

אברהם
יצחק

פרשת וירא
Parshat Vayeira

Ashreinu | אשרינו

ENHANCING YOUR STUDY OF THE WEEKLY TORAH PORTION



UPON MOUNTAINS,
FIELDS, AND HOUSES
RABBI BEN SUGERMAN

RABBI BEN SUGERMAN

DONIELLA ZAK ('21)

ADINA HIRSCH ('19)

SHMUEL BELIZON ('20)

MICHAEL ROSEN ('20)

And Avraham prayed in that place saying, "May future generations serve you in this place"; therefore people now say, "This is the mountain upon which Avraham served Hashem" (Bereishit 22:14).

R. Elazer asked: What does the pasuk mean when it says (Yeshayahu 2:3), "Many nations will go and say, 'Let us go up to the mountain of Hashem, to the house of the God of Yaakov'"? Is He the God of Yaakov and not the God of Avraham and Yitzchak?

The gemara answers: At the time of the redemption [the Holy Temple] will not be as it was in the days of Avraham when it was called a "har" [mountain], as it says (Bereishit 22:14), "On the mountain Hashem will be seen." Nor will it be as it was in the days of Yitzchak when it was referred

to as a "sadeh" [field], as it says (Bereishit 24:63), "And Yitzchak went out to pray in the field." Rather it shall be as it was in the days of Yaakov, who called it a "bayit" [house], as it says (Bereishit 28:19), "And he called the name of the place, 'The house of Hashem'" (Pesachim 88a).

Each of our Patriarchs visited the holy site of the Beit Hamikdash, and each of them perceived it slightly different from one another. It is safe to say that the change of perception that the gemara is describing is not referring to physical differences but rather conceptual distinctions. The Maharsha in Gemara Pesachim offers the following understanding:

Each of our forefather's view of the Temple site corresponds to each of the three Temples; the two that once were, and the third that hopefully will be built in our days. The Maharsha's comment is fundamentally rooted in the principle of the Ramban, מעשה אבות סימן לבנים -- that our patriarchs and matriarchs laid the foundation for all of Jewish history.

Avraham corresponds to the first Temple and saw it as a mountain, where the Shechina was guarded like one

would be guarded on a mountain-top, effective but temporary. The pasuk in Eicha (5:18), when describing the destruction of the first Temple, says: “The *mountain* of Zion which is desolate.”

Yitzchak corresponds to the second Temple and saw it as a field: totally exposed, unguarded, and vulnerable. The Talmud tells us that the second Temple was missing many items and miracles that existed during the first, not the least of which is the Aron Kodesh. The navi Mi-cha (3:12) writes, “Zion will be plowed as a *field*.”

Yaakov corresponds to the third Temple, and saw it as a house. A house is well constructed and well protected. One that will endure.

With this thought in mind it would be instructive to take a closer look at each of the Avot as they visit the Makom Hamikdash and make further connections between the narrative and the history of each of the temples.

And with a hope and prayer that we all go home!

SIMILAR BUT DIFFERENT

DONIELLA ZAK ('21)

In this week's parsha, Parshat Vayeira, Hashem tells Avraham that his nation will be as numerous as the stars in the sky and the sand by the sea. Hashem says:

”כִּי בָרַךְ אֲבִרְכֶךָ, וְהִרְבָּה אַרְבֵּה
אֶת-זַרְעֶךָ כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם, וְכַחֲלוֹ
אֲשֶׁר עַל-שָׁפַת הַיָּם; וְיָרַשׁ זַרְעֶךָ אֶת
שְׂעַר אֵיבֹיו”

“I shall surely bless you and surely increase your offspring like the stars of the heavens and like the sands of the seashore; and your offspring shall inherit the gate of its enemy” (Bereishit 22:17).

The stars and sand are both extremely plentiful and represent how Avraham's offspring will be plentiful as well, but since we know that the Torah does not include any extra words, why does Hashem need to say both the stars and the sand if they represent the same thing?

Sand is grouped together on the shore in a way that a person can't see just one grain of sand at a time. Instead, the sand appears as a whole until further examination. Stars on the other hand, are much more spread out and

individual, they are clearly seen as independent from each other even at first glance.

While both sand and stars are made up of items that are too numerous to count, the way each are formed gives insight into the bracha Hashem is giving Avraham. In this pasuk, Hashem is saying the Jewish people will be like BOTH sand and stars, not just because they will be many, but also because they will be a group as well as their own individuals.

This bracha is teaching us to recognize how lucky we are to come together in this great group of people, the Jewish people, while also valuing that we are also each individuals with unique talents and strengths that distinguish us from one another.

ELEVATING THE PURPOSE

ADINA HIRSCH ('19)

We are all familiar with the end of the story of Akeidat Yitzchak. Just as Avraham is about to do the unthinkable, and sacrifice his son to Hashem, an angel comes and tells Avraham to stop and sacrifice a ram instead. It seems pretty convenient that a ram would show up at exactly the right time when Avraham needed something to sacrifice. Pirkei Avot (5:6) lists the 10 miraculous things that were created on the last day of creation. Included in that list is “אֵילֹוֹ שֶׁל אַבְרָהָם אֲבִינוּ” – “the ram for Avraham our father.”

If the ram was around the whole time, why didn't Avraham notice it right away? Why is this ram considered one of the 10 most miraculous things that Hashem created? And why did this ram need to be created hundreds of years before it would be used?

The pasuk says that Avraham, “lifted up his eyes,” and saw something that he hadn't noticed before — a ram caught in the briars and thickets. Avraham's attention was so focused on this task of sacrificing his son for Hashem that he couldn't see what was there, in plain sight. Avraham needed to lift his eyes and take a moment to look around him to see a ram.

The Radak explains that this ram was destined to serve as the sacrifice brought by Avraham as a substitute for his son. If Avraham had been able to locate the shepherd of this ram, he would have compensated him for the value of the animal. He would not have wanted to offer an animal as a sacrifice without paying for it, which

is why it needed to have been created miraculously with the direct intention of being brought as a sacrifice to Hashem, signifying Avraham's deep *emunah*.

The Sforno, similar to the Radak, provides a practical answer to our question. The Sforno explains that this ram needed to be created miraculously during creation because Avraham would have not sacrificed the ram if it had just been a stray. The question of having committed robbery would have lingered over Avraham's head if he took this ram and sacrificed it as a *korban*. The fact that there was no such ram there when he prepared the altar to sacrifice Yitzchak and then suddenly this ram appeared, provides evidence of its purpose.

The Sefer Akeidat Yitzchak explains that anything created after the creation of man was created only after all the forces of nature had been assigned their tasks and then could be of use to humans.

Things created later signify that they belong to the physical world only slightly and are still incomplete, waiting to be assigned their function. Things created before Shabbat leaves their ultimate function up to anyone who will put it in use. Avraham elevated this ram's purpose from simply just being a ram to being offered to Hashem as a *korban*, demonstrating Avraham's extreme devotion and willingness to do anything — even sacrifice his own son — for Hashem.

REAL KINDNESS

SHMUEL BELIZON ('20)

Parshat Vayeira tells us about Avraham Avinu's mission to enlighten the world about God. He was responsible for spreading monotheistic ideas in a polytheistic society and making a *Kiddush Hashem*, sanctifying God's name.

A question arises when explaining Avraham's duty in this world: how was Avraham able to tell the world about God if it is extremely difficult to describe God? God is an omnipresent, omnipotent, infinite being who lacks nothing at all, so how could Avraham possibly aspire to describe God?

The answer can be discovered in God's reason for creating the universe. If God wasn't bored or lonely, what motivated Him to create the world? The one

thing God was "lacking" was beings other than Himself. God wanted beings to show kindness to and to care for. All human acts of kindness have some benefit for the doer, even something as minute as personal satisfaction, but with God, the intentions are to entirely benefit His creations.

This, then, answers our original question. One may describe God with the attribute of giving. We know God to be the ultimate giver, and giving is the most essential thing one can say of God. When God gives, He has no ulterior motives and acts solely to show His love for His people.

Avraham's job was to contradict common polytheistic views of the time by explaining to people around him about a single God that gives all of His beings what they need and does not gain any personal benefit from acting that way.

May we all have the ability to recognize everything God gives to us as solely for our benefit and to thank Him for His kindness towards us.

EXCEEDING REQUIREMENTS

MICHAEL ROSEN ('20)

At the beginning of this week's parsha, three angels, disguised as men, approach Avraham. When these men arrive at Avraham's tent, Avraham is engrossed in a discussion with Hashem:

וַיִּשָּׂא עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה שְׁלֹשָׁה
אָנָשִׁים נֹצְבִים עָלָיו”

“And he [Avraham] lifted his eyes and saw three men standing before himself” (18:2).

Immediately, he arises, bows, and invites the visitors into his tent. Avraham and his wife, Sarah, quickly prepared food for the guests. According to Rashi, Avraham even slaughtered three animals solely for them.

There are a few things we can learn from this parsha. If three men wandering in the desert approached you, what would you do?! Avraham would rather do the mitzvah of *hachnasat orchim* and look after his guests, and only then continue his conversation with

Hashem.

From this we learn the importance of the mitzvah of chesed. However, this is no ordinary act of kindness. Rashi observes that there were many things that Avraham did that he was not required to do. He scrambled to help his guests just three days after giving himself a brit milah, and even slaughtered three animals by himself! He went far beyond what he was required to do to help these people he had never seen before.

Thus, how much more so should we go above and beyond to do chesed for our friends and the people that we DO know!



Staff

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

BATSHEVA SHEKHTER

DESIGN DIRECTOR

SHIREL GARZON

MAYRAV SAKETKHOV

EDITORS

LIBBY WEINGARTEN ('19)

MEITAL FIXLER ('19)

SAM CLARKE ('19)

AHARON BRANDWEIN ('19)

JACKIE ZIMMERMAN ('19)

YONI KURTZ ('20)

CHANI KAMINETSKY ('20)

MONTHLY CONTRIBUTORS

ADINA HIRSCH ('19)

SARA DEICHMAN ('19)

AKIVA ROSENTHAL ('20)

MORDY SHEKHTER ('20)

YAFFA SHEKHTER ('20)

DONIELLA ZAK ('21)

ASHIRA MEYEROWITZ ('21)

FACULTY ADVISOR

RABBI AVI HOCHMAN

DEVELOPERS

ZIV MARKOVITZ ('19)

MAX FROHLICH ('21)

DOVID ZAK ('19)

DISTRIBUTOR

YOCHEVED SOBOL ('20)

A KYHS PARSHA PUBLICATION



RAVH@YESHIVAHS.ORG