redeem' (pakod pakadti)?' She said, 'He is the man! He has come to redeem Yisroel, because so I heard from my father, pei, pei. Immediately, 'And the people believed, etc.' (Shemos 4:31)."

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In addition to this, the Yalkut (Devorim 34:965) reports how she played a crucial part in the fulfillment of the oath to take Yosef's bones up to Eretz Yisroel, without which it would have been impossible to leave Egypt: וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת עֲצָמוֹת יוֹסֵף עִמּוֹ" (שמות י"ג, יט)... ומשה מהיכן היה יודע היכן היה קבור יוסף? אמרו שרח בת אשר נשתיירה מאותו הדור, והיא הראתה למשה קבר יוסף. אמרה לו: במקום הזה שמוהו. עשו לו מצרים ארון של מתכת, ושקעוהו בתוך נילוס. בא ועמד על נילוס נטל צרור חזק לתוכו וזעק ואמר: יוסף יוסף, הגיעה השבועה שנשבע הקב"ה לאברהם אבינו שהוא גואל את בניו. תן כבוד לה' אלהי ישראל ואל תעכב את גאולתך, כי בגללך אנו מעוכבים. ואם לאו נקיים אנחנו משבועתך [אם לא תעלה את ארונוך תישאר אתה כאן ואנחנו נצא ממצרים פטורים מהשבועה]. מיד צף ארונו של יוסף ונטלו משה

Because at the time Yisroel were busy with the spoil, he wandered around the city for three days and three nights to find Yosef's coffin, and he could not find it. After, he was very exhausted, and he met Serach bas Asher. She said to him, 'Our master, Moshe, why are you so exhausted? He told her, etc. She said to him, 'Come with me,' and she took him to the Nile River. "She said to him, 'At this place they made a lead coffin of five hundred kikars, and placed him inside, sealed it, and threw it into the river. Because the magicians said to Pharaoh, 'Do you want this nation never leave your jurisdiction? Arrange that they cannot find Yosef's bones and they will never leave here, because so he made them swear.' Immediately, Moshe stood by the river, etc

The last time Serach appears is a thousand years later when she appeared to testify to a historical event: ר' יוחנן היה יושב בבית המדרש ודורש את מעשה קריעת ים סוף 'והמים להם חומה מימינם ומשמאלם' (שמות יד, כב). דרש ר' יוחנן: כיצד היו המים עשויים כחומה? כמעין שבכה [אטומה]. **השקיפה סרח בת אשר** ואמרה: אני (הייתי שם, ולא היו עשויים אלא כמו חלונות מאירים [שקופים])" (פסיקתא דרב כהנא, ויהי בשלח יא, יג

"Rabbi Yochanan was sitting and teaching how the waters [of Yam Suf] were made into a wall for Yisroel. Rabbi Yochanan taught, 'How were the waters? Like a woven network.' Serach bas Asher looked in and said, 'I was there, and they were like [the glass of] a shining lamp.'" The Zayis Raanan on Yalkut Shimoni writes that she looked out from Gan Eden to give Rabbi Yochanan this information. Why was it so vital for her to correct Rabbi Yochanan's understanding of what happened? It was so crucial because if the partitions were like a woven network, the tribes would not have seen each other passing through different tunnels. With the wisdom of centuries, Serach felt it vital to emphasize that the walls were like shining glass. Even when the tribes were separate, they remained united.

Rabbi Abraham Twersky makes the point that even speaking directly to G-d can't give the insight of a person who saw the patriarchs and how they lived and acted. www.youtube.com/watch?v=apeYtP1InhM

The Torah requires, "In the presence of an old person shall you rise and you shall honor the presence of an elderly person" (Leviticus 19:32). The verb on the latter phrase is ve'hadarta, which indeed means to honor, which is giving something to the older person. Ve'hadarta also means "to return," i.e., to get something back from the older person. Old people are repositories of wisdom. The Midrash states that when the Israelites were about to leave Egypt, Moses took upon himself the task of taking the remains of Joseph with the, but he did not know where Joseph was buried. Moses asked Search, the daughter of Asher, who was the sole survivor of Joseph's generation, and she told him where Joseph was buried.

But why did Moses have to consult Serach. After all, Moses could speak to G-d at any time. Why did he not just ask G-d? It is because Serach had knowledge which could not be equaled even by direct contact with G-d. Serach knew Joseph and the patriarch Yaakov. This is what the elderly can offer us. We have to show our children that we not only revere the elderly but also that we appreciate their wisdom.

B"H Better Together Storied Lives- Maimonides School

Dear Students,

Meet, greet, and discuss an overview of the resident subject's life. Here are some sample questions for an outline, Student will focus 3-5 aspects of the person's life that they would like to write their stories about and ask more detailed questions to bring out the story. These can be based on the aspects of the person's life they found interesting, a request by the senior, and/or correlation with history (Landing on the moon, Israel , etc.)

What is your name?

Where are you from?

How was life growing up in Communist Russia?

Were you able to keep any mitzvos Kosher, Matza, ?

Do you remember Chanukah?

What do think about Jewish life today in America and Russia?

How did you Judaism change when you came to America?

What did you do on Pesach? Do you remember going to a matzah bakery?

What Jewish traditions do you remember from your parents, grandparents?

Do you speak any Yiddish words? Yiddish song

Did you feel anti-Semitism in Russia ? How about today ?

How you ever been to Israel? Relatives

Who is the person who influenced your life the most?

What was the happiest moment of your life?

What was your most important Jewish experience?

What did your parents do to keep Judaism alive in the home?

What Jewish observances would you like to start now ?

What Jewish things would you like to learn about ?

We are doing activities with you this year any ideas you would like to do, painting, cooking etc?

What are you most proud of?

Were you in the military? How did your experience in the military mold you as a person?

What are the most important lessons you've learned in life?

What is your earliest memory?

Who were your friends when you were growing up?

What was school like for you as a child? What were your best and worst subjects?

What school activities and sports did you participate in? What world events had the most impact on you?

What are some of the most important lessons you feel you have learned over the course of your life?

Some people say that they have had difficult or stressful experiences but they have learned important lessons from them. Is that true for you? Can you give examples of what you learned?

As you look back over your life, do you see any "turning points"; that is, a key event or experience that changed over the course of your life or set you on a different track?

What are some of the important choices or decisions you made that you have learned from?

What were the significant times they lived through?

(1) 6 day war - Yom Kippur, Israel, Jewish pride

(2) Beginning of the Space Age

Historical Events

- What historical event affected your life the most? How has your life changed through that experience?
- What natural disasters happened during your lifetime? How did that affect your life and where you lived?
- Were you involved in World War II? How did World War II affect the way you lived?

Technology

- What inventions or changes had the most impact on you and your life?
- How did you feel about man going to space the first time?
- What have you been the most excited about in terms of changes?
- Are there things that you've felt afraid of, in terms of inventions or technology?

Reflections

- What is most important in your life now? Looking back at your life, would you change anything?
- Looking back at your life, what is your greatest achievement and what are you most proud of?
- What advice or words of wisdom could you offer about life?
- How do you think your past experiences have molded you into the person you are today?
- Describe your greatest joy during your lifetime. • What's your opinion about the state of the world?
- Is anything else you want to say about your life or the years you've lived that we haven't talked about