Death is not only tragic for those intimately affected. It also always poses problems of succession and reorganization of the family, company or institution. Avraham and Sarah, the founders of the Jewish nation, pass from the scene in this week’s parasha. They are succeeded by Yitzchak and Rivka and in fact, the majority of the parasha concerns itself with how Yitzchak marries Rivka and how they establish their new home together.

In personality, temperament and action, Yitzchak and Rivka differ markedly from Avraham and Sarah. Whereas Avraham and Sarah devoted themselves to reaching as many outsiders as they could and were actively engaged in spreading the idea of monotheism in the surrounding society, Yitzchak and Rivka seem to take a more conservative approach. They attempted to consolidate what their forebears accomplished and to build a family nation rather than trying to attract more strangers to their cause.

As we will see in next week’s parsha, Yitzchak and Rivka’s struggle is an internal family one. How best to raise Eisav and Ya’akov and guarantee the continuity of Avraham and Sarah’s ideas and beliefs through their biological offspring. Eventually, it is only through Ya’akov that Avraham and Sarah continue and become the blessing G-d promised they would be. The world struggle that engaged Avraham and Sarah becomes a struggle within Avraham and Sarah’s family itself.

It becomes abundantly clear that the Jewish people’s main struggle will be to consolidate itself and thus influence the world by osmosis, so to speak. The time of Avraham and Sarah has passed and new times require different responses to the challenges of being a blessing to all of humankind.

There are those in the Jewish world who are committed to “fixing the world” at the expense of Jewish traditional life and Torah law. Yet the simple truth is that for the Jewish people to be effective in influencing the general society for good, we must be a strong and committed people. In Shir HaShirim, King Solomon warns us that “I have watched the vineyards of others but I have neglected guarding my own vineyard.”

The attempted destruction and delegitimization of the Jewish people or the State of Israel – G-d forbid – in order to further fuzzy, do-good, universal humanistic ideas, is a self-destructive viewpoint of the purpose of Judaism.

Without Jews, there is no Judaism.

Without Judaism, there is no true moral conscience left in the world.

Therefore, it seems evident to me that the primary imperative of Jews today is to strengthen and support Jewish family life, Torah education and the State of Israel.

We are in the generations of Yitzchak and Rivka and therefore we have to husband our resources and build ourselves first. As yet, we have not made good the population losses of the Holocaust 75 years ago! If the Jewish people will be strong and numerous, the age of Avraham and Sarah will reemerge. The tasks of the consolidation of Jewish life – as represented by the lives of Yitzchak and Rivka – should be the hallmark of our generation as well.