



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Dr & Mrs Michael Wilks on the birth of a granddaughter, born to Rabbi & Mrs Avrohom Zeidman in Edgware.

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Michael Issler on the birth of a daughter. Mazel Tov also to grandparents, Mr & Mrs David Issler.

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Malcolm Fagelman on the engagement of their daughter, Ruchama Lea to Dudi Gabai from London.

Kiddush This Shabbos

There will be a Kiddush after Davenning this Shabbos which is sponsored in honour of the Bas Mitzva of Yaffa and Tova Guttentag - Mazel Tov.

Friday Night Shiur

The Friday night Parsha Shiur restarts this week after Maariv for 15 minutes. This week's Shiur is given by the Rov.

Ovos uBonim

It's the start of the Ovov uBonim season once again taking place an hour and a quarter after Motzei Shabbos for an hour.

T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

Lot's and Lots of Opportunities Rabbi Label Lam (Torah.org)

And HASHEM said to Avram: 'Go for yourself from your country, and from your birthplace, and from your father's house, to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make your name great; and you will be a blessing. And I will bless those that bless you, and those that curse you will I curse; and through you shall all the families of the earth be blessed.'

So Avram went, as HASHEM had spoken to him; and Lot went with him; and Avram was seventy and five years old when he departed from of Haran. And Avram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had made in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. And Avram passed through the land until the place of Shechem, until Elon Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land. And HASHEM appeared to Avram, and said: 'Unto your seed will I give this land'; and he built there an altar to HASHEM who appeared to him. (Breishis 12:1-7)

Two things are described in the beginning of Avram's journey. One of them seems superfluous. The verse tells us that Lot joined in and went along with Avram. The very next verse informs us that Avram took "Lot his brother's son". Why did the Torah have to tell us then and there that Lot was his brother's son? That was spelled out clearly just before. Also, why does the narrative tell us that the Canaanites were then in the land before HASHEM promised him and his children the land?

If the Torah was just listing for us who went on the trip why then it would be unnecessary to repeat Lot's name on the captain's

manifest. However, the Torah is teaching us a few important points. Lot tagged along for his own motive and Avram had his own reason for including his nephew. Lot, it seems knew of the promise given by HASHEM of all the future blessings of wealth, fame, and family. Avram had no children from his barren wife Sarai. Perhaps he saw himself as the heir apparent to all those goodies. Therefore he came along.

Avram knew better. HASHEM's promise is real. He took Lot for a different reason because he was his brother's son. Who was his brother? What happened with him? The verse at the end of Parshas Noach simply tells that "Haran died on the face of his father!" What happened to him?

When Avraham was captured by Nimrod for sedition, for the heresy of believing in a Single G-d, he was cast into a furnace but Avraham understood that the same G-d that could make fire burn could make fire not burn. There is none other than Him! That's what happened. Avraham was miraculously spared.

Haran was offered the same ultimatum of acquiescing to idolatry or going into a fire. He opted like Avraham but for a different reason. Since it worked for his brother it would work for him. It didn't work. He was consumed by and died in that fire.

The Sefas Emes explains that even though Haran's belief was not enough to save him he was still included in the great Kiddush HSAHEM of dying for the highest ideal. He evokes the sagely principal that "HASHEM never fails to pay the reward to any creature". Since Lot was his progeny, Avram understood well that he is the bearer of all that future greatness. It is no mistake then that from Lot and his daughters would come out Moab and Ammon and the two doves, Rus and Naomis who would weave their way into the Davidic Dynasty more than seven centuries later.

Avram arrived in the land where the imposing Canaanites that scared

The Week Ahead	
פרשת לך לך	
Candle Lighting	4.23pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	4.28pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.30am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
Rov's Hilchos Shabbos Shiur	3.38pm
2nd Mincha	4.08
Seuda Shlishis	following
Motzei Shabbos	5.28pm
Ovos uBonim	6.43pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
Monday / Thursday	6.45am / 7.10am
Tuesday / Wednesday / Friday	6.45am / 7.20am
Mincha & Maariv	4.20pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

the spies and intimidated an entire nation impressed with miracles and he was visited by HASHEM who informed him of the fact that his children would inherit the land. Avram had no children then, the Canaanites were dominating the land but still he made a Kiddush because he saw with his mind's eye what HASHEM had promised him. That way of looking through to the future -beyond the tangible present, of seeing what will be in what is, is the same vision that informed him of Lot's and lots of opportunities.

Genuine Kindness

Rabbi Shlomo Jarcaig (Torah.org)

Our patriarch Avraham is renowned as the epitome of the attribute of chesed. Even today we continue to pray that G-d deal kindly with the Jewish Nation in the merit of his kindness. It is, therefore, most peculiar that the Torah's narrative is replete with activities in which Avraham is involved, all seemingly the antithesis of chesed: he abandons his father in his old age; he fights a war against four powerful kings; he evicts his son Yishmael from his house; and ultimately attempts to slaughter his other son, Yitzchak.

Our Sages explain that all of these activities were instances in which G-d was testing Avraham's conviction in response to challenge, and he passed them all. But why did G-d orchestrate situations in which Avraham was forced to act in a cruel way? And if with these responses Avraham passed these particular tests, why do we refer to him as the pillar of kindness, rather than some other form of Divine servant?

The Talmud (Brachos 33b) relates that everything is controlled by G-d with the exception of the degree of our fear of Him. Orchos Tzadikim, a classic text of Jewish ethics and philosophy, compares the fear of G-d to a thread run through several pearls and gems to form a necklace, tied together with a knot at the bottom. Were the knot to break, the gems would certainly fall and scatter. The fear of G-d, he explains, is the knot that binds together all of our positive attributes.

We do not do chesed because of the sense of fulfillment we acquire from helping our fellow man. We are not merely compelled to do for others in need because they are in need. Rather, in the Jew's lifelong quest for G-d consciousness and G-dlike perfection, he appreciates that just as G-d is merciful and compassionate so too we are merciful and compassionate (Talmud Shabbos 133b).

G-d tested Avraham, the pillar of kindness, by putting him in circumstances that mandated unkind deeds. Avraham certainly performed many kind acts and greeted many strangers with hospitality, but these undertakings could have merely been an outgrowth of his giving nature.

It was, therefore, necessary to test Avraham by putting him in a condition where he was obliged to go against his nature to determine whether his acts of kindness originated from a natural proclivity to give, or if they were genuinely a form of Divine service. When Avraham demonstrated that, if necessary, he would act cruelly in order to serve G-d, it served as a clear testimony that his acts of kindness were a genuine form of Divine service and a performance of chesed on the highest level.

Home Sweet Home

Rabbi Naftali Reich (Torah.org)

In this week's Torah portion, we are introduced to our patriarch, the very first Jew, Avraham, who by overcoming towering challenges, forged an intimate connection with Hashem and won for his progeny the eternal distinction as His chosen people. Hashem bequeathed to Avraham the land of Israel as a lasting inheritance, a land infused with sanctity with which the Jewish people are privileged to have an immortal bond.

When Hashem first introduced the promise of Eretz Yisroel to Avraham, He told him, "Lift up your eyes and see it from the place you are standing, the north, south, east and west, for this land I have promised to you and your children." The commentaries point out the interesting choice of words, "see it from the place that you are standing." It seems as if Avraham stood in one place, and Hashem swiveled around the whole land of Israel to enable him to view it

from all four directions, without moving his body.

Why did Hashem change the rules of nature to make this miraculous event occur? We know Hashem performs a miracle only when absolutely necessary. The commentaries provide different approaches to explain this phenomenon. Some say it reflects the intense love that Hashem bore Avraham. He did not even want to trouble him to have to turn around to see all parts of the land, and rather brought the land to him, so to speak.

Similarly, we find that when King David killed Goliath with a few stones, a sling and intense faith in Hashem, Goliath fell forward on his face. The commentaries note that this was not random happenstance. Out of love for his beloved prophet, Hashem wanted to facilitate the killing of Goliath, making it easier for David to swiftly decapitate him without having to run from the fallen giant's feet to his head. Similarly, Hashem's showed his love for Avraham by facilitating his comprehensive view of Eretz Yisroel.

Other commentaries highlight a different aspect of Hashem's kindness to Avraham, illustrated by His "turning the land around" for Avraham's benefit. They note that Avraham was so awestruck when communicating with Hashem, he was as though paralyzed. He was incapable of movement; even the slight inclining of the body was beyond him. Hashem had to move the world around to bring it within his line of vision.

I would venture to suggest another approach to understanding this phenomenon. The Novi tells us, "seu marom einechem u'reu mi bara eileh; lift up your eyes and see who created the world." My Rebbe used to ask, "Why do we need to lift up our eyes? Surely we can see the wonders of our Creator in a simple blade of glass or in the smallest of creatures. Why do we have to look up at the stars, the galaxies and the heavenly constellations to impress on ourselves the wondrous reality of the Creator? He explained that "lifting our eyes upwards" is not meant merely in a physical sense-it means take a "heavenly" look upwards, try to see with an exalted vision, unencumbered by the limitations of the naked eye and other human senses.

Leading scientists perceive the most awesome revelations in creation, but their vision often remains hobbled, without an appreciation of the Divine "designer" behind the wonders of the universe. Likewise, the greatest brain surgeons grapple with one of the most amazing testaments to Hashem's unfathomable wisdom - the human mind - often failing to grasp what is so self-evident, that only an omnipotent Creator could form the extraordinary properties of this magnificent organ.

One needs to lift one's eyes upwards with an exalted look, willing to see beyond physicality. Only then can one clearly perceive the Divine hand that lies beneath the exterior veil. Avraham lived on that plane of existence, seeing his Creator in every aspect of the mundane. Thus, Hashem gifted Avraham and all his future progeny with the land of Israel. Israel's spiritual potency can only be accessed by those whose vision is transcendent. The Divine presence that is concentrated in this land can only be perceived by those who are spiritually attuned, whose vision is "lifted upwards."

Hashem showed Avraham - and to us, his descendants - the key to unlocking and retaining our connection to Eretz Yisrael. He showed him how to transcend the physical limitations of human eyesight and perceive the land in its entirety from all directions-on both the physical and spiritual levels.

We, too, can follow this path, learning how to connect to, and be nurtured by, the inner sanctity of the land.

I am presently in Jerusalem for the weekend, in preparation for the wedding of my son, Eli, just three weeks away. As always, it is easy to become frustrated by the multiple layers of bureaucracy, the foot-dragging and disorganization that seem to characterize the life here. However, by 'lifting up the eyes,' seeing beyond the exterior, one can truly taste the Divine delight that can only be experienced in our beloved homeland. Wishing you a wonderful Shabbos.