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Parshat Vayera 5770

Mini-Shabbaton with HaRav Chizkiyahu Nebenzahl

We are pleased to announce a mini-Shabbaton with HaRav Chizkiyahu Nebenzahl Shlit"a and Rav Chanan Bina on Shabbat Parshat Toldot (November 20th-21st). The Shabbaton will take place in Woodmere at the home of Ariel and Elizabeth Edelstein (541 Church Avenue). The tentative schedule is as follows:



Leil Shabbat:

4:10 pm: Mincha at the home of Ariel Edelstein, followed by Kabbalat Shabbat and Maariv.

5:15pm: Seudat Shabbat (limited space, please see below)

7:00pm: Oneg Shabbat

Shabbat:

2:00pm: Mincha at the Young Israel of Woodmere

2:45pm: Shiur/learning at the home of Ariel Edelstein

3:45pm: Seudah Shlishit

5:45pm: Maariv and Havdala

Please RSVP as soon as possible to Ariel Edelstein (arieledelstein@yahoo.com), indicating which part(s) of the Shabbaton you plan to attend (Dinner, Oneg, Shalosh Seudot). Space is limited and will be given on a first-come first-serve basis.

Note: Everyone will be responsible for arranging their own accommodations, including the Shabbat day meal.

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HaRav Nebenzahl on Parshat Vayera

HaRav Nebenzahl asks that his Divrei Torah are not read during Tefillah or the Rabbi's sermon

KIDDUSH HASHEM



"SHALL I CONCEAL FROM AVRAHAM WHAT I DO?"

"So the men (the angels that had come to visit) got up from there, and gazed down toward Sodom, while Avraham walked with them to escort them. And Hashem said: 'shall I conceal from Avraham what I do'" (Bereishit 18:16-17). Rashi elaborates: "it is unbecoming of Me to do this thing without his knowledge, I have given him this land, and these five cities which I am about to destroy are his ... I have called Avraham 'a father of many nations', shall I destroy the children and not inform the father - who is someone who loves Me?"

Perhaps we can suggest an additional explanation for HaKadosh Baruch Hu wishing to tell Avraham what he would do to Sodom: The Gemara asks: "for what reason was our father Avraham punished that his children were enslaved in Egypt for two hundred and ten years?" One of the answers posited by the Gemara is "because he distanced people from being able to enter under the wings of the Divine Presence, as it is stated 'the king of Sodom said to Avram: give me the people and take the possessions for yourself' (Bereishit 14:21)" (Nedarim 32a). Avraham should not have acceded to the request of the king to return the people to him. He should rather have taken them to his Yeshiva and taught them Torah. Leaving them in the care of Sodom meant raising them to become *reshaim*. Perhaps had he not returned them to Sodom, there would have been less evil people inhabiting the city and there would have been no need for Hashem to destroy it.

Hashem says regarding Avraham: "for I have cherished him, because he commands his children and his household after him that they keep the way of Hashem." (Bereishit 18:19). A person like Avraham Avinu should have realized that sending the people back to the king of Sodom was not the right course of action - he should have taken greater responsibility for their fate. We know that Avraham does feel a sense of responsibility, after all he prays to Hashem to save Sodom should it contain fifty righteous inhabitants. When it becomes apparent that there are not fifty *tzaddikim* in the city, he asks Hashem if He would spare the city on account of forty-five and so forth down to ten. Avraham is certainly aware of his responsibility towards the people of Sodom. He is also aware of the evil which pervaded the city and he knows what it means to return those souls there, as we read in last week's *parsha*: "the people of Sodom were wicked and sinful to Hashem" (Bereishit 13:13). Avraham has the opportunity to take them in and teach them ways of *chesed*. The fact that he does not do so makes him somewhat responsible for Sodom's fate. Perhaps Hashem informed Avraham of His plans in order to teach him this lesson.

Why in fact did Avraham return the people to the king of Sodom? He believed that it would be a greater Kiddush Hashem to show that he derived no benefit whatsoever from Sodom. Avraham certainly understood that it would be a great mitzvah to bring them to his Yeshiva and teach them the ways of Torah, but he felt that it was more important to make a Kiddush Hashem.

The fact that this decision was not looked at favorably teaches us a valuable lesson. Kiddush Hashem is of paramount importance, but we need to know what

constitutes a Kiddush Hashem and when it is required of us to perform one. The first lesson we learn here is that a person should not avoid doing a mitzvah in order to make a Kiddush Hashem.

DEFINING KIDDUSH HASHEM

How do we define Kiddush Hashem? Usually, we perceive it as acting in a way that allows non-Jews or even our secular brethren to view us in a favorable light - they should see that G-d fearing Jews are decent people. This, however, is not the only definition. Kiddush Hashem also implies that we ourselves understand that the words and the ways of Hashem are holy - that we are devoting our life to Torah. Obviously it is important for the outside world to respect Yeshiva *bochurim* and if our actions do not elicit such a reaction then we have created a chillul Hashem. However, this is not the principle definition of a Kiddush Hashem.

Throughout the generations many Jews have been killed al Kiddush Hashem. Does this mean that the non-Jews thought we were good people? On the contrary they viewed us as a bunch of fools who allowed ourselves to be slaughtered! From their perspective, the fact that they were able to overpower us constitutes a chillul Hashem, they now believe they are more powerful than Hashem and His Torah, G-d forbid. The Kiddush Hashem is for us - we have demonstrated to ourselves that we believe that Hashem is holy and we will follow His command even if it means giving up our life.

The Rambam writes that Kiddush Hashem or, G-d forbid the opposite, is not limited to public acts. It is possible for a person to sit alone in his room and make a Kidush Hashem or chillul Hashem. What does he do with his time? Does he choose to open a Gemara and learn the word of Hashem or would he rather read other things? By electing to learn Torah he has made a Kiddush Hashem, he has shown that to him the word of Hashem is holy. By electing to involve himself in activities not related to learning Torah, he has demonstrated that the words of Hashem are not holy - this is a chillul Hashem. A Kiddush Hashem is first and foremost for yourself, you must show that you view Hashem and His Torah as holy. You must demonstrate to yourself that Torah and mitzvot are the first things on your mind. Only after that can you begin to worry about what the rest of the world thinks.

THE AKEIDA

A high form of Kiddush Hashem is to be willing to give up your life rather than violate the will of Hashem. This was the big *nisayon* of Avraham Avinu at *Akeidat Yitzchak* which we will read about at the end of this week's *parsha*. Hashem instructs Avraham Avinu to take his son up to Har HaMoriah and to place him upon the altar. Avraham, assuming that Hashem means him to sacrifice Yitzchak, brings a knife as well as wood for the fire. What is the world going to say? Avraham the great proponent of *chesed* is now killing his own beloved son! The world will now completely reject Avraham's teachings. What about the great chillul Hashem? Avraham does not ask such questions - Hashem commanded him to sacrifice his son Yitzchak and this is what he must do. This is the greatest Kiddush Hashem possible - that the word of Hashem is of paramount importance.

In the final analysis, Hashem informed him that his interpretation His command was mistaken and he does not need to sacrifice his son. Yitzchak will indeed become Avraham's heir, he will prosper, he will spread the word of Hashem to the world, and he will inherit *Eretz Yisrael*. Avraham certainly wanted all these things

for Yitzchak but when he believed that Hashem wanted otherwise then all that mattered was fulfilling His will. Avraham did not care what was good for him or what the world would say - being completely devoted to the will of Hashem is the greatest possible Kiddush Hashem.

AVRAHAM'S SACRIFICE PAVED THE WAY FOR ALL KIDDUSH HASHEM IN THE FUTURE

Avraham spent his entire life sanctifying the Name of Hashem, teaching people His ways. On Har HaMoriah he was willing to make the ultimate sacrifice. What makes this event so special? Were there not many people throughout the generations who sacrificed themselves or their sons al Kiddush Hashem? R' Chaim Volozhin, a disciple of the Vilna Gaon, offers an explanation based on a *pasuk* in Mishle: "one who walks in his innocence is a righteous man, fortunate are his sons after him" (Mishle 20:7). Why are his sons fortunate? Because "the traits that the *tzaddik* toiled and labored to attain, become part of the nature of his children after him, and with a slight amount of effort on their part, they too can reach this level. Throughout the generations people have sacrificed themselves to sanctify Hashem's Name because it is something ingrained in our nature which has been passed down to us from our forefather Avraham Avinu who was willing to give up his life for his belief - in the furnace at Ur Kasdim - and the life of his beloved son on Har HaMoriah. This paved the way for future generations to be able to withstand similar trials" (Ruach Chayim on Massechet Avot 5:3). Similarly, if a Jew is *moser nefesh*, if he makes the self-sacrifice to leave his home in America and settle in the Land of Israel, it is due to that strength instilled in him from Avraham Avinu. This then is the uniqueness of the *Akeida* - it was this sacrifice of Avraham that paved the way for all other Kiddush Hashem's that taught us that a person must be willing to give up his life if necessary in service of Hashem.

My esteemed teacher HaRav Chaim Shmuelevitz zt"l used this idea to clarify a passage from the Gemara. The Gemara describes the tragic story of Chana and her seven sons. As her youngest son was being taken away to be killed, Chana called to him: "my son, go and tell Avraham your father: 'you bound a sacrifice on one altar, but I bound sacrifices on seven altars'" (Gittin 57b). Was Chana competing with Avraham, was she implying that her sacrifice was greater than Avraham's because he had only bound one son upon the altar while she sacrificed seven of them? On the contrary, R' Chaim explains that Chana was praising Avraham Avinu, for it was his heroic act of placing his son upon the altar that imbued her with the superhuman emotional strength to sacrifice her seven sons. His one offering provided her with the strength required to give up her seven children.

Rather than Avraham's act being considered a chillul Hashem it is viewed as a great Kiddush Hashem which serves as a lesson for all future generations.

I would like to suggest that Avraham's life of Kiddush Hashem did not end with the binding of Yitzchak. Following the ordeal of the *Akeida* we would have expected Avraham to sit back and enjoy his remaining days in this world. This, however, was not the case. Upon returning home, his devoted wife of so many years passes away. Sarah had not only been with him day and night, they had prayed together for this child. Avraham's immediate task is to find a burial place for his beloved wife. He proceeds to purchase a plot from Ephron for four hundred shekel *over lasocheh* - in currency that is accepted everywhere (believe it or not there are places in which the shekel has great value!).

Rather than questioning Hashem's ways, rather than complaining to Hashem: "was it not enough that I almost sacrificed my own son, I come home and immediately have to bury my wife?" Avraham has no questions. From a certain perspective I would consider this an even greater Kiddush Hashem. Let us hope and pray that we never have such tests of faith, but we must know that a Jew should always be willing to fulfill whatever it is Hashem demands of us.

Staff Dvar Torah
by Rav Yoel Rackovsky, Shana Alef Rebbe

"...And he was sitting in the tent's entrance, in the heat of the day." On the third day after Avraham Avinu's bris, he sat by the entrance to his tent, waiting for guests.



Rabbeinu Yaakov Abuchatzzeira, in his sefer Machsof Halavan, explains what Avraham was actually doing. At creation, he teaches us, the Shechina was down on earth, but due to the sins of the early generations, the Shechina withdrew rising seven heavens. Avraham Avinu, and after him six other tzaddikim until Moshe Rabbeinu, each managed, through their special middot, to pull the Shechina back down - one heaven at a time. Our pasuk, the Machsof Halavan explains, is alluding to Avraham's returning the Shechina to this world. "...And he was sitting in the tent's entrance, in the heat of day," The tent alludes to the heaven, as we learn from the pasuk "vayimtachem ka'ohel" (Yeshayahu 40), "and He stretched them (the heavens) like a tent." The entrance of the tent is the gate of the first heaven, through which Avraham brought down the Shechina's attribute of chessed - one level down.

"K'chom hayom, in the heat of the day." Day is light and warmth, and alludes to the attribute (midda) of chessed, "Chessed Kel kol hayom, Hashem's chessed all the day." (Tehillim 52) Avraham Avinu wanted to bring down the midda of chessed, in its entirety, bursting with light and warmth, and make that midda so entrenched in the souls of his descendants that the midda would never be lost again, and the Shechina would never need to depart. When Avraham welcomed guests into his tent, he was actually ushering in the midda of chessed. Similarly, when we usher the Ushpizin into our succah each night, we too, try to pull in the particular midda of that day's tzaddik: Chessed, Gevura, Tifferet, etc.

Rashi explains that Avraham Avinu was sitting by the entrance to his tent waiting for guests to arrive. Hashem, not wishing to trouble the tzaddik who was recovering from his bris, "raised the temperature," by making the sun blaze so that no guests would bother Avraham that day. When Hashem saw how upset and disappointed Avraham was, He sent him three guests - actually angels. Avraham was weak and was recovering. It was a hot, lazy day with nobody in sight for miles. It was a perfect opportunity for Avraham Avinu to take a rest. But Avraham Avinu was troubled that he had no guests to host. On the third day following his milah when the pain is the greatest, he got up and sat by the entrance waiting, looking, hoping for passersby.

Rashi is teaching us a very deep concept here regarding Avraham Avinu's avodat Hashem. There are two very different ways of doing mitzvoth - a passive way and an active way. Most people wait for a mitzvah to come their way and then perform it, whereas Avraham Avinu runs after the mitzvah - "hevei rotz l'mitza" - always

run to a mitzva."

Some people get on the bus and head straight for the back thinking that by doing so they will not have to get up for any elderly or handicapped passengers. Of course, if they happen to see an elderly person standing near them they will certainly get up and offer them their seat. But a disciple of Avraham Avinu will purposely take a front seat, hoping and praying that an old lady will get on so that he will have the prized opportunity to jump out of his seat for her.

Some people spot a beggar out of the corner of their eye, and try and walk past, hopefully unaccosted. If they're asked for tzedaka, they will certainly give what they can. But an Avraham-Avinu-type will walk in the street, **searching** for a beggar, and be terribly disappointed if he doesn't find one.

Avraham Avinu is sitting in the doorway, intent on finding guests. Indeed the pasuk doesn't say he was sitting there "b'chom hayom, in the heat of the day," rather "k'chom hayom, literally, *like* the heat of the day." He was, as if on fire, burning with desire to do yet another mitzvah. And this example that he set for us, this trait that he perfected, brought the angels who, in turn, informed Avraham of the upcoming birth of Yitzchak. This is the beginning of the chain of generations, the passing down of these middos to us, his great, great, great grandchildren, his heirs and disciples. May we be worthy of the title, and be *zoche* to follow in his holy footsteps.

Alumni Dvar Torah

by Rabbi Mordechai Feigenbaum (5746), Rosh Kollel - Kollel Ohr Lahalacha

We read in this week's *parsha* that Avraham Avinu: "planted an *eshel* in Be-er Sheva and there he proclaimed in the Name of Hashem, G-d of the Universe" (Bereishit 21:33). Rashi explains that Avraham would feed the travelers who were passing through and would teach them about Hashem. Rashi adds that after the people had their share of food and drink Avraham would inform them that the time has come to thank Hashem Who provided them with the food. Why did Avraham feel the need to feed the people before teaching them about monotheism and about the need to thank Hashem?

HaRav Shlomo Wolbe zt"l explains that the prevalent opinion among the idol-worshippers of the time was to acknowledge that Hashem created the world but that He is too far above man for any serious interaction. The world was rather given over to other forces to rule as they see fit. People worshipped these forces instead of serving Hashem. By acting as he did, Avraham publicly disputed this claim. Avraham was considered a prince in the land, yet he personally served each passerby in his tent rather than handing that task over to one of his many servants. By doing so, he gave the message that no matter how great someone is perceived, he is able to perform acts of *chesed* with others. Only after demonstrating that even the prince of the land could perform acts of *chesed* was he able to teach the people that Hashem Who is infinitely great interacts and takes an interest with each and every one of us.

It behooves us to internalize this message and understand that we all have the capacity to establish a personal relationship with Hashem.

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Announcements from the Yeshiva

We are proud to announce the publication of "A Beacon in the Night", HaRav Lipman Podolsky zt"l's insights into Chanukah. For a minimum donation of \$18 to the Podolsky Family Fund it will be mailed to your home or business. Click [here](#) to donate.

Mazal Tov

Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh wishes a Mazal Tov to:

- David Blumenthal (5757-58) on his marriage to Aliza Stareshefksy.
- Uri (5763-64) and Sarit Dallal on the birth of a baby boy.
- Benjamin (5751) and Laura Friedman on the birth of a baby boy.
- Rav Aharon (Allan, 5748) and Tzippy Schnipper on the birth of a baby boy.
- Moshe Hammer (5764-65) on his engagement to Ashley Kotowitz.

Baruch Dayan Emet

Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh regrets to inform you on the passing of:

- Judy Leff, the mother of Michael Leff (5746) Boruch Leff (5749).

Tehillim List

The following members of our extended YNA family need our tefilot:

- Taube Yehudit bat Temma Gasia
- Yitzchak ben Shayna Ita
- Zev Eliezer ben Chaya Shayndel
- Rueven ben Tova Chaya
- Fruma bat Eeta
- Moshe Zanvel ben Breindel
- Sima Rivkah bat Eidel
- Leah bat Eidel
- Chaim Shmuel Moshe ben Golda
- Aryeh Rephael ben Sarah
- Chaya Sarah bat Fanya Luna
- Yitzchak ben Tova
- Fraida Rachel bat Sarah Milcha
- Lea bat Bracha
- Miriam Rivka bat Adina Leah
- Dina Sarah bat Shaindel Mira
- Tali bat D'vorah Bina
- Tobah Pessal bat Esther
- Lottie Adina bat Claudia
- Orly bat Yaerah
- Miriam Naomi bat Sarah
- Dov Eliyahu ben Mindel Hudis
- Rahamim ben Miriam
- Hinda bat Sara Leah
- Rivka Zelda bat Bracha
- Dovid Ben Miriam
- Yaackov Chaim Meir ben Miriam
- Avraham ben Leah

- Chaim Naftali Yaakov ben Shifra Shaulah
- Michael Yosef ben Tzipora
- Gidon Shlommo ben Esther
- Haya Rebecca Rivka bat Jeanne Yaffa
- Temima Adina bat Keren Ronit
- Avraham ben Meela
- Bracha Sara bat Rivka Zelda
- Ita Blima bat Malka Fraidel
- Eliyahu ben Victoria
- Chaya Malka bat Rachel Braindel
- Elnatan Meir ben Devorah Ze'eva
- Yahel Liam Gittel bat Rachel
- Shifra Sheulah bat Chana Sarah
- Dovid Chaim ben Brina
- Natan Zelig ben Leah

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Please, if you have any smachot or chas v'shalom, less happy occasions, [let our office know](#) so we can keep everybody updated. Are you visiting Israel? - [let us know!](#) We'd love to host you for a shabbat meal, davening, a shiur and would love for you to stop by.

Shabbat Shalom,

HaRav Aharon Bina, Netiv Aryeh
Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh

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