

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON VAYEIRA - 5758

B'S'D'

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"RavFrاند" List - Rabbi Frاند on Parshas Vayera

A Man's Level is Determined by His Wife's Level At the beginning of the parsha, during the description of the dialogue between the Angels and Avraham, we find the verse, "And they said to him 'Where is Sarah your wife?'" [Bereishis 18:9] If one looks in a Chumash, he will notice that the 4 letter word "eilav" - "to him" has 3 dots on top of it. Rash"i quotes a famous Chazal that when there are more dotted letters in a word than undotted letters, one should (homiletically) expound only those letters that have dots on top of them. In this case, the reading would be "And they said to him, where are you (ayo)? Meaning they turned to Sarah and asked where Avraham was. Rash"i interprets that they actually asked two questions. They asked Sarah where Avraham was (i.e. - how he was doing) and they asked Avraham where Sarah was (i.e. - how she was doing). Rash"i says that this teaches us Derech Eretz [proper behavior, manners] - that a guest should inquire about the welfare of both the host and hostess.

The Chernobyl Rebbe expresses a different interpretation of this Chazal: They did ask, "Where is Avraham?" but they did not ask this to Sarah. The dialog was strictly between Avraham and the Angels. First they asked Avraham "Where are you?" and then they asked, "Where is Sarah, your wife?" What does it mean that they said to Abraham "Where are you?" - He was standing right there! Says the Chernobyl Rebbe, they asked him "where are you holding in your life?" The way in which one asks a man where he is holding in his life is by inquiring "where is (Sarah) your wife holding?" A man's level is determined by his wife's level. If one's wife is on a high level, we know that the husband is similarly on a high level; if however she is not on a high level, we also know where he is. The type of wife that a person has largely determines the way that the person acts, his standard of living and his goals in life. If the wife wants the finer things in life, a better lifestyle, a husband to bring home a salary to support all those things; if the wife wants a lifestyle that requires 60 or 65 hours a week of work, then we know where the husband is holding. On the other hand if the wife is one who suffices with little, if she is happy with whatever her husband can bring home in 40 hours a week, his life will be different. If her attitude is "I will have a little less, but you will learn a little more, you will occupy yourself in communal affairs a little more" then we know where her husband is holding. "And they said, 'Where are you holding, Abraham?' How are we going to know where you are holding? 'Where is Sarah your wife holding?'"

Rav Elchonon's Unpopular Dvar Torah Towards the end of the parsha we find the incident where Avraham Avinu [our father] went down to Gerar. Avraham was afraid that Avimelech would want to take Sara for his own wife, perhaps even killing Avraham in the process. As a result, Avraham identified Sarah as his sister; Avimelech took her, almost came to the point of sinning with another man's wife, until finally G-d identified Sarah to Avimelech as Avraham's wife. Avimelech says to Avraham, "What have you seen that you did this thing?" [Bereishis 20:10] "You almost got me into terrible trouble. I thought she was your sister. It turns out that she is your wife. Why did you do this? Why didn't you just tell me the truth?" Abraham responds, "Only because I said there is no Fear of G-d in this place and I feared that they would kill me because of my wife." [20:11] The following insight of the Malbim was said over by Rav Elchanan Wasserman to a group of Rabbis in Germany in the 1930s: The Malbim emphasizes Avraham's use of the word Only (Rak) in the sentence "Only... there is no Fear of G-d in this place." Abraham told the people,

"Gerar is a wonderful place. It is a place of culture and refinement. It is a place of fine upstanding citizens. But that is not going to help. Why? Because if there is no Fear of G-d, and if the only authority is the laws of man, then laws can change. The only law that will always have force is Divine Law. In a society that yesterday said that something is murder and today calls it euthanasia; in a society that 20 years ago called it killing babies but today, -- for sex selection -- kills those same fetuses, there is no hope. There is no hope for such a society. Unless there is Fear of G-d, unless there is a Divine Law - an Absolute Truth that is unchanging - no one has guarantees. There are no safeguards. Anything can happen. That is what Avraham Avinu told the King of Gerar. "You are fine and cultured. However, if lust will grab you or some other motive - economic, sociological, whatever it is - nothing will stand in the way of you achieving and fulfilling your desires. Because there is no Fear of G-d in this place.

Rav Elchonon said over this Malbim about what can happen in Germany in the decade immediately prior to the rise of Nazi power. The other Rabbis scoffed at him and said "Not here. Never Again! Germany is a country of laws, moral standing, technologically advanced, not the Middle Ages. Not here." Yes, Germany was a country of laws. In 1933, one of the first laws that the Nazis passed was a law against cruelty to animals. Gypsies should not be allowed to perform with dancing bears. Why? Because it was not right for the German people to stand idly by when innocent animals were taken advantage of and perhaps not cared for properly. Those were the "laws" of Germany. A mere five years later there were different "laws" in Germany. Rav Reuvain Bulka remembers learning in Cheder [school] in Germany after "Kristall Nacht." A child came into Cheder and told the Rebbe that his house was on fire. The Rebbe ran and called the fire department, pleading with them to extinguish the fire. The fire department responded, "We are sorry we can't put out the fire in your house. It is the law." The law was changed. Fires in Jewish homes could not be put out.

"Only there is no Fear of G-d in this place." If there is no Divine Law then laws mean nothing. The Germans, with all their culture and with all their manners and with all their propriety can worry about bears but not worry about humans.

Rav Hutner's "Mitzvah L'Farsem" [Mitzvah To Publicize] Story - When Rav Hutner was learning in Slabodka he remembers that Rav Avraham Elya Kaplan went from Slabodka, Lithuania to Berlin to be with Rav Dovid Tzvi Hoffman. He came back to Slabodka for an Ellul [the month before Rosh Hashana] and the Alter from Slabodka asked for his impressions of the German people. Among other things, Rav Kaplan told them that the Germans were a kind people. They had a polite way of speaking. If someone asks directions from a German, he doesn't just give orders (go two blocks and take a right); after he finishes the instructions, he will politely ask "nicht wahr?" (Is this not so?) This showed refinement. He would not say anything definitive; he would always end the sentence with a tentative, 'nicht wahr?' At that point an argument broke out between the students of the Yeshiva. Was it right to praise the Germans? There were those who argued that it is wrong to praise them. We don't learn manners from other communities. [Their spoken customs might be only skin deep. We need to look into our own sources for ethics that penetrate.]

There was one student who persisted and argued that if one sees something nice in another culture, that should be learned and accepted and even praised. "Nicht wahr?" is a sign of politeness and thoughtfulness. It showed modesty and was admirable - why not learn it from the Germans? Fifty years later, Rav Hutner was saying a shiur in the Chaim Berlin Yeshiva. A Jew walked in and said, "Do you remember me? I was that student in Slabodka that complemented the custom of the Germans and insisted that their way of speaking showed how gentle and fine a people they were." Rav Hutner indicated that he did remember this student and he stuck out his hand to greet him. The Jew stuck out his hand and there was a hook in place of a hand. He lost his hand in the concentration camp. He told Rav Hutner, "When the German cut off my hand in the concentration camp, do you know what he said?" The German said, "It hurts - nicht wahr? Is it not so?" "You, Rav Hutner were right, and I was wrong." When there is

no Fear of G-d, when there is no Divine Authority, when there are no absolute laws, then there are no guarantees. It is not up to us to decide "Never Again". We can not guarantee that it will be "Never Again". Only the Ribbono shel Olam can determine whether it will be "Never Again".

Sources and Personalities Chernobyl Rebbe -- (1730-1798) Rav Menachem Nachum Twersky of Chernobyl; disciple of the Baal Shem Tov; author of Ma'or Einyaim. Rav Elchanan Bunim Wasserman -- (1875-1941); Rosh Yeshiva in Baranowicze, Poland. Pillar of Agudas Yisroel in Europe together with Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinski and the Chafetz Hayim; Holocaust martyr. Malbim -- Rav Meir Leibush ben Yechiel Michel (1809-1879); Rabbi in Germany, Romania, and Russia; one of the preeminent Bible commentaries of modern times. Reb Reuvain Bulka -- Rabbi of Congregation Machzikei Hadas, Ottawa, Canada; author and lecturer. Rav Yitzchak Hutner (1907-1980) Rosh Yeshiva of Mesivta R. Chaim Berlin, Brooklyn; author of Pachad Yitzchak. Rav Dovid Tzvi Hoffman (1843-1921) -- Rabbi, biblical and talmudic scholar. Born in Slovakia, studied in Hungarian yeshivot; rector of Hildesheimer Seminary in Berlin. Alter from Slabodka -- Rav Nassan Tzvi Finkel (1849-1927); spiritual head of Slabodka Yeshiva; one of leaders of Lithuanian Mussar movement.

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Hamaayan / The Torah Spring Edited by Shlomo Katz Vayera

Today's Learning Sponsored by Rabbi and Mrs. Sam Vogel on the yearzeits of their fathers Aharon Shimon ben Shemaryah a'h (Arthur Kalkstein) and Aharon Yehuda ben Yisrael a'h (Leon Vogel) Mrs. Rochelle Dimont and family in memory of mother-in-law and grandmother Chana Dimont a'h and father and grandfather Rabbi Louis Tarshish a'h

The midrash relates that after Avraham would feed the guests who passed his way, he would say, "Now thank G-d whose food you have eaten." If the guest refused, Avraham would say, "Then pay me! The wine costs such-and-such, the meat costs such-and-such, the bread costs such-and-such. Who would give you wine in the desert? Who would give you meat in the desert? Who would give you bread in the desert?" At that point, Avraham's guests would agree to thank G-d. The commentaries ask: Of what value is a blessing which is extracted by financial duress? R' Yitzchak Or Zarua z'l (13th century) explains that Avraham did not actually ask his guests for money. Rather he argued, "Think about how much you would be willing to pay for food and drink in the desert. Behold! G-d has prepared that food and drink for you by causing me to be here in your time of need. Moreover, it's all free, although you would have paid a small fortune had I requested it."

Upon realizing that G-d indeed looks out for each person's needs, Avraham's guests would willingly thank G-d for their food. (Quoted in Otzrot Hatorah Vol. I. p.54)

An Astonishing Midrash "Avraham ate as much as 74 people." The Vilna Gaon explains as follows: The Torah says (Shmot 24:9- 11), "Moshe, Aharon, Nadav, Avihu and the seventy elders ascended [Har Sinai]. They gazed at G-d, and they ate and drank." In these verses, appreciating the Shechinah is called "eating," and the verses refer to 74 people (Moshe, Aharon, Nadav, Avihu and the 70 elders). Avraham's appreciation of G-d was greater than that of these 74 people combined. He "ate" more than they did. (Binat Nevonim)

R' Avraham Mordechai Alter z'l (the Gerrer Rebbe) explains this midrash in light of the mishnah (Avot 5:3) which states: There were ten generations from Noach to Avraham. Because these generations angered G-d, Avraham received the reward due all of them. If you count, says R' Alter, you will find that 74 people are named in the Torah from those generations. (Imrei Emet)

What Was Avraham's Test? "And it happened after these things that G-d tested Avraham . . ." (22:1) Most commentaries agree that the akeidah/binding of Yitzchak on the altar was the culmination of the ten times that Hashem tested Avraham. However, the commentaries offer different explanations as to what precisely was the nature of this test. Two of these views are presented here: R' Menachem Mendel Krochmal z'l (17th cent.) explains that Avraham's willingness to sacrifice Yitzchak was not his main achievement; after all, who would not obey a command which he himself heard from G-d? Rather, Avraham's greatness was in not questioning the apparent contradictions in G-d's messages to him. He might have said: "Yesterday You told me (21:12), 'For through Yitzchak will offspring be

considered yours,' and now You tell me to sacrifice him?" Instead, he said nothing. This would explain why the akeidah is thought of as a test for Avraham, more so than for Yitzchak. Just as it would not have been difficult for Avraham to sacrifice Yitzchak (since Avraham heard G-d=FEs direct command), it would not have been difficult for Yitzchak to submit to being killed (for Yitzchak had no doubt that G-d had spoken to Avraham). The real test was how Avraham would react to the contradictory prophecies. (This was not a test for Yitzchak because Yitzchak never received contradictory prophecies.) (Pi Tzaddik, Drush 41)

R' Elchanan Wasserman z'l (20th cent.) also observes that anyone who had heard the command from G-d would readily have sacrificed his son. Indeed, millions of Jews throughout history have sacrificed their children and themselves without hearing G-d's voice. [Ed. Note: R' Wasserman himself was killed in the Holocaust.] He explains that it is "easy" to make a sacrifice if you know that the future holds something much better than the present. For a martyr, that future is the World-to-Come. However, Avraham did not value the World-to-Come above all else. When Hashem had informed Avraham that he was guaranteed a place in the World-to-Come (Bereishit 15:1, as interpreted by Chazal), Avraham replied, "Of what value is it, if I am left childless?" Why? Avraham's mission in life was to spread knowledge of G-d in this world, and the success of that mission required that Avraham leave behind a child. If he didn't, his teachings would quickly be forgotten, and his whole life's work would have been wasted. (Kovetz Ma'amarim)

"As it is for this reason that you have passed your servant's way" (18:4) On the above verse, part of Avraham's attempt to persuade the three angels to eat in his house, the midrash says: Avraham told them, "You were destined from the time of creation to visit me." R' A.Y. Yellin z'l (19th-20th cent.) explains this as follows: The gemara (Shabbat 88b) records that when Moshe ascended to receive the Torah, the angels argued that the Torah should remain in the heavens. Moshe defeated them with several arguments: First, he argued, the Torah says, "I am Hashem, your G-d, who took you out of Egypt, from the house of slavery." Were you, the angels, slaves in Egypt? Also, he argued, the Torah prohibits eating milk and meat together, yet you, the angels, ate milk and meat together at Avraham's house! Rashi (Shmot 20:2) writes: When Bnei Yisrael built the golden calf and Hashem was about to destroy them, Moshe argued, "The Ten Commandments are in singular form; they were given only to me. Thus the Jews have not sinned." With this argument, Moshe appeased Hashem. This raises a problem, however, writes R' Yellin, for it defeats Moshe's first argument to the angels. After all, Moshe also was not a slave in Egypt, so why was the Torah given to him? For this reason, Moshe's other argument was necessary; the angels could not receive the Torah for they ate milk and meat together at Avraham's house. The gemara (Shabbat 88a) teaches that the world was created only so that Bnei Yisrael could receive the Torah. And, as explained above, the Jews received the Torah only because the angels ate milk and meat together at Avraham=FEs house. This is why Avraham said to the angels, "You were destined from the time of creation to visit me." (Chidud Ve'pilpul)

Hamaayan, Copyright (c) 1997 by Shlomo Katz and Project Genesis, Inc. Posted by Alan Broder, ajb@torah.org The editors hope these brief 'snippets' will engender further study and discussion of Torah topics ("lehagdil Torah u'leha'adirah"), and your letters are appreciated. Back issues from 1990 through the present may be retrieved from <http://www.acoast.com/~seh/hamaayan/>. Donations to HaMaayan are tax-deductible. Project Genesis: Torah on the Information Superhighway learn@torah.org 6810 Park Heights Ave. <http://www.torah.org/> Baltimore, MD 21215

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VAYERA - Angelic Tasks by Rabbi M H Wise of Yeshivat Od Yosef Hai, Hendon There is a very famous Rashi at the beginning of our Parashah, his comment on the second verse: "Behold three men". One to announce to Sarah the birth of a son; one to overthrow Sodom and one to cure Abraham, for one angel does not carry out two commissions. Later, in the very same comment, Rashi seems to contradict this rule that he has taken from the Midrash Rabbah by telling us that Raphael, the angel who healed Abraham went on to save Lot. The supra-commentaries on Rashi explain that this rule only applies in the same place but there is no difficulty with the fact that Raphael went on to Sodom, another location, to another task, of saving Lot. Others argue that healing and saving are the same task for had Abraham heard that his nephew had been killed he would have had a relapse. The late Dayan Abramsky, of blessed memory, raised another problem. Why did the angel, sent to destroy Sodom, need to visit Abraham at all. He had no business there, he could have gone to Sodom directly. Also what is the meaning of the verse (18:16) "The men got up from there (Abraham's home) and looked towards Sodom and Abraham escorted them on their way". We know where the angels were, so, of course they got up from there; why does the Torah emphasize this? Also on the phrase "The men glanced at Sodom" Rashi comments that when ever the Hiphil of Sh-k-f- is used in the Bible it means looking with evil intent. Dayan Abramsky explained that the angel who was told to destroy Sodom probably wanted to know why. So G-d told him that the people of Sodom are evil, "But all people are evil" retorts the angel, is it not written (Bereshit 8:21) "for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth?" This is why the angel sent to destroy Sodom firstly had to visit Abraham. He could then see what a human being can become; to what majestic heights of loving kindness and righteousness a person can raise himself. And this is why the Torah emphasizes "they got up from there", from Abraham's tent of hospitality and goodness "and the men glanced towards Sodom (the most inhospitable place in the world)". The contrast must have been so stark that even the angel could not bear it and was convinced to carry out his task.

Since I have mentioned Dayan Abramsky z'l I should like to record another Dvar Torah in his name based on a Derashah that he gave in the Great Synagogue, Duke's Place on the Friday night after Kristallnacht, 9th November 1938. The anniversary nearly always falls in the week of our parashah, and next year will be the 60th anniversary of that fateful night. In the psalms that we say on Friday night there seems to be a contradiction. The third chapter that we say (Psalm 97) starts: "The L-d reigns (judges), let the earth be glad, let the many islands rejoice." Whereas the fifth chapter that we say Psalm 99) states the exact opposite: "The L-d reigns (Judges), let the nation tremble..." When the L-d judges should the nations be joyful or tremble? The answer said the Dayan is to be found in the preceding verse i.e. the last verse of the preceding Psalm. Psalm 96 (the second chapter we say on Friday night) concludes: "He (G-d) will judge the earth with righteousness and the peoples in His faith. "If it is a question of faith then all the gentiles have a good answer. We were not born into the Jewish faith and so let all the nations be happy, for when it comes to faith they will be acquitted. "Whereas Psalm 98 (the fourth chapter) concludes: "He (G-d) will judge the world with righteousness and the nations whether they were upright." Whether they were well disposed towards other people (like Abraham) or not (like the people of Sodom). The burning down of synagogues hardly constitutes uprightness, no matter what your own religion; and therefore when the L-d judges uprightness let the nations tremble.

In the introduction to his commentary on Bereshit the Netziv (Rabbi Nafali Yehuda Tzvi Berlin) of Volozhin point out that the book of Genesis was called the Book of Yashar (the upright) by the prophets, for the main teachings of the book are how our Patriarchs behaved with righteousness towards, and how committed they were, to the value of every human being, even those with diametrically opposing ethical positions.

Cloning by Rabbi Dr Julian Jacobs, Ealing Synagogue The successful cloning of Dolly the sheep in the Roslin Institute in Edinburgh a few months ago was reported in the media throughout the world. This remarkable scientific feat raises for us the question of the Jewish attitude to cloning. Animal experimentation is permissible in Jewish law because nature was created by G-d for man to use to his advantage and benefit. The production of hormones by recombinant DNA techniques also seems perfectly permissible, as does gene therapy because it can restore health and

prolong life. Thus, patients with absent or defective genes suffering from Tay Sachs disease or cystic fibrosis might be given a replacement gene. One rabbi contends that gene therapy would be permissible in halachah because genes are submicroscopic particles and no process invisible to the naked eye is forbidden in Jewish law. He also argues that gene manipulation would not be considered as tampering with an existing human being but only with a potential one. Some authorities, however, would argue that the destruction of even a potential human being is prohibited in Jewish law. In discussing cloning in Judaism we must consider a passage in the Talmud. Sanhedrin 65b speaks of the unnatural or supernatural creation of both man and a calf through mystical combinations of the Divine name, using powers that are inherent in the letters. However, the two cases are not entirely comparable. In the Talmudic passage creation was effected through Divine power, and is not a human act but an act of the Almighty. Cloning, on the other hand, is not "creating" life from something inanimate, and falls into a different category of activity. Nevertheless, from the Talmudic text the questions that spring to mind are whether through cloning we would be creating artificial human beings bordering on golems (artificial men) and whether such golems are human. Although there is not a clear halachic basis on which to prohibit cloning, such scientific experimentation must surely be undertaken only with the most extreme caution and under the most stringent safeguards. It must be understood that we would be tampering with the very essence of life and encroaching upon the domain of the Creator. The deep feeling of moral repugnance that the idea of cloning human beings arouses in the overwhelming majority of people should also not be ignored.

The words of Mishnah Sanhedrin 4,5 could almost have been written about cloning: "If a man strikes many coins from one mould they are all like one another; but the supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, has fashioned every man in the stamp of the first man, and yet not one of them is like his fellows." Cloning would threaten the uniqueness of humanity.

WEEKLY-HALACHA FOR 5758

SELECTED HALACHOS RELATING TO PARSHAS VAEIRA By

Rabbi Doniel Neustadt A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

FOOD PREPARATION ON SHABBOS (Continued from last week)

VEGETABLE SALAD: A. Vegetables may not be soaked in water to remove dirt or dust(1). Many poskim, however, permit rinsing vegetables under running water if they are rinsed immediately before eating(2), while other poskim prohibit doing so(3). B. Vegetables may only be peeled with a knife(4) - not a peeler(5) - right before meal-time. [Whenever we mention "right before meal-time" it means that if the meal is scheduled to start at 12:00 o'clock, for example, and it takes about 30 minutes to prepare the meal, then the food may be peeled at about 11:30, but not earlier. In last week's column, this was written incorrectly.](6). C. If the outer leaves of a lettuce head are rotten, they may be pulled off and discarded(7). But if the leaves have already been separated, then it is prohibited to pick out the rotten leaves from the mixture of good and bad leaves. The good leaves must be the ones that are picked out from the bunch, and the selection must be made immediately before the meal. D. Cutting vegetables into large pieces is permissible. E. Preferably, vegetables should not be cut up into very small pieces (diced)(8). But if it is difficult [or less tasty] to eat bigger pieces, or if the food is being prepared for a child, it is permitted to dice the vegetables into small pieces provided that they are diced immediately before the meal(9). F. Oil and salad dressing may be added to a vegetable salad(10). G. A salad containing radishes, cucumbers, onions, garlic or green tomatoes, may not be salted(11) [or soaked in vinegar(12)] unless oil or salad dressing [or a bit of vinegar] is added before or immediately after the salting(13). H. Sliced red tomatoes may be salted and eaten(14). Lettuce may be salted and eaten(15).

FRESH FRUIT SALAD(16) Instruction for washing fruit are listed in A above. Fruits may be peeled for immediate use only. It is strictly prohibited to peel fruit for a fruit salad that is being prepared for anticipated guests or for a later meal. Even if some of the fruit will be eaten immediately, it is strictly prohibited to peel extra fruit for later use(17). If, however, the fruit was peeled with the intention of eating it all but some is left over, it is not considered as if it was peeled for later use(18). If guests are scheduled to arrive during a certain part of the day, e.g., "sometime in the afternoon", it is permitted to peel fruit for them right before the afternoon begins. Even if they do not arrive until late in the afternoon, it is still permitted to have peeled fruit for them earlier(19). Even when fruits are peeled for immediate use, they may not be peeled with a peeler. There is a view which holds that fruits whose peel is sometimes eaten, e.g., apples and pears, may be peeled at any time and even with a peeler(20). Many other authorities, however, do not agree with this leniency and forbid it(21). All

authorities, agree, however, that fruits which are almost always eaten with their peel, e.g., grapes, peaches, etc., may be peeled at any time and even with a peeler(22). Some fruits have letters or words stamped on the peel, and care should be taken not to ruin the lettering while peeling the fruit(23).

Stems should be removed immediately before meal-time only. Some authorities maintain that it is best to remove a stem by holding it with one hand and pulling the fruit with the other hand(24). Cutting fruit into large pieces is permitted. For instructions on how to cut fruit into very small pieces, see the previous discussion about dicing vegetables. Instruments designed for cutting fruits into special shapes, e.g. melon ballers, should not be used(25).

TUNA FISH OR CHOPPED LIVER SALAD: Excess oil may be squeezed out of tuna(26), preferably - immediately before meal-time(27). Tuna or liver may be mashed in the usual manner. If eggs are added, they may be mashed in the usual manner. The eggs must be shelled immediately before meal-time as detailed above. If diced vegetables are added, see instructions above. If mayonnaise is added, it should be mixed in as directed in last week's column about mixing mayonnaise with eggs and onions(28). One who wishes to satisfy all views should prepare tuna salad before Shabbos.

IT IS PERMITTED TO MIX... Horseradish with mayonnaise or ketchup(29); Cottage cheese with sour cream(30); Cinnamon with rice or sugar(31); Jelly (jam) or sugar with sour cream or yogurt(32); Chopped liver and mayonnaise with ketchup(33); Mayonnaise with large pieces of potatoes(34). It is permitted to dip baked goods like cookies, pretzels, etc., in warm tea or coffee(35).

IT IS PROHIBITED TO MIX...(36) Jelly (jam) or sugar with soft cheese(37); Water and technah sauce(38); Butter or margarine with cocoa powder(39); Instant potato or instant pudding with milk or even with warm water(40).

FOOTNOTES: 1 O.C. 319:8. 2 Ketzos ha -Shulchan 125:16; Igros Moshe O.C. 1:125; Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 3:21); Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (Ayil Meshulash, pg. 176 and The Laws of Borer, pg. 33); Tzitz Eliezer 6:37. 3 Chazon Ish (oral ruling quoted in Ayil Meshulash, pg. 176); Minchas Yitzchak 5:39; Shevet ha-Levi 1:52. Note, however, that only actual dirt may not be washed off. Washing fruit for hygienic purposes is permitted according to all views - Chazon Ish and Igros Moshe, ibid. 4 Be'ur Halachah 321:19; Igros Moshe O.C. 1:124. 5 Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (quoted in The Laws of Borer, pg. 32); Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 3:31; Machazeh Eliyahu 51 quoting the Eglei Tal. 6 See also further details in the section dealing with fresh fruit salad. 7 Be'ur Halachah 319:1. 8 Mishnah Berurah 321:45. According to the Chazon Ish (O.C. 57) this is strictly forbidden, while Igros Moshe (O.C. 4:74-2) rules that when the need arises, even a ba'al nefesh does need not be stringent. 9 Mishnah Berurah and Igros Moshe, ibid.; Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah and Tikunim U'milumim 6:6) 10 Since "kneading" does not apply in the case of large pieces that do not join into one mass. 11 It is permitted, however, to dip one piece at a time in salt and then eat it. 12 See Mishnah Berurah 321:15 and Pri Megadim MZ 321:3. Some of the fat-free salad dressings may contain no oil, only vinegar. 13 Mishnah Berurah 321:14. For an elaboration, see Harav Y. Zilberstein (Otzros ha-Shabbos, pg. 482). 14 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 11:2). See Tikunim U'milumim where he questions if the prohibition applies to cucumbers nowadays. 15 Since lettuce leaves are not normally preserved nor is their texture drastically improved or altered by salting. See explanation by Harav Y. Zilberstein in Otzros ha-Shabbos, pg. 481. 16 See The Weekly Halachah Discussion, vol. 1, pg. 132 for a discussion concerning opening fruit cans on Shabbos. 17 Mishnah Berurah 319:5. When preparing fruit for guests, however, it is permitted to prepare even more than they can eat, if by doing so one honors them - Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 3:40); Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (The Laws of Borer, pg. 34). 18 Mishnah Berurah, ibid. 19 Ayil Meshulash, pg. 128. 20 Eglei Tal (Borer 6), Shevisas ha -Shabbos (Borer 4), Ketzos ha-Shulchan 125:16, based on the view of Pri Megadim 321:97. 21 Mishnah Berurah 321:84; Igros Moshe O.C. 4:74-8; Harav S.Y. Elyashiv, quoted in The Laws of Borer, pg. 20); Az Nidberu 1:19. 22 Harav N. Karelitz (Ayil Meshulash, pg. 159). 23 See Mishnah Berurah 340:16 and 41; Kaf ha-Chayim 340:34. 24 See Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 3:35 and Ayil Meshulash, pg. 81. 25 Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 11:12. See, however, Be'er Moshe 6:43 who allows using a scoop to carve out balls from watermelon. See also Da'as Torah 321:19. 26 Since it is permitted to squeeze cooked foods in order to enhance their taste - O.C. 320:7. 27 To satisfy the views of the poskim who hold that the removal of oil constitutes borer. Igros Moshe O.C. 4:74 Borer 1-2, however, maintains, that as long as some oil remains in the tuna, the prohibition of borer does not apply. 28 Igros Moshe O.C. 4:74:7. [In a certain aspect, tuna or liver salad is more lenient than eggs and onions, since some poskim maintain that "kneading" does not apply to cooked foods, see Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 8 note 10 and 67. On the other hand, eggs and onions could possibly be a looser mixture than tuna and liver.] 29 Since this mixture does not create a single mass. 30 Igros Moshe O.C. 4:74-8. 31 Since mixing two solids is not kneading. 32 Since this produces even a thinner mixture than one started with - Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 8:16). 33 Sefer Hilchos Shabbos, pg. 237. 34 Since the pieces are recognized individually. 35 This does not knead the food - it makes it soft. 36 Theoretically, some of these items may be prepared as a thin liquid mixture, provided they are mixed according to the instructions listed in # 8 above. In practice, however, it is difficult to distinguish between a thick

mixture and a thin mixture. 37 Since the resultant mixture may well be thicker than the original cheese - Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 8:16). 38 Ibid. 8:26. 39 Ibid. 8:17. 40 Igros Moshe O.C. 4:74-7; Shevet ha-Levi 7:105.

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DRASHA PARSHAS VAYERA -- BLESSINGS IN DISGUISE

In Pashas Vayera, Sora, the 90-year-old wife of Avraham, receives a most surprising piece of information from an even more surprising source. She is told by Arab nomads, who had found obliging accommodation in Avraham's house, that in one year she will have a child. Instinctively, she reacts in disbelief to this prediction. She laughs. Immediately, Hashem appears to Avraham. He is upset. "Why did Sora laugh? Is there something that is beyond the Almighty? At the appointed time I shall return, and behold Sora will have a son (Genesis 18:12-13). Hashem's ire must be explained. After all, Sora was not told by Hashem that she will have a baby. She was informed by what appeared to be Arab wanderers. And though the Talmud explains that the three nomads were indeed angels sent by the Almighty, they did not identify themselves as such. So what does G-d want from Sora?

A man once entered the small study of the revered the Steipler Gaon, Rabbi Yaakov Yisrael Kanievski with a plea. "I'd like a blessing from the Rav. My daughter has been looking to get married for several years. All her friends are married and she would like to get married too, but nothing is working. Can the Rosh Yeshiva bless her to find her bashert? (appropriate one)," he asked. The Steipler turned to the man and asked, "Is this your first daughter?" "No," replied the distraught parent. "Why do you ask?"

"When she was born did you celebrate with a kiddush?" (a celebratory party in a religious setting) The man was perplexed. "No. But, that was 27 years ago," he stammered, "and she was my third girl. I may have made a l'chayim while the minyan was leaving shul, but I never made a proper kiddush. But what does a missed kiddush 27 years ago have to do with my daughter's shidduch (match) today?" "When one makes a kiddush at a festive occasions," explained Rav Kanievski, "each l'chayim he receives is accompanied by myriad blessings. Some are from friends, others from relatives, and those blessings given by total strangers. Among those blessings are definitely the perfunctory wishes for an easy time in getting married. By not making a kiddush for your daughter, how many blessings did you deprive her of? I suggest you make your daughter the kiddush that she never had." The man followed the advice, and sure enough within weeks after the kiddush the girl had met her mate.

At the bris (circumcision) of his first son (after ten girls), my uncle, Rabbi Dovid Speigel, the Ostrove-Kalushin Rebbe of Cedarhurst, Long Island, quoted the Ramban (Nachmanides) in this week's portion. The reason that Hashem was upset at Sora was that even if an Arab nomad gives the blessing, one must be duly vigilant to respond, "Amen." One never knows the true vehicle of blessing and salvation. Hashem has many conduits and messengers. Some of those messengers' divinity is inversely proportional to

their appearance. We have to do is wait, listen, and pray that our prospective exalter is the carrier of the true blessing. And then, we have to believe. Quite often, we have ample opportunities to be blessed. Whether it is from the aunt who offers her graces at a family gathering or the simple beggar standing outside a doorway on a freezing winter day, blessings always come our way. Sometimes they come from the co-worker who cheers you on at the end of a long day or the mail carrier who greets you with the perfunctory "have a nice day" as he brings today's tidings. Each blessing is an opportunity that knocks. And each acknowledgment and look to heaven may open the door to great salvation. The only thing left for us to do is let those blessings in. Good Shabbos.

Dedicated by our Beloved Mother Shirley Eskowitz - Sarah bas Reb Moshe By Marilyn & Jules Beck (C) 1997 Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky Mordechai Kamenetzky - Yeshiva of South Shore <http://www.yoss.org> Drasha, Copyright (c) 1997 by Rabbi M. Kamenetzky and Project Genesis, Inc. Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky is the Rosh Mesivta at Mesivta Ateres Yaakov, the High School Division of Yeshiva of South Shore, <http://www.yoss.org/> Project Genesis: Torah on the Information Superhighway learn@torah.org 6810 Park Heights Ave. <http://www.torah.org/> Baltimore, MD 21215

YESHIVAT HAR ETZION ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH PARASHAT VAYERA SICHVA OF HARAV YEHUDA AMITAL SHLIT"A An Exalted Faith Summarized by Betzalel Posy

Va-yehi achar ha-devarim ha-eileh, ve-haElokim nisa et Avraham... And after these things came to pass, the Lord tested Avraham; and He said to him, "Avraham," and he said, "Here I am." And He said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love, Yitzchak, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains which I will show you." (Bereishit 22:1-2)

I would like to examine how the Rambam deals with the parasha of the akeida (the binding of Yitzchak). First, the Rambam tells us that the purpose of nisonot (Divine tests) in the Torah is not merely to test the recipient, but to teach others important principles in Divine service. The Rambam, then, points out two messages that we learn from this, the test of tests. Let us deal with the second one first, as I want to focus on the first. The Rambam tells us that the incident of the akeida is a proof of the perfect clarity of prophecy. After all, if there were any doubt that the command to Avraham was both of divine origin and absolutely clear and unequivocal in its meaning, would not Avraham have looked for every excuse to refrain from sacrificing his pride and joy, the son of his dreams? And not only that, but Avraham had three days to think and contemplate whether he was doing the right thing; he did not just impulsively sacrifice his son. This is an important message for us, as Jews. Judaism is based on prophecy, on God telling us what we are supposed to do. Any doubt in the truth or accuracy of the revelation could destroy our whole system. For this reason, the Torah tells us a story of how perfectly clear the revelation of Hashem was to Avraham Avinu, and thus to all other prophets.

The Rambam says that the other message of the akeida is to show how much one must love God, even to the point of sacrificing his only son. Avraham did so not because he was afraid that God would kill him, but rather because his strongest love and desire was to serve Hashem. To convey this message, the Rambam quotes a verse: "Ki ata yada'ti ki yarei Elokim ata..." - "Now I know that you are Godfearing..." (Bereishit 22:12).

This point in the Rambam seems strange. After all, does God really need us to love Him to the extent that we would kill our children? Does God ever require us to do such a thing? Furthermore, the verse that the Rambam himself quotes discusses yir'a (fear), not ahava (love), a recurring theme in this week's parasha.

I would like to explain the Rambam based on some letters of Rav Kook zt"l. Avraham Avinu was involved in a debate with the intellectuals of his time. Not all those who worshipped idols were merely primitive peasants who thought that sticks and stones ran the world. Rather, many people intellectually supported the concept of attaching physical substance to divinity, to make it more palatable to the common person. "Your approach," they told Avraham, "is fine for people like yourself who are removed from the real world. But for a regular person to be willing to give

his heart, soul, and very life, or the life of his son, there needs to be something he can touch, see or feel. Your pure faith is too elevated for him, me'od na'ala. He must be able to identify with the gods, to fight their battles, love their loves, and hate their hates. This is the only way for one to have true relationship with a deity." The akeida shows that by a purified faith, the innovation of Avraham, a person can have a relationship with the Almighty - a relationship that goes to the extreme of devotion, and is based on the one God of truth and justice.

The alternate viewpoint is an attractive one. For many years, there were Jews who tried to attach physicality to God, until the Rambam rooted that out of mainstream belief. The Rambam says that all of Judaism is a fight against avoda zara (idolatry). Many say that today, when there is no avoda zara, emuna (faith) is irrelevant.

However, I believe that there are many types of avoda zara today, just in different forms. The editor of Ma'ariv recently wrote a book about his travels to India and his discussion with some Hindu priests there, who told him that Judaism, as well as its offshoots Christianity and Islam, had failed to create a livable system for the majority of people. When people do not have a physical thing to base their morality on, results such as Nazism are evident. Even in America, the capital of intellectual openness, millions are attracted to cults and other primitive forms of belief; as they see that those who lack some faith, even if they are the biggest intellectuals, can be the worst people. Consider the man who spent years killing people with letter bombs: wasn't he a professor? Thus, the fight of Avraham Avinu is not over, and today more than ever, after the Holocaust and the rise of technology, we must show the world that faith in God is the way to achieve "tzedaka u-mishpat" (righteousness and justice).

But it is not only the outside world whom we must show. Today, many people try to sell Torah and mitzvot in the same way. There are mystics and miracle workers who claim to be able to tell the future or the past from physical objects, even if they are religious items, such as tefillin and mezuzot. Even worse, there are those who claim to have found new solutions to problems future and past by finding all sorts of codes and tricks in the Torah, using computers and calculators. These novelties have no importance; they are not mentioned by the Rishonim, nor did they need them! The Rambam had no codes, the Ramban had none, the Vilna Gaon, nor even the Baal Shem! What they had was faith and knowledge of Hashem and His Torah. It may be a good way to make "ba'alei teshuva," but a ba'al teshuva who is not for Torah and mitzvot is not a ba'al teshuva: EIN PATENTIM! There are no shortcuts or alternative ways to reach "tzedaka u-mishpat," nor are there shortcuts to reaching Ha-kadosh Barukh Hu, the source of tzedaka u-mishpat, who is high and exalted. We must regain the pure faith of Avraham, who stood against the world and taught of the One God. This task falls to us, the inhabitants of the batei midrash; we must purify the Torah of all dross and vulgarization, and show the world and our brethren the true faith, as we recite before blowing the shofar: "Yediyei amim ne'esafu: am Elokei AVRAHAM; ki le-Elokim maginei erez; ME'OD NA'ALA" - "The great of the peoples are gathered together, the retinue of Avraham's God; for the guardians of the earth belong to God; He is greatly exalted" (Tehillim 47:10). (Originally delivered Se'uda Shelishit, Shabbat Parashat Vayera 5757.) Copyright (c) 1997 Yeshivat Har Etzion.

... Have We Learned Anything? [Yesterday, 12 Ches hvan 5758 (Nov. 12, 1997), Harav Aharon Lichtenstein addressed the yeshiva on the occasion of the second anniversary of the murder of Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin z"l. The following is a summary of that address, written by Rav Ronnie Ziegler. It has not been reviewed by Rav Lichtenstein....]

Should anything be said today? Many find it convenient to ignore today's sad occasion, since, unwilling to glorify Rabin yet unable to ignore his achievements, they consider it better to say nothing at all. Others would prefer to forget the tragic events altogether and especially the involvement of our community in them. According to Halakha, we eulogize an individual for up to a year. However, in the case of Prime Minister Rabin z"l, eulogy and remembrance are necessary even though two years have passed. Memory is central to Knesset Yisrael. We remember not just victories, but defeats, the beautiful as well as the ugly. And this entails not mere recollection ("Zekhor yemot olam" - "Remember the days of old," Devarim 32:7), but understanding and reflection as well ("binu shenot dor va-dor" - "comprehend the years of ages past"). We will not be able to learn the lessons of this tragic occurrence if we gloss over its very existence. Although mourning for an individual ceases after a year, the death of Prime Minister Rabin was not merely a personal tragedy, but an event of tremendous ramifications for the entire Israeli public. And the focus on the public dimension does not cease after a year. Ignoring the significance of this day reflects not only alienation from the feelings of the vast majority of the

Israeli public, but alienation from the state itself, from the value of malkhut Yisrael (Jewish sovereignty).

The Bible says of Achav, the evil king of Israel, that "He did more to anger the Lord... than all the kings of Israel who preceded him" (I Melakhim 16:33). Chazal have even harsher words for him. Nevertheless, Eliyahu, the great zealot who feared no man, ran in front of Achav's chariot (ibid., 18:46). Despite his evil ways, Achav was the sovereign of an independent Jewish state, and Eliyahu, who recognized the importance of malkhut Yisrael, saw fit to pay honor to his office. How much more should we honor a person who, though he did not wear Rabbenu Tam tefillin, was a million times removed from Achav!

There are therefore three issues we should discuss today: A) the man and his accomplishments, primarily in the public sphere; B) the fact of his murder by a fellow Jew; C) the reaction to the murder, then and now.

A. It has been noted that the trajectory of Yitzchak Rabin's life follows that of the State of Israel. Moreover, the problems he confronted in his life were a reflection of those faced by the state. From its founding, the State of Israel has had to fight for its very survival, while at the same time trying to attain lofty goals: ingathering of the exiles, forming a just and equitable society, etc. We have been forced to fight, but have been challenged to avoid falling into the pitfalls of militarism. We desire peace so that we will be free to focus all our energies on attaining the true goals of the state.

Yitzchak Rabin devoted a good part of his life to defending the State of Israel, and served with great dedication. But he also displayed sensitivity to the spiritual or moral side of existence in the state. By nature, he was gruff and given to forceful tactics. It must have required great sensitivity and force of will for him to develop his personality to the point where it could balance strength with spirit.

This spiritual side was expressed not only in his memorable speech on Mt. Scopus after the Six-Day War, but in his bold attempt to end a long and bitter conflict. Even if one disagrees with his policies, we can appreciate his ability to rethink, reassess, and change his path even through clenched teeth. In his attempt to broker a peace with the Palestinians, he was guided not by partisan politics, but by moral and spiritual principles. He valued peace not for its diplomatic or economic value, but primarily for its spiritual value - the positive effect it would have on society as a whole, enabling it to turn to loftier pursuits than mere physical defense. This dimension of Yitzchak Rabin's personality has often escaped those who differed with his path.

B. The trauma of his murder has not lessened over the years. It was an event which shattered basic conventions of society. What does it portend for our future? At the time, I spoke of the educational dilemma which we face: how can we encourage enthusiasm in our students, a willingness to sacrifice for their principles, while at the same time retaining a sense of discipline and self-restraint? Is a tepid indifference the only alternative to unbridled zeal? This question is still unresolved. [See on our website Rav Lichtenstein's speech from 5756 (1995), referred to above.]

C. The events leading up to the two-year commemoration of Rabin's assassination have left me very sad. Accusations and recriminations have been flying back and forth. We would have hoped that at least on this issue, the Left and the Right would have been able to reach some sort of consensus - to formulate acceptable ways of communicating and rules for arguing. Perhaps they would even have displayed respect for each other and a willingness to learn from one another.

Instead, we have witnessed the opposite. The Left has appropriated Rabin's memory and will not let others share it. They do not acknowledge the grieving of those who may have disagreed with him, but nevertheless regarded him as their prime minister and mourned his death. At the rally held in Tel Aviv last Motza'ei Shabbat, which was supposed to be apolitical, not only would they not let Rightists speak, but many speakers ended by stating that, "Ours is the ONLY way." Where is their tolerance, their pluralism? The Left even tried to prevent Prime Minister Netanyahu from speaking in the Knesset in memory of Prime Minister Rabin. Where is their recognition of malkhut Yisrael? They delegitimize Netanyahu the same way they accuse him of delegitimizing Rabin!

On the Right, some people were happy to be relieved of the responsibility to mourn Rabin. Nobody has learned. Civil discourse is absent. There is no sense of our underlying unity as a people. Instead of becoming a unifying event, Rabin's yahrzeit has become an occasion for deepening divisions.

Occasionally, we hear talk of impending civil war. I believe this is exaggerated, and misses the point. Our problem is precisely the alienation between segments of our population, the lack of contact between them. People erect fences, and see no need to relate to those on the other side of the fence. Not only have we lost a sense of common destiny, of a unified goal we are all striving for, but we are even losing our sense of common fate, of being in the same boat. Such alienation and unconnectedness can create tremendous practical problems: how can such a non-unified nation go to war or deal with enemies? But it is the spiritual aspect of this problem which most concern us, the inhabitants of the beit midrash. Overcoming this problem is very, very difficult.

We need a sense of partnership in values. This entails a dual recognition. 1) I take issue with the depiction of one community as having a full wagon and others as having empty ones. The other wagons are not necessarily empty. Other communities are also guided by moral considerations, though they may not be identical with ours. 2) Part of their wagon may be filled with our wares. We do share common values. These can serve as a basis for mutual recognition and appreciation. It is not enough to be civil to each other; we must esteem each other as well.

The midrash (Bereishit Rabba, Noah, 38:6) explains that the Generation of the Flood was totally wiped out because they had no respect for each other: everyone stole from everyone else. However, the builders of the Tower of Babel were not wiped out because they were united in mutual affection. Rabbi Yehuda Ha-nasi further stated: "Great is peace, for even if Israel worship idols but peace reigns among them, God says, 'It is as if they are outside My control, since there is peace among them'... But if they are divided, [they will be found guilty]. From here we learn that peace is exalted and division is despised." Our challenge is clearly formulated here: we must strive to unite our people. May we devote ourselves to it with renewed strength, and may God aid us in this task.

* TORAH WEEKLY * Vayera <http://www.ohr.org.il> ...Insights
Leading From Behind "And Hashem appeared to him in the plains of Mamre" (18:1) There are two ways you can lead an army. You can sit in

a blockhouse buried hundreds of feet underground, 50 miles behind the lines and direct your troops, or you can be the first man over the top, leading your men into battle at the front. When Hashem commanded Avraham to circumcise all his household, Avraham went to Avner and Eshcol to ask what he should do about those members of his household who didn't want to be circumcised. They didn't know what to answer him. Avraham then went to Mamre who told him that he should first circumcise himself and Yishmael. When the others would see this, they would allow themselves to be circumcised too. And that is what Avraham did. First the Torah writes "On that very day was Avraham circumcised with Yishmael, his son," and only then does the Torah write "and all the people of his household." Ostensibly, Mamre's advice was unusual. Wouldn't it have been better for Avraham to preserve his strength and be circumcised last? In that way, he could have used his tremendously strong influence to persuade them. For it was Avraham's strength of speech alone that had brought so many under the wings of the Divine Presence. It was through the power of Avraham's persuasion, the power of the spoken word, that so many had converted. Actions speak louder than words. It would be well to remember that behaving like a mensch can bring someone close to the Torah more than thousands of words of intellectual proof. If you want people to follow, you have to go first.

Turning Over "And He (Hashem) overturned these cities and all the plain and all the dwellers of the cities and the vegetation of the earth." (19:25) When we look at the situation today, it's easy to despair. The strident metallic clang of materialism and selfishness seem to swamp out the message of the Torah and its People. The sensuous siren call of the media surrounds us all with a world whose reality is merely virtual. Society at large seems almost deaf to morality, to modesty, to the values that are rooted in the Torah. The motto of the time is "Let it all hang out." In a world where there is nothing to be ashamed of, nothing brings shame, and thus anything is possible. And what is possible... happens. Those who stand for the eternal values of our people are despised as fundamentalists and violent barbarians. Everything has been turned upside down. There is a strange thread of history that runs from this week's Parsha down through the ages and climaxes in the end of history: Lot was rescued from the overturning of Sodom. Why specifically was it necessary to overturn Sodom? Why couldn't Sodom have just been destroyed with fire and brimstone. Wouldn't that be cataclysmic enough? What are we supposed to learn from the fact that Sodom was overturned? After the destruction of Sodom, Lot's daughters thought that they were the only human survivors of what must have looked like a global nuclear holocaust. They surmised that the only way to perpetuate the human species was to cohabit with their father. The Torah, however, ascribes no blame to their actions as their motivation was pure. >From this incestuous union came a people called Moav -- literally "from father." From Moav comes the prototypal convert, Ruth. From Ruth comes King David, and from King David comes the Mashiach. So it turns out that the foundation of Mashiach is ultimately in Sodom. There are two ways that society's spiritual landscape can be changed. One way is by improving the situation bit by bit until the world is perfected. The other is that things get so bad that they cannot get any worse. At that point, everything reverses in an instant from the nadir to the zenith.

The prophets speak about the coming of Mashiach in terms of childbirth. Someone ignorant of the process of childbirth who sees for the first time a woman in labor would be convinced that she is about to die. And the closer the actual moment of the birth, the stronger that impression would become.

And then, within a couple of minutes, seeming tragedy has turned into the greatest joy. A new life has entered the world. Immediately prior to the coming of Mashiach there will be a tremendous confusion in the world. Everything will seem to have gone haywire. The natural order will be turned on its head. Age will bow to youth. Ugliness will be trumpeted as beauty, and what is beautiful will be disparaged as unattractive. Barbarism will be lauded as culture. And culture will be dismissed as worthless. The hunger of consumerism and the lust for material wealth will grow more and more, and it will find less and less to satisfy its voracity. Eventually,

materialism will grow so rapacious that it will become its own angel of death. It will literally consume itself and regurgitate itself back out. But from this decay, the line of David will sprout, like vegetation that springs forth from no more than dirt and earth. For vegetation cannot flourish unless the seed rots. The second event is predicated on the first. It's interesting to note that Mashiach is referred to as the "tzemach tzedek," literally the "righteous sprouting." For his coming is identical to the growth of vegetation. First total decay and only then new life. This is the way Mashiach will come. The worse things become, the more painful the birth-pangs, the nearer is his coming. Until, like a mother who had delivered, all the tears and pain will be forgotten in the great joy of a new life. ...

Sources: o Leading From The Rear - Chidushei Halev o Turning Over - Ohr Yesharim; Rabbi Moshe Shapiro Written and Compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman

INSIGHTS INTO THE DAILY DAF brought to you by Kollel Iyun Hadaf of Har Nof Rosh Kollel: Rabbi Mordecai Kornfeld

45b HALACHAH: MAY WOMEN MAKE A "ZIMUN" TOGETHER? The Gemara teaches that women may make a Zimun when they eat and recite Birkas ha'Mazon together. What is the Halachic ruling in this matter? Is it obligatory for women to do so? (a) TOSFOS (DH Sha'ani Hasam) rules that it is not obligatory for women to make a Zimun; rather, it is optional. (2) This explains why most women today are not careful to make a Zimun. This, too, appears to be the opinion of Rashi (DH d'Ika De'os). The S'MAG adds that if a woman eats together with a group of men then she becomes obligated to join the Zimun even according to Tosfos. It will be optional only when three (or more) women ate together (without a Zimun of men). (b) The ROSH (7:4) disagrees on several accounts. (1) The Gemara in Erchin (3a) learns that women make a Zimun from a Beraisa which states "ha'Kol *Chayavim* b'Zimun," which implies that it is obligatory. (2) Since a woman is obligated to recite Birkas ha'Mazon (either mid'Oraisa or mid'Rabanan) why should she not be obligated in Zimun? (3) Since the Gemara concludes that women are "separate minds," that is, each is considered to be like one man, it is implicit that three women have the same obligation of Zimun as three men. Tosfos (ibid.) indeed records that one of the Rishonim asked his daughters to make sure to recite Birkas ha'Mazon with a Zimun, if they ate together without men. HALACHAH: THE SHULCHAN ARUCH (OC 199:7) rules like Tosfos, that if women ate by themselves, making a Zimun is optional. If they ate together with a group of men, they are obligated to join the Zimun. The BI'UR HALACHAH (DH Nashim) quotes the VILNA GA'ON who rules in accordance with the Rosh, that women are obligated to make a Zimun even if they ate only with other women. However, he concludes that the custom is for women not to make a Zimun by themselves at all, like Tosfos.

HALACHAH: SAYING "AMEN" AFTER "BONEH YERUSHALAYIM" The Gemara relates that Abaye would say "Amen" loudly after his own blessing of "Boneh Yerushalayim" in Birkas ha'Mazon, in order to indicate to the workers that they should return to their work (and not recite the fourth blessing, "Ha'Tov v'ha'Meitiv," of Birkas ha'Mazon, since the fourth blessing is d'Rabanan). Rav Ashi used to say "Amen" quietly, so that people would not belittle the blessing of "Ha'Tov v'ha'Meitiv," saying that it was not d'Oraisa. What is our practice? (a) The SHULCHAN ARUCH (OC 188:2) rules like the Rambam that "Amen" after "Boneh Yerushalayim" should be recited quietly. Since nowadays we do not have workers who skip the last blessing, we should not say it loudly lest people belittle the last blessing. (b) However, this is not the common practice today. The common practice is not to be careful to say this "Amen" quietly. The REMA (OC 188:2) explains that the reason is because when a group of people recite Birkas ha'Mazon together, and the group responds "Amen" after each blessing that the leader concludes, it is not evident that the leader himself is also responding "Amen" to the blessing. Hence, when saying Birkas ha'Mazon with a group of people, one may say "Amen" out loud. When one says Birkas ha'Mazon by himself, then one should say "Amen" quietly according to the Rema, since that is the only blessing that he is saying "Amen" to, it is evident it indicates that "Ha'Tov v'ha'Meitiv" is d'Rabanan. (c) The MISHNAH BERURAH (188:2) explains that we may say Amen out loud even when reciting Birkas ha'Mazon in private. When there used to be workers who left out "Ha'Tov v'ha'Meitiv" and went back to work, we were concerned that they would get used to not saying "Ha'Tov v'ha'Meitiv" and leave it out even when they did not have to get back to work. Therefore, "Amen" had to be said quietly so that they would not think that the rest of Birkas ha'Mazon was unimportant. Nowadays, however, we do not have workers who leave to work right after "Boneh Yerushalayim" (as the Shulchan Aruch writes in OC 191:2), we do not have to worry about anyone belittling the fourth blessing, and, therefore, we may say "Amen" out loud.

Berachos 47 HALACHAH: EATING BEFORE THE ONE WHO SAID "HA'MOTZI" The Gemara says that those who are sitting at a meal may not eat before the person who recites "ha'Motzi." There are two opinions what this means. (a) TOSFOS (DH Ein ha'Mesubin) explains that those seated are not allowed to eat first when they are listening to the leader's blessing and are going to be eating from the bread that is *before the leader*. If those seated have in front of them their own loaves from which they will eat when the leader recites the blessing for them, they may eat before he eats. The logic for this ruling is as follows. One must recite a blessing over a piece of bread which is *before him*. If those who listened were to take a piece of the leader's loaf before he did, they would be Yotzei saying a Berachah, but they would not be considered saying a Berachah on a loaf that was *before them* -- since it was before the leader at the time of the Berachah. If the leader first eats, then the others are Yotzei not only making a Berachah, but making a Berachah on a loaf that is before them (since the leader did). (b) Tosfos cites the SAR M'KUTZI who gives a different explanation. When the person reciting "ha'Motzi" *distributes* pieces of bread from his loaf to everyone at the meal, they may eat before he eats. Our Gemara means that before the leader has distributed the bread to them, they may not reach for the bread in

front of the leader and *take a piece* before he takes for himself. According to the Sar m'Kutzi, it would appear that this Halachah is not part of the laws of blessings. Rather it is part of the laws of respectful manners (Derech Eretz). HALACHAH: THE SHULCHAN ARUCH (OC 167:15) cites the first explanation of Tosfos (a), that people should not eat before the one who says the blessing, unless they have their own breads in front of them. The MISHNAH BERURAH (167:83) points out that Shabbos is an exception. Even if they all have their own single loaf of bread before them, they may not eat before the leader, because they are required to eat from his Lechem Mishnah (his double portion of bread). If each person has his own Lechem Mishnah, then they do not have to wait for the leader to eat. Another exception is if the leader makes a blessing on a complete loaf of bread, and they have in front of them only slices of bread. Those listening must wait to eat until after the leader has eaten, because the blessing is preferred to be made on a full loaf rather than on slices.

47b HALACHAH: INCLUDING AN "AM HA'ARETZ" IN A "ZIMUN" Although the Gemara states that an Am ha'Aretz may not be part of a Zimun, TOSFOS (DH Amar Rav Huna) says that nowadays we invite them to join. Today the ignorant people are not able to accept being inferior to Talmidei Chachamim, and they would completely separate from themselves the community if we do not involve them in our religious affairs. HALACHAH: THE SHULCHAN ARUCH (OC 199:3) rules like Tosfos. The MISHNAH BERURAH (199:2) adds that a Jew who has gone so far away from the Torah that he purposely and maliciously transgresses the Mitzvos in public may not be included in a Zimun.

Berachos 48 HALACHAH: INCLUDING A CHILD IN A "ZIMUN" According to the conclusion of our Gemara, may a child (a boy under the age of thirteen) be included to make a Zimun? There are several opinions among the Rishonim. (a) The RAMBAM and RIF rule like the simple understanding of the Gemara and conclude that a child may join to make a Zimun as long as he knows to Whom the blessings are directed. Such a child may even be the third of a Zimun of three (and certainly the tenth of ten). (b) The TUR (OC 199) cites RAV HAI GA'ON and RABEINU PERETZ who say that a child who knows to Whom the blessings are directed may be included to make a Zimun of *ten* but may not make a Zimun of *three*. (See also end of Tosfos DH v'Les.) (c) RABEINU TAM rules like the Rambam and Rif, that a child may join to make a Zimun (of *three* according to the Rosh's understanding of Rabeinu Tam, but only *of ten* according to Tosfos' understanding of Rabeinu Tam), as long as he *either* knows to Whom he is blessing, or he is "Porei'ach" (see Background). Furthermore, Rabeinu Tam adds that even if he does not know to Whom he is blessing nor is he "Porei'ach," he may be included to make ten ("Snif la'Asarah"). (d) TOSFOS (DH v'Leis) explains that in order to include a child, he must have both qualities -- "Porei'ach" *and* know to Whom he is blessing. (Tosfos interprets "Porei'ach" to mean that he has short pubic hair and has not passed the age of thirteen.) (e) The ROSH cites a Talmud Yerushalmi that says that a child must have two hairs in order to be included in a Zimun. Therefore, the Rosh disregards the conclusion of our Gemara and concludes that a child may *never* be included to make a Zimun. HALACHAH: THE SHULCHAN ARUCH (OC 199:10) rules like the Rambam (a). The Acharonim point out that only one child may be included to make a Zimun, and not more.

The REMA rules like the Rosh, that we do not include minors to make a Zimun. The only time that we are lenient is when the child is thirteen years old yet we do not know for a fact that he has developed signs of maturity (at least two full pubic hairs). In such a case we may rely on the Chazakah that he has developed signs of maturity and include him to make a Zimun (because a Zimun is d'Rabanan).

THE OBLIGATION OF A MINOR IN MITZVOS ("CHINUCH") QUESTION: Rashi DH Ad she'Yochal explains that the Rabbanan did not place the obligation of Chinuch in Mitzvos upon a minor, but upon his father. Rashi's statement is logically very sound, since the minor is not obligated to accept upon himself the Rabbanan's Gezeiros any more than he is obligated in any other Mitzvos of the Torah. Rashi in Nidah 46b DH Isura makes a similar statement, emphasizing that it is impossible for the Rabbanan to obligate a minor in any of their enactments. Why, then, does RASHI himself (in Berachos 20b DH Shiura) rule that a minor *may* recite Birkas ha'Mazon for a person over the age of Bar Mitzvah if that person ate less than a k'Zayis of bread! This is the opinion of Tosfos (Berachos 15a DH v'Rebbi Yehudah; 48a DH Ad) and the Halachic ruling (Orach Chayim 186:2) as well. ANSWER: Rashi and Tosfos understood that although a minor is not obligated *at all* in Birkas ha'Mazon in his own right, nevertheless, the Rabbanan who originally decreed that a person who ate less than a k'Zayis must recite Birkas ha'Mazon, enacted in their decree that if a minor recites Birkas ha'Mazon for one who ate less than a k'Zayis, it will suffice. The reason they enacted their decree in such a manner was in order to further the cause of Chinuch, by making it *look* to the minor as though he is indeed obligated in Mitzvos in his own right, so that he should regard his obligation in Mitzvos with austerity. However, the minor himself is indeed exempt from all Mitzvos, even from the Mitzvah of Chinuch. (M. Kornfeld)

49b- QUESTION: On Shabbos, we mention "Retzeh" in Birkas ha'Mazon in the blessing of Boneh Yerushalayim. On Rosh Chodesh, we add "Ya'aleh v'Yavo" in the blessing of Boneh Yerushalayim. RABEINU YONAH (Daf 29a; see Insights 29:1) puts forth the rule that in the "abridged" version of a Berachah we only mention those things that were actual blessings in the original. If so, why do we make mention of Shabbos ("Retzeh") and Rosh Chodesh ("Ya'aleh v'Yavo") in Al ha'Michyah when those prayers are not actual blessings in Birkas ha'Mazon? RAV CHAIM SOLOVECHIK explains that those prayers sometimes *are* blessings in the Birkas ha'Mazon, as our Gemara makes clear. If a person forgets to say "Retzeh" and remembers after the blessing of Boneh Yerushalayim but before beginning the next blessing, he recites a short blessing that makes mention of Shabbos in lieu of "Retzeh." For that reason we include an abridged mention of Shabbos and Rosh Chodesh in Al ha'Michyah because they are indeed abridged blessings. Rav Chaim goes further and explains that this is the reason why we mention Shabbos and Rosh Chodesh *after* the words "u'Vneh Yerushalayim" in Al ha'Michyah, while in Birkas ha'Mazon we say them *before* the blessing of Boneh Yerushalayim. These short mentions are *not* abridged versions of "Retzeh" and "Ya'aleh v'Yavo," but rather abridged versions of the *blessings* of Shabbos and Rosh Chodesh. Since those blessings are said only *after* Boneh Yerushalayim, their abridged versions are said only *after* u'Vneh Yerushalayim as well!

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Shiur HaRav Soloveichik ZT"L on Parshas Vayera

(Shiur date: 11/5/74)

The Torah tells us that Hashem visited Avraham as he sat at the entrance to his tent at the hottest time of the day (Breishis 18:1). When Avraham sees the 3 strangers, he runs to them and says Adon-y, please do not pass by the tent of your servant. Chazal (Shavuos 35b) say that this use of the word Adon-y is treated as Kodesh, as it refers to Hashem. The Gemara (Berachos 7b) says that from the day that Hashem created the world, Avraham was the first to call Him Adon-y. Avraham referred to Hashem twice as Adon-y, once in Parshas Lech Lecha and the other in Parshas Vayera. Avraham asked Hashem, Mah Titen Li Vanochi Holech Ariri (Breishis 15:2), what will You give me, for I am childless. The second time is in Vayera when the 3 strangers pass by his tent. The fact that Avraham was the first to call Hashem Adon-y was considered so important that Daniel relied on this merit of Avraham (Daniel 9:17) when he prayed for the Mikdash (Gemara Berachos 7b).

Avraham was the great intellect who searched for and discovered Hashem. Avraham used the term Adon-y twice. Once when Avraham asked Hashem for a son as he was childless. The second time was when the strangers passed by and he asked Hashem to remain and not pass by His servant. The Tetragrammatron is pronounced Adon-y but is written differently. The word Adon-y connotes ownership, that Hashem is the master of the world. The Tetragrammatron means that Hashem is the be-all and end-all of existence. Elokim indicates that He created the world. Adon-y is used in all Berachos Hanehenin, that the world and everything in it that we enjoy belongs to Hashem. As the Master of the world, He could choose just as easily to destroy it. It is through His kindness that he has provided us with the things that we enjoy.

In Parshas Lech Lecha, Hashem told Avraham that the reward that awaits him is great. Obviously since everything belongs to Hashem, there were no limits what Hashem could give him. Avraham said that he realizes that Hashem is the master of the world and can give Avraham anything. He uses the word Adon-y for the first time to indicate the total ownership and mastery of Hashem over this world. But if he does not have a son, no reward would ever satisfy him because in the final analysis, whatever Avraham has will eventually fall to his servant Eliezer. So Avraham said that he had no doubts that Hashem, Adon-y, could provide him with any reward, but requested a son in order that he would have an heir to whom he could hand over his legacy.

In Vayera, where Avraham uses the word Adon-y for the second time, 2 things happened. Hashem appeared to Avraham, then the strangers appeared to Avraham. Some Mefarshim say that this was really one story. According to them, Hashem appeared to Avraham through 3 angels, as it was quite common for angels to appear to the prophets at any time. In other words, Hashem had appeared to Avraham, there was Giluy Shechina. Suddenly he saw in his prophesy 3 angels standing before him and he ran to them. Others interpret that first Hashem appeared to Avraham, then the 3 angels appeared as ordinary people to Avraham and he ran to them and asked them, Adony (my masters), please do not pass by my tent without stopping there. According to this interpretation, the usage of the term Adon-y refers to the strangers, and should be considered Chol. However, Chazal say that the use of the word Adon-y here is Kodesh, so we will operate with the premise that Adon-y is Kodesh.

Rashi interprets that Hashem came to be Mevaker Choleh, to visit the sick. Why did Avraham leave the Shechina and run to invite these 3 strangers into his house? How could he pass up such an honor, to have Hashem be his personal Mevaker Choleh? Chazal derive from Avraham's leaving the Shechina to greet the 3 strangers that the Mitzva of Hachnosas Orchim is greater than Kabbalas Pnay Shechina (Shavuos 35b).

The Midrash says that Hashem came to visit Avraham who was sitting. Why didn't Avraham stand up out of respect for the presence of Hashem? The Midrash says that Avraham wanted to stand but Hashem told him to sit as a symbol for later generations where it says Elokim Nitzav Badas Kel.

However it seems odd that Avraham would not stand for Hashem, yet he hovered over the 3 strangers to serve them. Why was it acceptable for Avraham to sit for Hashem yet stand for the strangers?

The Midrash says that when Hashem appeared to Avraham to visit him, Avraham wanted to stand up for Hashem out of courtesy, as the norm is for the master of the house to stand and welcome his guests. Hashem told Avraham that there is no reason for him to stand, for after all, He is Adon-y, the same all-capable Hashem that previously promised him great rewards. It is Hashem that is the Master of the house and Avraham is the guest. So it was proper that Avraham should sit. When the guests came, Avraham ran to them and he said to Hashem that now I must stand to welcome them, because vis a vis these guests I am considered the master of the house. So Avraham stood up for them out of courtesy. He said to Hashem, Adon-y, please don't pass by your servant. When You appeared to me, I wanted to stand, but You, the Master of the universe told me to sit because it was I who was Your guest. Now that other guests have arrived at my house, please do not be insulted that I am standing for them while I did not stand for You.

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