

JEWISH STUDY NETWORK

Vayera

“And Sarah laughed to herself, saying: ‘After I have aged will I again have smooth skin? And my husband is old!’...And Hashem said to Avraham...’Is anything too hard for Hashem?’” (Bereishis 18:12-14)

Our parsha begins with Avraham’s encounter with three men--angels in disguise --who visit his home bearing news: his wife, Sarah, will soon bear him a son. Sarah is listening to the conversation discreetly from the tent, and cannot help but laugh. She wonders to herself: Could it be that I, a 90-year-old woman, will somehow become young again and bear a child?

Hashem is displeased with Sarah’s reaction. He chastises Avraham over his wife’s lack of faith. Sarah should have realized that Avraham and those around him are special, that miracles can happen. He says to Avraham: “Is anything too hard for Hashem?”

The Chafetz Chaim comments that the Jewish people, like Sarah, are seemingly justified in wondering: “After I have aged will I again have smooth skin?” We have suffered and wandered for thousands of years. Sometimes things seem to be getting better, but all too frequently we are reminded by our neighbors just how unwelcome we and our message are. Tragically, the Jewish people have far more years of suffering in our history than years of peace.

continued ...



JEWISH STUDY NETWORK

It is in response to this question that Hashem reproves Avraham and Sarah: *Hayipalei meHashem davar?* "Is anything too hard for Hashem?" The Chafetz Chaim notes that the verse does not say *davar zeh*, "this thing", but *davar*, "anything". We must never forget who truly controls the world. Even in this dark period, with so few friends left in the world, we can and must have faith that Hashem will not forsake us. Just as He restored Sarah's aged body to youth, He will certainly restore the Jewish people to vibrancy, health and peace.

"When there is no way out - that is the very moment when we explode from within and the totally other emerges: the sudden surfacing of a strength, a security of unknown origin, welling up from beyond reason, rational expectation, and hope."

Emile Durkheim

Shabbat Shalom!

Rabbi Asher Coleman

