

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT CHAYEI SARAH

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CHAYEI SARAH



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The Rabbis teach us that Avraham (Abraham) faced ten tests from God in his spiritual journey to becoming the father of the Jewish people. The binding and near sacrificing of his son Yitzchak (Isaac) in last week's *parasha* seems to be the final one of these tests. Rabbeinu Yonah (13th century Spain), in his commentary on *Pirkei Avot* (5:3), suggests that it was actually the death of his wife, Sarah – and the initial lack of a burial place for

her – that was the final test.

Losing a beloved spouse is certainly a cause for profound grief, but in what way was it a test?

To answer this question, we must first understand the true purpose of marriage in Judaism: to reunite two souls that were separated before birth, allowing them to become whole once again. Marriage is meant to be a soul connection that lasts forever. When a couple shows love, care and attention to one another, this level of soul connection can be achieved.

After Sarah's death, Avraham sought to build an eternal connection in the next world with her. Despite his grief, he

focused on buying a burial place for her in *Me'arat Hamachpelah* (the Cave of the Patriarchs), located in Chevron (Hebron). Chevron has the Hebrew root *chaver*, meaning friend or partner. This is one of many reasons why it was particularly appropriate for Avraham and Sarah to be buried next to each other in Chevron.

Rabbeinu Yonah suggests that, given God's numerous promises of the Land to Avraham, he might have complained about the efforts he needed to make to acquire a burial plot. But he did not complain, thus passing this test too.

Shabbat shalom.

Chayei Sarah Cave Search

Can you find ten 'Caves of the Patriarchs'  amongst the items found in this week's Parasha in the box below?

