

November 17, 2017

Dear BQLI Region Friends,

During last week's Shabbat sermon, Rabbi Joel Levenson (Midway Jewish Center, Syosset) discussed why the years of Sarah's life are delineated separately (ie: one hundred years, *and* twenty years, *and* seven years). Maybe each segment gave its own meaning to her life.

In Parshat Hayyei Sarah, the words "the years of the life of Sarah," are repeated twice in verse one. Perhaps, it has been offered, "the life of Sarah" is mentioned two times so as to stress that a human life can be categorized two ways...by the passage of time from birth until death (quantity) *and* by the quality of our years lived.

Additionally, the double repetition could suggest that Sarah actually led two lives. Sages have translated the final three words of verse one, "Shnei Chayei Sarah," to mean "the two lives of Sarah." Sarah's first life is designated as her initial ninety years before she gave birth to Isaac while her second life lasted the thirty-seven years subsequent to her becoming a mother.

Like our matriarch, Sarah, many of us see our lives as a before and after scenario. Turning points such as marriage, birth of children, deaths, and even lesser events such as landing a dream job or meeting a forever friend can be life changing. When I think about my life, I recognize that I have experienced many pivotal moments and I'm so grateful for the new paths that they created for me to journey on. I include among the obvious, my marriage to Saul and the birth of my daughters, my serving as BQLI Region President. The quality of my life has been immeasurably enhanced in a significant way through personal growth, leadership development, and lasting friendships.

Straight paths are safe and predictable. I'm not suggesting we begin to have babies at ninety, but no matter your age, you can choose to experience a pivotal moment. Who knows...enhancing the quality of your life may increase the quantity!

B'Shalom,
Grace