



ב"ה

Parshas Vayeira in a Nutshell

(Genesis 18:1–22:24)

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Anshei Lubavitch Congregation
Rabbi Levi and Leah Neubort

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Shabbos Schedule

Erev Shabbos – Nov 6 / Cheshvan 19

Candle Lighting.....4:28 pm
Mincha4:30 pm

Shabbos Day – Nov 7 / Cheshvan 20

Shacharis..... 9:30 am*
Torah Reading10:30 am
Rabbi Drasha 11:05 am
Mincha4:30 pm
Rabbi’s Drasha.....4:55 pm
Shabbos Ends5:28 pm

**Latest morning Shema is now 9:05 AM. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).*

Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):

Minyan

Shacharis (Mon-Fri)6:15 am
Shacharis (Sunday) 9:00 am
Mincha (Sun-Thurs)1:45 pm
Maariv (Sun-Thurs)9:15 pm

Bulletin
*This week’s Bulletin
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G-d reveals Himself to Abraham three days after the first Jew’s circumcision at age ninety-nine; but Abraham rushes off to prepare a meal for three guests who appear in the desert heat. One of the three—who are angels disguised as men—announces that, in exactly one year, the barren Sarah will give birth to a son. Sarah laughs.

Abraham pleads with G-d to spare the wicked city of Sodom. Two of the three disguised angels arrive in the doomed city, where Abraham’s nephew Lot extends his hospitality to them and protects them from the evil intentions of a Sodomite mob. The two guests reveal that they have come to overturn the place, and to save Lot and his family. Lot’s wife turns into a pillar of salt when she disobeys the command not to look back at the burning city as they flee.

While taking shelter in a cave, Lot’s two daughters (believing that they and their father are the only ones left alive in the world) get their father drunk, lie with him and become pregnant. The two sons born from this incident father the nations of Moab and Ammon.

Abraham moves to Gerar, where the Philistine king Abimelech takes Sarah—who is presented as Abraham’s sister—to his palace. In a dream, G-d warns Abimelech that he will die unless he returns the woman to her husband. Abraham explains that he feared he would be killed over the beautiful Sarah.

G-d remembers His promise to Sarah, and gives her and Abraham a son, who is named Isaac (Yitzchak, meaning “will laugh”).

(continued next column)

Isaac is circumcised at the age of eight days; Abraham is one hundred years old, and Sarah ninety, at their child’s birth.

Hagar and Ishmael are banished from Abraham’s home and wander in the desert; G-d hears the cry of the dying lad, and saves his life by showing his mother a well. Abimelech makes a treaty with Abraham at Beersheba, where Abraham gives him seven sheep as a sign of their truce.

G-d tests Abraham’s devotion by commanding him to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Moriah (the Temple Mount) in Jerusalem. Isaac is bound and placed on the altar, and Abraham raises the knife to slaughter his son. A voice from heaven calls to stop him; a ram, caught in the undergrowth by its horns, is offered in Isaac’s place. Abraham receives the news of the birth of a daughter, Rebecca, to his nephew Bethuel. ❖

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Halachic Zmanim
Shabbos, November 7
Eastern Standard Time
Earliest Tallis 5:36 AM
Latest Morning Shema 9:05 AM
Earliest Mincha (Gedola) 12:06 PM
Plag Hamincha3:45 PM
Earliest Evening Shema5:14 PM

Chassidic Masters

"Clay Vessels and You"

By Rafi Rosenberg

A woman, the wife of one of the prophets, cried out to Elisha: "My husband, your servant, has died . . . and the creditor has come to take my two sons as slaves."

Said Elisha to her: ". . . Tell me, what have you in your home?" And she answered: "Your maidservant has nothing in the house but a cruse of oil."

Said [Elisha]: "Go, borrow vessels . . . from all your neighbors; empty vessels, only that they not be few. . . . And pour [of your oil] into these vessels . . ." (II Kings 4:1-4; from the haftorah for Parshas Vayeira)

I want to paint a picture. I don't have any specific ideas, but I want to paint. I want to write a story. I don't know what to write, but I feel that I must. So I stand at my easel, canvas, oils and brushes at the ready. Or I sit before my computer and gaze at the screen.

Once upon a time . . . I type a few words. And suddenly a stream. Then a river. A torrent of words rushing from somewhere deep within me. Inspiration.

I unzip the velvet bag that holds my tefillin, remove the black leather box and bind it to my arm. I reach into my pocket, dig out a coin and insert it into the slot of the charity box. My movements are sluggish. A thousand times I

have done this. Thousands more I will. My actions seem forced and automatic. I do these things because G-d has commanded me to, because I recognize that this constitutes my mission and purpose in life. But the experience feels meaningless.

I am not a robot. I feel things, sometimes deeply. I feel hurt, anger, love and elation. But I do not feel like putting on tefillin.

In the fourth chapter of the second book of Kings, we read of the "miracle of the cruse of oil" performed by the prophet Elisha. An impoverished widow sought the help of Elisha, crying that her debtors are about to take her two children as slaves, and all she possesses is a single cruse of oil. The prophet tells her to borrow as many empty vessels as she can, and to proceed to fill them with oil from her cruse. Miraculously, the oil keeps on flowing as long as there are vessels to receive it.

Chassidic teaching explains the deeper significance of the widow's quandary and Elisha's advice:

A woman, the wife of one of the prophets, cried out to Elisha—The soul of fire calls out to G-d:

"My husband, your servant, has died . . ."—My service of You is lifeless, devoid of inspiration. I yearn to fill my deeds with meaning and significance . . .

". . . and the creditor has come to take my two sons as slaves"—but my animalistic inclinations

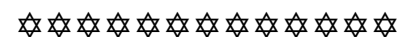
are monopolizing my emotions. They want me to love the present and revere the temporal. They cloud my vision of Your all-pervading, eternal truth.

Said Elisha to her: "What do you have in your home?"—G-d answers, "What is left of your soul that it can call its own?"

And she answered: "Your maidservant has nothing in the house, save a small cruse of oil."—"Nothing but the pristine essence of my soul, the 'small cruse of oil' at her core that remains forever unsullied by the mundanities of life."

Said [Elisha]: "Borrow vessels from your neighbors; empty vessels, only that they not be few . . ."—Act. Continue to do positive and G-dly deeds, many positive and G-dly deeds, even if they seem "borrowed" and empty to you. Remember, deeds are vessels, ready recipients for content and fulfillment . . .

". . . and pour [of your oil] into these vessels . . ."—The more vessels you acquire, the more your "oil" will flow from its source and fill your actions with meaning and significance. Without the vessel of deed, there is nothing to provoke the oil of inspiration. Ultimately, if you persist in doing what you know to be just and right, your divine essence will fill your every "empty vessel." ❖



From Our Sages

For I know him . . . (Genesis 18:19)

Said the divine attribute of chesed (love): "As long as Abraham was around, there was nothing for me to do, for he did my work in my stead."

-- (Sefer HaBahir)

Because the cry of [the victims of] Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous (Genesis 18:20)

In Sodom it was decreed: "Whoever hands a piece of bread to a pauper or stranger shall be burned at the stake."

Plotit, a daughter of Lot, was married to one of the leading citizens of Sodom. One day she saw a pauper starving in the street, and her soul was saddened over him. What did she do? Every day, when she went to draw water from the well, she would take some of the food from her home in her pitcher and feed the pauper. But the people of Sodom wondered, "This pauper, how is he surviving?" Eventually the matter became known and she was taken out to be burned, and her cries rose to the divine throne.

-- (Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer, ch. 25)

For G-d has heard the voice of the lad where he is (Genesis 21:17)

The ministering angels hastened to indict him, exclaiming: "Sovereign of the Universe! Would You bring up a well for one who will one day kill Your children with thirst?" "What is he now?" asked G-d. "Righteous," said the angels. Said G-d: "I judge man only as he is at the moment."

-- (Midrash Rabbah; Rashi) m took

It came to pass, after these things, that G-d tested Abraham (Genesis 22:1)

Said Rabbi Jonathan: A potter does not examine defective vessels, because he cannot give them a single blow without breaking them. What then does he examine? Only the sound vessels, for he will not break them even with many blows. Similarly, the Holy One, blessed be He, tests not the wicked but the righteous.

-- (Midrash Rabbah)

Isaac and Ishmael were engaged in a controversy. . . . Said Ishmael to Isaac: "I am more beloved to G-d than you, since I was circumcised at the age of thirteen, but you were circumcised as a baby and could not refuse." Isaac retorted: "All that you gave up to G-d was three drops of blood. But here I am now thirty-seven years old, yet if G-d desired of me that I be slaughtered, I would not refuse." Said the Holy One, blessed be He: "This is the moment!"

-- (Midrash Rabbah)

Jewishness is not a matter of historical consciousness, outlook, ethics, or even behavior; it is a state of being. This is the deeper significance of the debate between Ishmael and Isaac. When the Jew is circumcised on the eighth day of life, he is completely unaware of the significance of what has occurred. But this "non-experience" is precisely what the covenant of circumcision is all about. With circumcision the Jew says: I define my relationship with G-d not by what I think, feel or do, but by the fact of my Jewishness—a fact which applies equally to an infant of eight days or a sage of eighty years.

-- (From the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Haftorah Vayeira in a Nutshell

Kings II 4:1-37

In this week's Torah reading, G-d promises a child to Abraham and Sarah, despite childless Sarah's advanced age. This week's haftorah describes a similar incident that occurred many years later — the prophet Elisha assuring an elderly childless woman that she will bear a child.

The haftorah discusses two miracles performed by the prophet Elisha. The first miracle involved a widow who was heavily in debt, and her creditors were threatening to take her two sons as slaves to satisfy the debt. When the prophet asked her what she had in her home, the widow responded that she had nothing but a vial of oil. Elisha told her to gather as many empty containers as possible — borrowing from neighbors and friends as well. She should then pour oil from her vial into the empty containers. She did as commanded, and miraculously the oil continued to flow until the last empty jug was filled. The woman sold the oil for a handsome profit, and had enough money to repay her debts and live comfortably.

The second miracle: Elisha would often pass by the city of Shunam, where he would dine and rest at the home of a certain hospitable couple. This couple even made a special addition to their home, a guest room designated for Elisha's use. When the prophet learned that the couple was childless, he blessed the woman that she should give birth to a child in exactly one year's time. And indeed, one year later a son was born to the aged couple.

A few years later the son complained of a headache and died shortly thereafter. The Shunamit woman laid the lifeless body on the bed in Elisha's designated room, and quickly summoned the prophet. Elisha hurried to the woman's home and miraculously brought the boy back to life. ❖

Doing mitzvahs with joy and loving G-d, who gave them to us, is a great form of Divine service

-- Maimonides

Thank You to:
to our Chazzanim, Baalei Kria and to our Security Volunteers

Good Shabbos to all!

שבת שלום גוט שבת!

