



## FROM THE DESK OF RABBI MOSHE HAUER



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# Kiddush Hashem

A central mandate of the Jewish people is *Kiddush Hashem*, the sanctification of G-d's name by making His presence felt in our world. Avraham was the father of our people because he undertook this mandate, dedicating his life to delivering kindness and teaching people about G-d and His goodness, making the G-d of the heavens into the G-d of the earth as well (see Rashi 24:7). His impact was acknowledged by his contemporaries as he was referred to by them as a *Nesi Elokim*, a G-dly prince (23:5), representing all that is G-dly and good in the world.

The Midrash teaches that Avraham gained this title when he was greeted upon his victorious return from the battle against the four kings at “*Emek Shavei hu Emek Hamelech.*” It was then and there that the nations unanimously acknowledged Avraham as G-dly royalty (Rashi to 14:17).

What specifically had generated this acknowledgment? They were impressed by Avraham's loyalty to his estranged nephew Lot, expressed in his readiness to go to battle to save his life. They realized as well that Avraham had waged this war against Amraphel/Nimrod, his consistent nemesis who stood for paganism and rebellion against G-d, while Avraham continued to stand for faith in the one G-d. But they also celebrated the phenomenon of one man and

a small fighting force prevailing against the overwhelming power of four regional kings, recognizing that the usual metrics of numbers and physical strength were not decisive when G-d was brought into the equation. They witnessed how the spirit is mightier than the sword.

That same recognition is implicit here in our Parsha. When we read the exchange between Avraham and the leaders of Chevron, we recall that this was a city characterized by its population of *anakim*, people of unusual physical size and strength (Bamidbar 13:22; Yehoshua 14:12). It was these giants who looked at Avraham as the *adam hagadol ba'anakim*, the supreme giant amongst them, deferring to him as their G-dly prince (see Rashi to Yehoshua 14:15).

That kind of recognition represents the ultimate *kiddush Hashem*. In a world dominated by a variety of forms of material power – physical strength, wealth, prominence, or brilliance – G-d's presence is felt when those who exemplify His word and values garner the ultimate respect.

“Thus said Hashem: Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom; let not the mighty boast of his might; let not the wealthy boast of his wealth. For only in this may one be praised, in his conscious devotion to Me, for I, Hashem, act with loving-kindness, justice, and righteousness in the world, for it is these things that I desire, declares Hashem.” (Yirmiyahu 9:22-23) ■