

And Sarah died in Kiryas Arba....And Avraham came to eulogize Sarah and to cry for her. (23:2)

Rashi explains that the narrative regarding Sarah's death is juxtaposed upon the previous *parsha*, which relates the story of *Akeidas Yitzchak*, because her death is intrinsically related to the *Akeidah*. When she heard the news that her only child was about to be slaughtered, "*parchah nishmassah*," her soul "flew out" and she died. We may question why *Rashi* discusses Sarah's death and its connection with the *Akeidah* while commenting on the *pasuk* which mentions Avraham's eulogy. He should have raised this issue in the beginning of the *parsha*, when the *Torah* says, "And Sarah died." Second, it is difficult to grasp that Sarah, who was even greater than Avraham in prophecy, died as a result of an act that was the paragon of *mesiras nefesh*, self-sacrifice. The news should have moved her to the ultimate heights of *nachas*.

The usual *pshat*, explanation, given by most commentators, is that Sarah was an "*alteh mommeh*," old mother, who simply could not handle the shock of losing her only child. The mere thought of Yitzchak being taken to the *Akeidah* was enough to kill her. In another few minutes, however, she would have found out that he had been spared. Are we to accept that such a noble soul was so overcome with anxiety that she could not wait a few minutes to ascertain whether her son had died or not? It is difficult to accept that Sarah *Imeinu* died of fright. **Horav Shlomo Carlebach, Shlita**, offers a novel insight into Sarah's sudden death.

Sarah's primary focus in life was that her offspring would maintain the same lofty relationship with the Almighty that she and Avraham had nurtured. What criteria would clearly demonstrate their resolve? What would constitute undisputed proof that her progeny would sustain their commitment to Hashem? The test would be - and has always been - the ability to die *Al Kiddush Hashem*. *Klal Yisrael's* readiness to sanctify Hashem's Name, even if it means giving up their lives, has been the litmus test of our faith and loyalty to the Almighty. Anyone who is willing to relinquish life in this temporal world for eternal bliss in the World-to-Come is truly worthy of his share in *Olam Habah*.

As soon as Sarah heard the exciting news that her only child had been privileged to be a sacrifice to Hashem, she was overcome with rapture and joy. The mere fact that her son was willing and ready to offer his life *Al Kiddush Hashem* caused her *neshamah* to be uplifted. The words "*parchah nishmassah*," which is traditionally translated as, "her soul flew off," now has an entirely different meaning. "*Parchah*" can also mean "it bloomed," as a flower blooms. When Sarah was assured that her son had attained the sublime level of *kedushah* which she had aspired for him, her soul "bloomed"; it flowered and radiated as it reached the height of *nachas*. When Sarah saw that everything she hoped for had been achieved, she died. Her *neshamah* departed this world--not in fear, but with joy and satisfaction. Sarah did not die like an "*alteh mommeh*," but like the Matriarch of *Klal Yisrael*, leaving this world secure in the knowledge that she had accomplished what she had set out to do.