

B'S'D'
INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON VAYERA - 5761

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RABBI HERSCHEL SCHACHTER
"CENTRIST ORTHODOXY"

Our father Avrohom was known for his love of G-d. Yeshaya refers to him as, "avraham ohavi," "the one who loved Me" (Yeshaya 41:8). In what way does man demonstrate his love for G-d?

Rambam, in Sefer Hamitzvos, (3rd mitzvas aseh) quotes the Talmudic comment (Yoma 86a) on the pasuk, "Veahavta es Hashem elokecha" (Devarim 6:5), that the way to demonstrate our love for Hashem is by inspiring other people to love Him as well, just as one who loves another person will praise him in public and try to motivate others to like him as well. The mitzvah of ahavas Hashem belongs to both the list of chovos halevavos and to the category of chovos haevarim.

In the beginning of Parshas Lech Lecha we read about the "nefesh asher asu becharan," the many individuals whom Avrohom and Sara had brought to believe in Monotheism.

Rambam (first perek in Hilchos Avodah Zarah) quotes a medrash that states that Avraham had tens of thousands of followers. He was very outgoing, and the prophet Michah (7:20) singles him out for his middas hachessed, "Titen emes leyaakovB". By showering much love upon others he affected people so that they came to love G-d as well.

Nevertheless, after the Torah relates the story of the akeidah, G-dEs comment to Avrohom is mentioned, "Now I know that you are a God fearing individual." If Avrohom would have served G-d through love alone, he would not have been able to withstand the tremendous emotional strain of the akeidah. It was only because his love of G-d was coupled with a fear of Him that he succeeded in fulfilling this divine command (the Zohar develops this theme and uses the expression of "blending fire with water" fire is a reference to the fear of G-d, while water is an allusion to the love of god).

These two emotions are not mutually exclusive. There is no contradiction between them. Generally speaking, fear is a very unhealthy feeling. But fear of G-d is not unhealthy. The pasuk in Mishlei (10:27) tells us that, "Yirat Hashem tosif yamim ushnot reshaim taktzirena," that fear of G-d will add years to our lives. We are all obligated to both of these biblical mitzvos, both to love G-d and to fear Him at the SAME TIME. The extent that one emphasizes one emotion over the other is a matter of oneEs personality. Each individual must figure out his own balance.

Yitzchak Avinu was known for his fear of G-d. (See Bereishis 31:53, where Yaakov refers to G-d as "pachad Yitzchak", "the One whom my father feared.") But again, this does not mean that Yitzchak DID NOT POSSESS love of G-d AS WELL.

The opening pasuk in Parshas Vayeshev states that Yaakov lived in Eretz Canaan, the land of megurei aviv, where his father (Yitzchak) had

lived. The rabbis of the medrash add another level of interpretation to that phrase. They understood the expression, "megurei" to be rooted in the word, "gerus" φ conversion. Just as Avraham engaged in mass proselytizing, so too did Yitzchak after him. True, it was not to the same extent as Avraham, as Yitzchak did not seem to have tens of thousands of followers. Though YitzchakEs dominant emotion was fear, he still possessed a blend with love of G-d in that ha also was involved in proselytizing, as is required of all Jews. Without possessing both of these emotions, we would not be able to fulfill all of the mitzvos.

In his collection of teshuvos entitled, "Meshiv Davar", the Netziv has an essay on the topic of right-wing, left-wing, and centrist Judaism. He explains that whoever does not keep all of the mitzvos is not acting in accordance with the teachings of Judaism. The three groups of Jews φ acting as Jews- are divided in accordance with how they strike a balance between fear and love of G-d. Some follow Avraham, and place the emphasis on chessed and ahavas Hashem. Others follow Yitzchak, placing their emphasis on midas hayirah. The centrists are those who attempt to maintain more of a balance between the two emotions without emphasizing one or the other.

<http://www.artscroll.com/parashah.html>

Parashah Talk Parshas Vayeira

Excerpt from Brisk on Chumash, by Rabbi Asher Bergman

And he said, "Let not my Lord be angry, and I will speak" (Genesis 18:30).

On the surface, it appears that Avraham was pleading with G-d not to become angry at him for his bold request. This interpretation seems difficult, however. Avraham was offering his prayers on behalf of the people of Sodom. Why should G-d become angry at him for that?

When Avraham first started to plead for the sparing of the Sodomites, he said (following the translation of Onkelos), "Will You, in Your anger, eliminate righteous people along with the wicked?" (18:23). This should be understood in light of the Talmud's dictum (Bava Kamma 60a) that "Once permission has been given to the Destroyer to destroy, he does not distinguish between the righteous and the wicked." This is why there are often cases of mass tragedies, when a righteous minority suffers along with the wicked majority. Avraham thus pleaded with god that He should not act upon His anger, for in that case the result would be the elimination of "the righteous people along with the wicked."

In our verse as well, then, we can understand Avraham's request "Let not my Lord be angry, and I will speak," - to mean "Let not my Lord act with anger - against the people of Sodom - so that I can pray on behalf of the few righteous individuals who may live there."

-- Brisker Rav

From: Yeshivat Har Etzion's Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash
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Subject: SICHOT61 -Parashat Vayera

SICHA OF HARAV YEHUDA AMITAL SHLIT"A
AN EXALTED FAITH

Summarized by Betzalel Posy

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 nisyonot (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 G-d 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 G-d, even to the point of sacrificing one's only son. Avraham did so not because he was afraid that G-d would kill him, but rather because his strongest love and desire was to serve G-d. To convey this message, the Rambam quotes a verse: "Now I know that you are G-d-fearing, for you did not withhold your son, your only one, from Me" (Bereishit 22:12).

This point in the Rambam seems strange. After all, does G-d really need us to love Him to the extent that we would kill our children? Does G-d ever require us to do such a thing? Does He not, indeed, forbid human sacrifice? 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 primitives 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 a person with a purified faith, the innovation of Avraham, can have a relationship with the Almighty - a relationship that goes to the extreme of devotion, and is based on the one G-d of truth and justice.

The alternate viewpoint is an attractive one. For many years, there were Jews who tried to attach some measure of physicality to G-d, 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 something tangible on which to base their morality, 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, since 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 G-d 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 gimmicks 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 Ba'al Shem! What they had was faith and knowledge of G-d and His Torah. These gimmicks may seem like 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 the Holy One, 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 G-d. This task falls mainly 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 ertz; ME'OD NA'ALA" - "The great of the peoples are gathered together, the retinue of AVRAHAM's G-d; for the guardians of the earth belong to G-d; HE IS GREATLY EXALTED." (Tehillim 47:10)

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From: RABBI JONATHAN SCHWARTZ jschwrtz@ymail.yu.edu
Subject: Internet Chaburah -- Parshas VaYera

Prologue: People often ask why they should bother to get involved in different activities. What good will it do? Often the sense that one cannot totally correct a particular situation leaves one feeling as if the worth in affecting it at all is not practical.

Perhaps the greatest negation to the above can be found in the opening lines of this week's Parsha. VaYera Eilav Hashem. Rashi notes the fact that no words were uttered by Hashem, no commands were given to Avraham. Why then did Hashem make an appearance? Rashi explains that it was the third day following Avraham's Mila. Hashem knew that it was the most painful day after the surgery and he wanted to fulfill the Mitzva of Bikkur Cholim.

The truth is, G-d's action seems somewhat strange. G-d did not have to be Mivaker Cholim. The Talmud (Nedarim 39b) tells us that he who visits the sick removes 1/60th of his sickness. The commentaries (Meiri etc.) explain that by visiting and bringing comfort to the sick, the more comfort you bring, the more sickness you remove. Yet, G-d is the Rofeh Kol Basar. Why should he come to gain the small step of Bikkur Cholim, if by a mere utterance he could totally heal Avraham?

Rav Moshe Feinstein (Darash Moshe II) ztl. explained that in truth Hashem had other intentions in visiting Avraham. He wanted to show him how to perform a Mitzva. The steps involved in reaching a goal are often Mitzvos in themselves. The fulfillment of the word of G-d and the efforts extended in performing Chessed acts often are lost when we fail

to recognize the positive results even when they are not 100% recovery.

Communities often need to think about where the communal best interest lies. Often the programs that reveal the best results win the community's backing. This week's Chaburah examines the Mitzva of Bikkur Cholim through communal eyes. It is entitled:

VISITING THE SICK: A COMMUNAL RESPONSIBILITY?

(Special thanks to FASE, a project of 5th Ave. Synagogue and Lennox Hill Bikkur Cholim for inspiring this Chaburah)

The Mishna in Peah (1:1) notes clearly that the Mitzva of Bikkur Cholim does not appear in the text of that which a person does in this world and derives benefits for the action in this world and the next. However, daily we add it into our Tefillos? Why is that?

The Talmud (Bava Metzia, 30b) includes Bikkur Cholim among those Mitzvos that fall under the category of Chessed. Similarly, elsewhere the Gemara (Shabbos 127a) adds Bikkur Cholim to a list of six things that a person does, and enjoys the benefits from the activity in this world and in the next one. The Gemara in Shabbos explains that things that were included in the Mishna in Peah did not need to be spelled out there. Hence, Bikkur Cholim was subsumed under a more general requirement to do Chessed. (See also Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 335:2).

The difficulty begins when we consider aspects of the Mitzva of Bikkur Cholim. The Gemara in Nedarim (39b) notes that one who visits the sick takes away 1/60 of his illness. The Meiri notes that this is because of the Simcha that a visitor brings, a clear aspect of the Mitzva of Bikkur Cholim. However, the Gemara concludes that it is only a Ben Gilo who actually removes 1/60th of the illness. Now if Bikkur Cholim is merely an aspect of the Mitzva of Chessed, where else do we find a Mitzva of Chessed restricted to birth times?

The Behag (introduction) and Sheiltos (Sheilta 93) learn that Bikkur Cholim is part of a Mitzva of Chessed. However, at least for the Ben Gilo, it seems to carry its own weight as a Mitzva. Hence, we can have an obligation for the Tzibbur to do Chessed including aspects of Bikkur Cholim and the specific requirement of a Ben Gilo to engage in Bikkur Cholim.

The Rambam does not count Bikkur Cholim as its own Mitzva Deoraisa. This is consistent with his position (Sefer Hamitzvos Shoreshei Beis) that all aspects of Chessed fall under the category of V'Ahavta l'Reiacha Kamocha. The Rambam DOES develop a Rabbinic Mitzva (Hil. Avel 14:1) called Bikkur Cholim. He explains the added Mitzva as part of a classification of Mitzvos that are Gemilas Chessed B'Gufo, which have no limits. Still, he notes the fact that V'Ahavta l'Reiacha Kamocha applies to this Mitzva, namely things that you'd want the community to do for you, you should do for someone else.

This raises an interesting source for communities. The Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 335:3) praises communities that have set up Bikkur Cholim societies. The Chofetz Chaim (Ahavas Chessed III:3) too, praised this type of a society noting its exceptionality among all forms of Chessed. He explained that by being involved with the sick directly, this society offers respite to the family and allows the ill person's needs to be tended to. In doing so, lives are saved.

Thus, when determining how one should divide up his (or communal) Tzeddaka funds, one could arrive at the discussion of whether a community should set up a specific fund for Bikkur Cholim. If Bikkur Cholim is merely a Mitzva for the Bnei Gilo or merely an aspect of general Chessed, then it should be part of the regular funds utilized for the community's Chessed. However, if there is some special aspect to the Mitzva of Bikkur Cholim over other Mitzvos included under the banner of Chessed, it could have its own funding source. Rav Refael Mordechai Malchee (a 5th century Yirushalmi doctor cited by the Tzitz Eliezer, Ramat Rachel Siman Daled) advanced the position to have a separate Tzeddaka fund to support Bikkur Cholim related activities. Modern day Poskim (Tzitz Eliezer Xi:17) concur. They cite the logic

that Bikkur cholim uniquely is involved in the direct saving of lives. As a result, there are times when funds can even be diverted from Talmud Torah for the sake of Bikkur Cholim.

Battala News

Mazal Tov to the Herrmann family upon the Aufruf and forthcoming marriage of Rabbi Daniel Herrmann to Chani Schwartz.

From: RABBI YISROEL CINER ciner@torah.org

Parsha-Insights - Parshas Va'yaira -

This week we read the parsha of Va'yaira. "Va'yaira ai'lav Hashem. {And Hashem appeared to him (Avrohom).} [18:1]

The Talmud [Sotah 14A] teaches that Hashem had come to visit Avrohom who was then convalescing after his circumcision.

"And he was sitting by the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day."

In his debilitated state, Avrohom was sitting in anticipation of there being some passersby in order that he'd be able to fulfill the mitzvah {commandment} of hosting guests. Hashem had made it an unusually hot day in order that Avrohom wouldn't be bothered by guests. When He saw the sorrow and void that Avrohom felt in the absence of this mitzvah, He sent three angels in the guise of men.

Rav Sholom Shwadron zt"l points out that if Avrohom was so upset about the absence of guests on one day, we can safely deduce that his house was filled with guests each and every day. Taking into account the teaching of the Sages that Avrohom had an inn where he offered food, drinks and lodging, we can again safely assume that those who had slept over the previous night did not venture out on this oppressively hot day. Therefore, even on this day, there were guests that Avrohom was hosting.

If so, why was it so crucially important to Avrohom that he host new guests?

Rav Sholom explains that Avrohom's lofty and exemplary service of chesed {acts of loving-kindness} wasn't simply performed on a physical plane. The food that he gave the guests was a means of teaching them to appreciate the blessings that Hashem imparts to the world. He didn't want to simply give them to eat but rather to teach them how to eat.

The same way that Hashem renews His creation every single day, Avrohom thirsted to create new souls, by revealing to them Hashem's existence, each day. That spiritual chesed of a new revelation was something that he couldn't fulfill through the guests of the previous day. He therefore waited by the entrance of his tent, hoping to fulfill his partnership of the creation, that day too.

With this we gain a deeper understanding in the words of the Sages who taught that in the merit of the food that Avrohom served his guests, his descendants would be fed manna during the trek through the wilderness. He served people earthly food, teaching them to eat in a heavenly manner--Hashem served his descendants heavenly manna (sorry).

Avrohom, on his level, was striving to fulfill the spiritual aspect of even a physical chesed. On our level, perhaps we too can learn from an incident which occurred in Rav Sholom's life that revealed to him how even a simple, 'physical' act is actually replete with incredible, spiritual-chesed potential.

When one of his small children had fallen ill, he decided to bring the other children to stay by his mother-in-law for a few days. On the way there, he met Rav Isaac Sher who asked him where he was going.

Rav Sholom explained that one of his children was sick so he was bringing the others to his mother-in-law.

After a brief silence, Rav Isaac asked simply, "Well, what then?"

Rav Sholom didn't understand what he meant and didn't respond.

"Why and what for?" Rav Isaac asked again.

Rav Sholom, raising his voice slightly, repeated his explanation.

Rav Isaac then looked at him sharply, commenting: "The big animal is leading the small animals." (In the animal kingdom, parents show concern for the well being of their progeny.) He then explained further. "How do you differ from the animals? You are on your way to do a chesed for Jewish children, who also happen to be your own children!"

Rav Sholom related that on that same morning he later saw his wife carrying two buckets of water that she had drawn from the well. Whispering to himself, "I hereby am ready and willing to perform a chesed for a Jewish woman, who also happens to be my wife," he took the buckets from her.

Over the following few months, Rav Sholom worked on transforming all of his actions to conform to this new attitude. Whenever he did anything for his wife or children, his intention was focused on doing chesed. As he saw it, he was changing dust to gold!

Rav Sholom was once walking along with his Rebbe, Rav Eliyahu Lopian zt"l, when they saw a man repairing the street. "Look at that man," Rav Eliyahu commented, "he is so involved in doing mitzvos--he's helping to settle the Land of Israel! Too bad that he's missing the intention to do a mitzvah. If the focus is only to earn a living then we lose the value of the mitzvahB"

The story is told that in the Chofetz Chaim's town of Radin, there was a pharmacist who had completely left the ways of Judaism. One day the Chofetz Chaim entered his store, gave him a warm hug and began to lavishly praise him. "I'm so jealous of your portion in the World to Come!" he told him. "The merits you have are incredible--you save the lives of hundreds of people. To save one life is an incredible chesed and were it not for you and your medications, hundreds would have died!"

The pharmacist was very moved by the Chofetz Chaim's words but demurred, saying that he was simply doing his job and getting paid handsomely for his efforts.

The Chofetz Chaim explained further that, of course, he was entitled to get paid for his work and thereby support his family but that he should add the intention to help save people's lives to the work that he was anyhow doing.

This pharmacist began to have that intention when he was dispensing medications and soon went through a transformation. He seemed to be greeting people more nicely; he was more concerned with their situations and more patient with his directions. It gradually began to dawn on him that there were many other mitzvos besides this one and he eventually became observant of all the commandments.

Turning dust to goldB The opportunities abound within the deeds that we are already performing.

Good Shabbos, Yisroel Ciner

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"RavFrاند" List - Rabbi Frاند on Parshas Vayeira -

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frاند's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 257, Makom Kavuah. Good Shabbos!

Dedicated This Year Le'eluy Nishmas Chaya Bracha Bas R. Yissocher Dov - In memory of Mrs. Adele Frاند -
UNANSWERED PRAYERS ARE NOT WASTED PRAYERS

When G-d decided to destroy Sodom and Amora [Gemorrah], He initially withheld this information from Avraham. Subsequently, the pasuk [verse] says "And G-d said, 'Shall I hide from Avraham that which I am doing? ... For I have loved him' (ki yed-ativ)." [Bereshis 18:17-19]

What was the purpose of informing Avraham about the plans to

destroy Sodom and Amora? G-d knew what was going to happen. He knew that Avraham would pray and negotiate for the salvation of Sodom. G-d knew ahead of time that there were in fact not 50 people in Sodom worthy of saving, nor were there 40, or 30 ... or even 10. He knew that eventually the city would be destroyed.

If so, what was gained by giving Avraham this information? "Because I love Avraham so much, I want to give him a chance to pray for Sodom... even though I know that his prayers are doomed to be rejected." Where is the logic here? Avraham's prayer was to be nothing more than an exercise in futility. G-d knew ahead of time that Sodom did not have the requisite 10 righteous people to be deserving of salvation.

The Bais Av explains that the purpose of informing Avraham serves as a very important lesson for all of us. G-d was in fact doing a favor for Avraham. When we pray for another person -- whether we are successful in our prayers or not -- we become better people by virtue of these prayers. G-d wanted to offer Avraham the kindness of having an opportunity to empathize with his fellow man, to think about the impending tragedy of Sodom, and to at least attempt to stave off the tragedy. When someone puts himself out for others, he becomes better as a result of that effort.

So many times in our life we say prayers for others. Sometimes these prayers are not accepted. Our reaction tends to be, "All the Tehillim and praying were for nothing. It was wasted because he did not get better or the situation did not change." Not at all! The prayers are not for naught. We have become better people as a result of those prayers, which emerged from our care and empathy for our fellow Jews.

Judaism is not a religion that measures success by results. Judaism measures success by effort.

AVRAHAM'S PROMISE BINDS FUTURE GENERATIONS; AVIMELECH'S PROMISE DOES NOT

Towards the end of the Parsha, Avimelech told Avraham "I see that G-d is with you in everything that you do. And now, swear to me, by G-d, not to be deceitful with me or with my children or my grandchildren. The kindness that I did with you, please do with me..." [21:22-23] Avraham agreed to the terms of the oath.

If we look at the terms of the agreement, it was clearly a one-sided bargain. Avraham swore to be kind to Avimelech and his children and grandchildren and he obligated his own descendants to be kind to Avimelech and his descendants. Avimelech, on the other hand, swore regarding his personal obligation to Avraham. However, he did not obligate his children, nor did he even promise kindness towards Avraham's children and grandchildren. There was no full reciprocity here.

Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch explains the reason for this discrepancy. Avimelech knew that Avraham was in a position to make a commitment and be sure that his children and grandchildren would follow along. Avimelech likewise knew that whatever he himself might promise, would certainly NOT be binding upon his children.

The Jewish way of life is to follow the traditions of parents and grandparents. Our heritage is all about "passing it on" -- having confidence that there will be grandchildren and great-grandchildren that will respect the word of a Zayde [grandfather]. That was in fact the definition of the essence of Avraham: "For he commands his children and household after him (lishmor derech Hashem)" [18:19]. Even Avimelech understood that Avraham could make such a commitment, but he himself could not. Avimelech could not even be certain how his children would turn out, let alone his grandchildren.

In this week's parsha, Avraham received the command of the Akeida [the binding of his son, Yitzchak]. Avraham declared his readiness. He began his journey with his son Yitzchak.

But consider for a minute... Yitzchak was not a 3-year-old child. According to Rabbinic tradition, Yitzchak was already 37 years old.

Should the father not at least have mentioned the purpose of the journey to his son, before they departed? The answer is that there was no reason for him to do so. Just as he could take an oath that his children and grandchildren would keep his agreements, he KNEW who he was dealing with. He knew he had been successful in the education of his son. There was no question in his mind that Yitzchak would be equally prepared to carry out this commandment.

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky, zt"l, took a trip to Israel in his older years, accompanied by one of his sons. During the long flight, Rav Yaakov's son looked after his father's every possible need with great dedication. There was another man was sitting on the plane near the Kamenetskys. As time went by, Rav Yaakov noticed that the man was becoming more and more upset. Rav Yaakov finally asked him, "What's bothering you? What am I doing wrong?"

The man responded, "I can't stand to see how well your son is treating you. I know that if I were an 87-year-old man and would have to rely on my son to take care of me, I would be in very bad shape. It simply eats me up to see how well your son treats you, knowing how poorly my son treats me."

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky, in the best spirit of the disciples of Avraham, was able to raise generations that respected elderly parents and grandparents. Unfortunately, in our time, this tradition is lacking, not only among the world at large, but also because of our assimilation and acculturation, this once proud tradition is even lacking among our own people. Our pristine tradition, however, is demonstrated in this week's parsha. A grandfather can make a promise, confident that even his grandchildren will follow it to the letter of the law.

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From: Nehemiah Klein[SMTP:ndk@hakotel.edu]

WEEKLY SICHA OF HARAV NEBENZAHL - PARSHAT VAYERA 5761

The following is a translation of the sicha delivered by HaGaon HaRav Avigdor Nebenzahl every Monday night in the Beit Midrash of Yeshivat Hakotel. We try our best to accurately present to you the Rav's words. Shabbat Shalom, Nehemiah D. Klein We would like to express our gratitude to Adam Smith & Company ... in memory of HaRav Aryeh Bina zt"l, founder of Yeshivat Hakotel. Please say a tefilla for refuah shlema for Baruch Yoseph ben Adina Batya he is the twelve year old son of one of our alumni who is in great need of "rachamei Shamayim".

PARSHAT VAYERA

"He Seemed Like a Jester in the Eyes of His Sons-in-Law"

"So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, and the betrothed of his daughters and he said: 'Get up and leave this place, for Hashem is about to destroy the city!' But he seemed like a jester in the eyes of his sons-in-law" [1] (Bereishit 19:14). What does it mean "he seemed like a jester in the eyes of his sons-in-law"? They were so convinced that there was no element of truth in what Lot was saying, that the only plausible explanation was that he was merely joking. If they would have had the slightest premonition that perhaps the city would indeed be destroyed they would have fled. If we were told that there was a fifty percent chance of our locale being destroyed would we remain there? Certainly not! We would flee even if the chances were far less than fifty percent! Many today fear coming to Israel where thank G-d far less than fifty percent of the residents have been harmed. Lot's sons-in-law were convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that Sodom was not to be destroyed and there was no need to heed his warnings. This was surely Lot trying to entertain them in the middle of the night with his sense of humor!

How was it that they did not believe him? Lot after all was a great man whom Chazal compared to Avraham Avinu in many respects (see Rashi Bereishit 13:8).

It is true that Chazal have harsh criticism of him as well, and indeed he did err and stumble in many areas (see Bereishit 19:33), but in totality he was a great man. Even after his parting from Avraham Avinu, an act which Chazal have many a critical word for (see Rashi Bereishit 13:11), Lot still had the merit of conversing regularly with angels. In addition, his prayers managed to save Tzoar from destruction (see Bereishit 19:20-21). Lot must have spoken with burning emotion, following all that had recently transpired: The residents of Sodom descended upon his house and attempted to take him into captivity, and it was only through a miracle that the angels succeeded in protecting him. Lot knew that the entire town was evil, in fact there is a Midrash (Pirke D'Rabbi Eliezer 25) that states that his own daughter was killed by the people of Sodom, he could not have been too surprised that Hashem had planned to destroy the city of Sodom. Lot therefore, must have conveyed the information in a very convincing manner - surely his words had tremendous impact on listeners. How then could the sons-in-law attribute it all to a joke?

Perhaps Lot's sons-in-law were following in Noach's footsteps. The Torah relates: "Noach, with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives with him, went into the Ark because of the waters of the flood" [2] (Bereishit 7:7). Chazal comment that "even Noach was one of those with little faith, he believed yet did not believe that the flood would come, and therefore he did not enter the Ark until the waters forced him to" [3] (Rashi ibid.). The fact that Hashem informed him: "and as for Me - Behold, I am about to bring the flood-waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which there is a breath of life from under the heavens" [4] (Bereishit 6:17), was insufficient to convince him that the flood would come about. It was only when the rains began to fall in such a way that he could no longer remain outside the Ark without drowning was he convinced that the time had come to enter. How can we explain Noach's behavior? Noach, after all was a prophet, he was a "righteous, perfect man" [5] (ibid. 9), his belief in Hashem was complete! We know that he believed that the flood would come about, how else can we explain his having spent one hundred and twenty years warning his generation of the upcoming flood. He vehemently argued with those who opposed him believing that they had the means with which to protect themselves (see Rashi ibid. 14 and Sanhedrin 108b)? Is this a man "of little faith"?

The "baalei Mussar" explain that Chazal's intention was not that Noach did not believe that Hashem had the power to bring about the flood. Chazal meant that Noach did not believe that Hashem would actually execute His Attribute of Justice in such a harsh manner. Hashem, after all, is a G-d of kindness Who provides good for all His creations. It was Noach's great belief in Hashem and his love of chesed that convinced him that Hashem would not turn the entire world into water and destroy all living flesh leaving only a few survivors. (It would appear to me that this point can serve in Noach's favor in the following criticism Chazal have of him: Chazal criticize Noach (Zohar section 1 254:2) by claiming that when Noach came out of the Ark and found a world in ruins, he cried to Hashem: "Creator of the Universe! You should have had mercy upon Your creations" to which Hashem responded: "NOW you are telling me this, why did you not tell me this before the flood? Had you told me this before the flood perhaps your prayers would have served to cancel the decree of the flood?". We know that when Hashem informed Moshe Rabenu that he was planning to destroy the Jewish nation, Moshe's prayer served to prevent this decree from taking effect. When Avraham was told that Sodom was to be destroyed, he began long negotiations with Hashem and he managed to save at least one righteous resident of Sodom from destruction. When Noach was told that the world was to be destroyed, why did he not pray to have this decree rescinded? Chazal in fact tell us (Zohar section 1, 67:2) that the flood is referred to as "the waters of Noach" [6] (Yeshayahu 54:9), because, in a manner of speaking, it was Noach who brought about the flood - he could have prevented it through his prayers. Why did Noach not pray? What we have just quoted in the name of the "baalei mussar" provides us with a clear answer. Noach refused to believe that the flood would actually come about - there was no need to pray, for Hashem's Attribute of chesed alone would prevent a flood from taking place). By the same token Lot's sons-in-law did not believe what Lot was saying for to them it was incomprehensible that Hashem would punish Sodom in such a harsh manner!

This explanation, of course, cannot be, after all, Lot and his family lived after the flood, they were well aware of the mighty and awesome power of Hashem's justice. They saw how Hashem is able to punish in that manner during His time of anger. It is true that Hashem promised that the world would never again be destroyed, yet according to one opinion in Chazal (Zevachim 116a) this promise is regarding a flood of water, it did not include destruction by fire. In addition, the promise was that is the entire world that would not be destroyed, according to the angels only the totally evil cities were to be destroyed. Our question remains, how could it be that Lot's sons-in-law refused to even suspect that Hashem was about to destroy Sodom and its neighboring cities with a flood of fire?

An alternative explanation is that this was the work of their yetzer hara. The yetzer hara not only misleads one into performing evil deeds but convinces them (and perhaps the entire population of Sodom) that they are acting in a righteous manner. Haman said to himself: "Whom would the king especially want to honor more than me?" [7] (Esther 6:6). Chazal (Esther Rabba 3:10) comment that the term "haMelech" in the Megilla (when not followed by the word Achashverosh) refers to Hashem, the King of kings. Haman, therefore asked himself "Whom would the King of kings want to honor more than me?". Am I not incredibly righteous? It is true that I made myself into a god (see Rashi Esther 3:2) and I passed myself off as the creator of the world, so to speak, but I am sure that Hashem is satisfied with me. This is not the time for a sicha on Purim, but what could possibly have been going through Haman's mind? We see, that despite all his evil he actually felt that he was a tzaddik. Similarly, the people of Sodom which included Lot's sons-in-law felt that despite their evil and corrupt behavior what they were doing was correct. Why should they support those "parasites" who sit idly wasting their time. Why give bread to the poor, let them go out and work! The people of Sodom certainly had this "correct" hashkafa. They saw themselves as tzaddikim, they are not corrupt! Lot's sons-in-law strictly adhered to all the "minhagim" of the holy congregation of Sodom. Hashem would not possibly destroy them with a flood of fire. It was for this reason that they could not heed Lot's words "he seemed like a jester in the eyes of his sons-in-law".

I do not know if I am permitted to say so, but perhaps the sons-in-law alone were not responsible for Lot's words not being accepted, but Lot was to blame as well. How so? The Gemara relates the following incident (Meila 17a): The Romans placed harsh decrees upon the Jewish nation forbidding the practices of Shabbat, Brit Milah and Taharat Hamishpacha. R' Reuven ben Istroboli appeared before the Romans incognito. He asked: "Would you prefer that your enemies become wealthy or impoverished?". They responded "impoverished". He suggested that it would be better to forbid the Jewish people from working on Shabbat rather than coercing them to, in that way they would have one day less in which to earn their keep and they would remain poor. The Romans reacted by rescinding the decree against Shabbat observance. He later returned asking them if they would prefer their enemies to be strong or weak, to which the obvious response was weak. He suggested that having each Jewish child undergo an operation at the age of eight days would serve to weaken them - the decree against Brit Milah was then canceled. He finally inquired whether they would prefer their enemies to have larger or smaller families, to which they responded smaller. He suggested that Taharat Hamishpacha would serve to lessen their family size, for a large portion of the month, a woman would be forbidden to have relations with her husband. This decree was cancelled as well. At a certain point they realized that R' Reuven was Jewish and all the decrees were reinstated (until R' Shimon bar Yochai and R' Elazar ben R' Yossi managed to have them nullified).

Of what difference was it that they now realized that R' Reuven ben Istroboli was Jewish? Did he not present them with convincing arguments? They found his logic flawless. The answer is that once they realized that he too observed Shabbat, Brit Milah, and Taharat Hamishpacha, it was clear that he did not believe a word of what he was saying. If he did not believe what he was saying, why should his listeners? Lot's sons-in-law did not believe Lot because Lot himself was not convinced that in a very short time the city of Sodom would be in a total upheaval, despite having the people of Sodom converge upon his house, people whom the angels "struck with blindness, from small to great" [8] (Bereishit 19:11). Lot went to speak with his family, because the angels instructed him to do so. He did not, however believe what he was saying and if what he was saying did not emanate from his heart there is no way it could penetrate the heart of another. "But he seemed like a jester in the eyes of his sons-in-law".

From where is our assumption that Lot did not believe what he was saying? His behavior that followed clearly supports this. We ourselves are not permitted to speak of Lot in such a manner, but the psukim clearly indicate this. What should Lot have done once his sons-in-law refused to listen to him? He should have at least taken his wife and daughters and fled. What do we see? "And just as dawn was breaking, the angels urged Lot on saying: 'get up take your wife and your two daughters who are present, lest you be swept away because of the sin of the city'" [9] (Bereishit 19:15). Had the angels not urged him to flee, he would not have moved at all! We later read "still he lingered" [10] (ibid. 16 - in the cantillations, this is read with a "shalshelet" which is a very long and drawn out note signifying that he tarried for a very long time. Why did he in fact wish to remain behind? Rashi tells us that he had left his assets behind. He had to first pack his bags and liquidate his bank account. Given that the bank was closed in the evening he had to wait until the evening. Then what about all his sheep and cattle? He had to wake them and bring them along. Yaakov Avinu told Esav that traveling with sheep and cattle limits one's mobility (see Bereishit 33:13). (The main reason that Jews of the

Middle Ages did not work with livestock was that they feared that at any moment they would be expelled. It is very difficult to flee with this extra burden). How was Lot expected to run away in such a hurry?

Had Lot truly believed the angels, would he have remained behind to gather his money? He obviously did not believe them, for otherwise he would have run away with his wife and daughters and left his possessions behind. Lot believed that Hashem would bring a fire down upon Sodom, but he felt that it would not be immediate - perhaps tomorrow or the next day. Hashem did not destroy Tzoar, perhaps the decree against Sodom would be cancelled as well. If Lot himself was not convinced, is it any wonder that he was unable to convince his sons-in-law of Sodom's impending destruction? We know that "a second vessel (one that was not directly on the fire, but rather hot food was transferred to it) is not capable of cooking" [11] (Shabbat 40b). The Ashkenazim are stringent and forbid placing food that is easily cooked even in a "kli sheni", Lot's sons-in-law however were not "easily cooked". Because Lot was not convinced himself, he was unable to convince others.

The Chazon Ish used to say that the halacha of "moridin velo maalin" "cast in and not brought up" [12] (Avoda Zara 26b) (an evil person may be thrown into a pit and need not be saved if already in one) does not apply to today's sinners. He felt that so long as they were not properly rebuked for their sins, and given that in this generation there is no one with the ability to do so, one cannot apply this law. Why is there no one with this capability in our generation? It is difficult to say such things about the Chazon Ish and others, yet regardless we must always do some self-introspection before we go and rebuke the secular. How strong is our belief, do we LIVE what we preach? Perhaps if our belief was more sincere we would learn more and not waste even a moment of time in which Torah could be studied. Perhaps if we were strong we would be more enthusiastic about our Mitzvah observance and would run at the speed of one competing for a gold medal to perform acts of chesed. Avraham Avinu underwent Brit Milah at the age of ninety nine. While he was recovering, Hashem removed the sun from its place adding to the intensity of the heat. Despite this, Avraham gathered all the strength he could muster and ran to perform acts of chesed. Can we say this about ourselves?

What about our tefilla? Do we pour out our hearts to Hashem? We need not raise our voices to the level of a shofar, but do our hearts shout? I cannot speak of others, but I can certainly speak for myself. If my belief were stronger I would do things very differently. The fact that I do not, indicates something missing from my faith. If I do not sufficiently believe, how can I hope to influence others? When we arrive late for Shacharit, how upset are we at having missed a Kaddish? Do we simply resign ourselves to the fact that there is always tomorrow and the following day to hear the Kaddish? We say, thank G-d we arrived in time for "yotzer or", but we missed the Kaddish and Barchu! We have no idea how much we have missed. If so, can we even hope to convince others of the true path in life?

How do we combat this attitude? The only way is to educate ourselves to realize how great we truly are. Every step we take can build or G-d forbid destroy worlds. Every word of Torah we learn, every Rashi and Tosafot creates entire worlds that we cannot see but that nevertheless exist. Wasting of time and not learning produces the opposite result. If a child's toy breaks, he cries. As parents we try to calm him down either by giving him a candy or at worst spending a few shekels buying a new toy. Imagine for a moment if the sun were to break. Would a mere few shekels fix everything? I cannot imagine all the ramifications, only a brilliant scientist can make all the necessary calculations. We would first have to ascertain what paths each half of this ball would take, and what the new rotation of the earth would be in relation to them - up until that point the path was more or less elliptical. On the one side we would probably see a great intensifying of the heat, on the other side a decrease. The forces of gravity would be thrown out. We need not fear this, although Hashem does not reveal to me all His hidden secrets, it is unlikely this will happen in the immediate future, for the sun and moon were placed so that they remain "continuously all the days of the earth" [13] (Bereishit 8:22). The Rambam claims that even the materials on them are to last an eternity, although we have recently witnessed this not to be the case, for they have succeeded in removing dirt from the moon and bringing it to earth - the contents are thus not eternal. In addition, scientists claim that the sun is burning itself up. There is no need for panic, for it is highly unlikely that this will take place any time soon. If the sun were to split into two, it would have immeasurable ramifications.

We must understand that we are not a mere child's toy in which a crack is of little significance. We are as great as the sun and even greater! Hashem told Avraham: "Gaze now toward the Heavens, and count the stars if you are able to count them", and He said to him: 'so shall your offspring be!' [14] (Berishit 15:5). It is my humble opinion that this does not only mean that the Jewish people will be as great in quantity as the stars but qualitatively as well. The stars appear to us as

being very small, but in reality their greatness is immense - some being several times bigger than the sun. The sun itself is several times the size of the earth. Each and every Jew is like a star in the sun - he may appear small but that is only due to our inability to measure his greatness. A crack in a Jew, is therefore like a crack in the sky - the implications are difficult to measure. The relative weight of each and every word coming forth from our mouths, whether good or bad, is equivalent to a change in the sun. On the one hand a person must view himself, in the words of Avraham Avinu in our Parsha, as "dust and ash" [15] (Bereishit 18:27), or to quote Moshe Rabenu "for what are we" [16] (Shmot 16:7). On the other hand, each and every one of us must realize how great we truly are. Can Moshe truly claim "for what are we"? Does he not realize that he is the greatest of all prophets and that it was he who saved the Jewish nation from Egypt and brought the Torah down for us? Of course he knows! He also knows, however, that all of this was given to him by Hashem, he does not ascribe any independent greatness to himself. We must realize that we are great but that this greatness is a gift that was heaven sent. We have nothing to be haughty about, we need only act the way a great person should. We must take extra care to protect ourselves, for ruining a great thing can destroy the world, while improving it can improve the world.

The current situation here in Israel is very grave. We do not need Lot and his angels to tell us this. What we do not understand is that we have the ability to improve the situation. Each word of Torah that we learn has the power to remedy the situation, we must therefore learn more. Our tefillot must be an outpouring of our souls to Hashem. I feel that we should at least keep in mind how the commentaries interpret the seventh bracha "Goel Yisrael" "Redeemer of Israel". They explain that the brachot of "Boneh Yerushalayim" "Builder of Jerusalem", "Matzmiach Keren Yeshua" "Who causes the pride of salvation to flourish", and "Hamachazir Schinato leZion" "Who restores His Presence to Zion" refer to the complete redemption, may it come speedily in our day. The bracha of "Goel Yisrael" on the other hand, refer to Hashem's redeeming us from the troubles we come across from time to time - so long as we do not merit this total redemption. Along the way we encounter a Haman, an Antiochus, and other evil people and each time Hashem has saved us - this is "Goel Yisrael". Hashem has not only provided us with the great salvations of Chanukah and Purim, but even ones on a smaller scale. Many enemies have arisen against the Jewish people and each and every one of us, if we are worthy, will be saved.

Our Torah, our tefillot, and our chesed can save us. Every act of chesed helps, for Hashem acts with us "measure for measure" [17] (Shabbat 105b) - if we act with chesed towards others, Hashem will act towards us in that way. This is how we can protect ourselves from war (and also from peace!). Barak traveled to Washington in pursuit of peace, we need protection from this peace as well - especially here in Yeshivat Hakotel in the Jewish Quarter. I always refer to the group Shalom Achshav (Peace Now) as Chas veShalom Achshav. We ask Hashem to protect us from war and from "Chas veShalom", as well as from the secular revolution. There are many things we wish Hashem to protect us from, and this protection is within our reach.

My Rebbe HaRav Zolty zt"l used to point out that Chazal established that whoever sees the stone upon which Moshe sat when Yehoshua waged war with Amalek must "give thanks and praise to the OmniPresent" [18] (Brachot 54a). Chazal did not enact a similar bracha for one who sees the site in which Yehoshua actually waged the war. This is because the victory was not exclusively due to the power of Yehoshua and his army. It is true that Yehoshua chose soldiers who were "strong and feared sin, that their merit should assist them" [19] (Rashi Shmot 17:9), yet victory came as a result of Moshe's raising his hands: "It happened that when Moshe raised his hand, Israel was stronger" [20] (Shmot 17:11). Chazal tell us: But do Moshe's hands win a battle or lost a battle? Rather, the verse comes to tell you: so long as Israel gazed upward and subjugated their heart to their Father in Heaven, they would prevail, but if not, they would fall" [21] (Rosh Hashana 29a). The victory can be viewed on the battlefield, Yehoshua counted the dead bodies of the strong Amalekites whom he killed: "with the sword's blade" [22] (Shmot 17:13, see Rashi). The root of victory, however, was Moshe's raised hands. It was only by enslaving our hearts to our Father in Heaven, that we won the battle. The appropriate place for this bracha, therefore, is not at the site of the battlefield, but upon seeing the real place of war - the stone on which Moshe sat.

We are not on the level of Moshe nor of Yehoshua. We can, however, enslave our hearts to Hashem. We have the ability to strengthen our Torah, tefilla, chesed, Shabbat observance, Shmirat Halashon, and whatever else may require strengthening. May Hashem help us and bring about a salvation to ourselves and the entire Jewish people so that we again have a situation in which "Israel was stronger", speedily in our day, Amen.

APPENDIX (TRANSLITERATIONS OF SOURCES)

[1] "vayetze Lot vayedaber el chatanav lokchei bnotav vayomer: 'kumu tzeu

min hamakom hazeh ki mashchit Hashem et ha-ir' vayehi kintzacheh be-einei chatanav" [2] "vayavo Noach uvanav veishto unshei banav ito el hateva mipnei mei hamabul" [3] "af Noach mikatnei amana haya, maamin ve-eino maamin sheyavo hamabul, velo nichnas lateiva ad shedchakuhamayim" [4] "vaani hineni mevi et hamabul mayim alhaaretz leshachet kol basar asher bo ruach chayim mitachat hashamayim" [5] "tzaddik tamim" [6] "mei Noach" [7] "lemi yachpotz hamelech laasot yekar yoter mimeni" [8] "hiku basanverim migadol ve-ad katan" [9] "vayaitzu hamalachim beLot lemor: 'kum kach et ishtecha ve-et shtei bnotecha hanimtzaot pen tisafe baavon ha-ir" [10] "vayitmahma" [11] "kli sheni eino mevashel" [12] "moridin velo maalin" [13] "od kol yemei haaretz" [14] "habet na hashamaima usfor hakochavim im tuchal lispor otam, vayommer lo ko yihye zarecha" [15] "afar vaefer" [16] "venachnu ma" [17] "mida keneged mida" [18] "tzarich sheyiten hodaa vashevach lifnei HaMakom" [19] "giborim veyirei chet, shetehei zchutan mesayatan" [20] "vehaya kaasher yarim Moshe yado vegavar Yisrael" [21] "vechi yadav shel Moshe osot michama o shovrot milchama ela lomar lach, shekol zman shehayu Yisrael mistaklin klapei maala umeshabdim et libam laAvihem shebashamayim, hayu mitgabrim veim lav hayu noflim" [22] "lefi cherev"

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THE TANACH STUDY CENTER -- www.tanach.org Shiurim in Chumash & Navi by Menachem Leibtag In memory of Rabbi Abraham Leibtag

ABSTRACTS for shiurim on Parshat VA'YERA

Part One - Between Sdom and Avraham Avinu

The city of Sdom earns a lot of attention in Chumash - most prominently in the first half of Parshat Vayera. Wherein lies the significance of this city, which has become synonymous with immorality and corruption?

Chumash indicates on several occasions that Sdom signifies the antithesis of everything for which Avraham Avinu stands. First, when Lot chooses to leave Avraham and relocate in Sdom, the Torah quickly chimes in, "The people of Sdom were very evil and sinful to Hashem" (13:13). As we have seen in previous shiurim, Lot's migration to Sdom was motivated by his preference for the comforts afforded by the city over the lifestyle of his Uncle Avraham, which involved devotion to, and dependency upon, G-d. Thus, Sdom emerges as the opposing force that lured Lot away from Avraham.

Later, after Avraham's victory against the four kings during which he retrieved the booty taken from Sdom, he refuses to accept anything therefrom (14:22-24). Apparently, Avraham wished to have no affiliation whatsoever with the city of Sdom.

Finally, the very structure of Parshat Vayera points to this fundamental, ideological conflict between Avraham and Sdom. In the Torah scroll, Parshat Vayera contains not a single paragraph-break until the end of the story of Sdom, despite this segment's inclusion of two distinct stories: the angels' visit to Avraham and Sarah to foretell Yitzchak's birth, and the destruction of Sdom. If the same angels who will destroy Sdom are first commanded to inform Avraham of Yitzchak's birth, then apparently these two incidents share a common theme. The Torah alludes to this connection when it explains why G-d must consult with Avraham prior to Sdom's destruction: "for the nation fathered by Avraham is charged with the mission of representing the ideals of "tzdaka u'mishpat" - righteousness and justice" (see 18:17-19). This nation will serve to prevent the deterioration of morality and ethical conduct in the world. Appropriately, then, the story of Sdom's destruction begins with the prophesy of the birth of Yitzchak, the son of Avraham from whom will emerge the nation with the mission to prevent future Sdom-like societies.

But where do we see this association between Sdom and ethical bankruptcy?

This association arises from the story of the angels' visit to Sdom. After Lot welcomes the strangers to his home, a bizarre "protest demonstration" erupts outside his home. Whereas Rashi understood that this group consisted of the societal pariahs of Sdom, Ramban explains that the entire population showed up to voice opposition to Lot's hospitality. Sdom's constitution read, "No guests allowed!" As the Ramban writes, Sdom was afraid of the intrusion of foreigners who would tarnish the exclusive, upscale quality of the local population. Such a policy, of course, opposes at its very core the ideals of "tzdaka u'mishpat." Yechezkel (16:46-50) explicitly identifies Sdom with indifference to the plight of the needy. Yeshayahu, too, bemoans the ethical deterioration of Jerusalem, comparing the Jewish capital to Sdom (1:10-17). Four chapters later (5:7), the prophet laments Bnei Yisrael's failure to live up to G-d's expectations of "tzdaka"

and "mishpat." This theme of "tzdaka u'mishpat" as the primary goal of Bnei Yisrael and its leadership is repeated several times by Yirmiyahu (22:1-5, 13-17; 23:5-6; 9:22-23).

Sdom thus represents the opposing force to the ideals that Avraham's nation is to teach mankind. Whereas this city was marked by selfishness, isolationism and apathy, the city of Yerushalayim must embody the highest standards of ethical behavior, the values of kindness, giving, selflessness, and genuine concern for others.

Part Two: Ramban vs. Rashi re: Sdom vs. Lot

Hearing of Lot's offer of lodging and hospitality to two foreigners, the city of Sdom gathered round Lot's home and demanded his surrender of the two guests, expressing their desire to "know them" (19:5). Who were these hostile people, and what did they want with Lot's anonymous visitors?

Rashi and Ramban dispute the answers to these questions, and their differing approaches to this incident may accurately reflect their general attitudes towards "pshat." Rashi explains this expression - "v'neid'a otam" - as "knowing" in the Biblical sense; namely, the gang that had assembled outside Lot's residence desired "mishkav zachar" - homosexual relations with the guests. This view is supported by the general Biblical usage of the expression, "to know," which refers to this type of activity - see Breishit 4:1, and in our story, 19:8. Additionally, Lot tried to pacify the crowd by substituting his two unmarried daughters (19:8), implying that sexual interests stirred the mob to gather against Lot. The difficulty in Rashi's approach arises in pasuk 4, which indicates that the entire local population came to Lot's door (including the elderly and children). Could it be that everyone came for the purposes of "mishkav zachar"? Rashi must therefore resort to a more novel interpretation of that verse, that the entire population was held accountable as if it had participated in the gathering, since no one cared to object to the mob.

Characteristically, Rashi decides upon an approach based on what we might term, "local peshat." He concerns himself with the more immediate issues in the pesukim and their context, and seldom takes into consideration factors emerging from other places in Tanach. Ramban, however, understands "knowing" here as knowing the strangers' identity for purposes of extradition. Consistent with his general, "global" attitude to pshat, Ramban takes into account - and cites - psukim from Yechezkel which portray Sdom as the paradigm of apathy towards the underprivileged. This leads Ramban to explain that the entire population showed up at Lot's front door to protest his hospitality to strangers and demand their expulsion from the city.

Ramban's approach may allow for a new understanding of Lot's disturbing offer of his daughters in his guests' stead. Ramban himself notes Lot's hypocrisy in defending his guests to the point where he prepares to surrender his daughter to a violent mob. We may suggest, however, that Lot never intended to hand over his daughters. Rather, he wished to criticize the townspeople's ban on hospitality by comparing this policy to promiscuity. Lot basically said, "I would sooner give you my daughters than my guests," effectively equating the depravity of forbidding guests with the amorality of a demand of Lot's daughters for mass prostitution. Enraged by Lot's unsolicited preaching, the people respond, "One has just come to live and now he is judging us; now we will deal more harshly with you than [we planned to deal] with them!" (19:8). They did not all appreciate the newcomer's self-proclaimed right to question local policy.

This analysis underscores the centrality of kindness and generosity in Bnei Yisrael's system of values. The prophets often portray Sdom as the polar opposite of the destiny of Bnei Yisrael, who are to bring to the world the message of "tzdaka u'mishpat," charity and justice. This struggle against the culture of Sdom remains our challenge and mission to this very day.

Part Three Lot's Escape From Sdom

Embedded within the drama of the destruction of Sdom in Parshat Va'era is a curious dialogue between Lot and the angel that had come to rescue him (19:17-22). The angel urges Lot to flee to "the mountain," but Lot expresses his fear of the mountain and preference to proceed instead to the nearby city of Tzoar, which was to have been annihilated along with the rest of the region. The angel benevolently acquiesces to Lot's request and spares the doomed city on his behalf. Ironically enough, Lot in the end is too scared to stay in Tzoar and moves to the mountain, where the incident with his daughters occurs (19:30-38). What's going on?

The angel instructed Lot to return to from where he came - the mountains, where Avraham lived as did Lot, until he decided to leave Avraham for the "good life" in Sdom, in the Jordan River Valley. However, Lot feared the repercussions of living once again with Avraham. He would once again have to live in his uncle's shadow, as opposed to his position as the righteous among the wicked in

Sdom. Even when he felt compelled to leave the Jordan River Valley region for the mountains, Lot did not return to Avraham; he hid in a cave, where he ended up sleeping with his daughters.

This entire account clearly intends to condemn Lot's refusal to return to Avraham. In fact, the Torah's criticism of Lot surfaces earlier, in Parshat Lech-Lecha, when Lot first decides to resettle in Sdom: "And Lot lifted his eyes and saw the ENTIRE Jordan River Valley, that it was full of water... like G-d's Garden, like the land of Egypt, UP UNTIL TZOAR." (13:10) The Torah here may be taking a subtle "jibe" at Lot: he wanted the entire region, but in the end had to beg for the city of Tzoar, which was named on account of its small size (see 19:20). He left Avraham to enjoy the vast, fertile region of the valley, only to barely make it to the smallest city in the area. Unfortunately, the legacy of Sdom lived on through Lot's progeny. His relations with his daughters produced two sons, who fathered the nations of Ammon and Moav. These two nations lacked the common courtesy of offering basic provisions to Bnei Yisrael in the wilderness (Dvarim 23:5), in the spirit of Sdom's self-centered ideology.

However, the "spiritual redemption" of Lot's descendants is achieved through the kingdom of David HaMelech. As we know, David descended from the union of Boaz and Rut the Moavite - a couple that came together through "chesed" (kindness - see Megilat Rut). Through the kindness performed by Lot's descendants, the selfish qualities imbibed from Sdom are corrected. Indeed, the Tanach summarizes the reign of King David as follows: "And David reigned over all of Israel, and David performed MISHPAT [justice] and TZEDAKA [kindness] for his entire nation" (II Shmuel 8:15). Through the strict adherence to the values of "tzedaka" and "mishpat," David HaMelech helped transform the legacy of Sdom into the legacy of Avraham Avinu (see Breishit 18:19).

Shiurim by MENACHEM LEIBTAG, abstracts by DAVID SILVERBERG

weekly@lists.virtualjerusalem.com Subject: Torah Weekly - Vayera

* TORAH WEEKLY * Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion

Parshat Vayera

ONLY WORDS

"And Sarah laughed at herself, saying, 'Shall I in truth bear a child, though I have aged?'" (18:13)

The price of everything goes up and up. With one exception. Words. Talk is cheap and gets cheaper by the month. We live in a world where hyperbole has become the normal means of communication. I once scanned a piece of enthusiastic prose in a newsletter, trying in vain to find a sentence which didn't end with an exclamation mark! Most ended with two!! Or three!!!

Wow!!!! If the most banal statements are so overpoweringly exciting, where is the emotional space for enthusiasm at something genuinely remarkable? We've already run off the Richter scale of enthusiasm and there's nowhere else to go.

One of the casualties of modern life is our appreciation of the importance of words.

Judaism doesn't see words as just important; to the Jewish mind, words are fundamental. G-d created the universe with words. There is a mystical concept that the building blocks of creation are the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. In Hebrew, the word for "word" is *davar*. Interestingly *davar* also means "thing." To the Jewish mind, "things" are no more than the "words" of G-d. That's what physical reality consists of. Words.

There's an interesting anomaly in this week's Torah portion. Sarah laughed at the prediction of her pregnancy and said, "Shall I in truth bear a child, though I have aged?" Then G-d reiterated the *bracha* that Sarah would have a child. In last week's Parsha, however, Avraham also laughs when he hears the prediction that he will have children. But, in that case, G-d does not repeat the blessing. What is the difference between the two?

The power of speech.

When Avraham heard of his incipient parenthood, he didn't verbalize his incredulity. Sarah did. Sarah by her skepticism annulled the blessing that rested on her and thus G-d gave her another blessing.

Interestingly, we can see this idea illustrated in the haftara as well:

When the child of the Shunamite woman dies, she doesn't say anything to her husband. She merely takes her leave with "Shalom." Even when she comes to the prophet Elisha to beseech him to revive the boy, she doesn't say the boy is dead.

The Shunamite woman didn't want to say that her boy had died because she didn't want to lend her speech to making it a fact. Similarly, because Elisha's servant Gehazi stated that the "lad has not awakened" he was unsuccessful in reviving him, and it needed Elisha to revive the lad.

It's only words.

Source: * Rebetzin Chana Levin as heard from Rabbi Rafael Stephansky

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From: Project Genesis[SMTP:genesis@torah.org] Subject: * PG LifeLine - Vayera ON THE WEB THIS WEEK @ <http://www.torah.org> TRUTH AND THE AMERICAN WAY: What we see in Florida, says Rabbi Daniel Freitag, is that "visual acuity is cultivated differently depending on one's political affiliation." <http://www.torah.org/features/secondlook/election.html>

TRUTH AND THE AMERICAN WAY

BY RABBI DANIEL FREITAG

Our country's current election predicament leaves many people feeling quite uneasy. It is very unsettling to be caught in what feels like the election process of M.C. Escher. The seemingly endless twists and turns of what used to be a simple, painless procedure has caused more than its share of sleepless nights.

As I watch the scenario unfold, I am reminded of my days on the sandlot of my Yeshiva Cheder (Elementary) School in Monsey, NY. I vividly recall the disputes that arose during those childhood ballgames a rabble of young boys, shouting and gesticulating; a chorus of "Safe! He was safe!" mingling with "No way! He was out!" After some time on the second-grade sandlot, I realized that I was witnessing a unique sociological phenomenon (though I didn't describe it as such at the time). Somehow, all of those who felt that the runner was safe happened to be on the runner's team, while those who believed that he was out were invariably those on the opposing squad.

The situation in Palm Beach County, Florida seems very similar. Apparently, a confusing ballot was used, which has led to claims of voter misrepresentation. While Bush supporters ridicule this assertion, and Gore backers demand a recount of the "obviously" flawed ballot, I am reminded of age-old sandlot politics.

What if we polled these two groups with the following question Do you believe that the ballot in Palm Beach County was flawed to a degree that it warrants a re-vote? Is it more than likely that the respondents' answers would divide along party lines? A recent national survey of just that question received responses in exact proportion to votes received for each party. Apparently, visual acuity is cultivated differently depending on one's political affiliation.

The American political system recently offered us a similar sample of this sociological peculiarity at play. When President Clinton was investigated for perjury and obstruction of justice about a year ago, the House of Representatives voted on the issue of impeachment, and the Senate soon after voted on his possible removal from office.

While some representatives crossed party lines, the majority of Democrats felt that the president's actions "Did not rise to the level of impeachment," while their Republican colleagues believed just the opposite.

Partisan politics really find their roots in biblical sources. The Torah tells us that "Bribery blinds the eyes of the wise, and turns aside the words of the righteous." Bribery affects not only those of questionable character, but the most pious amongst us as well. And it is not confined to monetary enticement, but involves any action that promotes self-interest. Every person will defend some behavior or position -- whether culturally, personally or otherwise acquired -- at the expense of rational, objective analysis. Truth is available only to those who seek it wholeheartedly.

A midrash tells a story of a man who, while plowing his newly-purchased field, uncovered a box filled with treasures. The Jew's ownership was fiercely contested. A great king witnessed the case as it unfolded. The land's original owner asserted that, since he had sold the land without knowledge of the jewels, and had wholeheartedly relinquished the property, the jewels rightfully belonged to the purchaser. The purchaser, however, countered that, since he had had no knowledge of the jewels at the time of purchase, he certainly had not considered them as part of the sale, and they therefore should be awarded to the original owner. The judge resolved the dispute by arranging a marriage between the children of the two parties.

Noticing that the king was crying, the judge approached him. The king explained, "In my country we would kill the two parties and keep the jewels for ourselves." But his reaction must have been inspired by more than the judge's insight; it was the incredible impartiality of the parties involved which gave way to the king's existential crisis.

Every individual senses that truth is a necessary virtue; no one intends to be duplicitous or subjective. We must realize, however, the prevalence of bribery around us, and that the strength to resist its powerful grasp comes only with hard work and a willingness to overcome our natural drive of self-promotion and preservation.

Rabbi Daniel Freitag is the director of the Owings Mills Torah Center.

<http://www.kby.org/torah/parsha/vayeira.html>

Parshat Vayeira

Emanah and Chesed

Rosh Hayeshiva, RAV MORDECHAI GREENBERG, shlita

"Derech erez kadma LaTorah -- Proper character precedes the Torah."

(Vayikra Rabbah 9:3) The Torah relates the stories of the Patriarchs at great length in sefer Bereishit in order to guide us in the ways of mussar and derech erez before receiving the Torah in sefer Shemot. The parshiot of Lech-Lecha and Vayeira are the parshiot of Avraham Avinu, who is portrayed as a unique character in two areas, a "man of faith" and a "man of chesed."

Avraham is the great "man of faith." He is the first person since the generation of the flood to seek out the Master of the World, fight against the idol-worshippers and smash the idols. Ultimately, G-d revealed Himself and said to him, "I am the Master of the World." He travels and calls out in the name of G-d, builds altars, and teaches the people of his generation to thank and bless G-d. He is also the great "man of chesed," who extends hospitality and seeks the welfare of others, as depicted in the parsha and in Chazal.

These two realms are not unrelated, as Chazal state, "Anyone who denies the good of his friend will come, in the end, to deny the good of G-d." When Avraham parts from Lot, Chazal teach us that Lot said, "I want neither Avraham NOR his G-d." (Bereishit Rabbah 41:10) Conversely, in a positive way, it says about Avraham, "I have loved him, because he commands his children and his household after him that they keep the way of Hashem, doing charity and justice." (Bereishit 18:19) It does not say "they keep the way of Hashem AND do charity," which would imply that there are two distinct areas -- between man and G-d and between man and his friend -- but rather, "they keep the way of Hashem, doing charity and justice." Namely, the way of Hashem is through doing charity.

Yerushalayim represents the unification of these two areas in the service of G-d. After the akeida, it says, "Avraham called the name of the place, 'Hashem Yireh.'" (Bereishit 22:14) The midrash comments on this (Midrash Tehillim 76):

You find that it is called "Shalem," as it says, "Malkizedek, king of Shalem" (Bereishit 14:18), whereas Avraham called it "Yireh," as it says, "Avraham called the name of the place, Hashem Yireh." G-d said, "If I call it Shalem, as Shem

called it, I will negate the remembrance of my beloved Avraham, who called it Yireh. And if I call it Yireh, I negate the words of the righteous Shem, who called it Shalem." What did G-d do? He joined together what the two of them called it, and called it Yerushalayim. What is Yerushalayim? "Yireh" and "Shalem." There are those who see in the liberation of Yerushalayim, the ingathering of Bnei Yisrael, and the building of Israel merely a social-national issue. The unity of the nation is expressed through "Shalem." And there are those who belittle unity and peace, and are concerned only with mitzvot between man and G-d, "Yireh." G-d, however, called this city "Yerushalayim," which is a combination of the two names, "Yireh" and "Shalem," to teach that one cannot exist without the other. Yirat Shamayim alone does not suffice if there is no peace between man and his friend. Yerushalayim is, on the one hand, the place that we were commanded to go to on the three pilgrimages, "so that you will learn to FEAR Hashem." (Devarim 14:22) It is also the city about which it says, "a city that is UNITED together" (Tehillim 122:3), that it unites all of Israel. When we will understand how vital it is to unite these two forces, the areas of between man and G-d and between man and his friend, we will merit the building of Yerushalayim.

"The built up Yerushalayim, like a city that is united together" -- that joins Israel amongst themselves, and Israel and their Father in Heaven.

From: dafyomi@lists.virtualjerusalem.com ohr@virtual.co.il

The Weekly Daf #353 Nazir 27 - 33 Issue #353 Parshat Vayera By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach, Dean, Ohr Somayach Institutions
CHINUCH FOR GIRLS

Even though a boy who has not yet reached the age of bar mitzvah is not obligated by Torah law in any of the mitzvot, there is a rabbinical command for a father to train his child even at a young age in the performance of mitzvot. Does this parental obligation of chinuch extend to the mother as well, and does it apply to training a daughter as well as a son?

The impression gained from our gemara is that the responsibility of chinuch is limited to a father training a son. The Sage Reish Lakish explains the mishna ruling that a father can impose on his pre-bar mitzvah age son a vow to be a nazir as being a function of chinuch and not a Torah law. When challenged as to why it is only the father who can impose such a vow and only in regard to a son, Reish Lakish responds that a mother is exempt from the obligation of chinuch, and that even a father is responsible only for the chinuch of a son and not of a daughter.

Regarding a mother's obligation for chinuch there is a difference of opinion amongst the authorities. Magen Avraham (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 243:1) concludes from our gemara that she has no such obligation, and that Queen Helenie's training of her young children in the mitzvah of succah (Mesechta Succah 2b) was something she did voluntarily. Machatzit Hashekel, however, cites authorities who contend that a mother is also obligated as the case of Queen Helenie would indicate, and dismiss the view stated in our gemara as the position of Reish Lakish which is not in accordance with the halacha.

With respect to the parental obligation to train a daughter, even Magen Avraham agrees that the rabbinical mitzvah of chinuch applies to girls as well. This is based on the observation made by Tosefot here that the gemara (Mesechta Yoma 82a) clearly states that a parent should train both underage sons and daughters in fasting on Yom Kippur. Since this seems to be in direct contradiction to what Reish Lakish says in our gemara, Tosefot concludes that some distinction must be made, but does not elaborate on what that distinction is.

Magen Avraham expresses an uncertainty as to the nature of this distinction: It is either that fasting on Yom Kippur is such an important mitzvah because it is a day of atonement, and therefore even a girl should be trained, while chinuch will not apply to her in other mitzvot; or that all mitzvot are like fasting on Yom Kippur and she should be trained in all of them except for the mitzvah of nezirut which is not really obligatory and may never be relevant to her adult life. He cites a midrash (Yalkut Parshat Emor) which supports the latter approach, and Machatzit Hashekel cites a Tosefot Yeshanim (Yoma ibid.) to the same effect. This is why the halachic authorities such as Mishna Berura categorically state that chinuch applies to daughters as well as sons.

* Nazir 29a

From: RABBI MORDECHAI KORNFELD kornfeld@netvision.net.il
Insights to the Daf - <http://www.dafyomi.co.il> THE GISI TURKEL
MASECHES NAZIR INSIGHTS INTO THE DAILY DAF brought to you by
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Nazir 21b

PROVING THAT A HUSBAND'S HAFARAH IS "MEIGIZ GAYIZ" OR "MEIKAR AKAR" QUESTION: The Gemara discusses whether the husband's Hafarah (annulment) of his wife's Neder annuls the Neder retroactively ("Meikar Akar") or merely repeals it for the future, from now on ("Meigiz Gayiz"). The Gemara attempts to prove that Hafarah is "Meigiz Gayiz" from the Mishnah later (24a). The Mishnah states that if a husband annuls his wife's Nezirus after she designated animals to bring for her Korbanos of Nazir Taharah, then the Chatas that she designated must be left to die (because of the Halachah l'Moshe mi'Sinai that a "Chatas she'Mesah Ba'alehah," a Chatas whose owner died, must be left to die). The Gemara proves from here that the husband's Hafarah is "Meigiz Gayiz,"

since she is no longer a Nazir, it is as if the owner of the Korban "died," and thus her Chatas must be left to die. If the husband's Hafarah is "Meikar Akar," though, then the Chatas should revert back to Chulin retroactively.

The Gemara answers that this Mishnah is not clear enough proof that Hafarah is "Meigiz Gayiz." Even if the Hafarah is "Meikar Akar" and uproots the Neder retroactively, the Korban Chatas remains Kadosh (and must be left to die). Why should the animal remain Kadosh if the woman, retroactively, was never a Nazir?

The Gemara continues and explains its answer. There are, however, two different Girsas in the Gemara's subsequent explanation of its answer (see TOSFOS, DH v'Hainu, and 22a, DH Ha Mani). According to one Girsas, the Chatas is Kadosh because the woman *needs atonement* (Kaparrah) for accepting to be a Nazir and refraining from wine (until the time of the husband's Hafarah), because of the principle of Rebbi Elazar ha'Kafar who says that one who abstains from wine is a sinner. Therefore, the Chatas remains Kadosh even after the husband uproots her Neder of Nezirus. According to the other Girsas, even though the woman does *not need* atonement, nevertheless since she was Makdish the animal as a Chatas it does not become Chulin.

What is the logic behind the Gemara's conclusion, according to either Girsas? The second Girsas obviously needs further elucidation. If a person who is not a Nazir is Makdish an animal as a Chatas Nazir, the animal certainly does not become Kadosh. Why, then, should this woman's act of sanctifying the animal as a Chatas Nazir be effective if, retroactively, she is not a Nazir?

According to the first Girsas, too, the Gemara's answer is difficult to understand. Why should Rebbi Elazar ha'Kafar's principle obligate the woman to bring a Chatas Nazir? If a person who is not a Nazir refrains from wine for a month, he does not become obligated to bring a Chatas! Since retroactively the woman is not a Nazir, why should Rebbi Elazar ha'Kafar's principle apply to require her to bring a Chatas?

We might answer this question by saying that the woman's *acceptance* of Nezirus is the sin according to Rebbi Elazar ha'Kafar, even if the husband retroactively removes from her the obligation to observe the Nezirus. She sinned because she *attempted* to make herself a Nazir (see the Gemara on 23a, that says that one who attempts to sin "needs Selichah v'Kaparrah"). However, this assertion, too, seems to be contradicted by a Gemara later (31b). If a woman made herself a Nazir, designated Korbanos, and then was Matir her Nezirus with a Chacham, the Gemara (31b) says that her Korban is a Hekdesh Ta'us (a Hekdesh made my mistake) and the animal reverts to Chulin! Apparently, neither Rebbi Elazar ha'Kafar's principle, nor the logic of the other Girsas in our Gemara, applies there in the case of Hatarah Chacham, so why should it apply to Hafarah if Hafarah, too, uproots the Neder like the Hatarah of a Chacham?

TOSFOS (31b, DH Amru Lahem) asks this question. He writes, first, that the Gemara (31b) might be following the opinion of the Rabanan and not the opinion of Rebbi Elazar ha'Kafar. (This still does not answer the question on the second Girsas in our Gemara.) Tosfos then adds that even if the Gemara does follow the opinion of Rebbi Elazar ha'Kafar, we can distinguish between Hafarah and Hatarah, because when Hatarah is used to annul the Neder, it makes it that the Neder never took effect even for one moment. In contrast, when Hafarah is used to annul the Neder, "the Neder took effect for one moment, since we find that he can be Mefer without resorting to Charatah and making the Neder a Neder Ta'us." What does Tosfos mean by this? How did the Neder take effect for one moment if the husband's Hafarah, like Hatarah, annuls the Neder retroactively?

A similar question may be asked on what the Gemara says later (22a) regarding a Nazir Tamei. The Gemara cites a Beraisa which says that if a woman accepts Nezirus, becomes Tamei, and then her husband is Mefer her Nezirus, she must bring a Chatas ha'Of but not an Olas ha'Of. The Gemara explains that the Beraisa holds that the husband's Hafarah is "Meikar Akar," and that is why she does not bring an Olas ha'Of. The reason she brings a Chatas ha'Of, says the Gemara, is because of Rebbi Elazar ha'Kafar's principle. Again, we see that when Nezirus is removed retroactively, Rebbi Elazar ha'Kafar's principle applies! Why should it apply if the person, retroactively, was never a Nazir?

Furthermore, the Gemara (beginning of 22a) cites Rami bar Chama who is in doubt about a case where a person makes a statement in which he is Matfis to an item which was originally Asur but which is now Mutar now: is he being Matfis to the present state of the item, or is he Matfis to the original state of an item (and his Neder takes effect)? Mar Zutra explains that if a person is Matfis to the original state of an item, then when someone is Matfis to the woman's Nezirus and afterwards her husband is Mefer her Nezirus, even if the Hafarah uproots the Nezirus retroactively, the second person remains a Nazir since he was Matfis in the original state of Nezirus of the woman, prior to the Hafarah. This is according to the "Yesh Mefarshim" in TOSFOS (DH Mar Zutra). Again, we see that even if the husband uproots the Nezirus retroactively with his Hafarah, the woman is still

considered to have originally been a Nazir (and that is why the second person remains a Nazir)! Why do we not say that after the Nezirus is uprooted retroactively, she never had a status of a Nazir, just like we find in the Mishnah (20b) that if a Chacham was Matir her Nezirus, then anyone who was Matfis to her Nezirus also becomes Mutar?

TOSFOS asks this question on the "Yesh Mefarshim" and answers ("v'Dochek") that since the Chacham is Matir with a Pesach, he makes the Neder into a Neder Ta'us, and therefore nothing remains of it. The husband, in contrast, is Mefer without a Pesach, but rather because of the Gezeiras ha'Kasuv that gives him the right of Hafarah, and therefore even if his Hafarah uproots the Neder, for certain matters it is considered as though some element of the Neder remains.

Here, too, we may ask what does Tosfos mean by this? How can Hafarah be, at the same time, both retroactive, and not completely retroactive so that some element of the Neder remains?

ANSWERS: (a) The BEIS HA'LEVI (1:45) explains that when the Gemara suggests that the husband's Hafarah is "Meikar Akar," it does not mean that he uproots it retroactively from the inception of the Nezirus. Rather, it means that a moment *after* the Nezirus takes effect, the husband is able to uproot it. The husband cannot uproot it entirely retroactively from before it even took effect. This is why Mar Zutra says that when one is Matfis to the first moment of the woman's Nezirus, then even after the husband does Hafarah, the Nezirus of the second person remains. This might be what Tosfos means (31b) -- the Nezirus literally took effect for one moment, and therefore Rebbi Elazar ha'Kafar's principle could obligate her to bring a Korban.

However, this does not explain the Gemara according to the other Girsas, which says that even without the principle of Rebbi Elazar ha'Kafar, once she sanctified the animal, the Hekdesh cannot be removed because the animal is already Kadosh. Why should the Hekdesh not be removed if the Hekdesh was made long after the first moment of Nezirus?

(b) The BRISKER RAV (Chidushei ha'Griz, end of Hilchos Nezirus) explains that even if the Hafarah uproots the Neder retroactively, it only uproots it retroactively for what pertains to the woman herself, but not for tangential consequences of the Nezirus that are not related to her. (See Perush ha'Mishnayos of the RAMBAM, beginning of third Perek.)

Therefore, with regard to Malkus -- if the woman drinks wine before the husband does Hafarah, then the Hafarah will remove the Neder retroactively and she will not receive Malkus. Similarly, the person who was Matfis to her Nezirus will no longer be a Nazir if he is not Matfis to her original state (not like Mar Zutra, but like the Gemara thought before Mar Zutra), since the second person's Nezirus stems directly from her Nezirus. However, the Korban that she designated will remain Kadosh. (See RABEINU CHAIM HA'LEVI, Hilchos Ishus, who suggests a similar logic with regard to Mi'un.) It is not entirely clear, though, how to define what is considered an integral part of the Nezirus and what is considered an offshoot of the Nezirus, according to the Brisker Rav.

(c) Perhaps the reason for the difference between Hatarah and Hafarah may be explained as follows. In the case of Hatarah, when the Chacham is Matir the Neder, the factor that removes the Neder is inherent in the Neder itself. The Neder was a Ta'us, an error, and therefore it does not take effect. Since that factor of Ta'us existed at the time that the Neder was pronounced, the Hatarah works fully retroactively. In contrast, there is nothing inherent in the woman's Neder to remove it through Hafarah (even though the Gemara says that "Ishah Noderes Al Da'as Ba'alalah," the Rishonim say that this is only a "Taima d'Kra;" see RAN, end of Nedarim 73b). The factor that removes the Neder retroactively is the Hafarah itself. Even though the Neder is removed retroactively, we can view it as though the Neder existed until a certain point in time, and only after that point was it retroactively removed. (This is the way RAV Y. Z. GUSTMAN, zt'l, defined the concept of "mi'Kan u'Tha'Ba l'Mafrei'a.") This might be what Tosfos means (on 22a and 31b) when he differentiates between Hatarah Chacham and Hafarah ha'Ba'al.

Now it is clear that after Hafarah, Rebbi Elazar ha'Kafar's principle can make the woman considered a sinner, since until the point of Hafarah she actually was observing a full-fledged Nezirus, and only later was it uprooted retroactively. Similarly, even without the principle of Rebbi Elazar ha'Kafar, it is possible that the Korban Chatas that the woman designates before Hafarah should be considered a "Chatas she'Mesah Ba'alehah," because the removal of its Kedushah did not come about through a Ta'us in the original statement, in which case it never was a Chatas. Rather, it actually was a Chatas until a certain point, and then the Kedushah was removed from it. This removal of Kedushah of a Chatas -- which invalidates the animal from being offered -- is similar to the death of the owner of a Chatas which invalidates the Chatas from being offered, and therefore it is included in the Halachah l'Moshe mi'Sinai of "Chata'os Meisos."

Similarly, when Mar Zutra says that when a person is Matfis to the woman's

original state before the Hafarah, he does not mean that some element of her Nezirus remains after the Hafarah. Rather, he means that the person is Matfis to the *time period* before the Hafarah, during which she was a full-fledged Nazir. Hatarah, in contrast, retroactively removes the Nezirus completely, so that even before the Hatarah the Neder was a Ta'us and the Nezirus never took effect. The Chacham, through Hatarah, is just revealing the truth -- that the Neder was a Ta'us all along. (We find a similar definition of "mi'Kan u'Tha'Ba" in the KESEF MISHNAH and LECHEM MISHNAH in Hilchos Nedarim 13:2, according to the opinion of "Meigiz Gayiz." See Insights to Nedarim 78a.)

It should be noted that the ROSH in Nedarim (52a) cites a Yerushalmi which says that even the Hatarah of a Chacham is "mi'Kan u'Tha'Ba l'Mafrei'a." The Rosh might hold like the first answer of Tosfos (31b) in which Tosfos does not distinguish between Hatarah and Hafarah with regard to how they remove the Neder retroactively.

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