

וְתִאֶמֶר שָׂרָה צָחַק עָשָׂה לִי אֱלֹקִים כָּל הַשְּׂמֵעַ יִצְחַק לִי:

Soroh said, "G-d has brought me laughter; everyone who hears will laugh with me." (21:6)

Following the birth and Bris of Yitzchok, Soroh expresses her untold joy. Her long-awaited child has finally been born, and the legacy of Avrohom and Soroh can now be passed on to a future generation.

The Meforshim have different ways of explaining the meaning of her words.

Radak

The most simple and straightforward explanation is that everyone else was delighted with Soroh's news that she had given birth, and people shared in her happiness.

Rashi

When Yitzchok was born the celebrations were widespread. Everyone laughed together with Soroh out of sheer joy. Rashi explains that at that time many childless women became pregnant, many sick people were healed and many individuals' prayers were answered.

Midrash Rabba Perek (Parsha 53)

The source for Rashi is the Midrash Rabba which elaborates that when Yitzchok was born the world became flooded with brochos - people were granted children, those who were deaf had their hearing restored, blind people became sighted once again, and those who were suffering from poor mental health were healed.

The Midrash notes that the possuk includes the word עָשָׂה. The same word is used in Megillas Esther (2:18) when Achashveirosh crowned Esther as his new queen, and immediately relaxed the taxation laws in her honour - וְהִנָּחָה לְקִדְיוֹת עָשָׂה - so too, HaShem granted the world an amnesty, by blessing the world with children and good health.

Targum Yonason

The meaning of the word צָחַק means 'to wonder', rather than 'to laugh'. Soroh was expressing her conviction that people would have a sense of wonder and amazement as to how she was able to bear a child at such an advanced age.

Seforno

Our possuk is a continuation of the account of Yizchok's Bris. Soroh's happiness was so great, that it completely overwhelmed any natural maternal anxiety she would have felt over her baby son's pain and discomfort due to his Bris.

Rav Shimshon Refoel Hirsch

The meaning of the word צָחַק means 'to laugh at', rather than 'to laugh with'. Avrohom and Soroh were viewed as revolutionaries with pretentious ideas, and now that they were blessed with their first child so late in life, Soroh felt that they would become the laughing stock of society.

In memory of Reb Berish Lerner, a much-beloved member of our Kehilla, whose Yahrzeit was last week.

דוב בעריש בן חיים הלוי ז"ל
י"ז חשוון