

Parsha Press

PARSHAT VAYERA

What Makes Eretz Yisrael So Unique Beth Stein

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In Parshas Vayera, Hashem destroys S'dom, the evil and corrupt city in which Lot chooses to dwell. However, there are other evil and corrupt cities that Hashem only demolishes through war, without any miracles. Therefore, one should wonder why only S'dom and its surrounding cities are destroyed in such a miraculous way.



The Ramban explains that since S'dom and its neighboring cities are in Eretz Yisrael, Hashem chooses to wipe them out, using fire and tar from Shamayim. Those who live in Eretz Yisrael receive harsher punishments for their aveiros because Eretz Yisrael has the greatest kedusha. Hashem also hopes that when Am Yisrael later settles in Eretz Yisrael, they will keep the mitzvos, and remember S'dom's punishment.

Clearly, Eretz Yisrael is a unique place. The Ramban himself left Spain for Eretz Yisrael. He eventually established a shul, and spent his later days in Acco. At this time, such a journey was dangerous. However, the Ramban was so overcome by his love for Eretz Yisrael that he was willing to risk his life for this special voyage.

Today, we are aware of the unfortunate dangers that face the State of Israel, in addition to the Jewish people. Although many people have been killed during the intifada, we cannot allow the violence to deter us from traveling to Eretz Yisrael. We must openly demonstrate our Ahavas Eretz Yisrael, and prove to the world that this land, one of tremendous Kedusha, must belong to us.

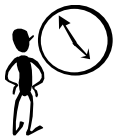
Fear of G-d Rabbi Jeff Rothman

In this week's parsha, Avraham finds himself in the city of Gar. Fearing that Avimelech, King of Gar, might kill him, Avraham instructs Sarah to say that she is Avraham's brother. One might wonder why Avraham was so concerned for his life? Chazal tell us that Gar was amongst the most civilized and culturally attuned nations of its time; what made Avraham so worried?

After being commanded by Hashem in a dream not to touch Sarah, Avimelech wakes up quite disturbed. He is upset that he was almost led to sin by taking another man's wife. He is so bothered that he calls a cabinet meeting, "*Vayashkeim Avimelech Baboker, vayikra lichol avadav* (continued on p.2)

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Shabbat Starts:
5:36

News From Israel

The Israeli Knesset approved Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan to move Israeli settlers out of Gaza by a 67-45 vote, with seven abstentions

Approximately 250 cyclists from around the world will cycle a 250-mile ride across Israel in order to raise money for terror victims



(Continued from p.1)...*vayirau hoanashim miod*," and everyone is trembling over the possibility that such a sin almost occurred to the king. Whereupon Avimelech approaches Avraham and asks him, "*Ma raita, ki asita et hadavar haze?*" We are a civilized and moral society; we don't do things like that here; why did you put me in the position to sin?" Avraham responds, "*Rak ain yirat Elokim bamakom haze, vayharguni al divar ishti.*" Avraham says, you are a moral people, BUT, there is no fear of G-d in this place and I was therefore, fearful for my life.

Avraham's response seems quite perplexing; actually it does not seem to answer the question of Avimelech. He was asked, if we are a moral people, why would you do this to me, we don't do those things here. How then, does a response of you don't fear G-d answer the question? There are many people in the world who do not fear G-d or even believe in G-d and yet they act morally; why did Avraham suspect Avimelech?

The Malbim and the Netziv give an explanation to this question that has ramifications far beyond understanding this story of Avraham and Avimelech. They explain that Avraham was saying to Avimelech that yes, you are a moral people. However, that morality is not based on the fear of G-d, but rather on your own human reasoning. Any morality and any legal system that is based on human reasoning can change. Avimelech, you say that you don't take other men's wives. Well, if you should decide to want Sarah, perhaps you will drum up some charges against me that will sentence me to death. With me dead, you will no longer be taking another man's wife. The only morality that can be relied upon is one based on fear of G-d. It is important to note that Avimelech accepted Avraham's claim and did not refute it for he understood that Avraham was right.

Unfortunately, we can look at Jewish History to see that Avraham was right. Nazi Germany was amongst the most civilized societies just a few years before the Holocaust. They had the leading artists and musicians and they even had highly moral laws. They were one of the few European nations to have animal rights laws, prohibiting certain animal testing. And yet, with the right motive, that morality turned into the worst kind of immorality.

It is important that we all learn the message of "*rak ain yirat Elokim bamakom haze.*" We have to remember that halacha is the word of G-d and that is why we follow it. We have to keep halacha as it was established by G-d and not let human, subjective logic make changes to our holy Torah. It is the Divine logic that sets our legal system apart from all the others. It is incumbent upon every Jew to spend his life studying and analyzing Hashem's divine morality so that we can always claim that "*yeish yirat Elokim bamakom haze.*"

Angels vs. People Shanna Naiman

In this weeks parsha, perek 18, psukim 2, 9-10 it says "*Vayisah Einav Vayerah Vihinei Shlosha Anashim Nitzavim Eilav Vayerah Vayaratz Likratam Mipetach Haohel Vayishtachu Artzah ...Vayomru Eilav, 'Ayeh Sarah Ishticha?' Vayomer, 'Hinei Baohel.' Vayomer, 'Shuv Ashuv Eilecha Kieis Chaya Vihinei Ben LiSarah Eishtecha...'*"

Yonatan Ben Uziel says that those who were visiting Avraham after his Brit Milah were three angels in the forms of humans. Rashi then continues to say that since Avraham was upset that he had no visitors, Hashem sent three angels who looked like people. The entire

time the angels were there, they remained in the form of humans, even as they left. This is also true in the later P'sukim. When they came to relate the news that Sarah would have a child, the angels in the story appeared in the forms of people.

But in the story of Hagar, the text reads, "Vayomer Lah Malach Hashem..." It does not say that it was an angel in the appearance of a human; rather it says in the form of a Malach. Additionally, in the story of Manoach's wife it says "...Ish Elokim Ba Ailai Umarehu Kimareh Malach Elokim..." In this case, the angel came in the form of a man, but as he left, he looked like an angel.

How is this possible that the angels came in the mere forms of humans when they appeared to Sarah Imeinu, while when they appeared to Hagar and the wife of Manoach, the angels actually looked like angels?

Rabbi Ben-Tzion Ferrer answers that the appearance of the angels does indicate the levels on which the people were on, but represents their Madreigot in a different way. Hagar was not a believer, she didn't accept the news until she heard it from the actual angel. And it didn't take just one angel to relay the message, it took four! And only after these four angels told it to her did she believe it and accept it as truth. Manoach's wife was better than Hagar. She believed the words of the "Ish Elokim" that came to speak with her. But as he left, his form switched to that of an angel, to rid her of any doubt that she may have in her mind that it was not true.

And lastly Sarah, was a complete Tzadeiket, and on the highest level of all three. She did not need to see the angel in order to believe the words of Hashem! She accepted it from people, a strong indicator of her Emunah baHashem. Even though the Torah says that she laughed, her laughter was not a laughter of disbelief. Rather she was so shocked at the greatness of these words, she laughed as if to say 'that's incredible!'

Story of a Gadol

A famous story of is told of Rav Soloveitchik: There was a boy with cancer in the Rav's daily Shiur. The boy had to leave early every day to receive chemotherapy treatments. In order not to embarrass the boy who was leaving the Shiur in the middle, the Rav stopped his Shiurim early for a few weeks. Nobody else found out why the Rav had done this, but the Rav certainly saved the boy from much emotional discomfort.

Every Friday morning, the Rav visited the Maimonides Yeshiva in Boston that he had founded. One Friday, while he was walking in the corridor of the yeshiva, he saw a little boy crying. He asked the boy "Why are you crying?" The little boy responded that he had misbehaved and the Rebbe had sent him out of the class. The boy continued to explain that his class was reviewing for a Chumash test. He was missing the review and feared that he wouldn't do well on the test. The Rav offered to teach him the material that the class was reviewing. The little boy looked up at the Rav and asked in all innocence, "You know Chumash?" The Rav answered – "We'll try to study it together."

-Told by Rabbi Judah Feinerman and Temima Herzberg

"Quote of the Week"

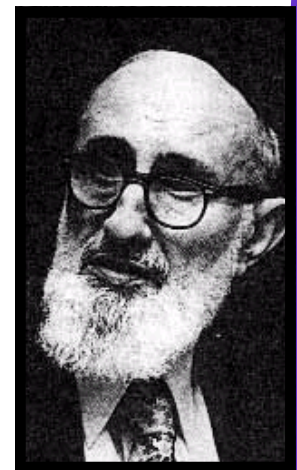
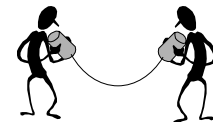
Part of being careful is not to be excessively careful

-Chovos Halevavos, Introduction

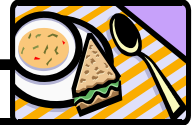
SHMIRAT HALASHON

"If it is apparent that the speaker is about to say something negative about someone, then you should interrupt him and ask whether he thinks that there is something constructive to be gained from your hearing this information"

**Chofetz Chaim:
A Daily Companion**



Fast Facts on *Hachnassat Orchim* Batya Matla Herzberg



- § Chazal stated in the Gemara that the mitzvah of *Hachnassat Orchim* is greater than greeting the presence of *Hashem*
- § This is one of the *mitzvot* for which a person receives reward in this world and the world to come
- § Has three components: providing food, providing drink, and escorting
- § Chazal stated that the reward for "*livaya*," escorting, has no measure
- § The sages said that whoever doesn't escort his guest, it is as if he spilled blood
- § One should not look at what his guest is eating and how much his guest is eating so as not to embarrass the guest
- § A host should point out the bathroom to his guest upon his arrival so that the guest shouldn't be embarrassed by having to ask
- § When the *Chofetz Chaim* had guests for Shabbat, he would not sing "*Shalom Aleichem*" until the middle of the meal so that his guests wouldn't have to wait to eat
- § One should not delay his Shabbat meal in order to eat with an appetite (the preferable way to fulfill the mitzvah) if he has poor guests who are hungry

-Based on "Torah Lada'at"
Rabbi Matis Bloom

Mazel Tov



Tara Fried on the upcoming marriage of her brother Nechemia to Dina Neuwirth

Aviva Aryeh on the engagement of her brother Ovadya to Nechama Gottlieb

Parsha Quiz



פרשת וירא
עליות חמישי וששי

כ"א: ה' - ל"ד

לידת יצחק
גירוש ישמעאל והגר
ו' - "יצחק לי"
י"ז - "את קול הנער"
י"ז - "באשר הוא שם"
ל"ג - "ויקרא שם וגו' "

Happy Birthday



November 2
Davina Wadler

November 4
Tali Grushko

Stella K Abraham High School for Girls



291 Meadowview Avenue
Hewlett Bay Park, New York 11557
(516) 374-7195
Fax (516) 374-2532
Email info@skahalb.org

Mrs. Helen Spirn
Principal
Dr. Tzipora Meier
Associate Principal
Rabbi Yosef Zakutinsky
Dir. Of Admissions and Student Programs

Mrs. Sandi Pomerantz
Assistant Administrator
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