

Vayera

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Hilula

17 – Rabbi Alter Biderman, Admor of Lalov

17 – Rabbi Avraham Dayan

18 – Rabbi Refael Baruch Toledano, author of Kitzur Shulchan Aruch

19 – Rabbi Yitzchak Chai Taub, author of Chelev Chitim

20 – Rabbi Mordechai Sharabi, elderly Kabbalist from Yerushalayim

21 – Rabbi Vidal Ben Vallid

22 – Rabbi Yissachar Dov Rokeach, Admor of Belz

23 – Rabbi Moshe Minder

Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Son of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto, zt"l, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"á



MASKIL LEDAVID

Weekly talk on the Parshah given by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

The Akeidah – Events Experienced by our Forefathers Are a Sign for Descendants

"And He said, 'Please take your son, your only one, whom you love – Yitzchak – and go to the land of Moriah; bring him up there as an offering upon one of the mountains which I shall tell you'" (Bereishit 22:2)

Contemplating the enormous challenge of the Akeidah, where Avraham Avinu went to slaughter his only son, born to him after one hundred years, brings into focus the extent to which Avraham Avinu loved Hashem with his entire heart and soul. Indeed, this test seems impossible to fathom. Hashem asked Avraham Avinu to offer his only son, Yitzchak, on the Altar, exactly as one burns a sacrifice, leaving only his ashes.

How could Hashem demand this of Avraham Avinu after so many years of promises that Sara will have a child and the clear assurance "Since through Yitzchak will offspring be considered yours" (Bereishit 21:12)?

Hashem promised Avraham Avinu that the nation Am Yisrael will emerge from Yitzchak. They finally rejoiced at Yitzchak's birth but several years later Hashem tells him to take this child and slaughter him on the altar as a burnt offering, leaving no remains and no chance of Am Yisrael descending from him.

Despite all this, Avraham Avinu did not hesitate for a moment or wonder about Hashem's ways. Rather, immediately upon receiving the command he arose early in the morning and went together with his son and his two lads in the direction of Har Hamoriah, prepared to offer Yitzchak on the altar.

Avraham Avinu's intense love for Hashem, to the extent that he was willing to slaughter his son without any resentment, is something the human mind cannot fathom. The Torah stresses how Avraham Avinu loved Hashem with such self-sacrifice and believed in Him with all his heart and soul, because indeed it was something extraordinary. And this degree of love and devotion Avraham Avinu bequeathed to his son Yitzchak.

In truth, Avraham Avinu could G-d forbid have entertained some fleeting thought that maybe he is unworthy of this honor, that Hashem's prom-

ise should be fulfilled through him and perhaps Yitzchak, and Am Yisrael, will not descend from him. But this was not the case. Avraham Avinu wholeheartedly believed in Hashem's promises, therefore even when Hashem told him to slaughter Yitzchak, he did not hesitate for a moment but went with self-sacrifice to return the gift to its Owner.

Now we understand why the Torah details the entire chain of events that Avraham Avinu went through; the brit bein habetarim, the promises to Avraham about the birth of Yitzchak and founding Am Yisrael through him, his brit milah, Sara being taken by Avimelech, the birth of Yitzchak, the promise made with Avimelech and his officer Phichol, and the Akeidah. It was all for the sake of imparting the message that if today Am Yisrael are 'believers, descendants of believers', it is only due to our first forefather, Avraham Avinu, who implanted this belief in all his offspring.

Furthermore, he recognized the Creator on his own initiative – on his own he came to the realization that there is an Owner of the world who created everything. He is the Source and there is none before or after Him. Everything occurs at His bidding and it is in His hands to affect any change. He can do whatever He wishes; He can promise and annul that promise and there is no one who can hold Him back for He is the Sole Power who renews the work of creation daily, in His goodness.

Indeed, after Avraham Avinu recognized Hashem as the One and Only, he travelled from place to place to disseminate knowledge of Hashem throughout the world. He drew others closer to belief in Hashem and converted people from his hometown, Charan, bringing them under the wings of the Shechina. Despite all his travails and challenges over the years, his belief in Hashem did not cease for a moment. He was constantly connected to Hashem in his thoughts, speech, and deeds. This is why the Torah describes all the stories of Avraham Avinu's greatness and faith in Hashem, until the final challenge of the Akeidah.



Walking in their Ways

Tidbits of faith and trust penned by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu
Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Consider them as New Every Day

I once went to visit my esteemed master, the tzadik Rabbi Chaim Shmuel Lopian zt"l, Rosh Yeshiva of Sunderland Yeshiva, England, and author of Ravcha Shmeitza on the sefer Shev Shmeitza of the Ketzot Hachoshen zt"l. He related the following inspiring message: "You should know that every day before the Gaon Rabbi Aryeh Leib Heller zt"l (author of the Ketzot Hachoshen) would begin studying Torah, he would seclude himself with his Creator and tearfully recite the verse, 'But to the wicked, G-d said, "To what purpose do you recount My decrees and bear My covenant upon your lips?"' (Tehillim 50:16). Through this preparation he would subdue himself to the holy Torah and approach it with an excitement as if it was his first time studying Torah."

Unfortunately, there are many people who when arriving at the Beit Midrash to learn or hear a Torah shiur, 'prepare' themselves by making a few phone calls, smoking a cigarette or two, or sipping a cup of coffee. Since they study Torah out of habit, they feel no excitement as they sit down to learn and that is how they can do so immediately after engaging in mundane matters.

David Hemelech writes (Tehillim 27:4), "One thing I asked of Hashem, that shall I seek: Would that I dwell in the House of Hashem all the day of my life, to behold the sweetness of Hashem and to contemplate in His Sanctuary." It is essential to understand that this spiritual aspiration to take shelter in Hashem's House throughout our lives, with a sense of excitement and newness and the desire to grow in Torah, must reside in the heart of every Jew. Each person must continually strive to reach this lofty level attained by the sweet singer of Israel.

The Haftarah

"One woman from among the wives of the prophets' disciples" (Melachim II, 4)

The connection to the Parshah: The Haftarah tells us how Elisha the Navi blessed the Shunamit that she would have a child, and about the fulfillment of that promise when she gave birth to a son at the exact time he prophesied. In the Parshah, the angels announced to Avraham that at this time next year a son will be born to him.

The Path of the Upright

It is forbidden to hate another Jew, whether this is open or concealed hatred, even if the person causes you pain or embarrassment.

Chazal define the prohibition using three examples: 1. He does not speak to him for three days, as derived from the verse "And he did not hate him from yesterday or before yesterday." 2. He wants to harm him. 3. He rejoices in his distress.



In Our Father's Path

Drawing Upon the Attribute of Kindness

Avraham Avinu, the pillar of kindness, implanted this attribute deep in the soul of the Jewish nation. It infiltrates generation after generation and so we see each Jewish person throughout the world, as one man with one heart, tries to help and assist others with physical, emotional and financial support.

How appropriate are the words of the Gaon, Rabbi Kalfon Moshe HaKohen zt"l: "The passionate man will understand that almost all Judaism and the survival of our Jewish nation, particularly in this long and bitter exile, depends on supporting our brothers and relatives so that they do not collapse."

Many are inclined to think that only someone of means can perform true chesed. For example a wealthy person can afford to donate a hundred thousand dollars for a sick person who has to undergo a costly operation, or for an orphan bride. But this is a big mistake, the Gaon Rabbi Moshe Levi zt"l, author of Menuchat Ahava, points out. Any act a person carries out to benefit someone else is included in the mitzvah of chesed. If a person only wishes, he can pick up acts of kindness at every step of his way throughout the day.

Rabbi Moshe Levi zt"l was known as an exception Gaon and posek. However, the stories that were revealed after his passing made it clear that his attitude to assisting others was just as outstanding. He would welcome every person who approached him with a question with particular graciousness, as if he had nothing else to do but be there for others.

The sefer Pirkei Hadracha about Rabbi Moshe's teachings, relates that one of his acquaintances once gave birth to a Down's syndrome baby. When Rabbi Moshe heard about it, he paid him a special visit on Friday night after the meal, offering his blessings and gladdening his heart.

When necessary, he would physically exert himself on behalf of others, as related by a ba'al teshuva who began participating in his shiurim. At the end of the first shiur, he approached Rabbi Moshe and asked him for a blessing since he was considering moving to a new area.

Rabbi Moshe told him not to sign any contract for the moment and after the next shiur he will tell him how to proceed.

The following week he came to the shiur, but felt uncomfortable to approach the Rav and once again disturb his precious time. But as soon as the shiur ended, the Rav stood up and asked, "Who asked me last week about moving to a certain settlement?"

Of course this fellow approached the Rav immediately, eager to hear his blessing and go ahead. But how surprised he was at the Rav's words: "Listen, my friend," he began, "If you want to take my advice, cancel the process and look for a home in a different area!"

Noticing his astonishment, the Rav modestly explained: "This week I went to visit the settlement you told me about. I saw that the apartments are beautiful and the air is pleasant and fresh, but I also realized it is a totally secular settlement with no trace of religion. I investigated and found out that there is no Talmud Torah and no mikveh. A religious family cannot establish their home in such a place!"

The fellow concluded with great emotion: "It is hard to describe what I felt. A distinguished Rav, who is barely acquainted with me, travelled to a new settlement, looked around and investigated, spending his precious time just to determine what would be best for me..."



The Sabbatical Year

1. One is forbidden to water the land during Shemittah. However, Chazal permit watering a field that requires constant irrigation if it does not get enough hydration from the rain. Watering is permitted only to prevent damage to the tree or vegetation. Some say that one must diminish the frequency and increase the time periods between watering. Others say that since watering is permitted (under certain conditions), it is not necessary to do so. However, during the rainy season one should not water at all.

2. The Torah permits watering trees whose fruits may be consumed during Shemittah, or vegetables that are not sefichin, as the Rambam details. One may also water spices and flowers, for example roses, that are not forbidden due to sefichin. Certainly one is forbidden to water a field whose vegetables may not be consumed.

3. Even if a lack of water will not completely destroy the fruits or vegetables but will cause some damage, one is permitted to water these fields as necessary.

4. Concerning fruit trees that require watering during the summer for their survival, one may water them as long as a professional opinion states that it is necessary, each tree according to its requirements. If it is not possible to get a professional opinion and one is in doubt whether watering is necessary or not, one may be lenient, for in general a lack of water damages a tree.

Watering when necessary means that a lack of water will cause the earth to become dry and concentrated and its trees will die.

Concerning grass planted for ornamental purposes, some say one should not water it every week or two as is customary, but only when one sees that the grass is losing its shine or shows signs of dryness. The frequency of watering depends on the climate and the kind of earth. Some say that since watering is permitted when necessary, one does not need to limit it and one may water as usual, as long as the watering is being done to prevent the grass from drying out, just as Chazal permit watering on Chol Hamoed.

5. In cases where it is forbidden to water one's field during Shemittah, it makes no difference whether this is done using a hose or sprinklers.

For any questions in practical application of these halachot, please consult a rabbinical authority.

Treasures

Based on the teachings of
Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon
Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya
Pinto, shlita



Investing in Chinuch Pays Off

This week's Parshah demonstrates Avraham Avinu's greatness and the extent of his self-sacrifice in going to offer his son Yitzchak on the altar, despite his enormous love for the one who was supposed to continue his legacy. Avraham Avinu did not dwell on all the years he had waited for a child to continue his ways and publicize the Name of Hashem in the world. Similarly, he removed all the love and attachment he felt for his son and from the moment Hashem commanded him to slaughter Yitzchak, he considered him as belonging entirely to Hashem, as if he wasn't his own son. This is why Avraham called him רֵעָב, the lad, "while I and the lad will go yonder."

In this vein, we find a ruling brought by the Rema (Orach Chaim 98:1): "One is forbidden to kiss one's young children in a Beit Kneset so as to establish in one's heart that there is no love like the love for Hashem." Therefore, when Avraham went to carry out Hashem's command, he suppressed his great love for his son and considered him simply as a lad, to establish in his heart that there is no love like the love for Hashem. However, the Torah always refers to him as Yitzchak, his son.

Avraham Avinu paid no attention to those who mocked him saying he was following the custom of those who offer their children to the idol, Molech. Neither did he pay attention to the rational claim of the Yetzer Hara: Yesterday you were told "... through Yitzchak will offspring be considered yours" (Bereishit 21:12) and now you are being told, "Please take your son... and bring him up there as an offering."

Despite all of this, Avraham Avinu rose early in the morning to fulfil the mitzvah. He saddled his donkey himself and did not ask his servants to do so, wishing to carry out every part of this mitzvah himself due to his great love for Hashem. On his way he had to cross water that reached his neck, but he went willingly and happily to fulfil Hashem's wish.

Avraham Avinu's tremendous self-sacrifice demonstrated his exceptional love for Hashem, a love that surpassed all other love and personal agenda. It enabled him to totally disregard all the futilities of This World, as he testified about himself (Bereishit 18:27), "I am but dust and ash." This is the meaning of "and he perceived the place from afar" (ibid 22:4). Even though the mitzvah was far from him due to the difficulties and challenges he had to overcome to fulfil it, it seemed near due to the great love he felt for Hashem.

Avraham bequeathed this love to his son Yitzchak. Indeed, the Torah testifies about the way Avraham Avinu educated his children (ibid 18:19), "For I have loved him, because he commands his children and his household after him that they keep the way of Hashem."



May the Memory of a Tzaddik be for a Blessing

Rabbi Mordechai Sharabi zt"l

Rabbi Mordechai Sharabi zt"l was born in 5672, in Sharab, Yemen. His father passed away before his birth and his mother passed away when he was but two years old. He was raised by his grandfather who recognized his exceptional scholastic abilities, and when his grandfather too passed away, he was brought up by Harav Hagaon Rabbi Chaim Sinvani zt"l.

In 5691 Harav Mordechai Sharabi set out for the shores of Eretz Yisrael. Upon his arrival at the Jaffa port, he was sent to Rechovot together with other immigrants, where they had to work in the orchards to provide for themselves.

Several days later Rabbeinu decided he wants to settle in Yerushalayim. He took his wife and all their belongings and travelled by train to Yerushalayim. Much later he related that he felt Heaven assisting him to merit living in the Holy City. When they arrived in Yerushalayim, he changed his family name to Sharabi, the name of his birthplace and also an acronym for לארשי יב לעבר מולש, abundant peace upon the Jewish people.

As soon as he finished his morning prayers, he would go to the distinguished Beit Midrash "Beit El", where he studied under the Gaon and mekubal, Rabbi Shalom Hadaya zt"l. In addition, he joined the 'Rechovot Hanahar' Yeshiva, under the auspices of the chassid and mekubal, Chacham Shaul Duvek HaKohen zt"l, known as the 'Sadeh'.

In 5722 Rabbi Sharabi founded his own yeshiva for mekubalim called 'Nahar Shalom'. It was named after the mekubal Rabbi Sar Shalom Sharabi zy"a (the Reshash) who was well known for his exceptional Torah knowledge. Not for nothing did Harav Sharabi decide to name the yeshiva after the Reshash, since his life's goal was to establish talmidim who would know how to pray with the intentions of the Reshash, as passed down generation after generation from the Beit El Yeshiva. In his opinion, his own Yeshiva was simply a continuation of the Beit El Yeshiva's legacy.

For more than thirty years he stood at the helm of his yeshiva and established many talmidim in kabbalah, who were familiar with the intentions of the Rashash. From the very beginning he set his eyes on his beloved talmid who eventually succeeded him, the chassid and mekubal Rabbi Shalom Shmueli shlit"a. Several weeks after establishing the minyan of mekubalim, he called him over to sit at his side and thus for decades he became his close talmid who merited serving him, learning from his Torah and being inspired by his conduct.

Several months before his passing, he suddenly asked his attendants to take him to the yeshiva; there he declared that he was appointing Rabbi Shalom to take over his position as head of the yeshiva, after his passing. Today the mekubal Rabbi Shalom Shmueli heads the yeshiva and leads it unassumingly together with his son the mekubal, Rabbi Benyahu Shmueli shlit"a.

Rabbi Mordechai Sharabi was known as a holy man and miracle worker. Many streamed to his door for blessings, good advice and seeking salvation. Harav Sharabi and his wife were not blessed with children. They invested all their strength in disseminating Torah and assisting others. Any money Harav Sharabi received he would pass on to tzedakah or use to support his yeshiva, while he himself lived in a small, simple apartment.

Many of our generations' gedolim studied under Harav Mordechai Sharabi, among them Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef shlit"a, Harav Meir Yehuda Gatz zt"l, Harav Shalom Shmueli shlit"a and his son Harav Benyahu Shmueli shlit"a, the Rosh Yeshiva of the Nehar Shalom Yeshiva, and Harav Yissachar Dov Rokeach shlit"a, the Admor of Belz.

On the twentieth of Cheshvan 5744, the holy mekubal Rabbi Mordechai Sharabi was taken to the Yeshiva Shel Ma'alah. He is buried on Har Hamenuhot in Yerushalayim. Since then, many Torah institutions have been established in his name, where both the revealed and the hidden parts of Torah are studied.