

1. וַיְהִי־לִי־חַיֵּי שָׂרָה מֵאָה שָׁנָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וְשִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים שְׁנֵי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה:

Sarah's lifetime—the span of Sarah's life—came to one hundred and twenty-seven years.  
(Genesis 23:1)

It seems to me that her age is divided into three parts because she was physically youthful until age 100, when she gave birth; spent the next 20 years older but active; and then spent 7 years in extreme old age. These are the stages of life described by Avicenna. But all three stages were good and could thus be called her "life" -- for years of grief and pain cannot be called living.

Don Yitzchak Abarbanel, 15<sup>th</sup> c

What have been the stages of your life? How do you envision the stage of "retirement?" How are you feeling about this stage (as you anticipate entering or have entered) it?

2. A major theme in *Parashat Chayei Sarah* is transition. Retirement is not so much of an ending as it is a transition in our lives. As a Jewish professional in transition, where and in what ways do you find yourself reflected in one or more of the different transitions in the parashah: Sarah's death, Abraham's acquisition of land, Isaac's (midrashic) reconciliation with Ishmael, Rebecca's decision to leave her family home, Isaac and Rebecca's marriage, Isaac re-entering Sarah's tent for the first time...Discuss!

Rabbi Michael Torop