



Ohr Yerushalayim News

י"ח מרחשון תש"פ - וירא - 16th November 2019 - Volume 12 - Issue 16

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Dean and Susan Kaye on the occasion of the bar mitzvah of their grandson, Akiva Hibbert, in Whitefield.

Kiddush This Shabbos

There is a kiddush this Shabbos after davening sponsored by Eliezer Issler as an expression of gratitude and thanks to Hashem by him and his son Yehuda - ועל ניסך שבכל יום עמנו following their recent accident - ועל ניסך שבכל יום עמנו.

Rov's Shabbos Shiur

The Rov's Shabbos morning Shiur at 8.45am will be starting Hilchos Mezuza this week.

What it means to be a Navi?

Benjamin Gouldman

Parshas Vayeira is the culmination of the transformation of Avram to Avraham, and Sarai to Sarah, which brings about the birth of Yitzchak, and Avraham's final test, the Akeida. Clearly, Avraham's ability to face these tests, which are diametrically opposed to his nature of Chesed, is one of the foremost reasons that Avraham became the seminal Navi and father of the Jewish nation. Regarding Moshe Rabeinu, the Meshech Chochma asserts that the burning bush was a transformative point for him in his journey as a Navi. Whereas, Avraham's growth in Nevuah is seemingly a gradual process that takes place throughout the majority of his lifetime. The Rambam at the beginning of Hilchos Avoda Zara explains that at some point between the age of 3 and 52 Avraham found Hashem and at the age of 52 he started to teach Torah to the men at Ur Kassim, to wean them off Avoda Zara. Afterwards, at the age of 70 he merited the covenant of the parts, at 75 Hashem promised him that his descendants would inherit Eretz Canaan and at 99 he had the Bris, becoming worthy of the title of Zakain.

However, behind the scenes a more profound change in Avraham's nevuah, takes place between Parshas Lech Lecha and Parshas Vayeira. Rashi understands that until Avraham was circumcised he was not able to communicate with Hashem and remain upright. Additionally, Hashem only engaged in a dialogue with Avraham when it was necessary. The difference post-Avraham's circumcision is that Hashem remained with Avraham permanently. In addition Hashem was (in some manner) visible to Avraham when engaged in a dialogue with him. Nevertheless, Avraham was still required to make preparations before conversing with Hashem. For the last 75 years of his life the Shechina was deeply integrated with his life. Indeed, this is demonstrated in the gematria of Yitzchak, which corresponds to the conclusion of the era of Avraham and Sarah's lives before the above changes in their nevuah (hebrew) take place: Yud (hebrew) corresponds to the 10 Nisyonos of Avraham, the Kuf (hebrew) to the 100 years of Avraham's life, the Tzaddick (hebrew) to the 90 years of Sarah's life before the birth of Yitzchak, and the Ches (hebrew) to the 8 days before a bris.

In conclusion, it was through a lifetime of growth that Avraham and Sarah merited to attain an unimaginable level of nevuah and become the patriarch and matriarch of the Jewish nation. May we all merit a life full of growth in our Avodas Hashem.

Journey To Truth

Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

And he said, "Do not stretch forth your hand to the lad, nor do the slightest thing to him, for now I know that you are a G-d fearing man, and you did not withhold your son, your only one, from Me." (Bereishis 22:12)

THE MIDRASH SAYS that Avraham Avinu only survived the furnace of Ur Kasdim so that Ya'akov could eventually be born. Had it not been for the future Ya'akov, G-d would have let Avraham burn to death that day in Ur

Kasdim—al Kiddush Hashem—and with him, his G-d ideology.

We may never know how many times WE have survived something dangerous because of future descendants we were destined to have. But in the case of Avraham Avinu, it is somewhat disturbing to know that he was only saved in the merit of Ya'akov Avinu, given what he had accomplished in the world in his own right.

This might make the reason clearer. The Talmud says that the "seal" of G-d is Truth (Yoma 69b). What does that mean? Does G-d have a seal? Where does He stamp it?

A person's seal is his identifying mark, his representation in a stamp, like a signature in a document. There is a reason people "read" signatures as a way to better understand someone. The things we choose and produce in life are projections of who we are and how we think.

This means that G-d and Truth are one and the same thing. Therefore, when people achieve ULTIMATE Truth, they reach its ultimate expression: G-d. This means that life, which is the pursuit of G-d, is simultaneously the pursuit of Truth.

Finding Truth not only means finding G-d, but it means finding oneself as well. The gematria of Truth is 441, which can be reduced to its mispar katan: 4+4+1=9. The gematria of adam is 1+4+40=45 which, in mispar katan, is also 9. People who find Ultimate Truth find their ultimate self. Finding both means they no longer have to remain in the world, having finished their tikun.

The story of the Avos is the story of the pursuit of Ultimate Truth—Emes. It began with Avraham—Ish Chesed, continued with Yitzchak—Ish Gevurah, and ended with Ya'akov—Ish Emes. It was a development process that began with Chesed, was altered with Gevurah, and ended up as Emes. And "ma'aseh avos siman l'banim—the actions of fathers are a sign for the children," means that that we too are personally supposed to replicate this pursuit if we truly want Truth.

Chesed, or kindness, is not truth itself. It can be an expression of it, but it can also be an expression of just the opposite. History is filled with examples of chesed being done with tragic results. We fast the first day after Rosh Hashanah to recall how Gedaliah hospitably welcomed his murderer into his own house.

Likewise, Gevurah has a whole history of mistakes. Elisha was harsh to his assistant and he ended up going in the wrong direction in life. How many secular Jews have cited severe discipline in cheder or at home as at least one reason for their leaving Judaism? At what point does discipline become too

The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת וירא

Candle Lighting	No later than 3.57pm
Mincha	4.02pm
Rov's Shiur	8.45am
Shacharis	9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.44am
Children's Group	10.45am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
2nd Mincha	3.45pm
Shalosh Seudos	Following
Motzei Shabbos	5.05pm
Ovos uBonim	6.05pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	3.55pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

much, either for others or even just oneself?

The answer to both problems is in a statement from the Talmud:

Our rabbis have taught: Always let the left hand thrust away and the right hand draw near. Not like Elisha, who thrust Gehazi away with both hands... (Sotah 47a)

Clearly what the Talmud is after is some delicate balance between Chesed and Gevurah. Chesed goes in one direction while Gevurah goes in the opposite, like Avraham and Yitzchak. However, they don't annihilate each other, but rather keep each other on a truer path called...?

Interestingly enough, in the sefiros at least, it is called Rachamim, or Mercy. The 10 sefiros are ordered in three vertical lines, the right side being Chesed, the left side being Gevurah, and the middle line being Rachamim. Somehow the balance between the two is...MERCY? REALLY?

When we last looked, mercy was not such a great thing from G-d's point of view. As Rashi explains on the first verse of the Torah, G-d REALLY wanted to make the world work according to din—judgment, which is Gevurah. He only added mercy to the program when He saw that man could never survive of world of din only.

And back at Rosh Hashanah, we discussed how Rebi Akiva died the way he did, and HAPPILY, because he merited to rise above mercy and receive STRICT din at the hands of the Romans. It earned him a trip straight to the World-to-Come without having to go through Gehenom. From all this, it does not sound as if G-d likes mercy a whole lot, as much as He has shown it to us! But wait a minute. Didn't we just say that G-d's seal is Truth? We didn't say that it was Judgment. We said it was Truth, something that Judgment alone cannot be, for some very deep and kabbalistic reason that is built into the sefiros. And THAT'S the TRUTH, the ULTIMATE Truth.

This will later help to explain Ya'akov's life. He starts off quite simply, learning day and night in the tents of Torah. But then he is harsh to Eisav, by compelling him to sell the birthright for life-saving food. Then he ends up deceiving his father, at his mother's request, to steal the blessings originally meant for Eisav. The assumption is that he was already an Ish Emes, and thus forced to act contrary to his spiritual instinct. The more accurate truth was that he was actually on a journey to becoming Ish Emes, one that took him through Chesed and Gevurah on his way to Tifferes and the beauty of ULTIMATE TRUTH.

The seeds of this are planted and nurtured at the end of the parsha, with the Akeidah. First G-d did the chesed of granting Avraham a miracle child late in life. Then G-d acted with Gevurah when He asked for the child back through the Akeidah. And finally, G-d stopped Avraham short of actually carrying it out, an act of rachamim, revealing the higher goal of mercy in Creation.

The Jewish people are not called "Bnei Rachamim" for no reason. It is not just because we have it, or at least should have it, but because it is what we strive for. And not just because it smooths over some of the nastier bumps in life, but because it is the greatest expression of truth, and as we will see next week, b"H, only when mercy is a function of Truth itself.

First Impressions

Rabbi Naftali Reich (Torah.org)

It is a blistering hot day. Abraham, that paragon of hospitality, is sitting by the door anxiously looking for passersby that he can invite into his home. Suddenly, he sees three dust-covered desert nomads trudging down the road. Before he brings them into his house, Abraham asks them to wash their feet, because he suspects they might be pagans who worship the dust of their feet. Then he feeds them lavishly.

Before they leave, the travelers, really angels in disguise, inform Abraham that Sarah would give birth in a year. Sarah overhears and bursts into laughter. After all, Abraham is one hundred years and she herself is a sprightly ninety, not exactly the height of the child-bearing years.

The Almighty, however, does not consider the situation humorous. He asks Abraham why Sarah found this a laughing matter, and Abraham, in turn, rebukes Sarah for laughing.

Let us consider for a moment. What had Sarah done wrong? After all, she did not know that the dusty wayfarers were really angels. Why then should she have thought that their blessings were efficacious? Can she be blamed for finding the fanciful good wishes of these wayfarers laughable?

The commentators explain that Sarah might indeed not have known that the wayfarers blessing her were angels, and this was exactly the reason she deserved to be reprimanded. She saw before her people who dressed differently, spoke differently, thought differently, and therefore, she looked down on them. She did not consider the blessings of such people worthwhile.

But how could she judge who is worthy and who is not? How could she know what lay within the hearts and souls of other people? How could she determine their inner value?

This was the reason Sarah was reprimanded. She took one look at these dusty wayfarers and instantly jumped to the conclusion that they were worthless people whose blessings were equally worthless.

A young man approached the stately house and knocked on the door. There was no response. He knocked again. Still no response.

Suddenly, he heard a hoarse voice speak. "What are you doing here, young fellow?"

He turned and saw an old man dressed in tramp's rags sitting on the ground, his back against the wall. He had not noticed him before.

"I've come to see the great sage, old man," the young man replied. "I want to become his disciple and learn from his knowledge and wisdom."

"Hah!" said the tramp. "He doesn't have so much knowledge, and he has even less wisdom."

"How dare you?" the young man replied in a flash of anger. "What does a person like you know about knowledge and wisdom?" He turned back to the door and resumed knocking. Still no response.

The following day, the young man returned. His knock was answered by a servant who showed him into the presence of the sage. Amazingly, the sage seemed to be the identical twin of the beggar.

"You recognize me, don't you?" said the sage, "I was the man sitting on the ground. I am afraid I can not accept you as my disciple."

"But why?" the young man asked plaintively. "How was I to know it was really you?"

"You saw a man," said the sage, "and based on his outward appearance you decided that he could know nothing about knowledge or wisdom. You can never be a disciple of mine."

In our own lives, we are called upon to make value judgments about other people all the time. Whether it is in a business, social or any other setting, we tend to jump to conclusions about new people. We rely on first impressions. We look at their clothing, their accessories, their bearing, their air of sophistication or lack of it, and we make assumptions about their intelligence, character, talents and social standing. First impressions are certainly important, and we should always try to make a good first impression on others. Nonetheless, it is unfair to pigeonhole and stereotype people on the basis of external appearance. Appearances can be deceiving, and we could be missing out on some very fine blessings.

Q&A

Kids

1. How many "men" came to visit Avraham?
2. Why couldn't only one angel come and visit Avraham?
3. Why did Avraham want them to wash their feet?
4. How many cities did hashem destroy?
5. How many angels destroyed the cities?

Adults

1. Why does ב פסוק יח פסוק טו say ורא twice?
2. Why did Avraham instruct Soroh to knead the dough herself?
3. Why did Avraham serve Milchic first?
4. Why did Soroh laugh?
5. What does it mean Soroh denied laughing?

1. As 2 things took place, first Avraham saw them coming, then they stopped at a distance and he perceived that they did not wish to trouble him, in response he ignored his pain and dashed towards them to invite them in. (Rashi)

2. As he wanted Soroh to be involved in the mitzva of Hachnosas Orchim (according to the midrash this took place on Pesach, and Avraham wanted to ensure that the dough did not rise. (Alshich)

3. As milky items did not require as much preparation. (Daas Zekainim)

4. Soroh thought that this was a general brocho as they were being courteous, not a brocho from hashem. She thought it had to be a miracle from hashem. Although, Soroh did not know that this was a brocho from hashem, Hashem still punished her for a person of her stature should have faith that the miracle could happen. (Radak, Sforno)

5. The kotzke commented that soroh did not lie, she thought she had laughed out of joy as avraham did, however the truth was subconsciously he doubted the possibility of the miracle.

Answers
Kids