



Parshat Chaye Sarah: All You Need is Love

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Love, Love, Love.

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There's nothing you can do that can't be done.

Nothing you can sing that can't be sung.

Nothing you can say but you can learn how to play the game.

It's easy.

Nothing you can make that can't be made.

No one you can save that can't be saved.

Nothing you can do but you can learn how to be you in time.

It's easy.

All you need is love.

All you need is love.

All you need is love, love.

Love is all you need.

These opening lyrics to the famous Beatles song, All You Need is Love, embody the essence of this week's Parsha, Chaye Sarah.

Our portion opens with the death of our first Matriarch at the age of 127. Upon her death, Avraham, her beloved husband, sets forth to find a proper burial home for her. Avraham is forced to put his grief on hold while he tries to find an appropriate place for burial. Avraham goes to Hebron to contract with Ephron the son of Zohar to purchase Maarat HaMachpela (the cave of the Patriarchs). Ephron is willing to simply give the land to Avraham, who demands that he pay the money so that he truly owns the land. Ephron gives in and sells him the land for the "mere" sum of 400 Shekel (keep in mind that a high tax on the people at one point in our history was a 1/2 shekel. Four hundred shekel therefore is a huge sum of money). Avraham does not hesitate to pay the amount in order to show love for his deceased beloved.

As Avraham continues mourning (post burial of Sarah) he sends his servant, Eliezer, to find a wife for his son Yitzchak (who since the binding incident, has been away from the family in Beer lahai-roee). Eliezer travels with specific instructions for finding a wife for Yitzchak. He needed to find a woman who would draw water at a well for him and his camel (in total this would be roughly 2000lb of water lifted from the well, an all day assignment of heavy physical labor). As Eliezer sat waiting, Rivkah arrived and drew the water. Thus Eliezer knew that she was the perfect match for Yitzchak.

It is no coincidence that it was at a watering well that Eliezer meets Rivkah. Watering holes have become commonplace for people to meet each other. In our society people meet for drinks in order to get to know someone better. Here it is the significance of water that draws me (no pun intended).

Water is seen as a source of life. Water is used for purification, survival and freedom. Our sources tell us that a person cannot survive more than three days without drinking water. Torah holds the same power. We are not supposed to go more than three days without hearing the Torah read (this is one reason given for Torah reading on Saturday, Monday and Thursday, never more than three days apart).

As two people begin their lives together as a married couple, water plays a significant role. It is before a wedding that a woman goes to the Mikvah for the first time. Men also go to the Mikvah before they get married. The Mikvah waters serve as a spiritual cleansing. It is a reminder that we are entering into a new phase (in this case marriage).

Marriage is a new phase. A strong marriage is one based on love and trust. Yitzchak, not knowing that Eliezer was looking for a wife for him, went to the field and prayed. Though his prayer is not recorded, commentators feel that he was searching for someone to replace the love that he lost when his mother died. As Yitzchak is looking to the heavens, praying for love, he looks up and sees Rivkah. Rivkah, who was riding on her camel, falls off of it when she sees Yitzchak. The two had an instant connection.

Each of us has a different story – a story of how we met our spouse, how we felt when we saw them for the first time, how long it took us to realize that they were the person of our dreams. For Yitzchak and Rivka it was an instant. Without a word spoken, they knew that they were meant for each other (in fact there is no dialogue in the entire Torah between Yitzchak and Rivka).

The story of love goes on in the Parsha. Yitzchak in finding Rivka has seemingly replaced the loss of love he felt when his mother died. But what of Avraham? Avraham buried his wife, the woman that he loved, the woman with whom he waited until she was ninety years old before they had their first and only son together. Where was his consolation?

Yitzchak brings comfort to his father in the only way that he knew how, by arranging a reunion with Hagar (the maidservant Sarah had banished). The love of Rivka was the strength that Yitzchak needed in order to bring love back into his father's life.

As the Beatles teach us - *There's nothing you can do that can't be done.
Nothing you can sing that can't be sung.*

It is a custom in a Jewish home for a husband to sing to his wife the beautiful words of Eishet Chayil (A Woman of Valor). These words remind us of the power of love. They remind us that with the love of those around us, there is nothing that we can't do.

Just as we are not to go three days without water, or three days without Torah, the same is true of love and of telling those that we love how much we love them.

Love can comfort us, love can strengthen us, love can support us, because All You Need is Love.

AS A FAMILY:

- Sing/Read Eishet Chayil in Hebrew and/or English.
- Discuss these virtues as a family and how the matriarch(s) in your family embody them.
- Tell those you love that you love them – don't go more than three days without telling them (emails, texts, cards, voicemails count too).

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:

1. How does Eliezer find a wife for Isaac?
2. Who is Keturah?
3. Who buries Abraham?