



ב"ה

Parshas Lech Vayeira in a Nutshell

(Genesis 18:1–22:24)

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.

(continued next column)

Every situation in which we are found, every person whom we meet gives us an opportunity to advance in our knowledge of G-d and our connection to Him.

-- The Rebbe

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

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Halachic Zmanim

Shabbos, Nov 12, 2022

Eastern Standard Time

Earliest Tallis 5:41 AM
Latest Morning Shema..... 9:08 AM
Earliest Mincha (Gedola) 12:06 PM
Plag Hamincha..... 3:42 PM
Earliest Evening Shema.... 5:10 PM

Anshei Lubavitch Congregation

Rabbi Levi and Leah Neubort

Adult education:

Rabbi Avrohom and Rivky Bergstein

Youth Outreach:

Rabbi Eli and Ruty Steinhauser

Shabbos Schedule

Erev Shabbos – Nov 11 / Cheshvan 17

Candle Lighting 4:23 pm

Mincha 4:25 pm

Shabbos Day – Nov12 / Cheshvan 18

Shacharis9:30 am*

Torah Reading..... 10:30 am

Kiddush..... 12:00 pm

Mincha 4:25 pm

Rabbi's Drasha 4:45 pm

Shabbos Ends..... 5:24 pm

**Latest morning Shema is now 9:08 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

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is sponsored by
The Berman Law Office .*

Chassidic Masters

The Contrast Between Isaac and Ishmael

*Based on the teachings
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe*

We read in Genesis (17:7–27) how G-d appears to Abraham and instructs him to circumcise himself and all the males of his household. G-d further commands that henceforth every newborn male should be circumcised on the eighth day of his life, as a sign of the “eternal covenant” between G-d and the seed of Abraham.

G-d then informs Abraham that, in one year’s time, he and Sarah will have a son, Isaac. Abraham was nearing his hundredth year at the time, and Sarah was approaching the age of ninety; the two had been married for 75 childless years, and Sarah was physically incapable of having children. Abraham already had a son, Ishmael, born thirteen years earlier, after Sarah had urged him to marry her maidservant Hagar, so that he could father a child through her.

Abraham’s reaction to the divine promise was to proclaim, “If only Ishmael would live before You!” Abraham seems to be saying that he would be perfectly happy to see Ishmael as his heir—as the one who continues his life’s work and perpetuates his special relationship with G-d.

G-d rejects Abraham’s proposal. He reassures him that Ishmael will become a great people, “but my covenant I shall establish with Isaac.” Only Isaac, the son you will have with Sarah, can be your true heir, and only Isaac can father the

people with whom I will enter into a covenant as my “kingdom of priests and holy nation.”

This is more than a technical choice. G-d’s insistence on Isaac as the progenitor of His chosen people tells us something very fundamental about the nature of our relationship with Him.

For Ishmael and Isaac differed in two significant respects:

Ishmael came into the world by natural means, while Isaac’s birth was a supernatural event.

Ishmael was circumcised at the age of thirteen, the age of daat (awareness), whereas Isaac entered into the covenant of circumcision as an eight day-old infant—an age at which a person is not even aware of what is taking place, much less of its significance.

In other words, Ishmael represents a rational relationship with G-d, one that is based upon a person’s nature and understanding. Isaac represents a supranatural, supra-rational bond.

Abraham discerned many positive qualities in Ishmael, and was prepared, and even desirous, to see him as his heir. Yet G-d insisted that his covenant with Abraham be perpetuated specifically through Isaac and Isaac’s descendants—a people whose commitment to G-d will transcend the natural and the rational. ❖

Powerful Insight From the Rebbe

Thirst for Torah

Parshas Vayeira begins by telling us that G-d appeared to Abraham while Abraham was “sitting at the entrance of his tent, in the heat of the day.”

Why was he sitting there? To look for guests. Abraham dedicated himself to deeds of kindness, feeding hungry wayfarers in an effort to heighten their awareness of G-d.

“Days are coming, [when people will be] hungry - but not for bread, thirsty - but not for water, but to hear the word of G-d.” And there must be people like Abraham ready to provide for them.

At times, this thirst may be consciously felt, and in other instances, a person may be unaware of his own thirst. But this lack of awareness does not change the reality. At the core of every man lies a soul that was created in the image of G-d. And every being seeks to express its fundamental identity. Therefore, when we emulate Abraham’s example and extend ourselves to these individuals, we will discover a readiness to respond that reflects their inner G-dly nature. ❖

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The Security Volunteers**

**Join us each weekday
morning Mon-Fri as we
delve into the mysteries of
Chassidic concepts.
5:55 am, followed
immediately by Shacharis.**

From Our Sages – Vayeira

Abraham confronted G-d and said: “Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?” (Genesis 18:23)

The Zohar compares the actions of two righteous men, Noah and Abraham, when confronted with the knowledge that G-d intended to destroy their fellow human beings for their wickedness. Noah set about building an ark that would shelter the handful of righteous individuals remaining in a corrupt world. In addition, the Midrash describes how he tried to convince his generation to mend their ways and thus be saved from the divine decree. But the Zohar faults Noah for not also praying for their sake, as Abraham did for the wicked inhabitants of Sodom.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains that the fact that Noah did not pray for the wicked of his generation implies that, ultimately, it did not matter to him what became of them. Had he truly cared, he would not have sufficed with doing his best to bring them to repent, but would have implored the Almighty to repeal His decree of destruction—just as a person whose own life is in danger would never say, “Well, I did my best to save myself,” and leave it at that, but would beseech G-d to help him.

In other words, Noah’s efforts on behalf of others derived solely from his sense of what he ought to do for them, as opposed to a true concern for their wellbeing. This was the extent of his “love”—his own need to do the right thing.

This also explains a curious aspect of Noah’s efforts to reach out to his generation. When the Flood came, Noah and his family entered the ark—alone. His 120-year campaign yielded not a single baal teshuvah (repentant)! Perhaps public relations was never Noah’s strong point, but how are we to explain the fact that in all this time he failed to win over a single individual?

But in order to influence others, the Rebbe explains, one’s motives must be pure; in the words of our sages, “Words that come from the heart enter the heart.” Deep down, a person will always sense whether you truly have his interests at heart or you’re filling a need of your own by seeking to change him. If your work to better your fellow stems from a desire to “do the right thing” and to fulfill the mitzvah to “love your fellow as yourself,” but without really caring about the result, your call will be met with scant response. The undercurrent of personal motive, be it the most laudable of personal motives, will be sensed, if only subconsciously, by those to whom you reach out, and will ultimately put them off.

Abraham, on the other hand, possessed a selfless love for his fellow man, as demonstrated by his daring intervention on behalf of the five sinful cities of the Sodom Valley. Abraham petitioned G-d on their behalf, using the strongest terms to demand of G-d that He spare these cities for the sake of the few righteous individuals they might contain. “It behooves You not to do such a thing!” he challenged G-d. “Shall the Judge of the universe not act justly?!” Abraham was prepared to incur G-d’s wrath upon himself for the sake of the most corrupt of sinners, giving precedence to their physical lives over his own spiritual integrity!

And because people sensed that he had their own good, and only their own good, at heart—they responded. When Abraham and Sarah left Charan for the Holy Land, they were joined by “the souls which they had made in Charan”—the community of men and women who had rallied to their cause. Sixty-five years later, Abraham was able to say to his servant Eliezer: “When G-d summoned me from the house of my father, He was G-d of the heavens but not of the earth: the inhabitants of the earth did not recognize Him, and His name was not referred to in the land. But now that I have made His name familiar in the mouths of His creatures, He is G-d in both heaven and earth” (Rashi, Genesis 24:7). ❖

Haftorah for Parshas 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. ❖



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Good Shabbos to all!