

ב"ה *Torah* **Tidbits**

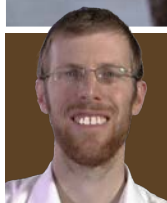
ISSUE 1491 NOV 12TH '22 י"ח מרחשון תשפ"ג

פרשת וירא

PARSHAT VAYERA

OU
ישראל

וישא
אברהם
את עיניו
וירא
והנה איל
אחר נאחז
בסבך
בקרניו
בראשית כב: יג



Shemita Laws for
Fruits And Vegetables
During The Eighth Year
Rabbi Moshe Bloom
see chart on page 48



Torah 4 Teens By Teens
By NCSY Israel
page 60

YERUSHALAYIM IN/OUT TIMES FOR SHABBAT PARSHAT VAYERA
CANDLES 4:07PM • HAVDALA 5:20PM • RABBEINU TAM 5:59PM

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Rose Schwartz // Michael Erdfarb

Rabbi Mann and Menachem Persoff's Divrei Torah
can be found online at www.torahtidbits.com



This week's Torah Tidbits cover image!

Photo By: Chayim Tzvi Schneider

I live in Ramat Bet Shemesh, Israel. I made aliyah in 2010

This photo was taken in Glacier National Park, Montana, USA.

This photo is one of my favorites because my Bar Mitzvah parsha is Vayera.

The photo was captured when I was approached by a family of these Big Horn Sheep.

When I see this picture I immediately think of the ram that replaced Yitzchak Avinu.

CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



OTHER Z'MANIM



CANDLES	VAYERA	HAVDALA	CHAYEI SARA	
			Candles	Havdala
4:07	Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	5:20	4:03	5:17
4:25	Aza area (Netivot, S'derot, Et al)	5:23	4:21	5:20
4:05	Beit Shemesh / RBS	5:21	4:21	5:18
4:22	Gush Etzion	5:21	4:19	5:17
4:22	Raanana / Tel Mond / Herzliya / K. Saba	5:21	4:18	5:18
4:22	Modi'in / Chashmona'im	5:21	4:19	5:18
4:22	Netanya	5:21	4:18	5:18
4:24	Be'er Sheva	5:22	4:21	5:19
4:23	Rehovot	5:22	4:19	5:18
4:07	Petach Tikva	5:21	4:03	5:18
4:22	Ginot Shomron	5:20	4:18	5:17
4:11	Haifa / Zichron	5:20	4:07	5:16
4:21	Gush Shiloh	5:19	4:17	5:16
4:23	Tel Aviv / Giv'at Shmuel	5:21	4:19	5:18
4:22	Giv'at Ze'ev	5:20	4:18	5:17
4:23	Chevron / Kiryat Arba	5:21	4:19	5:18
4:25	Ashkelon	5:23	4:21	5:20
4:23	Yad Binyamin	5:22	4:19	5:18
4:14	Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden	5:17	4:10	5:14
4:19	Golan	5:17	4:15	5:14
Rabbeinu Tam (J'lem) • next week - 5:55pm				

Times According to MyZmanim (20 min. before sundown in most cities,
40 min. in Yerushalayim and Petach Tikva, 30 min. in Tzfat/Haifa)

JERUSALEM

Ranges 11 days Wed - Shabbat

Wed. Nov 9-19 / 15 - 25 Marcheshvan

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	5:09 - 5:17
Sunrise	6:02 - 6:10
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	8:42 - 8:47
Magen Avraham	8:05 - 8:09
Sof Zman Tefila	9:35 - 9:39

(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanaya)

Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	11:22 - 11:24
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	11:52 - 11:54
Plag Mincha	3:36 - 3:32
Sunset (Including Elevation)	4:48 - 4:42



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DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY



RABBI AVI BERMAN

Executive Director, OU Israel



When I was in high school, Nachshon Wachsman's brother and I had many mutual friends, and we ended up hanging out together numerous times. I remember him coming over to my house and my grandparents house. Therefore, it hit very hard when Nachshon was kidnapped. When it happened, I was in shiur alef at yeshiva in Shilo. Together with friends and neighbors of Nachshon who were a year older than me in Shilo, we helped search for him. While he was missing, I read all of Tehillim every day.

In the process of searching we went on buses and walked the streets of Yerushalayim and other places in Israel. From the moment that Klal Yisrael saw the video that Hamas was holding Nachshon Wachsman hostage, the entire nation felt nothing mattered at that point besides for Nachshon. There was a feeling of unity where the

entire Jewish nation was focused on their fellow Jew's safety and wellbeing. Whether riding buses, shopping for groceries, or walking down the street, the sense of purpose and feeling of connection was there.

While unfortunately it was a tragedy that brought us together, the unity was strong and beautiful. Davening for Nachshon's safe return at the Kotel surrounded by Jews of all different backgrounds was a beautiful, incredible feeling of unity.

Unfortunately, we united again in tragedy and all felt this same unity when the three boys, Naftali Fraenkel, Eyal Yifrach and Gil-ad Shaar, were kidnapped from Gush Etzion in 2014. No matter our background, we davened for their safe return and felt the pain of Klal Yisrael when we found out they were murdered. These are two moments of unity where it is so clear how much Klal Yisrael cares for one another.

We know from Tanach that the sweetest moments to HaKadosh Baruch Hu are when the Jewish people are unified. On Wednesday of Chol Hamoed Pesach, two days before Rav Mordechai Eliyahu zt"l had his heart attack, I had the zechut of sitting with my Rav for over an hour. In that meeting, Rav Mordechai Eliyahu told me that today Klal Yisrael has more Torah than ever before, more kosher food than ever before, and more chesed than ever before. The one thing that is delaying the Geulah (redemption) is that we do not have *achdut* (unity) in Klal Yisrael. He told me then, which I have

ברוך דיין האמת

The OU Israel family extends our heartfelt condolences to Chaim (Director of Youth Programming) & Meirav Pelzner & family on the passing of Chaim's father

Moshe Pelzner z"l

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

Rabbi Avi Berman, Zvi Sand,
Executive Dir. OU Israel President, OU Israel

taken as a will of his, to be active in *achdut*.

The past five elections did not help foster unity for the Jewish people, and have taken us to places that we don't want to be. They have caused Klal Yisrael to have many arguments, including people who have stopped talking to family members, colleagues and friends. There are others who can only talk to each other if they leave the topic of politics off the table. Even though we agree about the vast majority of what's important when running this country, the minority of what we don't agree about has become a focal point which has caused massive disunity. We must realize that our unity is more important than political disagreements.

I am happy that there is a government that will hopefully be able to run our country and last until the next time we are due for new elections. Unfortunately, we have gotten too used to frequent elections that have brought the nation to constant political arguments. It goes without saying that this is bad for the Jewish people. We must be one unified nation.

B'ezrat Hashem, we will have a functioning government and be able to put the arguments aside. Perhaps the right thing to do now is to look at who we may have gotten into political arguments with over the past few years and invite them to spend positive time together,

whether going to the park, out to eat, or having them over for a Shabbat meal. Now is the time to reconnect with each other. Politics will always be a point of dissension, but let's move past this *machloket* and focus on the moments of unity I mentioned above when we stood at the Kotel with thousands of our brothers and sisters davening for the three boys or for Nachshon Wachsman. Let's show Hashem that we don't need tragedy to unite, but we can unify without tragedy. We can have a positive, strong country where we show care and support for one another.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



Rabbi Avi Berman

Executive Director, OU Israel

aberman@ouisrael.org

nisht on shabbos...

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Janet and Gordon Berkley and family



FROM THE DESK OF RABBI MOSHE HAUER



OU Executive Vice President

A Heritage of Hope

Anxiety is in the air. Everywhere we turn, concerns are expressed about rising antisemitism, and the future of our divided country.

In this context it is worth noting a remarkable commentary of Ramban. At the outset of our Parsha, Avraham and Sarah welcome three guests into their home and treat them royally, and in response one of the guests declares that they would be blessed a year later with a child. Sarah laughs bitterly in response, and is taken to task for this by G-d.

Ramban (18:15) is troubled by this. Clearly, if Sarah laughed it is because she did not realize that these guests were actually angels delivering a prophecy from G-d. She thought they were like all the other simple travelers who were regularly welcomed to their home. As such, why should she *not*

laugh? She was 90 years old, her husband was 100, they had been unsuccessfully trying to conceive for years, and now some stranger comes along and promises her a child in a year. How would *you* respond?!

Remarkably G-d expected her to respond with **hope**. Yes, even as difficult and as protracted as her situation was, she should not have despaired and should have instead responded sincerely to his declaration, affirming: “*Amein!* May G-d indeed do this for us!”

In the words of Rav Tzadok Hakohein of Lublin (*Divrei Sofrim* no. 16):

“The Jewish nation was built after the total despair of Avraham and Sarah ever being able to have a child ... purposely ... so that this would become the character of the Jew, to believe that there is never room for despair.”

Our times are indeed challenging and uncertain. But our history is instructive and a profound lesson of faith in G-d.

Let us all draw from that infinite resource of hope. ■



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VAYERA



ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



**Rabbi Reuven
Tradburks**
Director of
RCA Israel Region

The beloved stories of the life of Avraham are found in our parsha. Avraham hosts the angels who tell him of the impending birth of Yitzchak to Sarah. G-d tells Avraham of His intent to destroy Sodom; Avraham pleads on their behalf. The city of Sodom is destroyed, Lot is saved. The nations of Moav and Amon are born from Lot and his daughters. Avraham sojourns in Gerar. Sarah gives birth to Yitzchak. Hagar and Yishmael are sent away. Avraham makes a pact with Avimelech. The Parsha concludes with the dramatic story of Akeidat Yitzchak, the near death of Yitzchak at the hands of Avraham.



1st Aliya (18:1-14). G-d appears to Avraham. 3 men are warmly welcomed by Avraham with lavish hospitality. They announce to him that by

this time next year Sarah will have a child. She overhears this from the tent and laughs, for her ability to bear a child is a thing of the past. G-d protests – is anything too much for G-d – this time next year you will have had a child.

This story is a precious glimpse into the home of Avraham and Sarah. The whole house participates in the kindness – Avraham, Sarah, the young helpers. And the word run or fast occurs 4 times in 6 verses. This is an energetic, enthusiastic welcome. The eager hospitality modeled by Avraham becomes the paradigm of chesed for the Jewish people.

Sarah laughs at the news that she will have a child. She is reprimanded for that. But Avraham laughed at the same news at the end of last week's parsha. He is not reprimanded. Rashi comments there: laughter comes in 2 forms. Simcha, happy laughter. And scoffing. Avraham laughed; wow, look at that, me 99, she 90 – and we'll have a child! Sarah scoffed, guffawed: what? Me at 90 and he at 99? Don't think so.

She has a point. Sarah is the realist. Avraham the dreamer. Jewish history will need the dreamers and the realists. The Avot tend to be the dreamers; the Imahot, the women, the realists.



2nd Aliya (18:15-33). The men leave for Sodom. G-d reasons that He may not withhold from Avraham, the champion of justice, of His plan to destroy Sodom. Avraham challenges Him: How can You destroy the righteous along with the wicked? And how can You destroy the place if there are righteous people present? Avraham presses his point.

The generosity of Avraham continues,

May the Torah learned
from this Torah Tidbits
be in loving memory of and לעי"נ
Cantor Martin Horowitz זצ"ל

On his 28th Yahrtzeit

*Mina and Howard Millendorf
Sharon, Shlomo
Elior, Amiad, and Yagel Rabinowitz*

though expressed quite differently here. He refuses to allow, unchallenged, the destruction of Sodom. And his argument changes. The first argument is: why should the same fate be for both righteous and wicked? If You destroy the city, then the same fate awaits both righteous and wicked. A Just G-d would not punish the righteous. But then he turns the tables. Don't spare the righteous and punish only the wicked; rather, save the whole city, wicked and all. Avraham is pleading for the lives of the wicked.

Avraham has great generosity of spirit. The Judge of all can judge the wicked; my role is to be generous to them. He previously rescued Lot and all the people of Sodom who had been taken captive in the wars of the 4 Kings and 5 Kings; these same people who then too were already described as wicked. Further on in our parsha, he is not happy with Sarah wanting to send Yishmael away, even though his behavior is not to Sarah's liking. This too is his generosity of spirit.

We would be true students of Avraham if we left the judgment of our fellow man to Him, and were generous to a fault to them instead.



3rd Aliya (10:1-20). The men journey to Sodom. Lot prevails on them to stay with him. The men

of the city object to the presence of these foreigners. It turns violent. The visitors tell Lot that Sodom is to be destroyed and he must leave quickly. His sons in law refuse. The morning dawns and Lot, his wife and daughters leave Sodom, told not to look back.

Lot is Avraham's closest relative. He seems to follow in the footsteps of Avraham. He welcomes the strangers, gives them a place in his home, and serves them food. A parallel



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story to Avraham's kindness to them. But, the lesson lies not in the similarities but in the differences. Lot is living in Sodom. That makes all the difference.

This story is the beginning of the theme that will dominate the rest of the book of Genesis: who of Avraham's family is in? And who is out? Avraham's family will inherit the covenant of the Jewish people – but who in his family? After all, Lot is his nearest of kin. With the imminent birth of Yitzchak, the question as to who will inherit the land of Israel becomes urgent. Will it be all of Avraham's entourage? Lot, Yishmael, Yitzchak? Will Avraham's generosity of spirit extend to the promise of the Land – will he want to include his broader family unit?

Well, one person we can see is not going to be a part of Jewish history: Lot. Lot writes himself out of that possibility with his association with Sodom.



4th Aliya (19:21-21:4) Lot is told to flee Sodom. The cities of Sodom and Gemora are destroyed. Lot's wife looks back and turns to a pillar of salt. Avraham looks out from the hills and sees the destruction. Lot flees to the hills. The 2 daughters of Lot ply him with wine and become pregnant from him, reasoning that they are the only ones left in the world. They name their children Moav and Amon. Avraham goes to Gerar. Avimelech is told by G-d not to touch Sarah. Avimelech confronts Avraham as to why he hid Sarah's identity from him. Avraham responds: I saw there is no fear of G-d here. G-d fulfills what he promised to Sarah. She gives birth to Yitzchak. Avraham circumcises him as G-d commanded.

There is a lot of "seeing": Lot should not look back, while Avraham is looking over

the plain. The daughters see themselves as Noah and family – the sole survivors. Avraham sees there is no fear of G-d.

Lot did not see, or take to heart that he lived amongst sinners. What Lot did not see around him Avraham perceived immediately in Gerar; there is no fear of G-d here.

The story of Lot's daughters is tragic self-deception. Rav Hershel Schachter likes to point out – did they really think, of all the people in the world, they are the most righteous to be saved? There is no one else in the entire world except them? Really? What about Avraham? How did they feel the next day when they walked down the street and saw a whole world of people?



5th Aliya (21:5-21). Yitzchak grows and is weaned. Sarah sees Yishmael playing with Yitzchak. She tells Avraham to banish this boy, for he will not inherit on a par with Yitzchak. This troubles Avraham but G-d tells him to listen to Sarah. Avraham arises early, sends away Hagar and Yishmael. They go to the desert of Beersheva. The water runs out. Hagar cannot bear to see the death of her child and cries.

May the Torah learning
from this issue of Torah Tidbits
be in loving memory of and לעייני

רחמיאל חי בן אברהם וחנה ז"ל

Robert Ackert z"l

on his first yahrzeit

כ"ב מרחשוון

Beloved husband, father and
grandfather. We miss you so much.

*Rita, Dina, Rebekah and family,
Yehoshua Chaim and family*

An angel calls to her. Her eyes are opened, she sees a well and gives water to Yishmael.

The next generation of the Jewish people has now been born. Who will be part of the covenant? Lot is out, but he is not a child of Avraham, albeit a nephew. Sarah tells Avraham that Yishmael, although a child of Avraham, is not the next generation of the Jewish people. Yishmael's banishment is a parallel story to the Akeida that we are about to read. In both stories Avraham arises early, a child walks with a parent, the child's life is in danger, an angel calls, the parent sees what they did not see before, the child is saved. Similar stories teach that G-d cares and saves the one in distress. But similarities are only similar – they are not the same. Yishmael will not be Yitzchak's equal in the next generation of the Jewish people.



6th Aliya (21:22-34). Avimelech initiates a pact with Avraham in Beersheva. They name the place Beersheva from the word to swear. Avraham calls out in G-d's name in Beersheva.

Avraham's fame has prompted a pact. Why would Avimelech make such a pact? It would seem that not only is Avraham famous, but so too are the Divine promises of inheriting. People know about them. And believe them and respect them. So, they would rather be on Avraham's side.



7th Aliya (22:1-24). Akeidat Yitzchak, the binding of Isaac. Avraham is told to take Yitzchak and offer him as an offering. On the way, Yitzchak questions Avraham. They arrive at the mountain.

nisht on shabbos...

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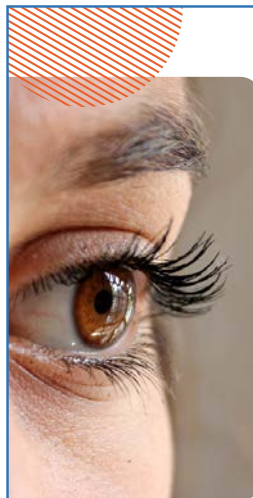
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At the last moment, the angel calls to Avraham. Avraham has proven his loyalty to G-d's command. He sees a ram caught in the bush and offers it in the place of Yitzchak. They return to Beersheva.

The most dramatic story in the Torah. A story of absolute loyalty to the Divine command but also one of pathos and irony. The man of generosity, who pleaded for the lives of the wicked of Sodom now prepared to take the life of his son. The one who challenged the injustice of the impending destruction of Sodom, now has no voice of objection. And the most obvious – the one who waited patiently for 25 years for the promise of a child – and a future – now prepared to destroy it all.

A story that can be thought about and studied for a lifetime. Perhaps, one element of the story pertains to the promises. While the promise to Avraham of fame, family and fortune have been granted by G-d. And the promise of his family inheriting the Land of Israel is now able to take shape. Do not think G-d's reach for man and for the Jewish people will be without its complexity, its sacrifices,

its mysteries in trying to understand the ineffable ways of G-d. While an intimate bond is being created of G-d's love for the Jewish people, and while we are increasingly being drawn to Him, He remains opaque, inscrutable, mysterious, ineffable. We live with Divine intimacy and vast distance simultaneously.

HAFTARAH

2 KINGS, 4:1-37

This week's parsha famously tells us that although Avraham and Sarah were advanced in age they miraculously bear a child. Along these same lines the *haftarah* this Shabbat describes a similar incident in which the navi Elisha assures an elderly childless woman that she will bear a child.

Elisha would often pass through the city of Shunem. A couple who lived in the town offered a place for Elisha to stay. They even made a guest room that Elisha could use whenever he needed. Elisha became aware that the couple was childless. He blessed the woman that she would give birth. Indeed a year later a son was born to the couple.

A SHORT VORT

BY RABBI CHANOKH YERES

Rav, Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

"And he lifted up his eyes and saw three men standing near him" (18:2)
 (וישא עיניו וירא והנה שלשה אנשים נצבים עליו) (י"ח:ב)

There seems to be many similarities between Avraham's hospitality to the angels and Lot's hospitality to angels in the city of Sodom in Chapter 19. Both approached the angels and "bowed down to them". Avraham took milk, cream and a calf and prepared a meal for them. Lot too, "made them a feast and baked unleavened bread, and they did eat." Lot went one step even further and protected the angels from the local inhabitants of Sodom.

If all these similarities are true, then, why is the characteristic of *Hachnasat Orchim* – "Hospitality" only attributed to Avraham and not Lot?

The great Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, known as the "defense attorney" for the Jewish people, answered that each man viewed his visitors in a different fashion. Lot saw them as angels- "And the two angels came" and had no choice but to serve them with great respect. On the other hand, by Avraham it says "And he saw three MEN". Even though they appeared as ordinary people, Avraham extended them a feast. This proves the great attribute of hospitality by Avraham. Shabbat Shalom

The story does not end there. A few years later the son died suddenly. The woman called Elisha back to her home. Elisha quickly came and miraculously was able to bring the child back to life. ■

STATS

4th of the 54 sedras; 4th of 12 sedras in B'reishit
Written on 252 lines in a Torah, rank: 5
6 Parshiyot; 4 open, 2 closed
147 p'sukim - ranks 7th (4th in B'reishit)
2085 words - ranks 2nd (1st in B'reishit)
7862 letters - rank: 3rd (2nd in B'reishit)
Vayera is actually the 2nd largest sedra in the Torah. (Naso, is #1 with no rival - Bamidbar, Pinchas, and R'ei all take up more lines than Vayera, but those sedras each have many parshiyot, which means a lot of blank space between parshiyot, which adds to the line-count.)

MITZVOT

None of Taryag (the 613 mitzvot) are found in Vayera (one of 17 sedras without entries on the list of 613) - however, there are Midot and values and other lessons.

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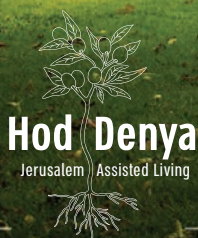


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THE PERSON

BY RABBI DR. TZVI HERSH WEINREB

OU Executive Vice President, Emeritus

IN THE PARSHA

An Inn and an Orchard

I read the story quite some time ago. It was told by a young woman who boarded an airplane early one winter Friday morning. She was on her way to Chicago from New York to spend a weekend there with friends.

She made herself comfortable in her seat, prepared some reading material, and was confident that the plane would take off more or less on time and that she would arrive at her destination in little more than an hour.

But that was not to be. Instead, she experienced what all “frequent flyers” are familiar with— unanticipated delays. At first, the pilot assured the passengers that the delays would be brief and that they would soon be on their way.

However, time dragged on, and the young woman, as well as the rest of the passengers, became a bit concerned. They all had appointments in Chicago, or flight connections to make, or were simply upset about the prospect of being strapped into an uncomfortable seat for a longer period

of time than expected.

For some of the passengers, however, and our young woman was among them, there was a “higher” concern. It was a short Friday, and sundown was early, only six or seven hours away. Would they make it to Chicago in time to reach their ultimate destinations before the Sabbath?

The young woman who related the story described the scene. At first, the several Jews aboard the plane took no notice of each other, each minding his or her own business. However, as the delay became more protracted, and the possibility of being stranded became more real, the Jews present began to converse with each other and share their anxieties.

Finally, the plane took off. But the worries of the Shabbat observers were not over. About halfway through the flight the pilot announced that they would not be able to land in Chicago after all. Instead, they were being diverted to Milwaukee.

By this time, there were little more than three hours until sundown. The group of Shabbat observers huddled in the back of the plane, and two of them assured the others, and there were 10 or 12 others, that they knew several people in Milwaukee who could host them for Shabbos, if they would land in the Milwaukee airport in time.

They asked the crew if they could somehow call ahead and contact their acquaintances in Milwaukee. That was

Mazal Tov to

Esther & Moshe Davis and family

on the birth of a grandson

son of Riki & Yosef Yehuda Gordon

done, and the Milwaukee friends assured the group that they would not only put them up and feed them well, but they would have a van at the airport ready to speed them to their Shabbat accommodations.

The young woman had been sitting next to a non-Jewish couple who couldn't help but eavesdrop upon the entire conversation and the arrangements that ten passengers were making to spend a weekend with total strangers. They expressed their astonishment to the young woman, saying: "Are you all going to spend an entire weekend with people you don't know? And why would they put all of you up? Are you sure this is not some kind of a trap? Will you be safe?"

The young woman reassured her co-passengers with this one brief statement: "That's Jewish hospitality."

The reader of this column, who is surely familiar with Jewish hospitality, can anticipate the happy ending of the story. The plane landed with barely an hour to spare, the van appeared, the group was rushed to the Jewish neighborhood, everyone had comfortable accommodations, and the delicious Shabbat meals were especially lively as the group played Jewish geography and learned about the many connections they had with each other.

But the reader may want to know more about what the young woman told her non-Jewish companions, expanding upon the concept of Jewish hospitality.

She began by explaining to them that Jews

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read selections from the Bible in the synagogue each Sabbath. She told them that the selection which would be read tomorrow was *Genesis* 18:1-22:24. She introduced them to the vocabulary of the weekly Torah portion and informed them that the name of that week's *parsha* was *Parshat Vayera*.

She went on to briefly introduce them to the inspiring personality of Abraham, our forefather. But time was running out, and she could not even begin to narrate the stories in this Torah portion that describe Abraham's hospitality.

She told them that Abraham was the model for hospitality that all Jews try to emulate, and she shared with them one brief verse, which appears toward the end of the *parsha*: "Abraham planted a tamarisk at Beer-Sheba, and invoked there the name of the Lord, the Everlasting God." (*Genesis* 21:33)

Of course, she had to define "tamarisk," which she did by telling them that it was a small tree or shrub. But then she went on to relate the following homily to them:

"I had a teacher at the Jewish parochial school I attended. He pointed out to us that the Hebrew word for tamarisk is *aishel*.

"The rabbis of old disputed the meaning of *aishel*. Some said that it meant an orchard. But others contended that it meant a hostel, an inn.

"Our teacher shared with us the deeper meaning of this dispute, as taught by a much more contemporary rabbi, Solomon Joseph Zevin. Rabbi Zevin held that *orchard* and *inn* represent the two qualities which

comprise hospitality. The orchard symbolizes life, growth, nurturance, regeneration. This is the emotional component of hospitality, the provision of sustenance, of care and compassion, and, when necessary, sympathy and healing.

"The other quality is symbolized by the inn—a structure, solid, protective, safe and secure. The hospitable person, and Abraham was the archetype of such a person, provides his guest with both the life-giving sustenance provided by the orchard and the sense of security provided by the home, by the inn."

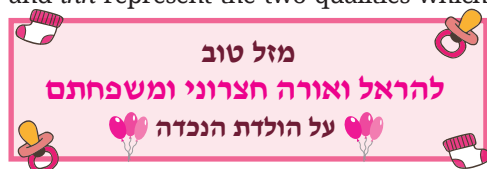
The two non-Jewish passengers thanked the young woman for the lesson. They added, however, the following remarks:

"We too study the Bible, and we remember that Abraham was called 'the father of the multitude of nations. He modeled hospitality for all mankind.

"Nevertheless, we concede that there is something special about the Jewish hospitality that we are now witnessing and that you are apparently about to experience.

"The truly hospitable person opens his or her home even to the total stranger—so much so that total strangers can rely upon that hospitality. You are truly a blessed people, and, although we will never meet your hosts, we ask that you share with them our profound admiration."

When the young woman boarded that airplane, she expected a very ordinary experience. Instead, she was blessed with the opportunity not only to benefit from Jewish hospitality, but to share the lessons of hospitality with others in a way that achieved that highest of all spiritual objectives, a "sanctification of the name of God," a *kidush Hashem*. ■



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COVENANT & CONVERSATION

Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from
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To Bless the Space Between Us

There is a mystery at the heart of the biblical story of Abraham, and it has immense implications for our understanding of Judaism.

Who was Abraham and why was he chosen? The answer is far from obvious. Nowhere is he described, as was Noah, as “a righteous man, perfect in his generations” (Gen. 6:9). We have no portrait of him, like the young Moses, physically intervening in conflicts as a protest against injustice. He was not a soldier like David, or a visionary like Isaiah. In only one place, near the beginning of our parsha, does the Torah say why God singled him out:

Then the Lord said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be

blessed through him. For I have chosen him, *so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just*, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what He has promised him.” (Gen. 18:17-9)

Abraham was chosen *in order to be a father*. Indeed Abraham’s original name, *Av ram*, means “mighty father”, and his enlarged name, *Avraham*, means “father of many nations”.

No sooner do we notice this than we recall that the first person in history to be given a proper name was *Chava*, Eve, because, said Adam, “she is the mother of all life.” (Gen. 3:20) Note that motherhood is drawn attention to in the Torah long before fatherhood (twenty generations to be precise, ten from Adam to Noah, and ten from Noah to Abraham). The reason is that motherhood is a biological phenomenon. It is common to almost all forms of advanced life. Fatherhood is a cultural phenomenon. There is little in biology that supports pair-bonding, monogamy, and faithfulness in marriage, and less still that connects males with their offspring. That is why fatherhood always needs reinforcement from the moral code operative in a society. Absent that, and families fragment very fast indeed, with the burden being overwhelmingly borne by the

abandoned mother.

This emphasis on parenthood – motherhood in the case of Eve, fatherhood in that of Abraham – is absolutely central to Jewish spirituality, because what Abrahamic monotheism brought into the world was not just a mathematical reduction of the number of gods from many to one. The God of Israel is not primarily the God of the scientists who set the universe into motion with the Big Bang. It is not the God of the philosophers, whose necessary being undergirds our contingency. Nor is it even the God of the mystics, the *Ein Sof*, the Infinity that frames our finitude. The God of Israel is *the God who loves us and cares for us as a parent loves for, and cares for, a child*.

Sometimes God is described as our father: “Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us?” (Malachi 2:10). Sometimes, especially in the late chapters of the book of Isaiah, God is described as a mother: “Like one whom his mother comforts, so shall I comfort you” (Is. 66:13). “Can a woman forget her nursing child and have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you” (Is. 49:15). The primary attribute of God, especially whenever the four-letter name Hashem is used, is compassion, the Hebrew word for which, *rachamim*, comes from the word *rechem*, meaning “a womb”.

Thus our relationship with God is deeply connected to our relationship with our parents, and our understanding of God is deepened if we have had the blessing of children (I love the remark of a young American Jewish mother: “Now that I’ve become a parent I find that I can relate to God much better: now I know what it’s like creating



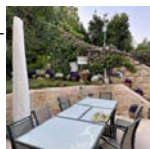
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something you can't control").

All of which makes the story of Abraham very hard to understand for two reasons. The first is that *Abraham was the son told by God to leave his father*:

"Leave your land, your birthplace and your father's house." (Gen. 12:1)

The second is that *Abraham was the father told by God to sacrifice his son*:

"Then God said: Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the land of Moriah, and there sacrifice him as a burnt offering on the mountain I will show you." (Gen. 22:2)

How can this make sense? It is hard enough to understand God commanding these things of anyone. How much more so given that God chose Abraham specifically to become a role model of the parent-child, father-son relationship.

The Torah is teaching us something fundamental and counterintuitive. *There has to be separation before there can be connection*. We have to have the space to be ourselves if we are to be good children to our parents, and we have to allow our children the space to be themselves if we are

to be good parents.

I argued last week that Abraham was in fact continuing a journey his father Terach had already begun. However, it takes a certain maturity on our part before we realise this, since our first reading of the narrative seems to suggest that Abraham was about to set out on a journey that was completely new. Abraham, in the famous midrashic tradition, was the iconoclast who took a hammer to his father's idols. Only later in life do we fully appreciate that, despite our adolescent rebellions, there is more of our parents in us than we thought when we were young. But before we can appreciate this, there has to be an act of separation.

Likewise in the case of the Binding of Isaac. I have long argued that the point of the story is not that Abraham loved God enough to sacrifice his son, but rather that God was teaching Abraham that *we do not own our children*, however much we love them. The first human child was called Cain because his mother Eve said, "With the help of God I have acquired [*kaniti*] a man" (Gen. 4:1). When parents think they own their child, the result is often tragic.

First separate, then join. First individuate, then relate. That is one of the fundamentals of Jewish spirituality. We are not God. God is not us. It is the clarity of the boundaries between heaven and earth that allows us to have a healthy relationship with God. It is true that Jewish mysticism speaks about *bittul ha-yesh*, the complete nullification of the self in the all-embracing infinite light of God, but that is not the normative mainstream of Jewish spirituality. What is so striking about the heroes and heroines of the Hebrew Bible is that when they speak to God, they remain



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themselves. God does not overwhelm us. That is the principle the kabbalists called *tzimtzum*, God's self-limitation. *God makes space for us to be ourselves.*

Abraham had to separate himself from his father before he, and we, could understand how much he owed his father. He had to separate from his son so that Isaac could be Isaac and not simply a clone of Abraham. Rabbi Menahem Mendel, the Rebbe of Kotzk, put this inimitably. He said:

"If I am I because I am I, and you are you because you are you, then I am I and you are you. But if I am I because you are you, and you are you because I am I, then I am not I and you are not you!"

God loves us as a parent loves a child – *but a parent who truly loves their child makes space for the child to develop their own identity.* It is the space we create for one another that allows love to be like sunlight to a flower, not like a tree to the plants that grow beneath. The role of love, human and Divine, is, in the lovely phrase of Irish poet John O'Donohue, "to bless the space between us". ■

These weekly teachings from Rabbi Sacks zt"l are part of his 'Covenant & Conversation' series on the weekly Torah teaching. With thanks to the Schimmel Family for their generous sponsorship, dedicated in loving memory of Harry (Chaim) Schimmel. Visit www.RabbiSacks.org for more.

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The haftarah selection for this week's parasha is based upon the stories of Elisha and two righteous women whose sufferings (poverty/barrenness) were relieved through the miraculous deeds of the navi. There is, however, a difference in traditions between the Ashkenazi and Sepharadi minhagim as to how much of the stories are read.

According to Sepharadi custom, the first 23 psukim of the 4th perek are chanted, which include the first story (of the impoverished widow) and the first half of the second story (of the wealthy Shunamite).. The Ashkenazim read 38 p'sukim from the chapter that include Elisha's resuscitation of the young lad, the end of that story.

Although we might wonder why the Sepharadi Chachamim would leave their readers "hanging" in the middle of the dramatic story, their approach is quite logical. They limit the reading to but 23 verses, following the tradition suggested by Chazal to keep the haftarah at a length of about 21 p'sukim, whenever possible, three verses for each Torah aliya (on Shabbat). Seemingly, Sepharadi custom focuses upon the fact that, as He did with Avraham, Hashem rewards the righteous. The widow, whose husband risked his life to save the lives of one hundred nevi'im, finds repayment for that sacrifice by the navi whose miracle saved her and her sons. Similarly, the barren Shunamite, who generously provided shelter and nourishment for the

itinerant prophet, is rewarded with a son by the miracle prophesied by Elisha. Both stories connect closely to that of Avraham and Sarah, whose righteousness was rewarded being granted both wealth and a miracle birth of their son.

Ashkenazi scholars chose to complete the second narrative for more reason than providing a satisfying ending. The final section includes the recovery of the Shunamite's son from death, an event reminiscent of Yitzchak's "survival" from near-death at the Akeida.

The Rav, however, points to a salient lesson that we should learn from the events found in the final section of the haftarah. In wondering why the Mishna (Sanhedrin 10; 2) includes Elisha's attendant, Geichazi, as among the most wicked who had forfeited any share in Olam Habah, the Rav focuses upon the clear contrast between the saintly navi and his apprentice. Elisha, a prophet who used his gifts to help the downtrodden and the suffering, did so in the most modest and private way. He tells the impoverished widow to close the door of her house before the miraculous oil would fill the empty jars; he reveals the promise of a son to the barren Shunamite woman only in private, at the

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entrance to her house.

And, as the story proceeds, we learn of how Elisha's revival of the young son was performed only in his upper chamber, without even the presence of the mother. He also instructed Geichazi: to hurry to the stricken child and greet no one nor respond to anyone. No one should know where or why he was going – it would be a secret; it would be a private miracle, performed in the most modest way. But Geichazi failed in his mission, as the child remained lifeless, despite the attendant's placement of Elisha's staff on the boy, as he had been charged to do.

The Chachmei Kaballa contend that Geichazi did indeed inform others of what would occur. Upon his return to summon Elisha (following his inability to revive the son), Geichazi told everyone what miracle he was about to perform, so that, when Elisha

arrived back to Shunam, he found the house surrounded by curious onlookers who were told of the impending miracle. It was clear that the miracle was not wrought by the staff – but by the righteous person!

Geichazi's failure to learn from Elisha, despite the many years he served in the presence of such holiness, was what our Tanna'im saw to be inexcusable. To tend to a man whose life was dedicated to quietly giving to others and yet to use G-d's gifts as a tool for self-aggrandizement, reflected a complete lack of sensitivity to the holiness of the navi who was the very personification of sanctity. His inability to see that was unforgivable.

Hashem grants each of us divine gift to better the lives of others. Indeed, this was the story of Avraham as well. Learning to do so will bring us closer to true holiness.

And that, my friends, is our challenge. ■



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ROSNER

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Senior Ra"m, Kerem B'Yavneh

As the Stars in the Heavens and Sand on the Seashore

כִּי יִבְרַךְ אֲבִיכֶם וְהִרְבָּה אֲרֻבָּה אֶת זֶרְעֶךָ כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם
וּכְחוֹל אֲשֶׁר עַל-שְׂפַת הַיָּם וַיִּרְשׁ זֶרְעֶךָ אֶת שְׂעֵר אֱיִבֹי:

That I will surely bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand that is on the seashore, and your descendants will inherit the cities of their enemies. (Bereshit 22:17).

Following the Akeda, Avraham receives a blessing from Hashem that his offspring will be plentiful like the stars in the heavens and as the sand on the seashore. There are so many possible examples that can be utilized to symbolize abundance, why were these two chosen? In fact, later in Bereshit (28:14), there is a reference to dirt (“*vahaya zaracha k’afar Haaretz*”).

In Shalom Rav (Parshat Vayetze), we cited an idea by Rabbi Lewin in Haderash VeHaiyun that explained the symbolism of these three items (stars, sand and dirt). Let us now explore the interpretation of the Kli Yakar on Vayera, which offers an alternative and meaningful explanation. These three items symbolize three different eras in Jewish history.

Stars: There will be times when the nation will be strong and shine like the stars in the heavens. In Devarim (1:10) on the pasuk לֹרֶב הַיּוֹם כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם לִרְבִּי – Rashi interprets this as “*lashon gedula*” (greatness). There

will be periods when the nation will be powerful and live in peace and prosperity.


Sand: There will be times when other nations will seek to annihilate us but will not be successful. Like the sand, which serves to break the waves as they near the land, so too, God will not allow the other nations to overcome us. Perhaps that is why the end of the pasuk adjacent to the depiction of the sand is stated that we will overcome our enemies וַיִּרְשׁ זֶרְעֶךָ אֶת שְׂעֵר אֱיִבֹי.

In addition, Prior to Yaakov’s encounter with Esav, Yaakov states: וְאַתָּה אֲמַרְתָּ הֵיטֵב אֵיטִיב (And You said, ‘I will surely do good with you, and I will make your seed [as numerous] as the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted because of multitude.’” Bereshit 32:13). Yaakov specifically refers to God’s promise to make the Jewish nation as numerous as the sand, since this is the item that relates to protection from our enemies. As Yaakov is about to face Esav, he highlights this facet to promote protection from the enemy!


Dirt: There are unfortunately times when our enemy will trample upon us, as if we are dirt. From this we will rise as well and spread throughout the four corners of the earth, as is stated: וַיְהִי זֶרְעֶךָ כְּעֶפֶר הָאֲרֶץ וּפְרָצְתָּ יָמָה:

וְקִרְמָה וְצִפְנִיה וְנִגְבָּה (And your offspring shall be as the dust of the earth, and you shall gain strength westward and eastward and northward and southward – Bereshit 28:14).

The Torah utilizes three different items to indicate that Bnei Yisrael will be numerous. As suggested above, perhaps each symbolizes a different phase in history. Times when we are strong (stars), periods when we experience hostility but overcome our enemies (sand) and times where we are stepped upon, but ultimately rise and spread across the earth (dirt). We have witnessed each of these intervals throughout history. May the bracha to Avraham, Yitzhak and Yaakov that their offspring be numerous continue to be fulfilled and may we be worthy of gaining **stardom**- through our ethical and moral behavior - shining and serving as a light unto the nations. ■




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Perfect Place

Avraham Avinu has reached his tenth and final test from Hashem; he is told to sacrifice his only, beloved son, Yitzchak. They travel for three days to the land of Moriah following Hashem's instruction. "*Bayom hashelishi vayisa Avraham et einav vayar et hamakom mei-rachok* - on the third day, Avraham lifted his eyes, and he saw the place **from afar**." (*Bereisheet* 22:4). We know that every phrase in the Torah is replete with lessons and deep insights. The beauty of Torah is that the same phrase can be understood on numerous levels, even in ways that are diametrically opposite from each other. What broader significance is encapsulated in the additional detail that Avraham saw the mountain "from afar"?

Rav Elyah Lopian understands this as expressing the passion that Avraham felt toward Hashem and the opportunity to perform the Akeidah. Seeing the mountain from "afar" indicates his longing to reach the mountain, his desired destination. Just as two friends who plan to meet after an extended absence can't wait to see each other, Avraham yearned to be at the place where he could fulfill Hashem's Will most fully. Indeed, as Rav Kook notes, Avraham Avinu maintained a state of simchah throughout the experience, since one can only receive prophecy in this state. Emphasizing that he saw the mountain from afar gives us a glimpse into the inner world of

Avraham Avinu, his longing, excitement and deep aspiration to connect to Hashem.

"*Hamakom*," says the Slonimer Rebbe in *Netivot Shalom*, is Hashem's name. The challenge of this *nisayon* was in Avraham experiencing Hashem as being far, it seems that Hashem removed the feeling of intimate connection, testing Avraham to forge ahead without it. Avraham Avinu felt the loss acutely and tried to restore the feeling. Remembering how Hashem reappeared to him after Lot departed, Avraham separated himself from the lads that accompanied him since was concerned that it was their presence that hindered his ability to feel Hashem's Presence. Yet the feeling of closeness eluded him, it was "far," and only reappeared at the conclusion of the Akeidah when the angel came to stop him.

Most fascinating, the *Netivot Shalom* quotes the Targum Yerushalmi who explains the name that Avraham Avinu gave to the place, "*Hashem Yira-eh*" as "sees, but is not seen." In retrospect, Avraham Avinu understood that in the intense moments during one's life when one feels so alone, Hashem is indeed present, it is just our vision that obfuscates this reality. The *Ba'al Shem Tov Hakadosh* explains the *passuk*, "and I will surely hide My face on that day" (*Devarim* 31:18), that Hashem is found within the hiddenness. Our challenge is to remember that although Hashem feels so far during dark times, it is then that Hashem is actually the closest to us. ■



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The Family That Wouldn't Leave

On Tuesday Erev Yom Kippur, United Hatzalah's Psychotrauma and Crisis Response Unit's (PCRU) delegation was in the middle of providing psychological and emotional stabilization for victims of Hurricane Ian in the western side of the Florida panhandle. Dr. Einat Kauffman, a member of the team was together with other responders from the unit stationed in Fort Myers Beach and we were called over by a group of firefighters who were having difficulty with one particular family. This family, a couple, and their four children were the only residents left inside a condo building that had been evacuated due to the storm. The family lived on the second floor of the building in an apartment. The entire area had been evacuated due to the flood and the building was deemed unfit for human occupancy. Firefighters and rescuers who had come to search for survivors found the family inside their apartment, but they refused to leave. The family told the firefighters that they hadn't left their apartment in more than two years due to fear resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. They were obstinate that they weren't going to leave now.



Dr. Kauffman recounted the meeting. "I approached them and spoke to them. I alleviated their fears about the pandemic as best I could and explained to them that it was unsafe for them to stay in their home and that it was a far more serious and immediate threat to their well-being. They said they understood but that they were unwilling to leave due to the possibility of contracting the virus. I helped them weigh the risks of each issue and its worst-case scenario, contracting the disease in its current form, which for most is not lethal, or staying in an apartment in a building that has been declared unsafe and the possibility of collapse. I told them that members of our very own team had responded to the Surfside collapse and explained to them a bit about what happens when a building collapses. I spoke to the wife and mother and she understood me and I understood her, and I tried to allay her fears. She said she would discuss the issue with her husband and children and decide later. I moved on to go and help others as the family deliberated. A few hours later, the firefighters who were at the scene and who had requested our help sent me a photo of the family after they had exited the building. The firefighters further told me that the family was going to be taken to one of the nearby shelters. I was proud that I was able to help this family make the right choice and I hope that they live a long and happy life together."

This is just one of the hundreds of families and individuals that the PCRU assisted during its relief mission to Florida in the aftermath of Hurricane Ian. Einat concluded by saying, "Over the course of the mission we were able to reach many evacuees who had lost everything and help them find a glimmer of hope amid the desolation. This hope opened the doors in their minds that will hopefully allow them to begin the process of healing. Based on the Unit's combined experiences, we were able to help hundreds of evacuees cope with their loss and find a way to move on. The important part that we had to constantly keep in our minds was that in the case of these evacuees, every story of loss is also a story of survival."





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SUN, NOV 13

9:15 AM

Journey Through the Siddur
Rabbi David Walk

10:20AM

Mishnah with Rambam's
commentary **Rabbi Dr.
Aaron Adler**

11:30 AM

Shivat Tzion in Tanach:
Daniel, Ezra, Nechemia
**Rabbi Yitzchak
Breitowitz**

2:00 PM

Men's Talmud-Mesechta
– Bava Basra **Rabbi Jeff
Bienenfeld**

7:30 PM

Hashkafa & Gemara in
Depth (The Bais) with
Rabbi Azarya Berzon

8:30 PM

Gemara B'Iyun (The Bais)
with **Rabbi Azarya
Berzon**

MON, NOV 14

9:15 AM

Divre Hayamim
Rebbetzin Pearl Borow
(L'Ayla)

10:30 AM NEW!

The Thought of Rav Kook on
Eretz Yisrael: A study of the
sefer Eretz Chefetz
**Rabbi Aaron
Goldscheider**

11:45 AM

Halacha and Agada in
Contemporary Society
**Rabbi Shmuel
Herschler**

8:30 PM

Semichat Chaver Program
**Rabbi Elyada
Goldwicht** (The Bais)

TUE, NOV 15

9:15 AM

Rebbetzin Smiles
Torah Tapestries (L'Ayla)

9:30AM

Minchat Chinuch-Meaning in
Mitzvot
Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz

10:30AM

Parshat HaShavua
Rabbi Shmuel Goldin

12:15 PM

Jewish National Revival:
The Infant State Matures
Dr. Deborah Polster

2:00 PM

Men's Talmud-Mesechta –
Bava Basra
Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld

7:30PM

Men's Safrus course with
Rabbi Tzvi Mauner (The
Bais)

8:00PM

Sefer Shmuel **Rabbi
Mordechai Machlis**

Schedule Subject to change, please check website for updates
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WED, NOV 16

9:00 AM

Medina and Halacha
Rabbi Shimshon Nadel

10:15 AM

Contemporary Issues in
Halacha and Hashkafa
**Rabbi Anthony
Manning**
(Resumes Nov 23)
Rabbi Avi Herzog
Subbing instead of
Rabbi Manning

11:30 AM

Great Jewish Thinkers
Rabbi Alan Kimche

12:30 PM- Trailblazing
the Text of Tanach-
Lunch and Learn
Rabbi Neil Winkler

8:30 PM

Halachic Controversies
Rabbi Aschi Dick
(The Bais)

THURS, NOV 17

9:00 AM

Parshat HaShavua
Rabbi Ari Kahn

10:15 am

Parshat HaShavua
**Rabbi Baruch
Taub**

11:30 AM

Unlocking the
Messages
of Chazal
**Rabbi Shai
Finkelstein**

2:00 PM

Men's Talmud-
Mesechta – Bava Basra
**Rabbi Jeff
Bienenfeld**

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Rabbi Taub

Parsha, 7:00PM Mon
Halacha, 7:00PM Wed

Rebbetzin Shatz

(L'Ayla)-Insights of
Chazal- Tues, 5:00PM

Rabbi Goldwicht

Parshat HaShavua
Wed. 8:30PM
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The Greatest Avodah

Rav Yisroel Belsky, zt'l, Rosh Yeshivah of Torah VoDaas, was an exceptional Torah personality and one of the great *poskim* of our generation. A *gadol* with multifaceted expertise, he was a shochet, a sofer, a musician, and a mohel, and had vast knowledge and interests ranging from physics and chemistry, to engineering, astronomy, and botany. Most importantly, perhaps, Rav Belsky's intellectual bandwidth, abilities and greatness in Torah was matched by his love of life and concern for people.

While in the hospital during his final illness, the Rav suffered deeply and slipped in and out of consciousness. In order to assuage his discomfort, the attending nurse suggested that the Rav be given some protein to eat to provide him with strength and sustenance. Rav Belsky's daughter placed a

plate of homemade scrambled eggs before him and pressed her father to taste something. With his eyes still closed, slightly disoriented, he whispered, "What about the poor people? Do they have what to eat?"

His daughter assured him that everything was fine, the poor were being fed as well.

"But is it the same quality as what I am being served? It has to be the same quality."

Only after his daughter was able to convince the Rav that the poor were being served the same quality food did Rav Belsky partake of his lunch.

Rav Belsky's son, Rabbi Elimelech Belsky offered his perspective. When we recite a *berachah* on food or drink, we may not speak before partaking of it. However, we may speak if it is relevant to the eating or drinking. For example, one may request salt in which to dip their bread — even after having recited *HaMotzi*. The Rambam rules that one may also speak to ensure that someone in need is given food, for how dare we begin to eat if someone else's needs have not been met?

.....

Our sedra introduces us to the original Jewish home, the open tent of Avraham Avinu and Sarah Imeinu. Torah describes with great detail the way our grandparents modeled service of others:

וְאֵלֶּיֶהֱבִקֵּר כֶּךָ אֶבְרָהִם וְיִשְׁחַבֵּרְךָ כָּךְ וְטוֹב...
וְיִשְׁחַבֵּרְךָ חֲמֵאָה וְחֵלֶב וּבִרְהֵבֵךְ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּתֵּן לַפְּנִיָּהם

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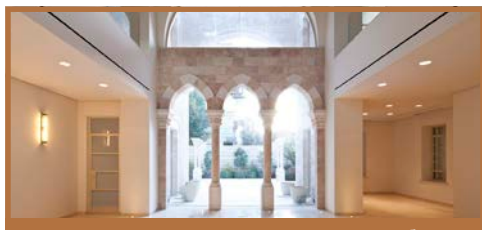
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והוא עמד עליהם תחת העץ ויאכלו:

Then Araham ran to the herd, took a calf, tender and choice, and gave it to a servant who hastened to prepare it... He took cream and milk and the calf that had been prepared and placed these before them; and he was standing over them under the tree, and they ate. (18:7-8)

We ought to study carefully the extent to which Avraham and Sarah exerted themselves to provide for the needs of weary travelers, feeding them the finest delicacies and doting over their every need. From fresh cream to the most choice cut of meat, they showered their guests with extreme honor, generosity and alacrity. This episode of visiting angels who appeared as vagabond travelers is particularly instructive, as it began to unfold as Avraham was deeply immersed in meditative prayer. The Gemara (*Shabbos*, 137a) explains: גדולה הכנסת אורחין מהקבלת פני שכינה, “*Hachnasas or’chim*, receiving guests, is greater than receiving a revelation of the Shechinah!”

Rebbe Moshe Chaim Ephraim, grandson of the Baal Shem Tov and author of the *Degel Machaneh Ephraim*, zy’a, expands on the holy service of *Hachnasas or’chim* even further. והוא עומד עליהם, “And he, Avraham, stood ‘above them’” — this means being in



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service of others propels us to a spiritual level that is “above” that of the angels.

Sefer haYom Yom is a collection of daily aphorisms and sources compiled by the Lubavitcher Rebbe in 1944, helping us to follow the Alter Rebbe’s instruction to ‘Live with (the spiritual qualities of) each day.’ In the selection for the 28th of the month of Sivan, the following story is recounted.

The *Tzemach Tzedek*, the third Rebbe of Chabad, was on the way to *shul* on market day, when someone asked him for a loan. The Rebbe asked him to come back after the davening, and continued on to shul. In shul he suddenly realized that the poor fellow needed this loan *now*, so he quickly returned home, got some money, sought out the fellow with great difficulty, gave him the money and then went on to daven.

That night, the Rebbe’s grandfather, the Ba’al haTanya, appeared in a vision to the Tzemach Tzedek, beaming, and lauded him for his thoughtfulness. The Alter Rebbe had not appeared to him for quite some time before this incident; it was clear that the favor he had performed merited the dream appearance of his holy grandfather, the Alter Rebbe.

Following this episode, the Tzemach

Tzedek related:

By helping someone in his livelihood, even to earn just a few kopeks....

אזי כל שערי היכלות העליונים פתוחים לפניו

all the gates to the Heavenly Chambers are open for him.

צריכים... לדעת את הדרך להיכלות העליונים,

(In general,) one should know the route to the Heavenly Chambers,

but it is actually not that crucial, since...

עם דארף זיין דער עיקר:

העלפין בלבב שלם מיט א געפיל, האבען א געשמאק

אין א אידען טאן א טובה.

the main thing is to help another wholeheartedly, with feeling & sensitivity,

and to take pleasure in the sweetness of doing a kindness to another.

Rav Yisrael Salanter used to say that he had often heard people in a synagogue calling out to strangers passing by, “*Kedusha! Kedusha!* Come join the *minyán!*” But he had never heard people sitting down to a meal call out to a stranger passing by, “*A seudah! A meal!* Come and join us!”

May the example of Avraham and Sarah inspire us in the service of others, and may this holy avodah propel us to the highest levels and Heavenly Chambers... together! ■

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SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

Our *Sedra* opens with *Avraham Avinu*, sitting, recovering from his recent *brit mila*, outside his tent during the heat of the day. *Chazal* explain that *Avraham* is sitting outside his tent, anxious to welcome guests, that despite his discomfort and recovery from his recent “surgical” procedure, he is literally sitting and waiting for an opportunity to welcome visitors into his home. Of course, the guests that arrive, are none other than the *malachim* that *Hashem* sends his way to cheer *Avraham* up, to enable *Avraham* to do that *maaseh chesed* he is longing to fulfill, as well as ultimately to share with *Avraham* and *Sara* that they will finally be blessed with a child.

In a stirring and beautiful teaching, **Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Horowitz zy’a**, known as the *Patiker Rav*, points out that there are four eternal lessons to be learned from this story as to how one should perform the *mitzvah* of *hachnasat orchim*, the *mitzvah* of welcoming guests into our homes.

The first message- *Avraham* is waiting outside his home, seeking opportunities to be hospitable, rather than waiting for someone to knock on his door or ask to be welcomed. Each one of us must ask ourselves, how can we emulate this *mida*-to literally actively seek opportunities to do *chesed* and to welcome others into our homes.

The second point, *Avraham Avinu* of course had many servants. When these travelers arrive to visit them, it is he and *Sara* themselves who engage in welcoming the guests, in making sure they are comfortable, that they have shade and that they can freshen up. It is *Sara* herself who prepares a meal for these visitors. All this teaches us that *hachnasat orchim* should be done ourselves and not through an emissary.

The third message we can learn is that one should not interrogate our guests, or bombard them with questions to see if indeed they really are in need of our hospitality and assistance. Our *Chazal* point out that *Avraham Avinu* intuited through his prophetic capabilities that these guests were *malachim*, that they really were not in need of any physical comforts or sustenance, yet this does not impact or limit *Avraham* in any way in terms of his desire to treat them with kindness and dignity.

Finally, these special guests ultimately reveal to *Avraham* and *Sara* that they will miraculously be blessed with a child! This, explains the *Patiker Rav*, teaches us the most profound message of all regarding the *mitzvah* of *hachnasat orchim* and any act of *chesed*,- in reality our guests end up giving us much more than they receive!

May we be blessed to heed the *Patiker Rav*’s powerful words, and to find fulfillment in a life filled with *chesed* and *hachnasat orchim*. ■

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Earth, Stars and Sands

Hashem guaranteed Avraham that his children would be like the dust of the earth and the stars of the skies. Both metaphors convey how plentiful Avraham's descendants would become. Additionally, the dust metaphor illustrates that the Jewish people would fertilize humanity's growth. Kafka described the Jewish role in spreading human progress: "as a seed of corn absorbs matter from its surroundings, stores it up and achieves further growth, so the destiny of the Jews is to absorb the potentialities of mankind, purify them and give them a higher development." We are like the dust of the earth because we pollinate human development.

Alternatively, the metaphor of the stars of heaven signals that the Jewish people provide religious and moral enlightenment just as the stars illuminate the dark skies. Additionally, stars orbit in heaven and aren't impacted by the terrestrial world and its natural forces. Jewish history hovers *above* this world and isn't subject to the rules and trends which govern human history. Our nation falls precipitously and rises meteorically, uninhibited by the gravitational forces of history. A mere eighty years after the nightmare of the Holocaust

the Jewish world is more prosperous than ever before, standing at the cusp of redemption. We are dust and we are stars. We advance the human condition, but we hover above it.

And we are also sand. In parshat Vayeira, after the akeidah, Hashem compares us to the sand by the sea. The sand image and the dust metaphor are often conflated, but earth and sand are very different elements, and they represent very different metaphors for Jewish history.

The Sand and the Seas

To properly appreciate the sand metaphor, we must study the evolution of the oceans and the dry land during the first three days of creation. When creation commenced, all reality was blanketed in an empty and liquid state of *תהו ובהו*. The Torah describes the spirit of Hashem hovering upon the dark watery abyss. On the second day of creation Hashem divided upper waters from lower waters, inserting the sky as a plate to separate the two realms, preventing the upper waters from cascading down to the lower realm. On the third day Hashem gathered the lower waters into distinct ocean basins, thereby allowing dry continents to emerge from a global watery mass.

Without these two "zonings" – first of the upper and lower waters and subsequently of dry land and oceans- human life would be unsustainable. Newly formed dry land

masses now provided a habitable space for oxygen-dependent human beings.

These divisions, however, are not static or stable. The ocean waters continue to be drawn toward dry land, posing a constant threat to our habitat. The relentless swelling and receding of the tides are a function of the incessant efforts of the original waters to reclaim their territory, swamp the dry land and drown humanity. To prevent this catastrophe, Hashem established sandy beaches as a sea-barrier to defend dry land and to protect humanity. These “fortresses by the sea” halt the march of the ocean tides and preserve our dry lands. Standing upon a beach and watching these waves, we are, in reality, observing a cosmic drama set in motion at the dawn of creation. The tides come and go but humanity remains protected. As Dovid Hamelech marvels: גבול שמת בל יעבורון בל ישובון לכסות. הארץ. “Hashem established an impassable border [so that] the waters should not return and cover the Earth.”

A Moral Fortress

The battle between the sand and the ocean symbolizes a moral drama. The sand standing guard against the ocean isn't just a geological phenomenon, but signifies a larger narrative. The ocean waters represent the “forces” of void and of evil which will always exist, and which will always threaten humanity. Inevitably, wicked people or dangerous ideas imperil the human condition. These dark waters always crash upon humanity, threatening human welfare and religious progress. Hashem designated us to serve as a barrier against these evil forces and, to protect humanity, just as the sand protects land. By

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comparing us to the sand, he appointed us as the fortress of humanity. We are assigned with looking evil in the eye and defeating it.

Deposing Tyrants

Two and a half centuries ago, a demigod named Nevuchadnezzar conquered the entire ancient Middle East. He erected a 100-foot tower to honor his pagan deity, demanding that every country send an emissary to bow to his god and to submit to his authority. No one dared defy his order except for three Jews named Chananya, Misha'el and Azarya, who were punished for their disobedience by being flung into a fiery furnace. Escaping unscathed, their brave defiance exposed Nevuchadnezzar as nothing more than a paper tiger. Within a short period, this all-powerful despot was roaming the jungle as a raving lunatic, half man, half animal. Shortly thereafter the Babylonian empire receded into the void of history. The sands of humanity, namely the Jewish people, had looked evil in the eye and had defeated it.

Defeating godlessness

In the 20th century a godless "religion" named Communism captured the human imagination. Its ideas were championed by the powerful Soviet Union which directly or indirectly dominated over half of the world. No one could imagine opposing this irrepressibly strong regime which enforced its will with an iron fist. No one, of course, except for a few scattered Jews who

dreamed of a return to their homeland and who were quickly incarcerated in Soviet jails. Undeterred, they quickly defeated Soviet persecution. In 1986, Natan Shtrikman crossed the Gliencke Bridge near Berlin signaling the "beginning of the end" for the Soviet empire. A few years later, the Berlin wall fell, and the Soviet Union disbanded. Once again, the sands of humanity, namely the Jewish people, had barricaded humanity against an unholy idea.

The Price

Serving as the sand, though, carries a price. As the ocean tide rises some of the sand is swept away and absorbed by the ocean. As we face attacks against our people and against humanity, we often suffer similar erosion. For this reason, we were assigned to be the sand in the wake of the akeidah. By sacrificing everything for Hashem, Avraham conditioned us toward the self-sacrifice necessary to serve as the sands of humanity. Avraham genetically programmed every Jew with the willingness and the courage to sacrifice our lives on behalf of Hashem and to defend His values. The akeidah prepared us to become the sands of history, and for this reason, this sand metaphor for this fearsome but glorious mission was first announced in the aftermath of Avraham's akeidah heroism.

The tides may wash away part of the sand, but the sand always recovers, quietly maintaining its vigil. Dust of the earth, stars of the sky and sand fortresses. ■

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This chart features the approximate dates after the shemitah year when shemitah laws no longer apply to fruits and vegetables and no shemitah solution is required. For more information, see the full chart on the Torah VeHa'aretz Institute website.


Yom Kippur 5783


Asparagus	Artichoke	Banana	Mint	Pineapple
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RH Heshvan

Baby radish		Lettuce		
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Mid-Heshvan


Chard	Coriander	Cucumber	Dill
Peruvian apple cactus	Pitaya	Radish	Squash


RH Kislev

Strawberry					
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Chanukah

Beet	Broccoli	Cabbage	Carrot	Cauliflower	Celery
Eggplant	Fennel	Horseradish	Kohlrabi	Leek	Melon
Corn	Parsley	Spinach	Potato	Pepper bell + hot	
Tomato	Peas in a pod		Passion-fruit		Turnip
Star fruit		Watermelon	Sweet potato		String bean


Mid-Tevet


Blueberries	Sabra	Onion
-------------	-------	-------

Shevat

Loquat	Nectarine	Loquat
--------	-----------	--------

RH Nissan

Garlic	Table Grapes
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Pesach

Butternut squash	Fig	Pumpkin
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Mid-Iyar

Almond (green)	Cherry	Hackberry	Lemon	Loganberry
Wine grapes	Pear	Plum (round)	Mango	Lychee

Mid-Tammuz


Apple	Apricot	Mulberry	Sweetsop	Watermelon seeds
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RH Av

Avocado	Guava	Plum (European)	Pomegranate
---------	-------	-----------------	-------------

Elul

Kiwi	Tangerine (Clementina)	Orange	Persimmon	Sunflower seeds
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Rosh Hashanah 5784

Date	Feijoa	Grapefruit	Peanut	Pomelo	Sweetie
------	--------	------------	--------	--------	---------

RH Heshvan 5784

Carob	Limequat	Kumquat
-------	----------	---------

RH Kislev 5784

Pecan

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BY REBBETZIN ZEMIRA OZAROWSKI

Director of OU Israel L'Ayla Women's Initiative



Structure of Birchat Hamazon

After a long hiatus consisting of summer (nine kids at home 😊) and chagim (16+ meals to prepare 😊), we will now continue our study of Birchat Hamazon.

If you or I were asked to write Birchat Hamazon, it would probably be pretty short. Something like – “Thank you Hashem for giving us food to eat and nourish our bodies”. Yet when we look at the benching, it's a lot longer than that and talks about a lot more than food. Let's look at the structure of the Birchat Hamazon and try to understand why this is.

The ברכת המזון can be divided into two parts – the first half was established early on and fulfills the biblical obligation of benching. The second half, consisting of all the ברכות are more personal requests which were added on during the time of the גאונים. We will focus on the first half today.

The first half of the benching consists of four long brachot, each focusing on

a different topic. **Gemara Brachot 48b** explains that the themes of these brachot are based on the words found in the pasuk where we were given the command to bentch (דברים ח, י) -

ואכלת ושבעת וברכת

אתה אלקיך

על הארץ

הטובה אשר נתן לך

When you eat and are satisfied, you should bless Hashem for the good land He has given you.

The first bracha known as ברכת הזון is based on the words ואכלת ושבעת וברכת and focuses on thanking Hashem for the actual food. According to tradition, this bracha was established by Moshe Rabbeinu at the time when Bnei Yisrael received the מן for the first time.

The second bracha (consisting of both ברכת הארץ and ועל הכל ונודה לך) known as ברכת הארץ is based on the words על הארץ and focuses on thanking Hashem for Eretz Yisrael. This bracha was established by Yehoshua upon entering Eretz Yisrael.

The third bracha (consisting of בונה ירושלים and בונה ירושלים) known as בונה ירושלים is based on the words הטובה (because the good of the land is the holiest city Yerushalayim) and focuses on thanking Hashem for building up Yerushalayim. According to the Gemara, this was a combined effort of Dovid haMelech and Shlomo haMelech - Dovid focused more on עירך, and Shlomo focused more on על ירושלים עירך, thanking

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Hashem for the building of Yerushalayim, whereas Shlomo focuses more on, **הבית**, the **הגדול והקדוש**, thanking Hashem for the Beit HaMikdash since it was built in his time. (The request of rebuilding Yerushalayim and the Beit Hamkidash were added later, after the destruction).

The fourth bracha (the bracha after **ובנה**) known as **הטוב והמטיב** was added in Yavneh at a later time and we will discuss its theme later.

After looking at this structure, we can now get back to our earlier question - if you think about it, it seems quite strange: why do we not stick to the topic at hand? Baruch Hashem, we have plenty to eat and the food that we have is both delicious and nourishing. That, in and of itself, is cause for major thanksgiving and not to be taken for granted. So why jump to other topics?

Rav Eliyahu Munk in his book **Olam HaTefillot** explains as follows. As Jews, we believe that food is not an end unto itself but rather a means to give us the strength to serve Hashem better. Therefore, it is extremely important that our benching reflects that. A polite “thanks for the food” is not enough. We need to go on and connect the dots. Once we are mentioning food, we take this opportunity

to thank Hashem for the Land (where the food comes from). We recognize that the Land of Israel was received as a result of the **ברית** that Hashem made with us and our Avot (**על ברייתך שחתמת בבשרינו**) and that it is conditional on our following the Torah and Mitzvot (**על תורתך שלימדנו**). We also remember the spiritual and moral mission which was placed on us, by mentioning Yerushalayim and the Beit haMikdash. Rabbi Munk writes that “in this way, we turn our benching from a simple thanks for our physical nourishment to a more general thanksgiving for our spiritual, moral, and nationalistic role.”

To take it one step further, Birchat Hamazon is a Tefilla that we say throughout the course of the day. No matter where we are when we dine. Let us take advantage of these moments throughout our day to thank Hashem for both the physical and spiritual and to remind ourselves of our goals in this world.

B'Ezrat Hashem, in the coming weeks, we will spend time analyzing the text of Birchat Hamazon. Often we say the words so quickly that we barely give them a passing thought. It is my hope that through our study, we will find new meaning and depth in our benching. ■

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RABBI AARON

GOLDSCHIEDER

Editor, Torah Tidbits

The Best Version of Yourself Is In the Land

ארץ ישראל יש לה הסגולות החיות העליונות של יסוד הקדושה היותר עליזנה המתגלה בעולם, שיש בכחה להפך את התוכן היותר רע והיותר מקלקל - לטובה ולברכה (ארץ חפץ א:י)

The Land of Israel contains within it singular elevated strengths, [which are] rooted in the most exalted sanctity which is revealed in this world, that has within [it's essence] the potency to transform that which is fully evil and rotten - [and restore it] to good and blessing. (Eretz Chefetz 1:10)

When Rav Kook visited America, a man told him that he had finally made the decision to make *aliyah* to Eretz Yisrael. He requested a blessing from Rav Kook: "You require my blessing?" the Rav asked. "You are going to the source of *all* blessing, as it is written in Psalms (132:3), "For there the Lord has commanded the blessing."

Rav Kook in the aforementioned passage touches on the notion that the Land of Israel with its people dwelling upon it have the unique capability to transform even wrongdoing and impurity to goodness and blessing.

In a novel interpretation, Rav Kook once suggested that the Torah description of Israel as "A Land flowing with milk and honey" hints at the transformative quality which characterizes Eretz Yisrael. Both food items have their resources in detestable, 'impure' sources. Honey is produced by bees, while milk is formed from blood. Because these foods involve the transformation of impure to pure, they symbolize repairing the world and have a special status. (*Peninei HaRa'ya*, Zuriel, p. 139, see also *Peninei Halakha*, Book Laws of the Festivals, Chapter 13, Shavu'ot).¹

In a similar vein, the famed *mashgiach ruchani* of the Ponevezh Yeshiva, Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler, makes the same claim. He sites a dramatic passage in the Talmud in which the sage Ulla witnessed a murder first hand as he entered the Land of Israel. When he arrived at the home of Rabbi Yochanan in Israel, he immediately told him of the harrowing event. Rabbi Yochanan's response is memorable. He was puzzled as to how a Jew could murder another Jew on the soil of *Eretz Yisrael*. Ulla responded that at the time the murder occurred they had not yet passed into the border of Israel (*Nedarim* 22a).

¹ This same interpretation is quoted in the name of the eminent, Rabbi Meir Shapiro (*Eretz Yisrael in the Parsha*, Lichtman p. 211-212)

Rabbi Dessler cited this passage and stated that even a person filled with anger, even a murderer, when entering the Land, will be transformed. In its holy environs anger is minimized. One's rage is instantly mollified when treading on the Land's soil. (*Michtav Me'Eliyahu* Vol. 3, p. 195).

Not only does the Land transform negative into positive but the Land has the power to amplify the good. Rabbi Dessler writes: "In our generation we see, in our own experience, how our young people studying Torah are achieving more in their learning, they are succeeding...they are able to attain much more than those who are learning Torah in other parts of the world" (Ibid, p. 196).

The final pages of *Masechet Ketubot* elaborate on the topic of the Land of Israel's holiness and its spiritual character. The following is the very last statement recorded in the tractate's last line concerning the Land's uniqueness: "All barren trees in *Eretz Yisrael* are destined to bear fruit." In what way is this the ultimate praise? The *Ben Yehoyada*, a classic commentary on the Talmud's Aggadic passages, suggests that the Talmud is not referring to trees literally, but rather to people. A Torah scholar is often referred to as a tree bearing fruit. The unlearned among our nation are compared to the barren tree. However, in the end of days, those living in the Land who were once barren of Torah and mitzvot will be abundant in their Torah knowledge and their devotion to mitzvot (*Ben Yehodaya*, Vol. 3, final comment on *Ketubot*).

The Land itself serves as a dynamic catalyst in bringing out the best in every Jew. ■



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RABBI GIDEON

**Machon Puah for Fertility and
Gynecology in Accordance with Halacha**

WEITZMAN

Extending Fertility

Last time we raised the question of a couple freezing eggs or embryos, and whether it is recommended. It has been some time since the last article appeared so we will give a brief presentation of the question of egg freezing.

Several companies are now offering their female employees to freeze their eggs at a cheaper rate or even for free. The rationale for the companies' apparent generosity is that such women will opt to delay having children in deference for their career development. But it is questionable as to whether this is the best option for such women. Freezing eggs is no guarantee of having healthy children, but is sometimes the best option for a single woman who is getting older and more worried about the decrease in fertility with age.

Which brings us back to our opening question; a couple gets married in their mid-thirties. They are both perfectly healthy and do not appear to face any fertility challenges. While they do not undergo extensive testing, the initial basic testing shows nothing abnormal, and the doctor says that they should be able to get pregnant naturally.

But the couple turn to a fertility specialist with a somewhat unconventional request; they want to undergo fertility treatment, not because they currently have a fertility

problem, but in order to bank embryos that can be used to extend their fertility. The couple are willing to delay getting pregnant in the near future in order to invest in their future.

The motivation behind such a request is that since the couple are in their mid-thirties it is reasonable to assume that their fertility will decrease in the next few years. If they continue to have children naturally they could limit their family to two or three children. If they want to have more children they can freeze the embryos created now and use them later. Since the embryos produced with "younger" eggs are more likely to produce healthy children, and, once the embryos are created and cryo-preserved, they can be maintained in their optimal condition almost indefinitely, this plan will give the couple much more time to become parents.

This issue raises a number of ethical and halachic issues, and a range of responses. Each person has their own approach regarding the legitimacy or ethical nature of such a plan. It is clear that there are numerous factors that impact such a decision and whether it is to be condoned or condemned.

More on this next week. ■

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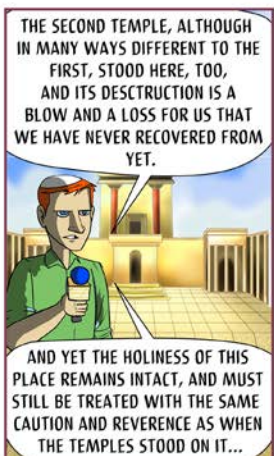
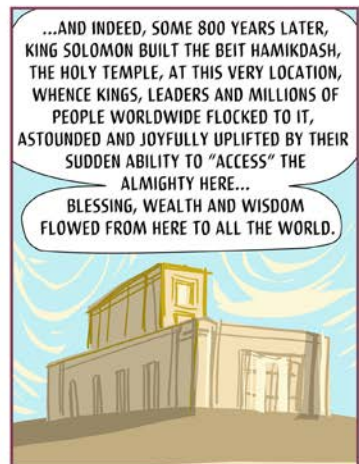
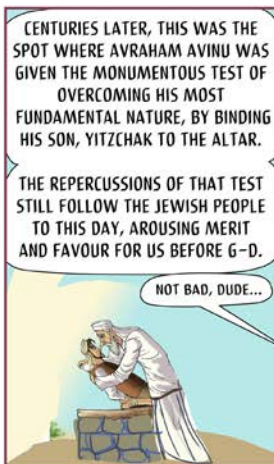


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Oh, The Places You're At

After being removed from the home of Avraham and Sarah, Hagar and Yishmael find themselves struggling through the desert for survival after being kicked out of their home by Sarah. Hagar feels completely destitute, believing that her son is dying.

Just as all hope is lost, an angel speaks out to Hagar and tells her that both she and Yishmael will be saved, because HaShem has heard the child's voice in the place where he is

"שמע אליקים אל קול הנער באשר הוא שם."

Explaining this Pasuk, Rashi brings a Midrash where the angels are protesting HaShem against saving Yishmael. Their argument was that in the future Yishmael and his decedents would bring much pain and death upon the Jewish people, and this suffering could be prevented by Yishmael's death in the desert. HaShem responds to the angels by asking what type of person Yishmael is in that very moment. When the angels answer "righteous", HaShem explains that he judges people based on who they are in the moment.

What can we learn from the angel's response to Hagar and Yishmael as he was

dying in the desert? Any single second of goodness or righteousness is positive in and of itself. If we have an entire day, with even one moment of spirituality or inspiration in our Yiddishkeit, that second alone is what HaShem cares about. Just as HaShem judges people based on where they are in that moment, so too should we judge ourselves.



Michael Erdfarb
12th Grade,
Neve Daniel

From Chaos to Order

The parsha starts off with the story of Sodom, and ends off with that of Akedat Yitchak. How are they connected?

One explanation is that both are a test of Avraham's faith in Hashem. He stood up for Sodom, thereby demonstrating his care and empathy for Hashem's creations. This in turn showed his love and devotion to Hashem. Similarly, he is told to sacrifice Yitchak in the ultimate sign of loving Hashem and utter devotion to Him and to His commandments.

There is another explanation, one that can connect the other stories in the Parsha as well. In between these two events we hear

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about Lot and his daughters, of Avimelech, and of the “exile” of Hagar and Yishmael. All these stories are examples of chaos, of anarchism. The ultimate place of evil and anarchy is Sodom, where the people were so evil, they mercilessly executed a young girl for giving charity.

Avraham on the other hand, is the example of order. We can see this with how he helps the “messengers”, with how he debates with Hashem in a clear numerical pattern, and how he waits for instruction from Hashem to “exile” Yishmael. He even follows instructions to the point that he is willing to sacrifice to Hashem the child that was born when he was one hundred years old! As we see in the Parsha, Hashem’s ways are meant to set order in our lives, and not following them leads to total anarchy and eventually total destruction.

May we all find the order in our lives that can bring about ימות המשיח במהרה בימינו! ■

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January 7 – JUDGE LOUIS BRANDEIS

January 14 – MENACHEM BEGIN

250NIS per family/home for the series, only by pre-signup, & link will be sent to you

Do NOT wait until next Saturday night to register as you will not get in. If you miss any lecture, the video link will be emailed to you after the series.

For questions, sign up form, information, call or email Nachum Amsel

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