Class # 5 - **Parshat Chayai Sarah: The Jefferson Memorial and the Ma’arat Hamachpelah**

Advanced Fellowship Parsha Class - Sponsored in memory of Alice Toby Barbanel Z”l

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oPhDUNN0-Mg>

1. Why is a visit to the Jefferson memorial a must for all 8th grade Washington school trips?
2. What ideas are being communicated by the monument?

*Sarah Dies*

23:1 [Sarah had lived to be](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=23#C432) 127 years old. [These were] the years of Sarah's life. 23:2 Sarah died in [Kiryath Arba](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=23#C433), also known as [Hebron](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=23#C434), in the land of Canaan. Abraham came to eulogize Sarah and to weep for her.

23:3 Abraham rose from beside his dead, and he spoke to the [children of Heth](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=23#C435). 23:4 'I am an immigrant and a resident among you,' he said. 'Sell me property for a burial place with you so that I can bury my dead, [and not have her here] right in front of me.' 23:5 The children of Heth replied to Abraham, saying to him, 23:6 'Listen to us, Sir. You are a prince of God in our midst. Take our best [burial site](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=23#C436) to bury your dead. No one among us will deny you his burial site to bury your dead.' 23:7 Abraham rose, and he bowed down to the [local people](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=23#C437), the children of Heth. 23:8 He spoke to them and said, 'If you really want to help me bury my dead and [put her out of] my presence, listen to me, and speak up for me to [Ephron](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=23#C438) son of Tzohar. 23:9 Let him sell me the [Makhpelah Cave](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=23#C439), which belongs to him, at the edge of his field. Let him sell it to me in your presence for its full price, as a burial property.' 23:10 Ephron was then sitting among the children of Heth. Ephron the Hittite replied to Abraham in the presence of the children of Heth, so that all who came to the city gate could hear. 23:11 'No, my lord,' he said. 'Listen to me. I have already given you the field. I have [also] given you the cave that is there. Here, in the presence of my countrymen, I have given it to you. Bury your dead.' 23:12 Abraham bowed down before the local people. 23:13 He spoke to Ephron so that all the local people could hear. 'If you will only listen to me,' he said. 'I am giving you the money for the field. Take it from me, and I will bury my dead there.' 23:14 Ephron replied to Abraham, saying to him, 23:15 'My lord, listen to me. What's 400 silver [shekels](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=23" \l "C440) worth of land between you and me? Bury your dead.' 23:16 Abraham understood what Ephron meant. He weighed out for Ephron the silver that had been mentioned in the presence of the children of Heth, 400 shekels in negotiable currency.

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Questions:

1. Why did Avraham first eulogize Sarah and then cried for her - isn’t that out of order?
2. Why did Avraham take such great care to purchase the Maarat Ha’machpeilah? Could there not be a easier plot to buy?
3. Why didn’t he pre-buy a plot for his 127 year old wife?
4. Why isn’t there a special burial spot for Moshe Rabbainu? Why was his burial spot kept a secret?

Sephorno comments -

**לספוד לשרה** בשביל שרה ולכבודה. כאמרם ז''ל ([סנהדרין פ'](https://www.sefaria.org/Sanhedrin.80a) כ''ג) הספידא יקרא דשכבי:

לספוד לשרה,

**on Sarah’s account,** in her honour, and to weep for her. This corresponds to the view expressed in [Sanhedrin 46](https://www.sefaria.org/Sanhedrin.46a) that eulogies are in honour of the deceased, as opposed to being intended to honour the survivors.

Ramban comments:

The Rabbis state [Baba Batra 16] that one of the Trials of Avraham was that he sought a place to bury Sarah and he did not find one until he purchased it…

5) How is this purchase a trial?

Rambam, Laws of Idolatry 1:3

...When the people would gather around [Avraham] and ask him about his statements, he would explain [them] to each one of them according to their understanding, until they turned to the path of truth. Ultimately, thousands and myriads gathered around him. These are the men of the house of Abraham.

He planted in their hearts this great fundamental principle, composed texts about it, and taught it to Isaac, his son. Isaac also taught others and turned [their hearts to God]. He also taught Jacob and appointed him as a teacher.

[Jacob] taught others and turned [the hearts] of all those who gathered around him [to God]. He also taught all of his children. He selected Levi and appointed him as the leader. He established him [as the head of] the academy to teach them the way of God and observe the mitzvot of Abraham.

[Jacob] commanded his sons that the leadership should not depart from the descendants of Levi, so that the teachings would not be forgotten. This concept proceeded and gathered strength among the descendants of Jacob and those who collected around them, until there became a nation within the world which knew God.

When the Jews extended their stay in Egypt, however, they learned from the [Egyptians'] deeds and began worshiping the stars as they did, with the exception of the tribe of Levi, who clung to the mitzvot of the patriarchs - the tribe of Levi never served false gods.

Within a short time, the fundamental principle that Abraham had planted would have been uprooted, and the descendants of Jacob would have returned to the errors of the world and their crookedness. Because of God's love for us, and to uphold the oath He made to Abraham, our patriarch, He brought forth Moses, our teacher, the master of all prophets, and sent him [to redeem the Jews]. After Moses, our teacher, prophesied, and God chose Israel as His inheritance, He crowned them with mitzvot and informed them of the path to serve Him, [teaching them] the judgement prescribed for idol worshiper and all those who stray after it.

6) What is the difference between Avraham Avinu and Moshe Rabbainu?