



# THE SHUL

WEEKLY MAGAZINE



SPONSORED BY MR. & MRS. MARTIN (OBM) AND ETHEL SIROTKIN  
& DR. & MRS. SHMUEL AND EVELYN KATZ

## SHABBOS PARSHAS VAYEIRA

**CHESHVAN 16 - 17**

**OCTOBER 22 - 23**

**CANDLE LIGHTING: 6:28 PM**

**SHABBOS ENDS: 7:20 PM**

The Shul - Chabad Lubavitch - An institution of The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Menachem M. Schneerson (May his merit shield us)  
Over Thirty Five Years of Serving the Communities of Bal Harbour, Bay Harbor Islands, Indian Creek and Surfside  
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# THE SHUL WEEKLY MAGAZINE

EVERYTHING YOU NEED FOR EVERY DAY OF THE WEEK

## NACHAS AT A GLANCE

### RAV SHALOM ARUSH AND THE SHUL YOUTH DEPARTMENT



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# PARSHAH MESSAGE

## FROM THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE - RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSOHN

“**A**nd G-d appeared to him in the plains of Mamre”—  
Genesis 18:1.

It was the third day after Abraham entered into an everlasting covenant with G-d. At the age of ninety-nine, at G-d's behest, Abraham circumcised himself. Now, as he sat at his tent's entrance, G-d appeared to him.

Yes, G-d had appeared to Abraham in the past, but never had Abraham experienced a revelation of such a caliber. The level of G-dliness he perceived on that day far surpassed all he'd seen in the past. And, as opposed to his previous experiences with divine revelations, when Abraham would be overwhelmed and fall to the ground, this time Abraham wasn't fazed by this awesome display. He calmly sat and soaked it all in.

This is precisely what brit milah (the covenant of circumcision) is all about—it is the one mitzvah that bridges the highest and lowest levels. On one hand it is the loftiest mitzvah in the Torah. As Maimonides says (Laws of Circumcision 3:9), “Three covenants were established regarding [the observance of] all the mitzvot of the Torah, whereas thirteen covenants were established regarding circumcision.” On the other hand, it is the only mitzvah that actually permeates the physical body – more specifically, the very organ most associated with physical pleasure and selfish pursuit – and infuses it with tremendous holiness. And it is through this mitzvah that we have the ability to infuse, not only the body but the entirety of our mundane habitat, with G-dliness and purpose.

This also explains why the Sages tell us that Abraham's descendants were awarded the Land of Israel as an eternal inheritance in the merit of circumcision. For the ability to infuse land – with all the physicality it symbolizes and represents – with holiness, derives from the mitzvah of circumcision.

Until Abraham circumcised himself he was not a “vessel” for G-dly revelation. The physical and spiritual could not seamlessly fuse. But once he was circumcised, “G-d appeared to him.” No longer did a divine revelation disturb his equanimity.

### Who Is “Him”?

Interestingly, the verse doesn't say that G-d appeared to Abraham, rather, “G-d appeared to ‘him’...”

When reading the text of this verse, one must understand that as a descendant of Abraham, as one who was entered into the “Covenant of our Father Abraham,”<sup>1</sup> he is an heir to all of Abraham's spiritual fortune and estate—including that G-d reveals Himself to “him” at his circumcision just as He did to Abraham.

“Him” refers to me and you.

The difference? Abraham actually saw the revelation; most of us do not.

### A Young Boy's Cry

The 20th of Cheshvan, which always falls in proximity of the Torah reading of Vayeira, is the birthday of the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Shalom DovBer (1860-1920). When he was a young boy of four or five, he went in



to his saintly grandfather, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, the third Lubavitcher Rebbe, on Shabbat Parshat Vayeira, in honor of his birthday. The lad broke out in tears. “Why,” he sobbed, “did G-d reveal himself to our Father Abraham, and not to us?!”

The Rebbe replied: “When a righteous Jew at the age of 99 decides to circumcise himself, he is worthy that G-d should reveal Himself to him.”

This story was later recounted by Rabbi Shalom DovBer, and publicized by his son Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe.

But why? Why repeat a potentially depressing story? Why tell us that G-d only reveals Himself to “a righteous Jew who decides at the age of 99 to circumcise himself”? Come to think of it, why does the Torah tell us of an incident that seemingly has no

relevance to the average Jew?

### Wisdom Beyond His Years

Shalom DovBer understood well how great Abraham was relative to us. But, he argued, Abraham was our father; and as his heirs we inherit all the spiritual greatness he accrued—including the reward he received for courageously choosing to circumcise himself at an advanced age. So why can't we see G-d as Abraham did?

Rabbi Menachem Mendel gently explained: Yes indeed, we are all graced with the very same sublime levels of G-dliness that Abraham experienced and internalized on that fateful day. But to perceive this revelation we must ourselves be worthy. We can inherit a gift, but the refinement that is necessary to perceive it, that cannot come from another, that we must accomplish ourselves.

### Yearning to See

The awareness that in fact every one of us has experienced, and experiences, this awesome revelation engenders an intense yearning to actually see it—and leads us to do all that is within our powers to be worthy of perceiving this revelation. Specifically through incorporating into our lives the primary lesson of circumcision:

Bringing harmony in our personal lives between the spiritual and the physical, permeating our entire being – and the world around us – with holiness, Torah and mitzvot.

And ultimately, we await the greatest revelation – one that will actually be seen by every living being – with the coming of Moshiach. And today, as we stand on the very threshold of redemption, and our work in exile has been completed, we can say the same idea regarding the redemption: The revelation of Moshiach already exists. Now we only await the moment when we will be able to actually see this revelation.

May this happen now, and together we will all bless G-d for having “kept us alive, sustained us and allowing us reach this time”!

Based on the Rebbe's last public address for Vayeira, delivered on Parshat Vayeira 5752 (1991).

# THOUGHTS ON THE PARSHA

FROM RABBI SHOLOM LIPSKAR

## VAYEIRA



In this week's Torah portion we are introduced to Hashem's appearance and relationship to Abraham that transcended any other interaction prior to his going through the covenant of circumcision.

It is in this Torah reading that we witness Abraham's commitment to,

and beseeching Almighty God on behalf of the most despicable, degenerate, immoral society that one can imagine. Sodom in fact has become the synonym for illicit immoral behavior and a sense of selfishness.

Why would the Torah find it necessary to portray Abraham in this relationship and what lesson does it have for each and every one of us.

Abraham, the first Jew teaches us that no one is lost to their essential faith until we have given them every opportunity and chance to recognize their bad choices and commit to move forward in a positive lifestyle. Even one who is on the level of Sodom and Gomorrah, involved in the worst behavioral patterns that one can imagine, has the opportunity and capacity to repent and move to the most pristine and highest level that one can ever reach.

The Jewish message is that it is never too late. Wherever we are and under whatever circumstances we have fallen from grace, Hashem is always available and open to receive us.

We live in times and conditions that are very challenging and very materialistically, selfishly orientated.

It is during such a critical period that the message of Abraham and Jewishness is most potent.

It directs us to recognize our extraordinary opportunities not only to move from one level of goodness to another level of goodness, from negativity to positivity, from profanity to holiness but to literally transform darkness to light.

That is the main mission of the Jew in this world. To elevate the physical, material world, to become a vehicle to bring holiness and Godliness in a most conscious and revealed and apparent state to our world.

The pattern and mechanism for this is absolute, unconditional, selfless kindness that is represented by our first Jew Abraham and carried through for eternal generations.

Have a wonderful Shabbos and a great week

Rabbi Sholom D. Lipskar



# CELEBRATING SHABBOS

EVERYTHING YOU NEED FOR AN "OVER THE TOP" SHABBOS EXPERIENCE

## SHABBOS SCHEDULE

Candle lighting	6:28 p.m.
Mincha / Kabbalas Shabbos	6:30 p.m.
Shabbos Day Hashkama Minyan	7:15 a.m.
Shacharis (Morning Services)	8:30 a.m.
Shacharis 2nd Minyan (Morning Services)	10:30 a.m.
Children's Programs	11:00 a.m.
Kiddush	Following the service
Daf Yomi	5:15 p.m.
Men's Shiur	5:45 p.m.
Women's Shiur	5:45 p.m.
Mincha	6:15 p.m.
Shabbos Ends / Ma'ariv & Havdalah	7:20 p.m.
Weekly Video of The Rebbe	

<b>Next Week:</b>	<b>Chayei Sarah</b>
Candle Lighting	6:23 p.m.
Mincha	6:25 p.m.



### **KIDDUSH THIS WEEK:**

Early Kiddush sponsored by The Shul in honor of the marriage of Yosef Petlak & Goldie Blisko. Mazal Tov to the Petlak and the Blisko Family. May their lives be filled with love, joy, and laughter



## THE SHUL'S SHABBOS <sup>B"H</sup> KIDDUSH CLUB SOCIETY

You Don't Have To Wait For A Family Celebration, Milestone Or Yahrzeit  
To Sponsor A Kiddush

**Maybe You Want To Celebrate Having Had A Great Week!**

To become a member of the Kiddush Club Society,  
Please contact Milena (305) 868-1411 ext. 328 \* [milena@theshul.org](mailto:milena@theshul.org)

### Eruv Information

We would like to emphasize that every Erev Shabbos, individuals should call the Eruv Hotline to make sure that the Eruv is operational. The number to call is 305- 866-ERUV (3788).

The Eruv message is recorded approximately two hours prior to candle lighting. Surfside: The Eruv in Surfside now includes the walking paths along the beach. Pushing strollers and carrying is permitted on the paths, but not beyond the path or onto the beach. Bal Harbour: The Eruv in Bal Harbour included the inner (western) walking path only. The pier at Haulover Cut is not included.

To pay your annual dues visit: [www.miamibeacherv.com](http://www.miamibeacherv.com)

# A TIME TO PRAY

## DAVENING SCHEDULES AND LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT THE WEEK

SHACHARIS MINYANIM (MON - FRI)				
Main Minyan	6:50	7:30		9:00
Sephardic Minyan			8:00	

SUNDAY SHACHARIS MINYANIM		
Main Minyan	8:00 am	9:00 am
Sephardic Minyan		8:30 am

### DAILY CHUMASH & TANYA AFTER EVERY MINYAN

MINCHA / MAARIV MINYANIM (MON - THURS)			
Main Minyan	2:00 pm Early Mincha	6:30 pm	10:00 pm
Sephardic Minyan		6:30 pm	Following

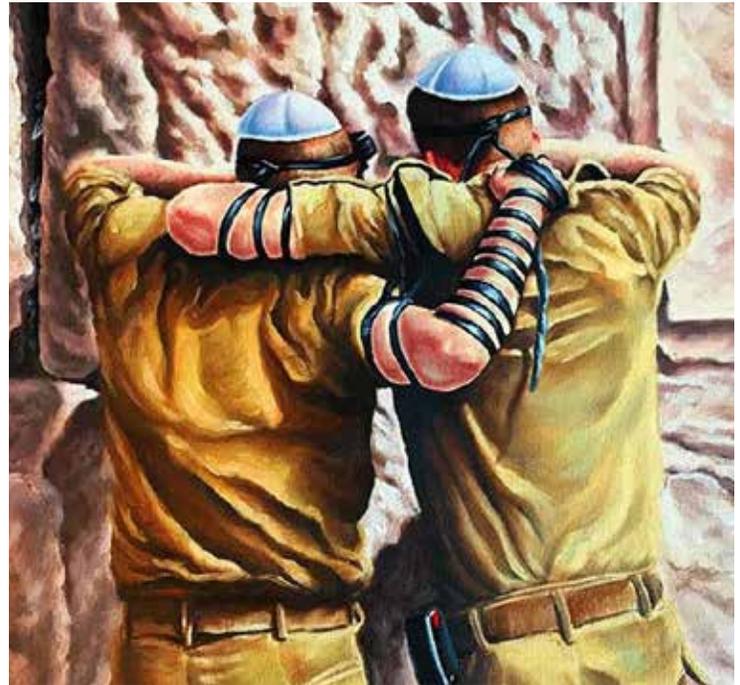
SUNDAY MINCHA / MAARIV MINYANIM	
Main Minyan	6:30 pm
Late Maariv	9:00 pm

### HALACHIC TIMES BASED ON TIMES FOR OCTOBER 27

Alot Hashachar / Dawn	6:18 am
Earliest Talit & Tefillin	6:49 am
Netz Hachamah / Sunrise (Earliest Amidah)	7:31 am
Latest Shema	10:18 am
Zman Tfillah	11:18 am
Chatzot / Midday	1:11 pm
Earliest Mincha	1:38 pm
Plag HaMincha	5:40 pm
Shekiah / Sunset (Preferable latest time for Mincha)	6:47 pm
Tzeit Hakochavim / Nightfall (Earliest preferable Ma'ariv)	7:11 pm

Times taken from [www.chabad.org](http://www.chabad.org)

Please note that during the week times may vary by a minute or two.



To our beloved Soldiers in the Israeli Defense Forces, courageously protecting and defending Eretz Yisroel. We pray for you and all of the soldiers safety and well being daily.

Eden Chana bat Karine Cecile

PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOUR CHILD IS IN  
THE IDF SO WE CAN INCLUDE THEIR NAME

# DAILY STUDY

A COMPLETE GUIDE TO ALL CLASSES AND COURSES OFFERED AT THE SHUL

[HTTPS://ZOOM.US/ 6457054016](https://zoom.us/j/6457054016) PASSWORD: 699576

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<b>7:20 - 7:50 am</b> <b>CHASSIDUS</b> <b>Derech Mitzvoisecha</b> <i>Rabbi Zalman Lipskar</i> PHL-101 / PHL-301 / PHL-501	<b>7:20 - 7:50 am</b> <b>CHASSIDUS</b> <b>Derech Mitzvoisecha</b> <i>Rabbi Zalman Lipskar</i> PHL-101 / PHL-301 / PHL-501	<b>7:20 - 7:50 am</b> <b>CHASSIDUS</b> <b>Derech Mitzvoisecha</b> <i>Rabbi Zalman Lipskar</i> PHL-101 / PHL-301 / PHL-501	<b>7:20 - 7:50 am</b> <b>CHASSIDUS</b> <b>Derech Mitzvoisecha</b> <i>Rabbi Zalman Lipskar</i> PHL-101 / PHL-301 / PHL-501	<b>7:20 - 7:50 am</b> <b>CHASSIDUS</b> <b>Derech Mitzvoisecha</b> <i>Rabbi Zalman Lipskar</i> PHL-101 / PHL-301 / PHL-501
<b>7:50 - 8:05 am</b> <b>CHITAS SYNOPSIS</b> <b>Chumash, Tanya,</b> <b>Rambam's book</b> <b>of Mitzvos</b> <i>Rabbi Zalman Lipskar</i> PHL-320	<b>7:50 - 8:05 am</b> <b>CHITAS SYNOPSIS</b> <b>Chumash, Tanya,</b> <b>Rambam's book</b> <b>of Mitzvos</b> <i>Rabbi Zalman Lipskar</i> PHL-320	<b>7:50 - 8:05 am</b> <b>CHITAS SYNOPSIS</b> <b>Chumash, Tanya,</b> <b>Rambam's book</b> <b>of Mitzvos</b> <i>Rabbi Zalman Lipskar</i> PHL-320	<b>7:50 - 8:05 am</b> <b>CHITAS SYNOPSIS</b> <b>Chumash, Tanya,</b> <b>Rambam's book</b> <b>of Mitzvos</b> <i>Rabbi Zalman Lipskar</i> PHL-320	<b>7:50 - 8:05 am</b> <b>CHITAS SYNOPSIS</b> <b>Chumash, Tanya,</b> <b>Rambam's book</b> <b>of Mitzvos</b> <i>Rabbi Zalman Lipskar</i> PHL-320
<b>8:05 - 9:05 am</b> <b>DAF YOMI</b> <b>Tractate Pesachim</b> <i>Rabbi Dov Schochet</i> <b>(Men)</b> TXT-220 / TXT-601	<b>8:05 - 9:05 am</b> <b>DAF YOMI</b> <b>Tractate Pesachim</b> <i>Rabbi Dov Schochet</i> <b>(Men)</b> TXT-220 / TXT-601	<b>8:05 - 9:05 am</b> <b>DAF YOMI</b> <b>Tractate Pesachim</b> <i>Rabbi Dov Schochet</i> <b>(Men)</b> TXT-220 / TXT-601	<b>8:05 - 9:05 am</b> <b>DAF YOMI</b> <b>Tractate Pesachim</b> <i>Rabbi Dov Schochet</i> <b>(Men)</b> TXT-220 / TXT-601	<b>8:05 - 9:05 am</b> <b>DAF YOMI</b> <b>Tractate Pesachim</b> <i>Rabbi Dov Schochet</i> <b>(Men)</b> TXT-220 / TXT-601
<b>9:05 - 9:35 am</b> <b>RAMBAM</b> <b>One chapter a day</b> <i>Rabbi Aryeh Schottenstein</i> PHL-120 / PHL-510	<b>9:05 - 9:35 am</b> <b>RAMBAM</b> <b>One chapter a day</b> <i>Rabbi Aryeh Schottenstein</i> PHL-120 / PHL-510	<b>9:35 - 10:00 am</b> <b>MEGILLOT</b> <b>Mishlei - Book of Proverbs</b> <i>Rabbi Dov Schochet</i> <b>(Men &amp; Women)</b> TXT-121	<b>9:05 - 9:35 am</b> <b>RAMBAM</b> <b>One chapter a day</b> <i>Rabbi Aryeh Schottenstein</i> PHL-120 / PHL-510	<b>9:05 - 9:35 am</b> <b>RAMBAM</b> <b>One chapter a day</b> <i>Rabbi Aryeh Schottenstein</i> PHL-120 / PHL-510
<b>1:30 - 2:30 pm</b> <b>THE BOOK OF DANIEL</b> <i>Rabbi Dov Schochet</i> <b>(Men &amp; Women)</b> TXT-120	<b>9:35 - 10:05</b> <b>PARSHA OF THE WEEK</b> <i>Rabbi Aryeh Schottenstein</i> <b>(Men &amp; Women)</b> TXT-112 / TXT-113 / TXT-501	<b>10:00 - 11:30 am</b> <b>PARSHA OF THE WEEK</b> <i>Rebbetzin Chani Lipskar</i> <b>(Women Only)</b> TXT-112 / TXT-113 / TXT-501	<b>11:15 am - 12:00 pm</b> <b>PARSHA OF THE WEEK</b> <i>Rabbi Shea Rubinstien</i> <b>(Men &amp; Women)</b> TXT-112 / TXT-113 / TXT-501	<b>10:30 - 11:00 am</b> <b>FOOD FOR THOUGHT</b> <i>Dobie Rubinstien</i> <b>(Women Only)</b>
<b>8:45 - 9:45 pm</b> <b>PARSHA IN SPANISH</b> <i>Rabbi Shea Rubinstein</i> <b>(Men &amp; Women)</b> TXT-112 / TXT-113 / TXT-501	<b>11:00 am - 12:00 pm</b> <b>SHABBOS</b> Exploring customs w/ chassidus and Kabbalah <i>Rabbi Shea Rubinstien</i> <b>(Men &amp; Women)</b> TXT-201 / TXT-211 / TXT-601	<b>11:30 - 12:15 pm</b> <b>TANYA</b> <i>Rabbi Sholom Lipskar</i> <b>(Men &amp; Women)</b> PHL-320 / PHL-501	<b>12:00 - 1:00 pm</b> <b>SENIOR TORAH ACADEMY</b> <i>Rabbi Dov Schochet</i> <b>Book of Judges</b> <b>(Men &amp; Women)</b>	<b>5:30 - 5:45 pm</b> <b>SHABBOS INSPIRATION</b> <i>Rabbi Sholom Lipskar</i>
	<b>12:00 - 1:00 pm</b> <b>PIRKEI AVOT</b> <i>Rabbi Dov Schochet</i> <b>(Men &amp; Women)</b> ETH-101	<b>2:00 pm</b> <b>TANYA IN ENGLISH</b> <i>Mrs. Vivian Perez</i> <b>(Women Only)</b> <a href="https://zoom.us/j/85486162783">https://zoom.us/j/85486162783</a> password 540360	<b>2:00 pm</b> <b>TANYA IN SPANISH</b> <i>Mrs. Vivian Perez</i> <b>(Women Only)</b> <a href="https://zoom.us/j/85486162783">zoom.us/j/85486162783</a> password 540360	
	<b>2:00 pm</b> <b>PARSHA OF THE WEEK</b> <i>Mrs. Vivian Perez</i> <b>(Women Only)</b> <a href="https://zoom.us/j/85486162783">https://zoom.us/j/85486162783</a> password 540360		<b>6:50 pm</b> <b>Tractate Sotah</b> <i>Dov Schochet</i>	
	<b>8:00 pm</b> <b>PARSHA OF THE WEEK</b> <i>Rabbi Sholom Lipskar</i> <b>(Men &amp; Women)</b> TXT-112 / TXT-113 / TXT-501		<b>8:00 pm</b> <b>Tanya in Portuguese</b> <i>Moshe Lerman</i>	

# COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

## SHARING WITH YOUR SHUL FAMILY

### BIRTHDAYS

17 Cheshvan	Jesse Joseph Salver
17 Cheshvan	Mrs. Liba Barouk
17 Cheshvan	Janet Weingarten
17 Cheshvan	Mr. Eduardo Sucher Rozen
17 Cheshvan	Mrs. Robbye Henesch
18 Cheshvan	Mazal Behar
18 Cheshvan	Rabbi Shaya Farkash
18 Cheshvan	Mrs. Sara Kurant
18 Cheshvan	Mr. Mendy Kurant
18 Cheshvan	Mr. Joe Listhaus
18 Cheshvan	Mrs. Michelle Weinberg
19 Cheshvan	Mr. Jonathan Kopel-Laoui
19 Cheshvan	Mrs. Ellen Kramer Hodkin Koppel
20 Cheshvan	Jonathan Ariel Segal
20 Cheshvan	Mrs. Sara Edelman
20 Cheshvan	Gabriel Knight
20 Cheshvan	Yosef Falic
20 Cheshvan	Tomas Ehrenfeld
20 Cheshvan	Mrs. Sari Weinberg
21 Cheshvan	Daniel Attias
21 Cheshvan	Kelsey Dunn
21 Cheshvan	Mrs. Ahuva Almagor
21 Cheshvan	Mrs. Rosita Zelcer
21 Cheshvan	Mrs. Fanny Selesky
22 Cheshvan	Jessica Rachel Lichter
22 Cheshvan	Nathan Kaplan
22 Cheshvan	Mr. Jerry Sher
22 Cheshvan	Mr. Sidney Wainberg
22 Cheshvan	Mr. Isaac Gilbert Franco
23 Cheshvan	Mrs. Shterna Sarah Mangami
23 Cheshvan	Mrs. Chana Lipskar
23 Cheshvan	Rabbi Ezzy Rappaport
23 Cheshvan	Mrs. Bella Brenner

### KID'S BIRTHDAYS

17 Cheshvan	Ariella Rebecca Levene
17 Cheshvan	Yehuda Berner
19 Cheshvan	Miriam Aizenman
19 Cheshvan	Isaac Schottenstein
19 Cheshvan	Mendel Diamont
20 Cheshvan	Isaac Sholom Wertheimer
20 Cheshvan	Avraham Laskar
20 Cheshvan	Isaac Benichou
21 Cheshvan	Sophia Grunstein
23 Cheshvan	Sholi Kurant

### YAHRTZEITS

17 Cheshvan	<b>Yankle Paishe HaKohen ben Baile obm</b> Brother of Mrs. Sarah Libke Caplin
17 Cheshvan	<b>Meyer ben Shmuel obm</b> Father of Mr. Alan Lipton
17 Cheshvan	<b>Avraham Tzvi ben Falic obm</b> Father of Mr. Eric Stein
18 Cheshvan	<b>Moshe ben Yitzchok obm</b> Father of Mrs. Diane Cole
19 Cheshvan	<b>Aryeh Leib ben Yaacov Aron Dubrofsky obm</b> Father of Mrs. Sandra Gewirtz
19 Cheshvan	<b>Menachen Tzvi ben Moshe Chaim obm</b> Grandfather of Mr. Isi Halberthal
20 Cheshvan	<b>Meyer ben Baruch obm</b> Father of Mr. Baruch Toledano
20 Cheshvan	<b>Raizel bas Avraham Yaakov obm</b> Mother of Mrs. Shelley Rindner
21 Cheshvan	<b>Yitzchok Nutta ben Avraham obm</b> Father of Mr. Richard Moore
21 Cheshvan	<b>Moishe Gershon ben Abraham Iser Ha Levy obm</b> Father of Mrs. Perla Gilinski
22 Cheshvan	<b>Mordechai ben Yacov obm</b> Father of Mr. Jack Gluck
23 Cheshvan	<b>Faiga bas Lewis obm</b> Great Aunt of Dr. Fran Glicksman
23 Cheshvan	<b>Rachmiel obm</b> Grandfather of Ms. Nicole Brenson
23 Cheshvan	<b>Mordechai ben Moshe obm</b> Husband of Mrs. Ethel Meril Sirotkin
23 Cheshvan	<b>Yule bas Benjamin obm</b> Grandmother of Mr. Claudio Stivelman
23 Cheshvan	<b>Dina bas Moshe obm</b> Grandmother of Mrs. Eliana Gilinski

### ANNIVERSARIES

Mr. Paul & Lana R. Weintraub  
Mr. David & Bren Schwartz  
Mr. Gregory & Veronica Levine  
Mr. Gustavo & Lorena Sued



**HATZALAH EMERGENCY 305.919.4900**

# COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

## SHARING WITH YOUR SHUL FAMILY

### THANKS TO OUR DONORS

We sincerely thank the following members and supporters of The Shul for donations received between 10/15/21 and 10/22/21

We apologize for any errors or omissions that we may have made.

Alexander, Shlomo & Orly  
 Ammar, Raphael & Batya  
 Backman, Chaim  
 Banon, Menahem  
 Baum, Joel & Leslie  
 Belecen, Daniel and Eve  
 Ben-Chetrit, Nadav D  
 Berry, Estela.  
 Betch, Simon  
 Brecher, David & Leah  
 Charles and Doreen Hadid  
 Charitable Fund  
 Chomer, Mario  
 Chudaitov, Moshiach & Berta  
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 Cohen, Marilyn  
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 Gal On, Liam  
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 Holtz, Abel & Fana  
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 Klein, Robert Meyer  
 Koppel, Jeffrey  
 Lederman, Shlomo Zalman  
 Levine, Gregory & Veronica  
 Levy, Shmuel and Batsheva  
 Levy, Shmuel and Batsheva  
 Lipskar, Schneur Zalman &  
 Rivkie  
 Lipskar, Sholom Dovber &  
 Chani

Liss, Frederick  
 London, Lawrence S. & Helen F.  
 Mayan, Haim & Amanda  
 Melohn, Joseph & Makla  
 Menaged, Anat & Louis  
 Miller, Kenneth & Marie  
 Millul, Jeremy  
 Mizraji, Ralph & Sara  
 Mochkin, Shlamie & Esther  
 Moteles, Gene & Sandra  
 Namvar, Daniel  
 Nir, Eyal & Sara  
 Ohayon, Edward & Carene  
 Pinson, Mendel & Reut  
 Raviv, Yaffa  
 Rosenfeld, Tzemach &  
 Devorah Leah  
 Rosenstock, Eric & Maya  
 Rovt, Max  
 Rubashkin, Shmuly & Rochel  
 Rybak, Penina  
 Salver, Seth E. & Perla  
 Sasson, David Meir  
 Schechter, Shoshana  
 Scheiner, Esty  
 Schochet, Dov & Kayla  
 Schottenstein, David & Eda  
 Schottenstein, Robert &  
 Caroline  
 Shagalov, Elchonon  
 Shapiro, Zalman & Dinah  
 Vogel  
 Silberstein, Binyomin  
 Sragowicz, Daniel & Diana  
 Stein, Eric & Cynthia  
 Stix Male Mentoring  
 Program  
 Stulberger, David & Sivan  
 Sued, Gustavo & Halac,  
 Lorena  
 Swisa, Michael  
 Tabacinic, Moris & Lillian  
 Tauber, Irwin & Laura  
 Tauber, Stephanie  
 The First Presbyterian  
 Church of Miami  
 Turgel, Mordechai  
 Vertsberger, Boris  
 Wax, Barry & Amy  
 Weintraub, Paul & Lana R.  
 Wolf, David & Natalie  
 Wolfe, Lenny & Lisa  
 Wolff, Shneur  
 Yaron, Michael & Keren  
 Yehudiel, Shalom &  
 Jacqueline  
 Zaidman, Paul  
 Ziefer, Adam & Elizabeth

### REFUAH SHLEIMAH

If you have a health update on anyone listed, please contact The Shul. We would like to keep the listing current and remove names of people who have recovered.

#### MEN

Sholom Dovber ben Rochel  
 Bayla  
 Shmuel ben Rivka  
 Mordechai Yitzhak ben Devorah  
 Yehonatan HaLevi ben Malka  
 Eliezer ben Sarah  
 Aharon ben Beylah  
 Meyer Eliezer ben Sarah  
 Menachem Mendel ben Sara  
 Yehoshua ben Tamara  
 Isaac Gilbert ben Nelly Esther  
 Bentzion ben Nomi Rachel  
 Margalite  
 Chaim Zelig ben Eidel  
 Ari ben Na'ama  
 Shama David ben Akiva Leah

#### WOMEN

Fayga Etta bas Gita Henia  
 Sarah Libke bas Baila  
 Leah bas Alta Miriam Chaya  
 Esther Yocheved bas Raizel  
 Bracha  
 Shima Leah bas Gittel  
 Chana Bayla bas Masha  
 Genya Bailah bas Gietel Sura  
 Sonia Simcha bas Sultana  
 Tzipora Pnina bas Slava  
 Feige bas Krandel  
 Chaya Miriam Yehudit bas  
 Chava  
 Clara bas Corina  
 Rivka bas Shoshana  
 Miriam bas Risha Raizel

### CHESHVAN LIGHT & POWER

Light & Power and Wine for Kiddush & Havdalah for the month of **CHESHVAN** is dedicated in honor of the birthday of my aishes chayil,

**Eda Sirota Schottenstein.**

Thank you for everything. By her loving husband,  
**David B. Schottenstein.**

“Those who establish Synagogues for prayer and those who come there to pray, those who provide lights for illumination, wine and grape juice for kiddush and havdalah, food for the wayfarers and charity for the needy, and all those who occupy themselves faithfully with communal affairs - may The Holy One, blessed be He, give them their reward, remove them from all sicknesses, heal their entire body, pardon all their sins, and send blessing and success to all their endeavors, together with all Israel their brethren; and let us say Amen.”

## Shabbat – Parashat Vayera 5782

### Friday Night, Oct 22<sup>nd</sup>:

- Shir Hashirim: 6:15 PM
- Mincha/Arvit: 6:25 PM
- Candle lighting: 6:28 PM

### Shabbat, Oct 23<sup>rd</sup>:

- Shacharit (Korbanot): 8:45 AM
- Zman Keriat Shema: 9:38 AM
- Shabbat Learning: 5:15 PM
- Mincha: 6:10 PM
- Seuda Shelishit: 6:40 PM
- Arvit: 7:15 PM
- Shabbat Ends: 7:21 PM
- Rabenu Tam: 7:58 PM

### Message from the Rabbi:

**The two angels came to Sdom in the evening and Lot was sitting at the gates of Sdom; and Lot saw and stood up to meet them and bowed, face to the ground** (Genesis 19: 1)

This week's Parsha contains a remarkable contrast of the Chessed of Avraham with that of his brother-in-law Lot. Just as Avraham had been sitting in his tent gazing towards the highway looking for visitors, so too the Torah tells us regarding Lot; "and Lot was sitting at the gate of Sdom." Rashi explains that Lot had learned from living in the house of Avraham to seek out guests.

Avraham is known as the patriarch of Chessed. Yet by Lot we see a level of Chessed that seems to transcend that of even Avraham, the quintessential paradigm of kindness. Lot invites the angels that came to Sdom to stay at his home and, even after they politely demure, he insists that they take him up on his offer. Bear in mind, showing kindness to strangers was a serious crime in the city of Sdom; merely feeding the poor of the city was a capital offense.

By offering to host the angels, Lot was literally putting himself and his family at grave risk. In fact, Lot was well aware of these potential consequences; once the angels agreed to take him up on his offer, he told them to take a roundabout route so that the inhabitants of Sdom wouldn't take notice that they were staying in his home. This seems to be a very high level Chessed.

Moreover, when the people of Sdom do find out and surround his home to attack them, Lot makes an extraordinary offer: "I have two daughters that have never been with a man, I shall bring them out to you and you may do as you please with them. Just do not harm these men because they have come under the shelter of my roof". Clearly, Lot goes above and beyond to protect these visitors. How is it possible that he isn't the quintessential "Baal Chessed"?

While it's true that doing kindness is an admirable trait, there are often different motivations for being a "Baal

### Clases y Jabruta en Espanol

#### **Rabino Samuel Heber**

*Halaja - Musar – Jasidut - Parasha - Talmud*  
Lunes a Jueves – 9 AM - 1 PM  
Viernes – 9 AM - 12 AM

#### **Rab Michael Gazal**

*Halaja - Musar - Parasha - Talmud*  
Domingo a jueves – 7-9 PM

#### **Ahora Es El Tiempo!**

*Por más información o para agendar tu Jabruta,  
Contacta a Rabino Yair Massri*

Chessed." Helping others is a very fulfilling experience, one feels that he has done the right thing and this is very satisfying. However, another aspect of a being a "Baal Chessed" is the feeling that one has now become a greater person for becoming a "Baal chessed." One who is known as a magnanimous person is admired and held in high esteem. True Chessed requires one to diminish himself. We see this from Hashem Himself: The world was created as an act of Chessed and in order to effect a real act of creation Hashem constricted Himself, as it were, to give mankind a feeling of an independent existence. Thus, Hashem limiting Himself effected the original act of Chessed and now defines how true Chessed is accomplished: through a diminishment of the benefactor.

Avraham Avinu did Chessed in exactly the same way; "Avraham ran to the cattle... he took cream, milk, and the calf which he prepared, and placed it before them; and he stood over them..." Even though Avraham was very wealthy he didn't just snap his fingers and have servants prepare everything and serve his guests. On the contrary, he ran himself to prepare all the foods and then acted as a waiter to serve the food himself, and hovered nearby to see what else they might require.

On the other hand, the Torah tells us exactly Lot's motivation: "for they have come under the shelter of my roof." He didn't want the people of Sdom harming anyone who was under his protection, because that would be a violation of his power to shelter someone. For Lot his magnanimity was about his power and his reputation; it was really all about him. This is reflected in his outrageous offering of his daughters to the people of Sdom to protect his reputation.

May we all be Zoche to be true Baali Chessed!

**Shabbat Shalom Umevorach!**

### רעיון של מוסר מהפרשה

"והוא יושב פתח האהל" (שמות י"א)

לראות אם יש עובר ושב ויכניסם לביתו (רש"י)

בפרשתנו התורה מאריכה ומבליטה את מידת החסד של אברהם אבינו בקבלת אורחים, והתורה הדגישה זאת כדי ללמדנו עיקר גדול במידת החסד. בספר "התורה המשמחת" מתאר באופן נפלא בנו בכורו של ר' שלמה זלמן אוירבך זצ"ל כיצד היה אביו משתתף בצער הזולת. אבא חנך אותנו לכך שמי שאינו 'חש' את השני לא רק שאין לו דרגות במידת החסד אלא אין לו צורת אדם כלל! 'היטיב להגדיר זאת ר' אריה לוי זצ"ל כאשר רגלה של אשתו כאבה והלכו לרופא באמרו: 'רגלה של אשתי כואבת לנו...'

כיצד לחוש את כאב הזולת נוכל ללמוד ממעשה נפלא שאירע עם ר' חיים אוירבך: באחד מילי טבת, כשכל אנשי הבית כבר שוקעים בתרדמה עמוקה, ישב רבי חיים אוירבך לבדו ולמד. לפתע נשמעה נקישת בחלום. "מי זה?" "שאל. "אני סנדלר, "נשמעה התשובה, "ולפני שעות אחדות ילדה אשתי בן למזל טוב, אבל בביתנו קר ואין עצים להסיק את התנור". מיד יצא ר' חיים מביתו והלך עם הסנדלר לביתו של העשיר מבני העיר והתחיל דופק בחזקה על דלתו. העשיר נבהל וכששאל: "מיהו הדופק כל כך?" "נענה: "זה הרב!" מיד נפתחה הדלת. הרב נשאר עומד בחוץ וסירב להיכנס למרות הפצרותיו של העשיר. מפני הנימוס נאלץ העשיר לצאת אף הוא החוצה, למרות שהיה לבוש בחלוק הבית שלו, וכך לשמוע את דברי הרב. הקור היה גדול ושוב התחנן העשיר בפני הרב: "היכנסו נא אל תוך הבית! אתם עלולים לקפוא למוות!" ועדיין הרב מסרב. "רצוני שתרגיש מעט ממה שמרגישים הסנדלר ואשתו והתינוק שזה עתה נולד להם", הסביר. לא היה צריך הרב להאריך בדיבורים ובו במקום הבטיח העשיר לספק למשפחת הסנדלר עצים וזרדים למשך כל החורף. אברהם אבינו מסמל את מידת החסד. אברהם אעפ"י שישל להתחמק מאורחים שהרי יום שלישי למילתו היה, אעפ"כ לא נרתע מלעסוק בעצמו במצווה. מסופר על רבי ישראל מסלנט זצ"ל, שבערב יום הכיפורים הציבור ציפה לבואו והוא טרם הגיע לבית הכנסת. כשראו שהשעה עוברת התפללו "כל נדרי" בלעדיו ושוב המתו לו לתפילת ערבית ור' ישראל איננו. החליטו לחפשו בביתו בעיירה ולא מצאוהו וכמעט לקראת סיום התפילה מופיע ר' ישראל מעוטף בטלית ועומד להתפלל ביחידות. בסוף מסתבר שרבי ישראל היה שמרטף לילד בן שנתיים שנתעורר מהשינה בבכי גדול ואמו עזבה אותו שישן כדי לשמוע את כל נדרי לחצי שעה ורחמיו של ר' ישראל לא נתנו לו ללכת לבית הכנסת ואירח חברה לתינוק שיחק אתו האכיל אותו וחיתל אותו עד שאמו חזרה מבית הכנסת, ראו עד היכן מגיע מדת החסד אצל הצדיקים מבלי לדרוש מאף אחד שיחליף אותו במשימה.

פעם אחת התאונן איש אחד לפני הרב הקדוש ר' מנחם מנדל מרימינוב ז"ל, כי למרות חפצו לקיים מצות הכנסת אורחים לא יוכל לעשות כן, כי אשתו עינה צרה באורחים, ואם יכניס אורחים לביתו יביא מהומה ומריבה לביתו, ויושבת שלום ביתו. אמר לו הרב: הנה רבותינו אמרו "גדולה הכנסת אורחים יותר מקבלת פני השכינה", ויש להבין: וכי לא די היה להגדיל מעלת מצוה זו עד כדי קבלת השכינה ולומר: "גדולה הכנסת אורחים כמו קבלת פני השכינה"? אלא שחז"ל אמרו: "איש ואשה ששלום ביניהם שכינה שרויה ביניהם ובכן: אם חז"ל היו משווים הכנסת אורחים לקבלת השכינה לא היה שום אדם מקיים מצות הכנסת אורחים, מאחר שאשה עינה צרה באורחים, ואם יכניס אורחים תעורר האישה מדנים בתוך ביתו ותסתלק השכינה מביניהם, ויצא שכרו בהפסדו, על כן אמרו חז"ל, שהכנסת אורחים גדולה יותר מקבלת פני השכינה, שלא יבטל האדם מצוה זו, אפילו אם בסיבתה תסלק האישה את השכינה על ידי מריבה.

### THE WEEKLY HALACHA MOMENT BY NETANEL AMINOV

#### Question:

What types of candles/oil may one use for Hadlakat Nerot?

#### Answer:

Paraffin candles, wax candles, or clear-burning oil lamps may all be used for Hadlakat Nerot. When using wax candles, one should not put them too close together since they will melt faster or even bend and fall over as a result of the heat of each other, and may be put out before one can benefit from them. Preferably, one should use olive oil for Hadlakat Nerot. One who is meticulous to light with olive oil merits a long life and to see their children become Talmidei Chachamim. However, all other oils, such as cotton-seed oil or canola oil may also be used for Hadlakat Nerot, especially because the oil burns very clearly. One should not use oil that is spoiled or oil that something repulsive fell into. Preferably, one should use silver candle sticks for Hadlakat Nerot. If one does not have that then any metal is preferred. If metal is not available, then one can use glass or coated earthenware. One should not use glass or earthenware candlesticks if they are chipped. Similarly, they should be able to stand on their own without leaning on a wall or other object. Similarly, one may use a candelabra that has many candle holders on it. The candles do not have to be in a straight line, and they may be aligned in a circle as well.

#### Question:

What does one do if one forgot to light the Shabbat Candles?

#### Answer:

The Chachamim established that a woman who forgets to light candles before Shabbat must light an extra candle on every Shabbat from then on. This only applies, however, to a woman who forgot entirely to light, but if she lit at least one candle, even though she regularly lights more than one, she does not have to light another candle the next Shabbat for forgetting.

A woman does not have to light an extra candle if forgot to light Shabbat candles for reasons that are beyond her abilities. This includes if: she fell asleep before Shabbat and only awoke after Shekiah; if the clock stopped working and she was not aware of the time; if she was busy with some other work and thought that she had more time to light than she actually had; if she ran out of oil or candles and could not buy any more before Shabbat; if she was stuck somewhere before the onset of Shabbat and could not make it home to light candles; if she accidentally lit earlier than Plag Haminchah and did not know that she does not fulfill her obligation through such a lighting.

If a woman did not light as many candles as she usually lights, then she does not have to light an additional candle the next week, since she has fulfilled her mitzvah of lighting. However, it is praiseworthy for her to add some extra oil or use a larger candle from then on, or she should donate some oil or candles to a poor person. Furthermore, a woman who just became observant does not have to light extra candles for all of the times that she did not light when she was unobservant.

# DAILY WISDOM

Inspiring insights on the Torah

Shabbos, 17 Cheshvan

## Tests

**[G-d] said [to Abraham], "Please Take your son, your only one, the one you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah. Take him up there as an ascent-offering, on one of the mountains that I will designate to you." Genesis 22:2**

The primary aspect of this test was not the self-sacrifice it entailed but the challenge it posed to Abraham's implicit faith in G-d: G-d had promised Abraham that Isaac would be the one to perpetuate his legacy; now G-d was commanding Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, in seeming contradiction to His very own word. Yet Abraham unquestioningly carried out G-d's command.

G-d tests us in order to bring our hidden soul-powers to the fore. In fact, life in general is such a test. Before it descended into this world, the soul related to G-d within the limits of reason; the soul never experienced a love for Him that transcends reason. But once the soul is encased in a physical body, which is by nature antagonistic to spirituality, it must summon its innermost strength to remain faithful to G-d despite life's daily trials and tribulations. With this newfound strength, the soul comes to understand and appreciate G-d in a much more profound and intimate way than it ever could have before descending into this world.

Monday, 19 Cheshvan

## G-d's Estranged Wives

**[Abraham told Eliezer,] "You must go to my land, to my family, and take a wife for my son, Isaac." Genesis 24:4**

The prophets often describe the relationship between G-d and the Jewish people as that of husband and wife. In this sense, we are all entrusted with a mission comparable to the one that Abraham gave Eliezer – to go out and find those souls that have drifted away and bring them back to G-d, their "husband."

Sunday, 18 Cheshvan

## Jewish Destiny

**[Abraham said to the Hittites,] "Allow me [to buy] a burial ground among you." Genesis 23:4**

The Machpeilah Cave is the burial site of Adam and Eve, the first human beings; as such, it originally belonged to all humanity. In purchasing it, Abraham articulated G-d's intention that the mission originally given to humanity as a whole now be passed on to the Jewish people. By accepting this task, the Jewish people were fundamentally separating themselves from the rest of humanity and assuming the role of its mentors. It is our challenge to recognize this destiny today, as well.

Tuesday, 20 Cheshvan

## Benevolence

**[Eliezer prayed,] "Let it be that the maiden to whom I will say, 'Please tilt your pitcher so that I may drink,' and she replies, 'Drink, and I will also give water to your camels,' will be the one whom You have designated for Your servant Isaac." Genesis 24:14**

Since G-d lacks nothing, generosity is the primary way in which He relates to the world. For the same reason, generosity is the natural hallmark of people who feel closely connected to G-d. In contrast, the hallmark of evil is selfishness. No matter how much an evil person possesses, he remains unsatisfied, so he seeks only to take and never to give.

Eliezer therefore sought a woman for Isaac who would display kindness. When Rebecca went beyond fulfilling Eliezer's specific request by offering to also water his camels, he understood that she was a G-dly person and thus a fitting match for the son of Abraham.

By demonstrating kindness to others, we too are "matched" with the most worthy partners – whether soul-mates, friends, business partners, or callings in life.

Wednesday, 21 Cheshvan

### **G-d Spares Nothing**

**[Eliezer said to Rebecca's family,] "My master's wife Sarah bore my master a son after she had grown old, and he gave [his son, Isaac,] all that he owned." Genesis 24:36**

Abraham was willing to give up his entire fortune in order to ensure that Isaac marry Rebecca. So, too, G-d is willing to give up "all His bounty" to help each and every one of us fulfill our mission of bringing about the "marriage" of the physical and the spiritual dimensions of reality by transforming the world into G-d's home through our good deeds.

Thursday, 22 Cheshvan

### **Lighting Up the World**

**Eliezer set out with Rebecca back to Canaan to meet Isaac. After Isaac and Rebecca married, Rebecca assumed Sarah's place as the family matriarch. Genesis 24:67**

Although Abraham lit the Sabbath candles after Sarah's passing (for he observed all the Torah's commandments), his candles did not remain lit throughout the week, as Sarah's had. But when Rebecca began kindling the Sabbath lights, her candles continued to burn miraculously the whole week.

This demonstrates the unique ability of Jewish women and girls – who are all "daughters" of Sarah and Rebecca – to influence the spiritual character of the home, illuminating it with the holiness of the Sabbath throughout the ensuing mundane week. Although the illumination provided by their candles might be physically visible for only a limited time, their spiritual illumination continues throughout the entire week.

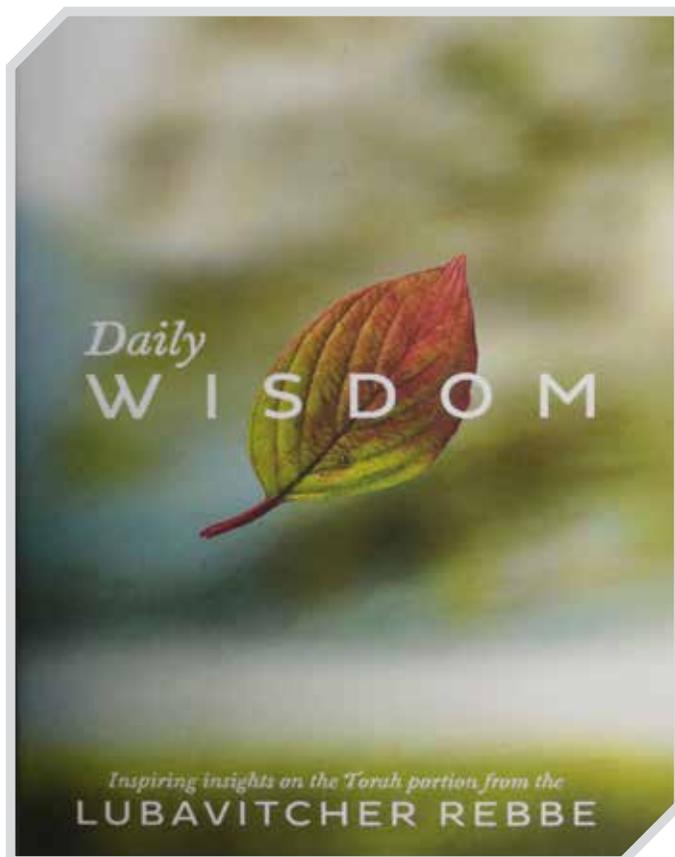
Friday, 23 Cheshvan

### **The Reward of Discipline**

**[Abraham's] sons – Isaac and Ishmael – buried him in the Machpeilah Cave. Genesis 25:9**

Isaac is mentioned first, indicating that although Ishmael was the elder son, he allowed Isaac to lead the funeral. Ishmael thus demonstrated that he had truly repented: His primary sin had been his claim to Isaac's inheritance; it was only after Abraham died that Ishmael could have made this claim, yet he did not.

Sarah deserves the credit for Ishmael's improvement of character. Her insistence on directing Ishmael properly eventually led him to repent enough to recognize the truth of Isaac's primacy. Following Sarah's example, we too should not give up or shy away from correcting and assisting those who truly need our help in the ongoing challenge of self-refinement.



# PARSHA MESSAGES

## G-D AND STRANGERS

By Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

**G**-d appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men were standing over against him; and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent entrance, and bowed down to the earth...

Thus Parashat Vayera opens with one of the most famous scenes in the Bible: Abraham's meeting with the three enigmatic strangers. The text calls them men. We later discover that they were in fact angels, each with a specific mission.

The chapter at first glance seems simple, almost fable-like. It is, however, complex and ambiguous. It consists of three sections:

Verse 1: G-d appears to Abraham.

Verses 2–16 : Abraham meets the men/angels.

Verses 17–33: The dialogue between G-d and Abraham about the fate of Sodom.

The relationship between these sections is far from clear. Do they represent one scene, two or three?

The most obvious possibility is three. Each of the above sections is a separate event. First, G-d appears to Abraham, as Rashi explains, "to visit the sick" after Abraham's circumcision. Then the visitors arrive with the news that Sarah will have a child. Then takes place the great dialogue about justice and the imminent punishment of the people of Sodom.

Maimonides suggests that there are only two scenes: The visit of the angels, and the dialogue with G-d. The first verse does not describe an event at all; it is, rather, a chapter heading. It tells us that the events that follow are all part of a prophetic revelation, a divine-human encounter.

The third possibility is that we have a single continuous scene. G-d appears to Abraham, but before He can speak, Abraham sees the passers-by and asks G-d to wait while he serves them food. Only when they have departed – in verse 17 – does he turn to G-d, and the conversation begins.

The interpretation of the chapter affects – and hinges upon – the way we translate the word Adonai in Abraham's appeal: "Please Adonai, if now I have found favour in your sight, do not pass by, I pray you, from your servant." Adonai can be a reference to one of the names of G-d. It can also be read as "my L-rds" or "sirs." In the first case, Abraham would be addressing G-d. In the second, he would be speaking to the passers-by.

The same linguistic ambiguity appears in the next chapter, when two of Abraham's visitors – now described as angels – visit Lot in Sodom:

And the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot sat by the city gates. When he saw them, he rose to meet them and bowing low, he said, "I pray you now, adonai, turn aside to your servant's house and tarry all night and bathe your feet and you shall rise up early and go on your way."

As there is no contextual element to suggest that Lot might be speaking to G-d, it seems clear, in this case, that adonai refers to the visitors.

The simplest reading then of both texts – the one concerning Abraham, the other, Lot – would be to read the word consistently as "sirs." Several English translations indeed take this approach. Here, for example, is the New English Bible's:

The L-rd appeared to Abraham... He looked up, and saw three men standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the opening of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground. "Sirs," he said, "if I have deserved your favour, do not pass by my humble self without a visit."

Jewish tradition, however, does not.

Normally, differences of interpretation of biblical narrative have no halakhic implications. They are matters of legitimate disagreement. This case of Abraham's addressee is unusual, however, because if we translate Adonai as "G-d," it is a holy name, and both the writing of the word by a scribe, and the way we treat a parchment or document containing it, have special stringencies in Jewish law. If, by contrast, we translate it as "my L-rds" or "sirs," it has no special sanctity. Jewish law rules that in the scene with Lot, adonai is read as "sirs," but in the case of Abraham it is read as "G-d."

This is an extraordinary fact, because it suggests that Abraham actually interrupted G-d as He was about to speak, asking Him to wait while he attended to the visitors. According to tradition, the passage should be read thus:

The L-rd appeared to Abraham... He looked up and saw three men standing over against him. On seeing them, he hurried from his tent door to meet them, and bowed down. [Turning to G-d] he said: "My G-d, if I have found favour in Your eyes, do not leave Your servant [i.e. Please wait until I have given hospitality to these men]." [He then turned to the men and said:] "Let me send for some water so that you may bathe your feet and rest under this tree..."

This daring interpretation became the basis for a principle in Judaism: "Greater is hospitality than receiving the Divine Presence." Faced with a choice between listening to G-d, and offering hospitality to

what seemed to be human beings, Abraham chose the latter. G-d acceded to his request, and waited while Abraham brought the visitors food and drink, before engaging him in dialogue about the fate of Sodom. How can this be so? It seems disrespectful at best, heretical at worst, to put the needs of human beings before attending on the presence of G-d.

What the passage is telling us, though, is something of immense profundity. The idolaters of Abraham's time worshipped the sun, the stars, and the forces of nature as G-ds. They worshipped power and the powerful. Abraham knew, however, that G-d is not in nature but beyond nature. There is only one thing in the universe on which He has set His image: the human person, every person, powerful and powerless alike.

The forces of nature are impersonal, which is why those who worship them eventually lose their humanity. As the book of Psalms puts it:

Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but cannot speak,

eyes, but cannot see;  
they have ears, but cannot hear, nostrils but cannot smell...

They that make them become like them,  
and so do all who put their trust in them.

One cannot worship impersonal forces and remain a person; compassionate, humane, generous, forgiving. Precisely because we believe that G-d is personal, someone to whom we can say "You," we honour human dignity as sacrosanct.

Abraham, father of monotheism, knew the paradoxical truth that to live the life of faith is to see the trace of G-d in the face of the stranger. It is easy to receive the Divine Presence when G-d appears as G-d. What is difficult is to sense the Divine Presence when it comes disguised as three anonymous passers-by. That was Abraham's greatness. He knew that serving G-d and offering hospitality to strangers were not two things but one.

In one of the most beautiful comments on this episode, Rabbi Shalom of Belz notes that in verse 2, the visitors are spoken of as standing above Abraham (nitzavim alav), while in verse 8, Abraham is described as standing above them (omed aleihem). At first, the visitors were higher than Abraham because they were angels and he a mere human being. But when he gave them food and drink and shelter, he stood even higher than the angels.

By choosing the most radical of the three possible interpretations of Genesis 18, the sages allowed us to hear one of the most fundamental principles of the life of faith: We honor G-d by honoring His image, humankind.

# WHEN YOU ARE IN A SLUMP

By Aharon Loschak

When professional baseball players start slumping, it's bad news. They can't hit, they get depressed, and pretty soon, they're benched.

When it happens to the best in the sport, we hear about how they're "trusting their mechanics" even if it's not delivering results. "Trust the process" they say, "and it'll eventually bring the results." It's a fair argument: After all, the mechanics are still there, it's just a matter of time until they break out.

And it usually works.

You see, a player whose swing is off is hopeful and even confident that whatever he's doing will eventually bring the results he's looking for. Day after day, he accumulates empty at-bats, yet his coach (the type that inspires confidence) believes in him and tells him, "Keep doing what you're doing. Any day now, you'll make sweet contact and that ball will pop right off your bat."

He's a professional, after all. He has it in him, and there's no reason to assume he's magically lost his touch. It'll come, it's just a matter of time. There are countless stories to prove it.

This is a wonderful metaphor for life.

## Collect Empty Jugs

In this week's haftarah, we read of a distraught woman who turns to the prophet Elisha crying that her husband died and she's destitute. Worse still, creditors are threatening to kidnap her children as collateral and she doesn't know what to do.

The prophet tells her to collect empty pitchers and fill them with the one small jug of oil that she does have. Miraculously, the oil continues pouring until all the empty containers fill up. She now has a valuable resource, and everyone's happy.

And he said, "Borrow vessels for yourself from outside, from all your neighbors; do not borrow only a few empty vessels. And you shall come and close the door about yourself and about your sons, and you shall pour upon all these vessels; and the full one you shall carry away."

## When Your Fire is Lost

The Alter Rebbe sees this as a metaphor for a person who used to have a "fire" (the Hebrew word for "my husband" can also be read "my fire"), but now it's dead.

You know exactly what that's like. Don't you remember when you were young, passionate, and idealistic? Who doesn't recall those early



days when you first started exploring your Judaism and everything was fascinating and oh-so-wondrous? Every new ritual, every new teaching was exhilarating and refreshing; you simply couldn't get enough of it.

Don't you remember when you were young and naive, and your marriage "sparkled"? People talked about how you were so in love, and you felt as if you had discovered the best thing since sliced bread (or perhaps even better)? Your relationship was alive, and every time you looked at your spouse, you couldn't help but think how lucky you were and how much richer your life had become.

Or how about the early days of your career? Each time you entered the office, every time you got into your truck to start the day, you felt like you were changing the world. You spun magic, and people adored your skills, services, or management.

But then you got older, life roughed you up a bit, and now you're "dead." Religion is boring, your marriage is monotonous, and your job is a black hole. It's not bad per se, it's just dead. You drag your feet around and scoff at all those young, naive puppies who think they're making a difference. "Been there, done that, son. It's all downhill now."

What to do? How do you drag yourself out of the abyss?

"Gather empty containers, and let them be filled with the little bit of oil you do have."

## Trust the Mechanics

Like the slumping player, you must trust your "mechanics." You really do have it. You really are someone excited about praying and keeping Shabbat. You really do have a passionate marriage and love your spouse

deeply. You really are changing the world by fixing broken sinks. You gotta believe it.

Ah, but it's not producing results? You're still spacing out while you pray, still fighting with your wife, and you still hate the sight of leaking pipes?

Keep at it. Trust the process. Keep adding those containers—I don't care if they're empty; just keep piling zeros on the scoreboard. Eventually, you're gonna break out. You're on the cusp. If you stick with the process and believe in yourself, the oil will come spilling out with abundance.

Keep praying, trying to put intention into what you're saying. Keep your eyes closed and stick to your regular Shabbat candle-lighting routine, even though you no longer feel that the heavens are opening.

Keep bringing flowers home for the weekend, and saying things like, "I see something's bothering you, would you like to talk about it right now, or should we dedicate some time later tonight to discuss it in earnest?" You don't mean it? Say it anyway (and do it, too!).

Go to work, and fix yet another broken sink. Remind yourself that an entire family is now happy that they can eat with clean dishes again. You don't care anymore? All those grumpy clients burned you out? You're too cynical to believe it anymore? Say it to yourself anyway, and do whatever it takes to convince yourself that somehow, somewhere, you still believe it.

Eventually, you'll hit a home run.

# HALACHA OF THE WEEK

## Hosting Guests - Rabbi Dov Schochet

Our portion opens up directly following Abraham's circumcision that concluded the last portion. Instead of taking time to recover and relax, he was immediately outside his tent gazing over the horizon to find guests to entertain. Abraham was 99. When the guests finally arrive - three angels disguised as men - Abraham hurries to invite them in even though he was at that same time being addressed by G-d Himself. From here the sages learn that inviting guests in is greater than receiving divine revelation.

This Mitzva, while included in the general Mitzva of loving ones friend as himself, is a subset of the laws of Gemilut Chassadim, acts of kindness. Our sages explain that while the Temple was standing one would receive atonement through the bringing of sacrifices, today when the Temple is destroyed the atonement is achieved through our table. This means by sharing the food on our table with guests one is atoned as if they brought a sacrifice.

When hosting, the host should always display a pleasant demeanor to put the guest at ease. If the host is experiencing a particular challenge or difficulty, they should not share it with the guest. This would dampen their ability to enjoy the hospitality and bring a sense of dread.

It is appropriate for the host to serve the guest himself. We find by Abraham that he personally attended to the guests, and the Talmud explains that whatever Abraham did himself, G-d would do the same directly for the Jewish people. Whatever Abraham asked a servant or worker to do, G-d would only do through an agent. (The consequences of this was enormous, for Abraham asked an agent to bring the water, similarly G-d brought the water to the Jews in the desert through an agent Moses, and that's the context of the story of Moses hitting the rock.)

In general it is considered bad manners to watch someone as they eat, certainly for a guest who might feel uncomfortable and not eat their fill. It is for this reason



Original artwork by Yoram Raanan

that the custom is that the host divides the bread, and cuts a large piece for each guest so they don't have to be ashamed to take on their own.

The Mitzva of inviting guests is tied to the Hebrew word Eshel which is an acronym for the words. The Aleph is for food, the Shin is for drinking and the Lamed is debated. It either stands for lodging or accompanying. The first opinion is giving the basic requirement, food drink and a place to sleep. But the sages add that a part of the obligation is to accompany the guest on their way. They go so far as to say that a host who doesn't accompany the guest is akin to murder! This was so no one should think that the guest is alone and no one would care if they were attacked. It also had the practical benefit that the host who was familiar with the city and its roads could show the guest the best way to travel. While there are various opinions how far one is obligated to accompany the guest, today when all roads are well defined etc. the general custom is to just accompany a short way past the front door.

This Mitzva applies even to wealthy guests, for every traveler when

away from home is considered "needy". If the guest is actually poor the host fulfills two Mitzvot, hosting guests and Tzedaka. One does not fulfill this Mitzva when inviting guests that live in the same city, social guests, for they could eat at home. (Some argue that it is still a minor Mitzva to create feelings of closeness with ones neighbors.) Rather the Mitzva is for a guest who is from out of town and needs to be hosted. The one who hosts them fulfills this Mitzva. Even if they are staying in another's home, if one has an out of town guest for a meal, this Mitzva is fulfilled.

The above distinction is important for there are certain Halachic leniencies when one is hosting, and they only apply to out of town guests. On Shabbat one is generally not allowed to clear out a storage room to make space. Either it is considered a weekday activity or an unnecessary burden on Shabbat. However if someone needs that space for guests they are allowed to clear it out on Shabbat. Similarly anything Rabbinically prohibited on Shabbat that the sages allowed for the performance of a Mitzva, would be allowed for a guest as well. (When and which Rabbinic prohibition are relaxed from a Mitzva is a discussion for a separate article.) Also in any area of Halacha where the codes mention that one can be lenient in a time of great need or to prevent great loss, one could be lenient to use the food for guests as well.

The fact that Abraham was willing to put Hashem on pause, so to speak, in order to tend to guests is an important lesson. At times we have an opportunity to grow in our person spiritual development or appreciate some fine internal idea, but it comes at the cost of engaging and positively influencing others. Here the very first Jew teaches us where our priorities should lie, to change the world around us in a positive way, to elevate our environment and to be a beacon of light is always the most important job to do.

# WHY WERE SODOM AND GOMORRAH DESTROYED RIGHT AFTER

## ABRAHAM WAS CIRCUMCISED? — By Eduard Shyfrin

The residents of Sodom and Gomorrah were wicked sinners both before Abraham was circumcised and after the event. Was it a mere coincidence that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed right after Abraham was circumcised? I don't think so. There is nothing coincidental in the text of the Torah. The leading Torah commentators leave this question unanswered. To answer this question let us put the prior events to detailed analysis. After Abraham came to the land of Canaan, the L-rd promised to deliver this land to him on five occasions.

Right after Abraham came to the land of Canaan, the L-rd appeared to Abraham and said, "To your offspring I will give this land."

After Lot parted from Abraham, the L-rd said to Abraham, "For all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever."

After the war with the four Kings, "I am the L-rd, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it."

After a flaming torch passed between the pieces of animal bodies, "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the River Euphrates."

When establishing the covenant of circumcision, "The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you."

Please refer to the table below we made for convenience:

INSTANCE	PROMISED TO	WHAT?	DURATION	CIRCUMSTANCES
1.	to "offspring"	"this land"	not mentioned	not mentioned
2.	"to you and to your descendants"	"all the land which you see"	"forever"	not mentioned
3.	to "you"	"this land"	not mentioned	not mentioned
4.	to "your descendants"	"from the river of Egypt as far as... the River Euphrates"	not mentioned	not mentioned
5.	"to you and your descendants"	"the whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner"	"everlasting possession"	Abraham's circumcision

The table above leads us to conclude that only in the fifth case was there an explicit and binding covenant between the L-rd and Abraham. What is particularly important is that only then was the covenant paid for (by circumcision).

As the Torah indicates later, a man comes into the rightful possession of anything only if such a man pays for this thing. We see this in the case when Abraham purchased the Cave of Machpelah. Abraham did not accept it as gift from Ephron and insists on paying for it, as he knew that the cave would come into his rightful possession only once paid for.

It should also be mentioned that having entered into a covenant with Abraham, the L-rd never returns to the matter of the land of Canaan.

Thus, we understand that having fulfilled the covenant of circumcision, Abraham and his descendants have received the land of Canaan into their rightful and eternal possession. To support this we may quote Rashi, who commented the following citation from the Torah: "the L-rd said 'Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?'" saying, "I should not do this leaving Abraham unaware. I gave him this land and five cities (that are to be destroyed)... May I exterminate the sons without letting know about this their father who loves Me?" Our men of wisdom (e.g. Bereshit Rabbah) say the same, quoting a parable telling about a king who wished to do certain things in the land owned by a nobleman and consulted that nobleman before doing those things.

However, Rashi in his comment does not provide an answer to the question why Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed specifically right after Abraham was circumcised. Nahmanides offers the following comment: "Know that the verdict to Sdom was delivered in consideration of the special status of the Land of Israel, which is the land of the L-rd, and thus this land does not tolerate the evil-livers, so before that land expelled all the wicked Canaan tribes it also expelled the men of Sdom who were the most sinful of these tribes both against the Heaven and the people."

The comment by Nahmanides seems to leave a certain loose end. First, the whole Earth belongs to the L-rd. Second, if the Land of Israel is some kind of special "land of the L-rd," when did it become so? If the Land of Israel was the special land of the L-rd from the beginning of time, then why did the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah have to be tolerated before Abraham was circumcised?

The Land of Israel is named the Holy Land. Sacredness implies difference. Let us try to find out in what way the Land of Israel is different from other lands.

It is traditionally believed that the dust the L-rd used to form the first man was taken from the Land of Israel. After the Great Flood, this land came to the possession of Canaan, grandson of Noah and his descendants. However, Noah had cursed Canaan, and Nachmanides believes that this gave legal grounds to passing this land into the possession of Abraham and his descendants. I believe that the main difference (sacredness) of the Land of Israel is that it is here that the L-rd and man established their first covenant. As a token of this covenant, Abraham and his descendants assumed a voluntary commandment of circumcision. The greatness of Abraham's deed is that he gave to the L-rd not a part of his belongings but a part of himself, a part that can never be returned or recovered.

The above reasoning leads to the following conclusions:

After the covenant of circumcision was established was the land of Canaan irrevocably and unconditionally passed into the eternal possession of Abraham and his descendants. At that time it was established that the Land of Israel became the special Land of the L-rd.

This explains why the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah could no longer be tolerated within the sacred land. And this is why these cities were destroyed.

# MY ENCOUNTER WITH THE REBBE

## THE MEETING THAT LASTED 45 YEARS

MR. AVRAHAM INFELD

I grew up in South Africa in a family that was focused on Jewish education. In fact, although they were not religious, my parents were influential in establishing the first Jewish day school in South Africa where I was educated.

In 1959, shortly after graduating high school, I made aliyah to Israel. There I studied law and also started keeping Shabbat and observing Torah. Eventually, I went to work for the Jewish Agency and was sent as its emissary to the United States.

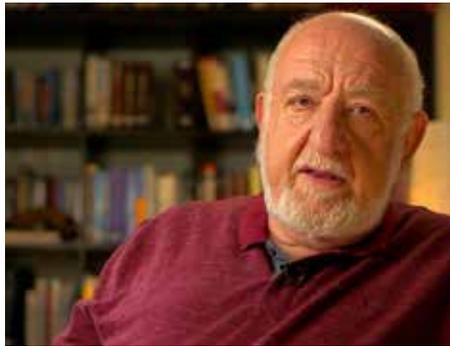
While in the United States — I was posted to the Baltimore office — I was asked one day in 1969 to accompany a person of great distinction who was visiting from Israel to his meeting with the Lubavitcher Rebbe. I myself had never met the Rebbe although, of course, I knew about him — one can't grow up Jewish without having heard of Chabad or the Rebbe.

The very important visitor from Israel — whom I am not at liberty to name — was not Torah-observant, but he wanted to behave in a correct manner when meeting the Rebbe, and this was the reason my assistance was requested.

We arrived at Chabad Headquarters in Crown Heights, where the gentleman from Israel was welcomed with great respect and taken to see the Rebbe while I waited outside. After about a half-hour, he came out and said that the Rebbe wanted to speak with me. I said, "You must be mistaken. There is no reason why the Rebbe would want to speak with me." But he insisted that I go in.

Before I tell of what took place when I went into the Rebbe's office, I have to mention that shortly before these events, I had decided to leave the field of Jewish education and had accepted a position to run a new start-up business in Israel. This is why I was so astonished by what happened next.

I walked into the room, and the Rebbe was standing there. I knew I was standing in the presence of greatness. It is hard for me to describe the emotional feeling of coming face-to-face with the Rebbe — I can only say that it was a rare moment in my life. I felt the Rebbe's presence fill the entire room, and I felt the love in his eyes. He took my hand, held it in both



of his hands and said to me in Yiddish, "Avraham, bleibt in chinuch — Avraham, stay in education."

How he could have known that earlier that week I had signed a contract to leave education, I have absolutely no idea. But the way he urged me to stay, with such warmth, touched me deeply and affected me profoundly.

The distinguished visitor was also affected. Afterwards he said to me several times, "Yesh poh mashehu meyuchad — There is something special here." I have said that, knowing this individual, it was unusual for him to make a statement like this.

When I went home, I cancelled that contract. My wife will testify that for the next two or three months I walked around as if on a cloud. The meeting with the Rebbe had such an incredible impact upon me, even though it lasted only a few minutes.

Of course, I sent the Rebbe a note of thanks, telling him that I decided to follow his advice, and I received a reply from his secretary that the Rebbe sends me his blessing.

The end result was that I dedicated myself to Jewish education for the next forty-five years. I returned to Israel, where I built an institution called the Melitz Center for Jewish Zionist Education, working with tens of thousands of young Israelis and doing educational work with the Israeli Army. And eventually, in May of 2003, I became the international head of Hillel, the world's largest Jewish college campus

organization.

When I returned to the United States to work with Hillel, I had some Hillel leaders come to me and complain that Chabad is competing with us on campus. But I could not understand how anybody could possibly relate to Chabad as competition. After all, were it not for the Rebbe of Chabad, I wouldn't be in education, and I wouldn't be the president of Hillel.

But much more than that, I felt strongly that anybody who is in Jewish education has to see Chabad as a partner. Even when people disagree with some of Chabad's underlying principles, they can't possibly disagree with that very sincere love for every Jew that is an inherent part of Chabad. So, I think that, perhaps, my task at Hillel was to try to change the relationship between Hillel and Chabad, and I think I succeeded. I demonstrated that if any problem arises it can be solved because when there is a desire to work together, we can work together.

This was the result of the few minutes that I spent with the Rebbe — the few minutes in which I confronted greatness, was met with love and warmth, and in which the course of my life was completely changed. For this I will be forever grateful.

I would just like to add that, in my view, the Rebbe was unique among Jewish leaders. He built a movement based on chessed, on loving kindness — a movement that is slowly but surely changing the Jewish world. The Jews are a people who have a covenant with God, and the Rebbe conveyed to his followers that their love for this people must be unlimited.

At Hillel, we would spend hours upon hours training people how to work with students on campus, but nothing can compare with the effect of a Chabad rabbi and his wife opening up their home to students and welcoming them with genuine love and warmth. That doesn't come from training. That doesn't come from being taught how to do it. It has to be implanted in the heart and soul. And this is what the Rebbe did.

# STORIES WITH SOUL

In a small corner of the vast expanse of Russia there lived a Jewish innkeeper. In appearance, there was nothing special about him. He dressed like a peasant and spoke like a peasant. But this simple, earthy man was admired and respected by villagers all over his district. It was known to one and all that he was in reality a holy man, a miracle worker. Whomever he blessed, was sure that the blessing would be fulfilled.



So, after a time, the reputation of the innkeeper wonder-worker spread, until word of him reached the Rebbe of Apta, who then lived in Mezibuzh. The Rebbe became curious to meet this man and learn his secret. If the man was, indeed, as simple as they all said, then whence his mystical power?

The Apter Rebbe harnessed his horses and went to the tavern. When he arrived, he looked the tavern-keeper up and down, but could perceive no nuance of greatness in him. He studied his movements, but saw nothing remarkable in anything the innkeeper did. Finally, the Rebbe approached the man and questioned him, "Tell me, please, from where are your special powers? Why does Heaven grant all of your blessings?"

The man smiled, and replied straightforwardly, "My powers come from my faith in G-d which is as strong as a mighty oak."

"Since my youth, I have always trusted in G-d, and no matter what ever happened to me I was always certain that it would be ultimately for the best, since it came from G-d. I never despaired and I always gave charity generously, particularly when times were tough."

"As for guests, I have always kept an open house and treated passersby with the greatest hospitality."

The innkeeper paused and then continued. "One night,

when I had a house full of guests, there came a knock at my door. It was a messenger from the poretz (landowner) saying that I was to appear before him at once or else he would have me thrown into prison.

"Now, I had a problem, for I had a lot of hungry people to feed. If I left at once, they would probably go to bed hungry. I stayed and took care of my guests, putting my trust in G-d that no harm would come to me."

"Only hours later, after my guests were comfortably in their rooms did I venture out to meet my landlord. When I arrived, he was brimming with goodwill; apparently he had had a change of heart. Not only didn't he throw me into jail, but he greeted me like an old friend. Everything worked out all right."

"Whenever I put my trust in G-d, I have nothing to worry about. Two years ago I lost all my money. I had no trouble maintaining my faith, but it was a different thing for my family. They were desperate and begged me to go and find a partner. They could see no other solution."

"This was against my own ideas. Why should I suddenly begin to rely on flesh and blood when all my life I had trusted only in G-d, and He had never let me down? In the end, I couldn't hold out against them, and so, I set out to find a business partner."

"I walked through the green countryside that was bursting with G-d's goodness and bounty, red apples here, luscious grapes to the other side, contented cows grazing

lazily, and I stopped in my tracks. My heart was almost bursting with my love of G-d, and my trust in Him had never been greater. Could not the One Who created all of the beautiful greenery and sustained it eternally also care for me and my little family? Why was I seeking out some human being to lift me up from all my troubles. I raised my eyes to the heavens and prayed, 'G-d, You are the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe, please grant my prayer. I have lost all my money, and I cannot operate my inn. My family tells me to get myself a partner, a mere mortal of flesh and blood. Why can't You become my partner? We'll split everything down the middle. Your half, I'll distribute to the poor, and my half, I'll use to support my family.'

"No sooner had I finished, when I felt something in my pocket. I reached for it, and to my astonishment it was a silver coin of such value that I had never owned one like it. And I knew that G-d had accepted my proposition; we were partners, and this was the first profit."

"With this coin I replenished my stock and resumed my trade. When the first profits came in, I put one half aside for my 'partner' in a box that I keep behind the counter. I am scrupulously careful with these funds, even more so than with my own money. This is my whole story."

The Apter Rebbe, who had been listening with rapt attention, rose, thanked the tavern-keeper, and left. When he returned to his own shul in Mezibuzh he told the entire story to his Chasidim, and concluded "When one enters a partnership with G-d, and is completely honest in his business dealings, G-d enables him to perform wonders."

# 'OF MIRACLES, MEDICINE AND MINDSETS': A CHABAD COUPLE'S FIGHT FOR THEIR BABY'S LIFE

BY ROCHEL HOROWITZ

When Rabbi Elie and Chaya Rochel Estrin were preparing to welcome their sixth child into the world, the news that their baby had developed multiple cardiac defects in utero felt like a bombshell. The doctors' prognosis was grim. The medical conditions were inoperable, and they weren't sure if the baby would be born alive. At a loss for what to do, Rabbi Estrin set off to visit the Ohel in Queens, N.Y.—the resting place of the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, of righteous memory—to ask for a blessing.

Nissi Estrin was born on a cold winter afternoon on Feb. 8, 2016. The doctors were sure he wouldn't make it. But Nissi proved everyone wrong.

The newborn spent the first few days of his life in the neonatal intensive-care unit at the University of Washington Medical Center. "The doctors gently told us that our baby could die at any minute," recalls Chaya Rochel Estrin. "There was nothing they could do for him. They suggested we contact a hospice service and start saying our final goodbyes."

As Nissi fought for his life, the Estrins searched for a medical professional who would take on their case, begging anyone that would listen to "give Nissi a chance." A few days after their son was born, they received the news that the Seattle Children's Hospital agreed to take him under their care.

When he was six days old, Nissi underwent open-heart surgery. A few weeks later, he suffered a cardiac arrest. To date, Nissi has survived four cardiac arrests and multiple open-heart surgeries.

Almost six years later, with a zest for life and broad smile, Nissi thrives, uplifting all those with whom he comes into contact. "A friend recently told me that Nissi is their 'personal life mentor,'" says Chaya Rochel Estrin. "Every time I'm going through something rough, I close my eyes and imagine Nissi's warm, beautiful smile, and that's all I need to feel better."

That was part of the encouragement that led the Estrins to draft their experiences into an online document to share their story with those who could use support and guidance. "People were always telling us: 'You really should write a book,' so we did. We worked on it together until the end of the 2020 lockdown. We aimed to write the book



as an inspiring story of hope."

## A Family's Journey of Perseverance

Miracles, Medicine and Mindsets chronicles their personal journey of raising Nissi, a delightful little boy born with a single ventricle, pulmonary atresia and (PVC) premature ventricular contractions.

The Estrins describe both the struggles and joys that accompany raising a child born with physical challenges. Poignant and uplifting, the book is replete with anecdotes, as well as perspectives gleaned from a lifetime of Chassidic study that "carried them through." Especially instructive for them were lessons of bitachon (absolute trust in G-d's goodness) emphasized in the Rebbe's teachings.

The book includes practical guidance on crisis management, patient advocacy and self-care for parents who are struggling, as well as advice for friends and loved ones who want to be supportive but don't know how.

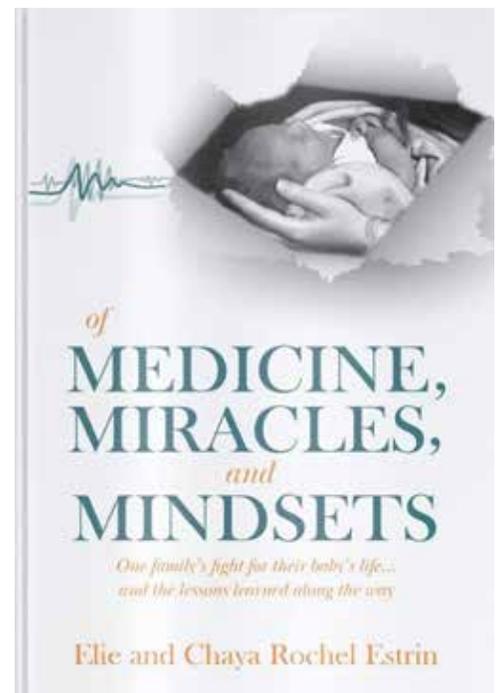
Raising their son has been a journey, says Chaya Rochel Estrin. "We're thankful to G-d to have 'come out at the other end,' but we remember the fear, grief and uncertainty well. Sharing our story and experience in Of Miracles, Medicine and Mindsets is our 'small' contribution to helping people navigate the waters of raising children with disabilities. No one should be forced to go this alone."

When asked about what mindsets helped her stay calm during their many challenges, Chaya Rachel Estrin says:

"Taking one day at a time definitely helped me stay present, focusing on the here and now. Realizing that Hashem has a plan and that He loves us was definitely a game-changer. Knowing and meditating on the belief that He's got our backs and He's taking care of us definitely helped us through trying times. That sort of acceptance helped me better handle the situation. Simply recognizing that Hashem is orchestrating it all and that He knows what He's doing was comforting to me."

Estrin says she feels lucky to have "gotten past" those moments of intense grief and fear of the unknown, but keeping in mind G-d's love for her and her family, helped to "soothe the wound."

"Hashem does really tough things to us," she says. "We don't understand it, and I don't think there's really any explanation for it. Though G-d has a plan, we can still cry and beg that we see revealed goodness in our lives."



"Of Miracles, Medicine and Mindsets" can be purchased via the Kindle app on Amazon.com.

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# FRENCH CONNECTION

## PARACHA

### Le mythe de la charité

par Yanki Tauber

Les Juifs ne croient pas en la charité.

Ne vous laissez pas abuser par leur philanthropie légendaire, le nombre incroyable de leurs organisations sociales et humanitaires ou par leur invention de la boîte de charité, du mechoula'h et de l'Appel Unifié. Dites-le vous bien : les Juifs ne pratiquent pas la charité et ce concept est virtuellement inexistant dans la tradition juive.

Au lieu de la charité, le Juif fait la Tsédaka, ce qui signifie la « droiture » et la « justice ». Quand un Juif aide par son argent, son temps ou ses ressources les nécessiteux, il n'est pas en train d'être bienveillant, généreux ou « charitable ». Il fait ce qui est droit et juste.

On raconte l'histoire d'un riche 'hassid qui reçut un jour une lettre de son Rabbi, Rabbi Avraham Yehochoua Héschel de Apt, lui demandant de donner 200 roubles pour sauver un homme menacé d'une ruine financière. Mais cette lettre arrivait à un moment où les affaires étaient particulièrement difficiles et contenait une requête pour une somme très importante. Après un moment de réflexion, le 'hassid décida de ne pas répondre à la demande du Rabbi.

Peu de temps après, la fortune du 'hassid commença à décliner. Une aventure financière rencontra un échec retentissant, puis une autre et bientôt, il avait tout perdu.

- Rabbi ! s'écria-t-il lorsqu'il eut obtenu une entrevue avec son Rabbi. Je sais pourquoi tout cela m'est arrivé. Mais en quoi mon péché était-il si terrible pour mériter une telle punition ? Et est-ce juste de punir sans avertir ? Si vous m'aviez dit combien il était important de donner ces 200 roubles, j'aurais obéi à la lettre à vos instructions !

- Mais tu n'as pas du tout été puni, répliqua le Rabbi.

- Que voulez-vous dire ? Toute ma richesse m'a été enlevée !

- Rien de ce qui t'appartenait ne t'a été enlevé, dit le Rabbi. Vois-tu, quand mon âme est descendue sur terre, un certain nombre de ressources matérielles me furent attribuées pour que je m'en serve dans mon travail. Mais mes jours et mes nuits sont occupés par la prière, l'étude, l'enseignement de la Torah et



le temps que je passe à donner des conseils à ceux qui me sollicitent. Je n'ai pas le temps de m'occuper de gérer tout cet argent. C'est ainsi que ces sommes ont été placées entre les mains d'un certain nombre de « banquiers », des gens qui se donnent comme devoir de soutenir mon travail. Quand tu as échoué dans ton rôle, mon compte avec toi a été transféré à un autre « banquier ».

Dans notre monde si manifestement – et parfois violemment – partagé entre la prospérité et la pauvreté, il existe deux points de vue généraux sur la richesse et la propriété.

a) Qu'il s'agit des possessions légitimes de ceux qui les ont gagnées ou héritées. S'ils choisissent de partager même une petite quantité de leurs biens, c'est considéré comme un acte noble et digne de louanges.

b) Que la répartition inégale des ressources de la terre parmi ses habitants est un scandale. Posséder plus que sa part est une injustice voire un crime. Donner aux nécessiteux n'est pas une « bonne action », mais la rectification d'un tort.

La tradition juive rejette ces deux perspectives. Selon la loi de la Torah, donner aux nécessiteux est une mitsva – un commandement et une bonne action. Cela signifie d'un côté que ce n'est pas un acte arbitraire, mais un devoir et une obligation. Mais de l'autre côté, c'est une bonne action, un acte méritoire pour celui qui reconnaît son devoir et accomplit son obligation.

Le Juif croit dans le fait que la richesse

matérielle n'est pas un crime, mais une bénédiction de D.ieu. Celui qui a été béni de la sorte doit se considérer comme le « banquier » de D.ieu, celui qui a le privilège d'avoir été choisi par D.ieu pour dispenser aux autres les ressources de Sa création.

D.ieu aurait pu partager de façon égale toutes les richesses de Son monde entre tous ses habitants. Mais alors, le monde n'aurait été rien de plus qu'une manifestation du pouvoir créateur de D.ieu, aussi prévisible qu'un jeu vidéo et aussi statique qu'une œuvre d'art dans un musée. D.ieu voulait un monde dynamique, un monde dans lequel l'homme, lui aussi, est créateur et nourricier. Un monde dont le contrôle a été remis, dans une certaine mesure, à des êtres qui ont la possibilité de remplir ou bien de manquer à leur rôle.

Aussi, la loi juive requiert-elle que chaque individu donne la Tsédaka, même si lui-même ne vit que grâce à la Tsédaka qu'il reçoit des autres. Si le but de la Tsédaka n'était que de rectifier la distribution inégale des richesses entre les riches et les pauvres, cette loi n'aurait aucun sens. La Tsédaka toutefois, est bien plus que cela : c'est l'opportunité qui est donnée à chacun de devenir « un partenaire de D.ieu dans la création ».

Donner la Tsédaka est, par-dessus tout, un geste qui rend humble. Devant nous, se tient un être humain moins fortuné que nous. Nous savons que D.ieu aurait pu très facilement lui donner tout ce dont il a besoin, au lieu de faire en sorte qu'il vienne à nous pour que nous subvenions à ses besoins. Voici une personne qui souffre de la pauvreté pour pouvoir nous donner à nous l'occasion d'accomplir un acte divin !

De la même manière, si la Providence divine nous place en position de recevoir un don charitable, nous ne devons pas en être démoralisés. Car nous savons que D.ieu aurait pu tout aussi bien pourvoir Lui-même à tous nos besoins, et que notre obligation de recourir à une aide humaine existe seulement pour donner à l'autre la possibilité la volonté divine. Notre « bienfaiteur » nous donne de l'argent ou une autre ressource, mais nous lui donnons quelque chose de bien plus important : l'occasion de devenir le partenaire de D.ieu dans la création.

Selon les paroles de nos Sages : « Bien plus que le riche fait pour le pauvre, le pauvre accomplit pour le riche. »

# LATIN LINK

## REFLEXION SEMANAL

### Parasha de la Semana

#### El test ácido

Por Yossy Goldman

La semana pasada leímos cómo Abraham recibió de Di-s la orden de marcharse. “Lej lejá: Deja tu tierra, el lugar donde naciste, la casa de tu padre, ve a la tierra que yo te mostraré”. Di-s le dijo que abandonara sus conocidas zonas de confort y que viajara hacia un destino desconocido. Más adelante, se lo conocería como la Tierra de Israel, y a Abraham, como la persona a quien le fue prometida. En ese momento, sin embargo, es probable que Abraham no tuviera idea de hacia dónde se dirigía. Pero las órdenes son órdenes, así que partió con fe.

Al final, la gran travesía de Abraham sería la respuesta a su llamado a ser el padre del monoteísmo. Se enfrentó al mundo pagano del momento y tuvo más éxito del que podría haber soñado. De hecho, creo que no valoramos lo suficiente a nuestros héroes bíblicos. No logramos apreciar la enormidad de la contribución de Abraham a la civilización. ¡Lo que hizo fue nada menos que cambiar él solo la mentalidad de todo el mundo! Creer en un solo Creador invisible fue un shock cultural para quienes en ese entonces veneraban a varios ídolos. Este logro hizo de Abraham no sólo el padre fundador del pueblo judío, sino también el padre de todas las religiones monoteístas del mundo. No hay dudas de por qué una investigación reciente sobre “Las 100 personas más influyentes” de la historia lo ubicó a Abraham en uno de los primeros puestos, incluso muy por encima de Madonna, Britney y los dos Bills (Clinton y Gates).

Según nuestros sabios, este viaje hacia lo desconocido fue la primera de diez pruebas de fe que el Todopoderoso le presentó a Abraham. La última prueba, sobre la que leímos en Rosh Hashaná y también en la parashá de esta semana, se considera la prueba suprema. La akeidá, la atadura de Itzjak, el casi sacrificio del hijo que había esperado un siglo para tener, tiene mucho



más lugar en la Torá, en nuestros rezos y en los escritos.

¿Por qué es así? La primera prueba de lej lejá tuvo un impacto universal, mientras que la atadura de Itzjak fue sólo algo entre un padre, su hijo y Di-s. En un lugar perdido en la cima de una montaña, muy lejos de la mirada de la gente, tuvo lugar un drama personal. El viaje de Abraham, por otro lado, tuvo una audiencia casi mundial. Seguro, esta prueba universal debería ser considerada mucho más importante que la prueba personal de un padre y su hijo.

La respuesta es que antes de poder emprender una misión universal para la humanidad, debemos primero entender nuestra relación personal con Di-s. O, para ponerlo de una manera más simple, antes de cambiar el mundo debes saber quién eres. Si no te conoces, si no reconoces tu propia misión espiritual, ¿cómo puedes aspirar a influenciar a toda la sociedad?

Los sabios enseñan: “Perfeccionate a ti mismo antes de pretender perfeccionar a otros”. Por supuesto, esto no quiere decir que no deberíamos intentar enseñar nada a otros hasta ser perfectos. (¿Quién es perfecto?). Lo que sugiere es que si esperamos tener un impacto en otros, nuestro llamado debe resonar auténtico y genuino. ¿Cómo

podemos causar una impresión en otros si no somos nosotros mismos individuos creíbles? Un buen vendedor cree en su producto (incluso si tuvo que convencerse de ello...).

El legendario Hilel nos dice, en la Ética de los padres: “No juzgues al prójimo hasta que hayas estado en su lugar (makom)”, y una interesante interpretación alternativa entiende que quiere decir que para juzgar a una persona con precisión, uno primero debería establecer qué tipo de reputación tiene en su propio makom, en su propia ciudad y en su casa. ¿No hay algo de verdad en el chiste de Jackie Mason sobre el marido judío que pisa fuerte por toda la ciudad pero que, no bien entra por la puerta de su casa se convierte en un shlemiel sumiso?

Hace varios años descubrí una frase que tuvo un enorme impacto en mí: “Cada rabino tiene un único sermón: la forma en la que vive su vida”. Es algo muy cierto. Podemos dar consejos desde hoy hasta el próximo lom Kipur, pero si no “pasamos a los hechos” y vivimos el juego que afirmamos jugar, no vamos a conmovir a nuestra audiencia. Los oradores más elocuentes no logran impresionar si quienes los escuchan saben que su mensaje es falso y no está respaldado por un genuino compromiso personal.

Entonces, mientras la historia del viaje de Abraham y su misión universal aparece en la Torá y sucede en la historia antes que la prueba final, en esencia la akeidá es suprema. No sólo porque fue la más difícil, sino también porque nuestro compromiso personal y nuestra integridad siempre son lo que conforma la base moral de nuestra misión en el mundo. En definitiva, eso es lo único que valida a la persona y a su mensaje. Y ese es el test ácido para todos nosotros.

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## Quinoa-Stuffed Chicken

Recipe By Michal Frischman

### INGREDIENTS

8 boneless, skinless chicken thighs  
2 cups Empire Chicken Broth or other chicken stock or water  
1 cup raw quinoa, rinsed  
1 packed cup flatleaf parsley, chopped and divided  
juice and zest of 1 lemon  
1/2 a red onion, finely minced  
1/4 cup Bartenura Extra-Virgin Olive Oil  
2 onions, sliced  
2 whole lemons  
1 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon pepper  
1 teaspoon Gefen Garlic Powder

## PREPARATION

1. Bring the chicken stock or water to a boil and cook the quinoa until all the water is absorbed. Add in half of the chopped parsley, lemon juice and zest, chopped red onion, and olive oil. Season to taste (this will depend on if your chicken stock was preseasoned, or if water was used in the quinoa). Set the quinoa aside to cool.
2. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit (180 degrees Celsius).
3. Lay the sliced onions on the bottom of a 9- x 13-inch (20- x 30-centimeter) baking dish. Stuff each boneless chicken thigh with about two tablespoons cooled quinoa mixture and roll up, then place on top of the onions.
4. Slice each lemon in half and squeeze over the top of the chicken, then tuck the lemon halves into the pan as well. Sprinkle the chicken with salt, pepper, and garlic powder.
5. Cover tightly and bake for one and a half hours. Sprinkle with remaining parsley before serving.

\* SOURCE: KOSHER.COM

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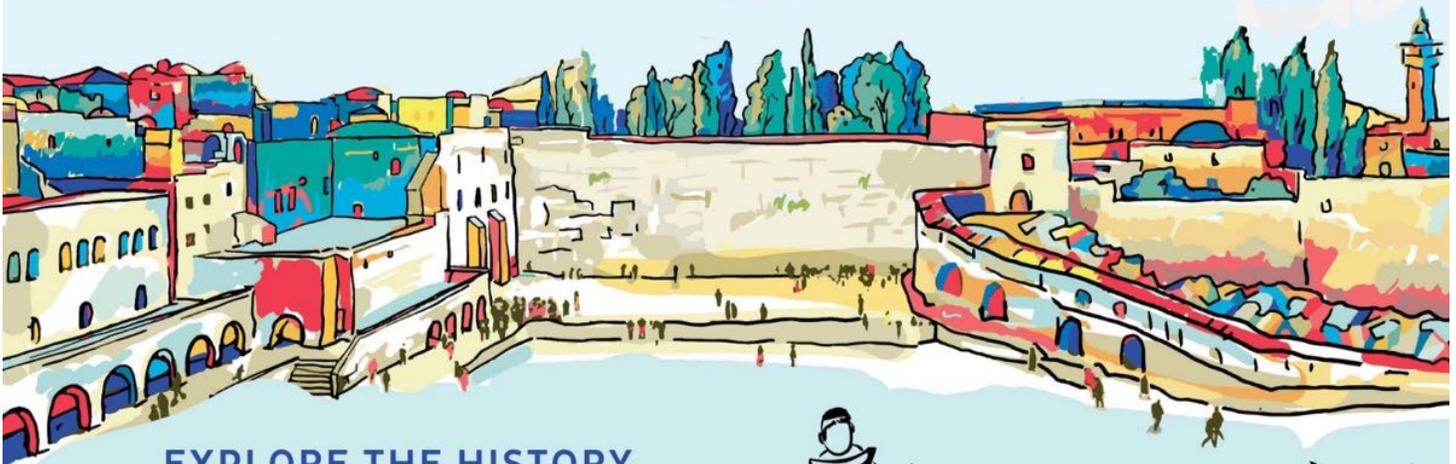


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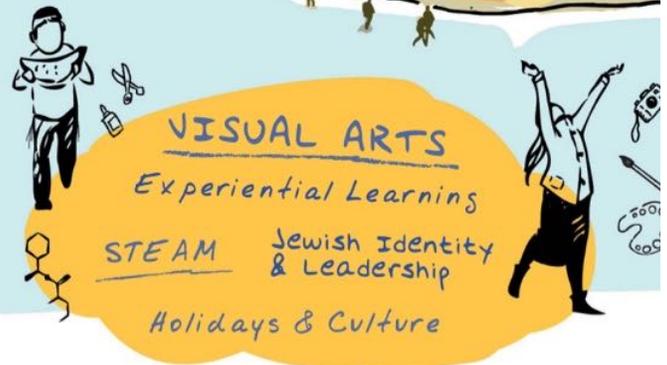
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