



THANK YOU HASHEM For Shabbos Kodesh!



Parshas Vayeira

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לזכות רפואה שלמה מלכה בת רחמי, מיכאל בן שולמית, יעקב משה בן דבורה שירה ואברתם יחודה בן שרה רבקה

HaMeor Shebah

A Short Burst of Relevance

וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה בְּאֵלֵי מַמְרֵי וְהוּא יֹשֵׁב פְּתַח-הַאֹהֶל כְּחֹם הַיּוֹם...

And Hashem appeared to him in Elonei Mamre; he was sitting at the entrance of the tent in the heat of the day...

THE HOLY MEOR Einayim teaches that Hashem is found even with the worst sinners of the Jewish nation, no matter how hard they try to push Him out of their lives. "There is no place vacant of Him," taught the Zohar HaKadosh. "Even in your place, the place of the *Kelipos*, it is also possible to find Hashem there, for He sustains everything," Rebbe Nachman wrote to the sin-burdened souls of the final generation before Moshiach. "From there it is possible to bind yourself to Him and to return to Him with complete *teshuvah* for, 'the matter is not far from you'; it is only that in your place, there are many garments concealing the Godliness that brings everything to life." (*Likutei Moharan* 33:2) Indeed, it is this ever-patient, ever-loving presence of Hashem that causes thoughts of *teshuvah* to surface from time to time within the heart of the sinner. When the sinner experiences the passionate yearning for spiritual transformation caused by these thoughts, his soul remembers the spiritual greatness of our forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, and aspires to emulate their elevated way of living. Based on this idea, the tzaddik reads our *pasuk* in a remarkable way: "**Vayeira eilav Hashem**": Hashem is present in the lives of even the lowliest sinners, "**b'eilonei mamrei**": who are absolutely firm (the word "*eilonei*", in its connection to the word "*illan*", denotes might) in

NO MATTER
WHERE YOU ARE
OR WHAT YOU DID,
HASHEM CAN'T WAIT
TO HEAR FROM YOU.
TALK TO HIM!

their rebellion ("*mamrei*"). The proof of this is that, "**v'hu yosheiv pesach ha'ohel**": Hashem opens the heart of these sinners, "**k'chom hayom**": with the warm and passionate thoughts of *teshuvah* that arise in their hearts. 🤴

Parsha Roundup

A 60-second Review

- Avraham interrupts a visit from Hashem to greet three travelers. These travelers are angels in disguise who have come to inform Avraham and Sarah that they will have a child in one year. Sarah laughs in disbelief, and Hashem expresses displeasure.
- The angels leave to destroy Sodom and Avraham argues with Hashem in an attempt to save the city. The angels stay by Lot's house in Sodom. The residents surround the house, intending to assault the guests. As they try to break down the door, they are smitten with blindness. Lot, his wife, and two of his daughters are escorted out of the city. Sodom is destroyed. Acting against the angel's warning, Lot's wife looks back at Sodom and turns into a pillar of salt. Thinking that the whole world is destroyed, Lot's daughters give their father wine with intent to seduce him in order to repopulate the world. They each give birth to a son.
- Avimelech king of the Pelishtim takes Sarah to his palace. Hashem inflicts Avimelech with a disease. After Hashem appears to him in a dream and demands that he return Sarah, Avimelech complies in addition to showering Avraham with gifts. Sarah conceives and gives birth to Yitzchak at the age of ninety. Sarah demands that Avraham expel Yishmael and Hagar from the household. They wander in the desert and are miraculously saved from death by thirst. Avraham enters a treaty with Avimelech stating that neither will harm the other for three generations.
- Hashem commands Avraham to bring up Yitzchak as a sacrifice. Just before he fulfills this command, an angel stops Avraham. Avraham sees a ram caught in the thicket by its horns and offers it in Yitzchak's place. As a reward for passing this awesome test of faith, Hashem promises Avraham great blessings.

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P'nimiyus haParsha

An Encounter with the Soul of the Torah

כי ידעתי למען אשר יצוה את בניו ואת ביתו אחריו ושמרו דרך יהוה לעשות צדקה ומשפט למען הביא יהוה על אברהם את אשר דבר עליו...

(Should I hide from Avraham what I am going to do?)... For I have singled him out to instruct his children and descendants to keep the way of the Hashem by doing what is just and right, in order that the Hashem may bring about for Avraham what He has promised him...

IN THIS WEEK'S parsha, Hashem tells Avraham of his plans to destroy Sodom and Avraham argues on their behalf in attempt to spare the city. The holy Berditchover Rav writes that the reason Hashem made His plans known to Avraham was because of His great love of our forefather to whom He referred as "Avraham ohavai", "Avraham, My beloved." The tzaddik details two primary reasons that Avraham merited to be on the receiving end of Hashem's great love.

Firstly, despite serving Hashem with unimaginably awesome levels of love, devotion, and elevated consciousness, Avraham Avinu always considered his personal service to be insignificant. Shifting the focus from his own *avodah*, Avraham performed the *mitzvos d'oraysa* and *d'rabbanan* "b'sheim kol Yisrael", in relation to and on behalf of the entire Jewish nation that would descend from him. As a result, because they were bound to Avraham's being like a pre-conceived child's existence in the mind of the father, every member of am Yisrael has already fulfilled all the mitzvos while in their state of potentiality in the being of Avraham Avinu. This makes it far easier to again fulfill the commandments in their post-birth, actualized state.

The second cause of Hashem's great love of Avraham was his focus

on causing the divine Trait of *Chessed*, Loving-Kindness (for which Avraham serves as a chariot) to flow down into the world through the *Shem Ha'Etzem*, the name associated with Chessed.

The Berditchover teaches that the word "yadativ" in our verse can be seen as referring to love and connection (as in the context of the verse, "vayeida Adam es Chavah ishto") and the word "yetzaveh" can be seen as referring to connection, a bond (as in the word "tzavah").

Based on this introduction, the tzaddik reads our verse in the following amazing manner: "**Ki yadativ**": Hashem says, "I would like to inform Avraham of My plans because I love him." "**L'ma'an**": I love him for the following two reasons. 1. "**Yetzaveh es banav v'es beiso acharav**": "Firstly, Avraham binds himself in his *avodah* to all of his children, the entirety of am Yisrael who are destined to descend from him, "**V'shamru derech Hashem**": making it so that it is as if they have already fulfilled the Torah and its mitzvos, "**la'asos tzedakah umishpat**": so it will be easier for them to bring that fulfillment from potential to actuality in their post-birth state. 2. "**L'ma'an heivi Hashem al Avraham**": Secondly, I love him because he seeks to bring the *Shem Havaya* upon his own trait of Loving-Kindness, to increase light and blessing throughout creation. 🕎



At the core of the Jewish soul flickers the residual illumination of Avraham Avinu's passionate avodah. If we can tap into this fountain of inspiration natural to our deepest essence, it will be that much easier to actualize our desire for closeness with Hashem!

Profiles of Tzaddikim

Biographical sketches of the Chassidic Masters

Rebbe Yisrael ben Eliezer, the Baal Shem Tov zy"א

THE BAAL SHEM TOV, legendary tzaddik and founder of the Chassidic movement that changed Yiddishkeit forever, was born in the year 1698 (5458) to Rabbi Eliezer and Rebbetzin Sarah. Sadly, the young boy lost both of his parents by the tender age of five years old. He spent the next several years in the village of Tluste where the townspeople noticed that after leaving cheder, little Yisrael would spend hours wandering throughout the forests and fields which surrounded their village.

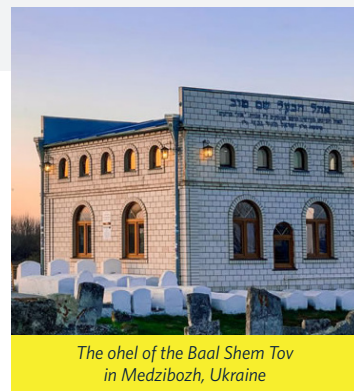
In 1710 (5460) after completing his own studies, Reb Yisrael assumed a position as an assistant Rebbe in a local cheder, often walking the children to and from school in order to teach them songs of praise and thanking Hashem along the way. He married, but soon after, his Rebbetzin passed away and Reb Yisrael began to travel throughout Eastern Galicia. In 1724 (5484), on his 26th birthday, the ancient prophet Achiyah HaShiloni revealed himself to the hidden tzaddik, teaching him the secrets of the Torah.

It wasn't until the year 1730 (5490) that Reb Yisrael's name began to spread. With knowledge of various herbs and spices learned from local villagers, and kabbalistic amulets, he would remedy the physical illnesses of the local townspeople he encountered along his travels as well as heal their spiritual maladies with words of love, hope, encouragement, validation, and radical optimism. It was during this time that he became known as the "Baal Shem Tov," the "Master of the Good Name."

Perhaps the most famous anecdote regarding the holy Baal Shem Tov about whom thousands of tales and miraculous accounts are told, is based on a letter the tzaddik penned to his brother-in-law after Rosh Hashanah of 1746 (5707), where he described a spiritual ascension to heaven in which he visited the chamber of Moshiach. When the Baal Shem Tov inquired as to when he would arrive, Moshiach replied, "When your wellsprings of Torah extend outward."

The Baal Shem Tov left this world on the 1st day of Shavuos, 1760 (5520). Although this transformational tzaddik did not personally author sefarim, his life-altering teachings have been recorded throughout the writings of his students, most notably the works *Toldos Yaakov Yosef* and *Degel Machane Ephraim*.

Zechuso Yogen Aleinu! This section is written by R' Akiva Bruck, author of "From Behind the Curtain" (Mosaica Press). 🕎



The ohel of the Baal Shem Tov in Medzibozh, Ukraine

Tohameha

Tasting the Depth of Shabbos Kodesh

THE CHERNOVITZER RAV teaches that the spiritual components of *Ruach* which are attained through Torah study are divided into three levels: The first level, which allows one to attain “*Nefesh of Ruach*”, is to learn Torah on a simple level in order understand what our obligations are as servants of Hashem and how to fulfill them. The second level, which enables one to tap into the elements of “*Ruach and Neshama d’Ruach*”, is when a person delves into the hidden light of the Torah and enjoys the delights of her secrets. This kind of Torah study enflames the heart with yearning for Hashem, as it is founded solely upon ahavas Hashem. Instead of engaging in a life of Torah and mitzvos because they feel forced to do so, these tzaddikim see Yiddishkeit as the greatest gift and rejoice in the mitzvos with tremendous passion. Finally, the third level, which grants a Jew access to the levels of “*Chaya and Yechidah of Ruach*”, is when a person merits to perceive the manner in which the entire Torah is composed of Hashem’s Names and is able to affect unifications between his soul and the Torah’s essence, binding himself with the Master of the world in the deepest way. Reflecting on these three levels, one notices that the defining factor at play is the degree of one’s focus on Hashem. The more a person sees the Torah not as a means unto itself but as a vehicle for the deepest intimacy with our Father in heaven, the loftier levels of “*Ruach*” he will be able to access. Next week, we will discuss the parallel of this model with regard to the mitzvah of Shabbos. 🕎

This section is adapted from the sefer “Sidduro Shel Shabbos” by R’ Chaim of Chernowitz zy”a (1760-1816)

Chassidus 101

Exploring the Foundations of Chassidus

MANY OF US are familiar with the halacha that when davening, one must not only face the direction of Yerushalayim (or if one is in Yerushalayim, the Beis HaMikdash), but one must also direct his heart towards the *Kodesh HaKodashim*. While on the surface this is a readily understandable concept, aimed at instilling a certain level of seriousness and focus when davening, the question still arises: Why is facing the Beis HaMikdash and focusing our thoughts towards the *Kodesh HaKodashim* such an important aspect of *tefillah*?

The Shem MiShmuel offers a beautiful explanation. The tzaddik writes that the word *tefillah* can also mean *to connect* or *to bind*, as *tefillah* is one of the main ways in which we connect ourselves to our Father in heaven. However, this connection can only be achieved by means of the Beis HaMikdash. This, explains the Shem MiShmuel, is why we don’t find any expression of *tefillah* regarding Avraham Avinu until after his *bris milah*. Avraham’s *bris* transformed his body into a Beis HaMikdash, enabling him to truly achieve the connection transmitted through *tefillah*. The tzaddik adds that this is why the Midrash Tanchuma at the beginning of parshas Vayeira, immediately after Avraham Avinu’s *bris milah*, begins with a lengthy discussion regarding *tefillah*.

Hashem commands us, “*V’asu li mikdash v’shachanti bisocham.*” Each and every one of us is charged with the responsibility to create a dwelling place for Hashem within ourselves, our own Beis HaMikdash. The tzaddikim teach that the body of a Jew mirrors the Beis HaMikdash; each of our limbs, veins, and sinews correspond to a different vessel or area of the Beis HaMikdash with the heart

corresponding to the *Kodesh HaKodashim*. A meaningful *tefillah*, one which enables us to truly feel that connection with Hashem, can only come about when it is stemming from the heart, the *Kodesh HaKodashim*.

As children of Avraham Avinu, we are granted the incredible opportunity to transform ourselves into a home for the Master of the world and to bind ourselves to Him. All Hashem asks of us is that when we turn to Him in prayer - whether it’s during one of the 3 established *tefillos* we say each day or simply when one feels the need to speak with Hashem - that our words flow from the heart. The path towards a meaningful davening begins from within, through taking the time to focus on the words we are saying and utilizing them to draw close to Hashem.

The Avnei Nezer compared *tefillah* to a bow and arrow. Just as with a bow and arrow, the more one draws the bowstring back, the greater the distance the arrow will travel. So too, when our *tefillos* come from the heart, from that place deep within ourselves in which Hashem can dwell, our *tefillos* pierce the heavens and ascend ever higher.

Whether we choose to begin with a sentence, a paragraph, or a specific section of *tefillah*, taking the time to focus on the words we are saying and truly feeling them from within will enable us to achieve the connection in davening that we all yearn for. With each step we take towards focusing on our *tefillos*, the more we will begin to feel an eternal connection to our Father in heaven in a tangible way. 🕎

This section is written by R’ Akiva Bruck, author of “From Behind the Curtain” (Mosaica Press)

A Quick Mayseh

A Story to Warm the Heart

REB ZALMAN LEIB Teitelbaum of Sighet was a close chassid of Rabbi Chaim Halberstam of Sanz. He always traveled to spend the *chagim* with his Rebbe.

During a contentious period of dispute between the Sanzer Rebbe and the children of Rebbe Yisrael of Ruzhin, the chassidim were surprised that Reb Zalman Leib did not get involved, instead choosing to withhold from declaring his support for either party. When he was asked why he did not side with the Sanzer, Rabbi Zalman Leib replied, "The Rebbe is great, but he is not greater than Moshe Rabbeinu! I learned from my grandfather not to ever get embroiled in *machlokes*, even if it involves Moshe Rabbeinu himself!" When asked for an explanation, Reb Zalman Leib told that his grandfather, Rebbe Moshe Teitelbaum of Ujhel, known as the Yismach Moshe, used to remark that his soul had been reincarnated three times. In a previous life, he had been among the Jewish people who were redeemed from Mitzrayim.

As a child, Reb Zalman Leib once asked him, "Zeide, since you were among those who came out of Mitzrayim, this means you lived during the *machlokes* between Korach and Moshe Rabbeinu. Tell me Zeide, whose side were you on?" Rebbe Moshe became serious. "My sweet child," he began, "you cannot imagine how revered Korach was. He was held in great esteem by many important people and had a tremendous following. And on the other side was our holy leader, Moshe Rabbeinu! After considering my options, I decided that the best way to deal with the situation was simply to stay out of it. Throughout the entire controversy, until Moshe and Ahron were declared the rightful leaders, I remained inside my tent. I did not go out even once. You, my dear grandson, should see to it to do the same. Take this lesson with you for life: Whenever there is divisiveness, keep away. Lock yourself in your house if necessary. But stay out of *machlokes*!"

In our current cultural state of divisiveness, we are often under the impression that we must choose one side or the other. But we forget that there is a third choice - to simply stay out of machlokes and not take any side at all! 🙏

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"Thank You Hashem" is a powerful sound bite. These simple words are a prayer, blessing, appreciation, sanctification, and expression of spiritual intimacy—all in one. Jews from all walks of life utter them in all life circumstances, finding meaning and strength in direct access to Hashem. Our mission is to ignite that passion and pride in every Jew worldwide. To remind us all that Hashem exists in every single aspect of life. That He loves each of us in every situation, environment, and spiritual position. And that by saying His name with gratitude, we return His love every day.

"THANK YOU HASHEM
FOR SHABBOS KODESH! WEEKLY"
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