



SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR
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OU ISRAEL

This past week, we commemorated the 68th *yahrtzeit* of the great *tzadik* **Rabbi Yaakov Friedman, the Admor of Husiyatin zy'a**. A descendant of the illustrious *Reb Yisrael Friedman, the Rizhiner Rebbe, z'ya*, Rav Yaakov made aliya to *Eretz Yisrael* in the late 1930's, and succeeded his father-in-law as the *Admor of Husiyatin* in Tel Aviv. His *drashot* and teachings are recorded in a beautiful *sefer* known as *Ohalei Yaakov*. The Rebbe lived through the formative years of the establishment of the State of Israel, during the turbulent times of both the days leading up to the Declaration of Independence, the subsequent war, and the earliest days of our fledgling state, and was a powerful voice for the importance and significance of the return of the Jewish People to the Land.

Our *Sedra* this week of course opens with the passing of *Sara Imeinu*, and *Avraham's* purchase of *Maarat HaMachpela* in *Chevron*. The *pasuk* tells us:

'V'Tamat Sara B'Kiryat Arba, Hee Chevron... And Sara died in Kiryat Arba, which is Chevron...'

The *Ohalei Yaakov* points to a very interesting *Midrash* in the *Yalkut Reuveni*, which offers a creative interpretation of this *pasuk*:

'V'Tamat Sara B'Kiryat Arba-And Sara passed on b'kriat shema-while reciting the daled(the fourth letter) at the end of the word echad- of kriat shema....'

Kiryat Arba- represents Sara's recitation of Kriat Shema as she left this world and entered the next.

The Rebbe, in explaining this *Midrash*, points to a teaching from the great *Mekubal, Rav Chaim Vital zy'a*, prime disciple of the *Arizal*. In *Shaar Hay of Shaar HaKavanot*, *Rav Chaim Vital* wrote:

"We must be prepared to give our lives, to sanctify *Hashem's* name. The *daled* in the word *echad* in the first verse of the *Shema*, represents *Hashem's* four letter name..."

The *Ohalei Yaakov*, takes this idea from *Rav Chaim Vital*, and explains that *Sara Imeinu*, as she departed from this world, leaves us an eternal message connected to the unbreakable bond between the Jewish People and our sacred Land.

Throughout our history, the Rebbe explained, and especially during the turbulent early years of *Medinat Yisrael*, which the Rebbe merited to experience, *Am Yisrael*

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has been willing to risk their lives for the gift that is *Artzeinu HaKedosha*. May we always remember and hold dear, the many *neshamot* who have enabled us the *zechut* to build our lives in our sacred, eternal home.

Another great contemporary of the *Ohalei Yaakov*, was the **Avodat Elazar, Rabbi Yisrael Elazar Hopshtein of Koshnitz zy'a**, who also arrived on *aliya* to Israel in the 1930's, and settled in *Tel Aviv*, where his grandson continues to preside over the Koshnitzer Chasidut today. In a moving and powerful teaching, the *Avodat Yisrael* also wrote that when *Am Yisrael* first entered *Eretz Yisrael* it was fortunate to inherit the land due to the merit of the many *korbanot* that were to be offered in the *mishkan*, and subsequently in the *Beit HaMikdash*. Now, however, when we do not have a *Beit HaMikdash* to offer the *Korbanot* upon the *mizbeach*, **it is in the merit of the many *korbanot*, the many *neshamot* who have made the ultimate sacrifice, of giving their lives al kiddush Hashem, that we continue to merit to inherit the land.**

Perhaps, more than ever, the Rebbe's words resonate with each of us so strongly. *Yehi Ratzon*, may all those working to protect us, continue to be safe, and may we soon be blessed to live here in *Artzeinu HaKedosha* in complete peace and tranquility. ■



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Rabbi YY Rubinstein is a global lecturer, columnist and author of 14 books. He spent seven years in Gateshead Yeshiva, plus three in Kollel and has taught in Yeshivas and Seminars for over 40 years.

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