

## Parshat Chaye Sara 5776

### The two Ages Of Man

**The famous first Rashi-Rashi** on the first posuk explains from the *Midrash Rabbah* why the word ‘*Shana*’ (Year) is repeated 3 times – Sara lived 100 years and 20 years and 7 years. It is to tell us that each of the references to a whole number of years has its own lesson. Specifically, when Sara was 100 years old, she was like a 20 year old, regarding sin - just as when she was 20 she was not considered as having sinned since she was not yet subject to heavenly punishment, so, too, at 100 she was similarly (still) not a Bas Onshin i.e. this is telling us that she had not sinned by age 100.

**A second Rashi - Why was Noach 500 years of age before he had children?** *Rashi* on Berashis 5:32, the possuk which states that Noach was 500 years old when he gave birth to his 3 children, quotes the *Midrash Rabbah* in the name of the *Amora R’ Yudan*. He asks why all the previous generations were age 100 (or thereabouts) when they had children, but Noach had to wait until he was 500. He replies that before Matan Torah one did not become a Bar (or Bas) Onshin until age 100 (as will indeed be the case at the time of Moshiach based on Yeshaya 65:20). Hashem had therefore reasoned that if Noach’s children had become wicked, they would have to have perished in the Flood, and this would have caused Noach enormous distress. If alternatively they grew up as Tzadikim, then it would have meant a considerable amount of additional work for Noach in constructing numerous Teivos in which to save them and all their (assumed very large) families of descendants. It was therefore divine providence that none of Noach’s sons were old enough to be punished at the time of the Flood, as none had reached 100 years.

**Factor of five**-So we see that there was a fivefold decrease in the age of culpability from 100 to 20 years of age post Matan Torah. Interestingly, there appeared to be a similar fivefold decrease in the age of majority post Matan Torah from 65 years of age to the current Bar Mitzvah age of 13. Sedra Berashis, chapter 5, tells us that Mahalalel (verse 15) and Chanoch (verse 21) both gave birth at the age of 65 i.e. exactly 5 X 13. Just as the Gemara tells us that 13 is the minimum age that it is possible for a man to marry, so pre-Matan Torah it was age 65.

**More evidence – the case of Moshe Rebbenu**-A further indication that the quality of life was reduced fivefold post Matan Torah is put forward by HaRav David Cohen.

He notes that Shem was the last person born before the flood and he lived for 600 years. Moshe Rebbenu lived 120 years (600 ÷ 5) which was a typical life span for the righteous of the period.

**Adam HaRishon – The exception?**-Adam was punished even though he sinned on the day that he was created (notwithstanding Bereshis Rabbah 14:7 which indicates that he, and Chava, were created as fully grown individuals of 20 years of age). This is addressed by *Yalkut Me'am Lo'ez (Volume 1 page 321)* who writes that there is no contradiction that Adam was punished even though he sinned on the day that he was created. Since people lived so long in those times, they matured very slowly; at the age of 100, an individual’s mentality was the same as that of a youngster of 15 or 16 today. Therefore, they were not punished until they were 100 years old. But Adam was created by G-d’s own hand, so he had a developed intellect as soon as he was formed. Additionally, Adam was punished because he himself had heard G-d’s commandment.

**Contradiction of the two Rashis**-Readers I hope will have noted an apparent contradiction between the introductory two Rashis. In Sedra Berashis *Rashi* wrote (quoting R’ Yudan) that the Bar Onshin reduction from age 100 to 20 took place only at Matan Torah. Yet in this week’s Sedra *Rashi* says that at 100 Sara was like age 20 as far as sin is concerned – but surely since she lived before Matan Torah she was not culpable until she reached the age of 100! Alternatively, it might imply that this fivefold reduction may have commenced after the Flood (and not after Matan Torah).

**Possible responses**-*Mizrochi* answers in respect of the first question that the Torah wanted to tell us that even by post-Matan Torah standards (when the age had dropped to 20) Sara had not sinned at all. As to the second question that the age of 100 may have been reduced immediately following the Flood, there is other evidence that it occurred at Matan Torah. *Gur Aryeh* on Berashis 17:26 says that the reason the Torah stresses the age of 99 for Avraham at the time of the Bris Miloh, is to teach us that it had to take place before he reached 100 - for it would not have been right for Avraham to be uncircumcised at the age of culpability of 100.

דבר תורה לפרשת השבוע לעילוי נשמת אמי מורתי מרת צינא בת הרב יחזקאל הלוי ע"ה

ביום היארצייט לפטירתה כ"ז חשוון