



Parshat HaShavuah

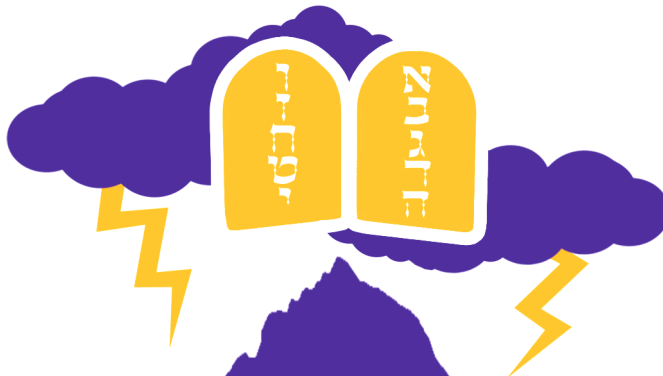
VAYEIRA

וירא

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ט"ו חשוון תשע"ב

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Ashreinu

חלקינו מה טוב

Candle Lighting

5:14

S"Z Kriat Shema

9:20

Sunset

5:32

Motzei Shabbat

6:09



Enriching and Enhancing Your Study of the Weekly Torah Portion

THE HOLY LAND RABBI MOSHE SCHOCHET

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We are all familiar with סדם and עמורה, societies in which there was a total moral breakdown. The entire region was decimated for not only abstaining from חסד, but also from punishing those who helped others.

Why was their punishment so harsh? There are many evil people and corrupt communities. Yet, Hashem does not decree that those places have to be leveled to the ground.

What is the reason that ה' feels that in this case the appropriate punishment is total and utter destruction?

The רמב"ן explains that עמורה and סדם's punishment was so severe because their heinous crimes were committed in ארץ ישראל. While Hashem may tolerate inappropriate behavior and horrible sins outside of the land of Israel, within the borders of Israel those actions can not be ignored. The קדושה of ארץ ישראל is so powerful that anything or anyone that is against what Israel stands for cannot remain there.

This is a powerful lesson that bears reminder. Thank G-d we live in a generation in which Jewish control of our holy land is a given and often times taken for granted. At times, it is incumbent upon us to realize the uniqueness and the absolute holiness of this special place. A place in which sanctity is real. We must not only take advantage of this one of a kind place, but we must appreciate and daven that it remains in our hands forever!





MODESTY IS THE BEST POLICY CORI DENNIS ('13)

In *Parshat Vayeira*, we read about how Avraham tries to persuade Hashem against destroying the wicked people of Sedom. In the course of pleading with Hashem, Avraham states, “*Henah nah hoalti lidaber...v’anochi afar v’efer*” – “Behold now I have begun to speak...and I am but dust and ash” (18:27).

The Chatam Sofer asks the question: Why does Avraham describe himself as being “*afar*” and “*efer*,” like dust and ash?

The Chatam Sofer answers that Avraham explains that the *gematria*, the numerical value of each letter of the word, of the two words, “*afar*” and “*efer*,” is 631, which is the same *gematria* as “*k’torah*”- like Torah.

The Torah can only be properly fulfilled by someone who is not haughty but considers himself as “dust and ash.” Avraham is the epitome of such a humble person. This can be seen in the beginning of the parsha when Avraham sees “*shlosha anashim*,” “three people,” and in response, “*va’yaratz likratam*,” “he runs to greet them” (18:2).

Our rabbis explain that Avraham does not know that these people were angels, but merely thought they were travelers. Yet, Avraham does not think of his own greatness when he sees them. Instead he runs to bring them into his home and welcome them in order to perform the mitzvah of *hachnasat orchim*, inviting in guests.

Avraham’s behavior is a lesson for us today. We must constantly remember not to value ourselves over others and to remain modest as we come from “*afar*” and “*efer*.”

THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND SHMUEL KILSTEIN ('15)

This week’s parsha contains the Akeida- the Binding of Yitzchak. The section begins with the phrase, “*Vayehi achar hadvarim ha’aleh*,” “And behold it was after these things took place...”

One of the ways the Torah reveals subtle nuances is by the juxtaposition of one idea to another. The words “*Achar hadvarim ha’ale*” imply a connection with that which came before. In order to shed light on the Akeida we need to examine what precedes it.

The section before the Akeida is the story of Avraham making a peace treaty with Avimelech. In the treaty, Avraham and Avimelech agree to respect each other’s rights in the land. The Rashbam explains that the reason these two parshiot are connected is because Hashem was angry with Avraham. Hashem had promised Avraham that the land of Israel would belong to him. What right did Avraham have to refuse Hashem’s gift?

Continued page 3





Kilstein continued

The Rashbam argues that the Akeida serves as a punishment for Avraham's mistreatment of the divine promise that he was given.

The words of the Rashbam are often quoted when discussing the situation in the Middle East. People cite the Rashbam as a source urging that Israel not give any land to the Palestinians. They point to these two parshiot and warn of the danger of Israel negotiating a land-for-peace deal. We find a difficulty later in the Torah when Yaakov makes an agreement with Esav; he gives Esav the rights to dwell in the land. Does Yitzchak not indicate that Yaakov was to inherit the "Divine Promise"? The agreement of Yaakov might hint that a peaceful settlement is always part of the divine plan.

Should the State of Israel cede land to the Palestinians in exchange for a lasting peace? Whether Avraham and Yaakov did the right thing in Sefer Breishit may be very relevant to this extremely important question.

PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS

RENA BEN EZRA ('13)

In *Parshat Vayeira* three angels appear to Avraham, and upon their arrival he immediately offers them water to wash their feet and food to eat. In response to his kind offer, the three angels reply, "*Ken Ta'aseh Ka'asher Debartah*," "Do just as you said" (Genesis 18:5).

This appears to be an abnormal response to someone who has just graciously offered kind treatment. Why then did the angels reply in such an ill-fitting manner?

Rabbi Zevin offers a unique explanation to better understand the angels' atypical response. He describes three steps that must occur once a promise is made. First, there is the thought, then the speech, followed by an action – the fulfillment of the promise. Because speech is the physical representation of thought, the step between thought and action, one often forgets certain components of his initial thought when verbalizing it. Therefore, it was crucial for the angels to instruct Avraham to do exactly as he says so that he can follow through with his promise.

Often times people have brilliant ideas, ideas which they intend on carrying out, but in the scheme of things the action is more often lost than achieved. We make promises or goals for ourselves to work on a specific project or a good deed, but we most likely end up falling through on them.

This is why the angels reply in such an abnormal manner; they are teaching us that thinking and even articulating a promise is not enough. We must "do just as we say" to fulfill the promises we make in our lives and in order to grow into dedicated and honest people.



RISE AND SHINE DAVID CUTLER ('14)

In this week's parsha we read about the monumental story of Akeidat Yitzchak. This is a very well known event in the Torah, but one detail is commonly overlooked.

The Torah relays, "So Avraham arose early in the morning and he saddled his donkey" (22:3). We know that Avraham agrees to follow Hashem's orders in sacrificing his son, but this pasuk makes it seem like Avraham was indeed excited to perform the act of surrendering his son to the will of Hashem.

One must ask, what is so important about this detail? What triggered Avraham's excitement? Is it that he got up early in the morning to go to slaughter his son, or that he saddled his own donkey? The answer is that both of these things did the trick and are important.

Avraham is so eager to go fulfill Hashem's commandment that he gets up at the crack of dawn to go do it. Not only that, but instead of having his servant Eliezer saddle up his donkey, Avraham does it himself to expedite the process.

Now, while school is not a sacrifice, getting up in the morning sure feels like one. Everyday, the kids who live in Hollywood, North Miami Beach and Miami Beach have to get up earlier in the morning, get onto their "donkeys" (the bus), and travel to school. It is so hard for some of us to get out of bed, sometimes even causing us to miss the bus.

This is why it is so amazing that a person like Avraham could get up early in the morning and be so excited to do something so horrible to his own son. From here we learn that we must wake up in the morning with excitement, like Avraham, and be ready to start our day with a positive attitude.

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Faculty Advisor

Rabbi Avi Hochman

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Contact Rabbi Hochman at
RAVH@WYHS.NET

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7902 Montoya Circle
Boca Raton, FL 33433
Phone: 561-417-7422
Fax: 561-417-7028
www.wyhs.net