

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON VAYERA - 5759

B'S'D'

Avraham's greatness engendered his humility in every circumstance, in victory and defeat. After losing the case of Sodom, he returns. After his amazing accomplishment of the Akeida, he returns. Avraham returns home, never showing the haughty spoils of victory or the despondent embarrassment of defeat. He remained constant in his service to Hashem and in his attitude to his family and peers. Avraham does not revel in victory nor despair in defeat. He returns the same way as he leaves. Steadfast in faith and constant in character.

Good Shabbos Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

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drasha@torah.org Drasha Parshas Vayeira -- The Return of Abraham

This week we read of Avraham's experiencing both a humbling failure and stunning accomplishment. After he was informed of the wonderful news that a child will be born to him and Sora, Avraham is told bad news. Though it would not affect Avraham personally, Avraham took it personally. Hashem informed Avraham that he was about to destroy the city of S'dom. That city's customs were diametrically opposed to every one of Avraham's principles and teachings. Where he espoused kindness, they preached selfishness. Where Avraham spoke of Hashem, S'domites promulgated heresy. Avraham should have reveled in their demise, but he did not. He pleaded with Hashem to spare them. "Will You stamp out the righteous together with the wicked?" "Perhaps," he cried "there are 50 righteous men in the city. Shall You not spare the city in the merit of the 50?" (cf. Genesis 18:23-24). But there were not 50, There were not 40. In fact, there were not even 10 and Avraham had no more bargaining chips. Hashem did not spare S'dom. Avraham lost his case. The Torah tells us that, "Hashem departed after he finished speaking to Avraham and Avraham returned to his place." (Genesis 18:33). What does the Torah mean, "Avraham returned to his place"? Where else should he go? To watch the fireworks that once was S'dom? This is not the only time that Avraham returns. At the end of the portion, we read of Avraham's great faith and fortitude. He is told by Hashem to sacrifice his only son, Yitzchak up on a mountain the Akeida. Unquestioning and determined, Avraham embarks to fulfill Hashem's wishes. Before the knife reaches his son's neck, an angel stops Avraham AND tells him that he has passed the test of commitment. Hashem promises to increase Avraham's offspring like the stars, and declares that all the nations of the world will bless themselves by Avraham's offspring. After the remarkable incident the Torah tells us that "Avraham returned to his young men." What does the Torah mean? Of course he returned. Should he stay on the mountain forever? Of course he returned!

Rabbi Dovid Koppleman tells the story of Rabbi Abish, the Rav of Frankfurt who was known for his extraordinary humility. In addition, he would often raise funds for the needy families of his city. Once he heard that a wealthy man was on business in town and went to the man's hotel suite to ask him for a donation. The tycoon was arrogant and assumed that the Rav was a poor shnorrer, and after a few moments drove him out of his room. A few minutes later the man went to leave his suite and looked for his silver cane. Noticing it was gone, he immediately suspected that Reb Abish took it during his brief visit. Quickly, the man bolted toward the lobby of the hotel where he accosted Reb Abish. "Thief," the man shouted while pushing the Rav, "give me back my cane!" Reb Abish calmly pleaded. "I did not steal your cane. Please do not accuse me! Please believe me. I did not steal your cane!" The man was adamant in his arrogance and began to beat the Rav while onlookers recoiled in horror. Reb Abish, despite the pain, remained steadfast in his humble demeanor. "Please believe me. I did not steal your cane!" Finally, the man realized he was getting nowhere and left Reb Abish in disgust. That Saturday was Shabbos Shuva. The entire community, including the wealthy visitor, packed Frankfurt's main synagogue for the traditional Shabbos Shuva Speech. Horror gripped the visitor as a familiar looking figure rose to the podium and mesmerized the vast audience with an eloquent oration. It was the very shnorrer he had accosted in the hotel! As soon as the speech ended, the man pushed his way toward the podium and in a tearful voice tried to attract the Rabbi's attention. He was about to plead forgiveness for his terrible behavior when Reb Abish noticed the man. In all sincerity Reb Abish began to softly plead with him. "I beg of you please do not hit me. I truly did not steal your cane."

weekly@vjlists.com Torah Weekly - Vayera
<http://www.ohr.org.il/tw/5759/Bereishi/vayera.htm>

Insights Body & Soul "And it was that when G-d destroyed the cities of the plain that G-d remembered Avraham; so He sent Lot from amidst the upheaval when He overturned the cities..." (19:29) Predictions of Jewish continuity are dire. We face a situation where intermarriage in the United States has topped 50%. Simply put, this means that most Jews marry non-Jews. To combat this situation, dedicated people are making tremendous efforts to dissuade such relationships by teaching what Torah is, and why a Jew should live by its precepts.

When a Jew begins observing Torah, major changes may result in his lifestyle. This is rarely easy. Spiritual awakening is often accompanied by difficult adjustments: Tensions may arise between a person who becomes religious and other family members; or the person may want to change a present job for one which makes it easier to observe the Torah fully. To what extent is someone involved in "saving souls" also obliged to become involved in these physical problems?

In the above verse, it's apparent that G-d saved Lot because He remembered Avraham. Isn't this a non-sequitur? Shouldn't G-d have rescued Lot because He remembered Lot? If not for Avraham, Lot would probably still have been living comfortably, minding his own business in his hometown of Charan together with the rest of his family. He may never have had the spiritual advantages of being close to a tzaddik, a righteous person, like Avraham, but he would also not have had any of the problems that this led to. For it was Lot's kindness in agreeing to accompany Avraham which eventually led to Lot's living in Sodom. Thus Lot was saved in the merit of Avraham, for had it not been for Avraham, Lot would never have been in the mortal danger of Sodom in the first place.

If, in bringing people close to Judaism, we uproot them from their birthplaces and their lifestyles, it is not enough for us to attend to their spiritual needs, we must also involve ourselves in their physical requirements; for had it not been for our intervention, they would probably be living in a world which, for all its spiritual dangers, was a lot more familiar than the one they subsequently find themselves in.

Permanent Ink "Fear not for G-d has heard the cry of the youth in his present state." (lit. as he was there) (21:20) The Torah plumbs the psychological depths of Man. In this week's Parsha, Avraham banishes Hagar and her son Yishmael. Avraham supplies them adequately, but they lose their way, Yishmael falls ill, and they run out of water. They find themselves on the brink of dying from thirst in the desert and Yishmael prays to G-d to save them.

The Torah says that despite the fact that Yishmael's descendants would in the future murder Jews, nevertheless, G-d judged him "as he was there." At that point in time Yishmael was worthy of being saved, and he was judged only according to his present merit.

A fascinating contradiction arises between this idea and another Torah concept: In Parshas Ki Seitze, the Torah instructs us regarding a "wayward and rebellious son." This is a boy who shows specific signs of incipient moral degeneracy. He is put to death, not because of his current behavior, but rather because he will inevitably rob and kill to satisfy his appetites. The Torah instructs that he be executed before reaching this future

depravity. The question thus arises, why wasn't Yishmael judged in the same way as the wayward and rebellious son? Why wasn't he judged according to his evil progeny, and condemned immediately? Why was he judged "as he was there?"

Let's try and answer this conundrum with another Torah concept. A Torah scroll must be written with black ink on parchment. If the ink is another color, the Torah scroll is invalid. What if the ink is a type which starts off black but later turns red? Is it permitted to publicly read the Torah while the writing is still black? After all, at that point the ink looks identical to permanent black ink.

The answer is that a Torah scroll written with ink that eventually changes color is invalid even when the ink is still as black as night.

With this concept we can offer an answer to our perplexing contradiction: The wayward and rebellious son is like the black ink which is going to turn red. We look at him as though he were really red ink masquerading as black. His true nature has yet to become visible, but that's who he is now. It's not that he will change into a highway robber. He is a highway robber now. We just can't see it yet. So the Torah judges him according to his future behavior.

However, the descendants of Yishmael did not represent Yishmael's essence at the time he prayed to G-d when he was dying of thirst. At that point, Yishmael was still righteous, and thus he was saved.

Maybe this is one of the reasons that on Rosh Hashana we read in synagogue this section from this week's Parsha about Yishmael.

On Rosh Hashana, the Jewish People stand in the dock of cosmic justice. For our past flawed actions, hopefully we have repented. As far as the future is concerned, we have taken upon ourselves an earnest undertaking not to repeat our past mistakes. However, in spite of our most sincere intentions, it is known before Hashem that we will stumble again.

How can we hope for forgiveness?

At our core, the Jewish People are "kosher." At our deepest center we want to do Hashem's will. Our transgressions are external to our essence. They are like caked mud that sticks to us from the outside. If we do fall again in the future, it is not because we are like the rebellious son with our true nature surfacing. Rather, we are saying to Hashem: "We are in a sense like Yishmael. Now our hearts are perfect in repentance. What may happen in the future is not of our essence. Our essence is as we are, here and now."

Sources: * Body and Soul - Ramban, * Permanent Ink - Rabbi S.Y. Zevin

Women of Kindness Just as Avraham and Sarah were both old and yet Hashem gave them a child, similarly in this week's Haftorah, Hashem grants the Shunamite woman and her husband a child.

Why then does the Haftorah begin with an entirely different incident, the miracle of the oil filling pitcher after pitcher, until the penniless widow of the prophet Ovadia became rich? What is the connection between these three women?

The answer is that they all excelled in chesed, in kindness to others. To this day, Sarah is a role-model of the Jewish woman. Her life was an unceasing labor of welcoming guests and teaching them about Hashem. Ovadia's widow was also a heroine of such kindness, as depicted in the Haftorah, and the same was true of the Shunamite woman. All three cast the mold, the archetype of the Jewish woman for all generations. * Adapted from Rabbi Shimshon Rafael Hirsch; * The Midrash Says

LOVE OF THE LAND Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

JERUSALEM - YERUSHALAYIM "Malki-Tzedek, King of Shalem, brought out bread and wine." (Bereishis 14:18) "Avraham called

that place Hashem Yireh." (Bereishis 22:14) Both of these saintly men -- Malki-Tzedek, who was Shem, son of Noah, and his descendant Avraham -- were referring to the site upon which stands Jerusalem (whose Biblical name is Yirehshalem).

When Hashem wished to name His holy city, He faced, as it were, a Divine dilemma. "If I call it Yireh like Avraham did, the righteous Shem will feel slighted, and if I call it Shalem like Shem did, the righteous Avraham will feel slighted. I will therefore call it Yireh-Shalem like both of them called it."

Shalem means both peace and perfection, while Yireh, as Targum Onkelos translates, means human service of Hashem. Only when man serves Hashem

can he hope to achieve the peace and perfection symbolized by Yirehshalem.

* Bereishis Rabbah 56:10

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parasha-qa@vjlists.com * PARSHA Q&A * In-Depth Questions on the Parsha and Rashi's commentary. Parshas Vayera http://www.ohr.org.il/qa/5759/bereishi/Vayera.htm

I Did Not Know That! Because Avraham invited the angels to "sit under the tree" (Bereishis 18:4) his offspring were rewarded with the mitzvah of succah. * Midrash Tanchuma

Recommended Reading List Ramban 18:7 The Love of Kindness 18:13 For the Sake of Peace 18:15 Sarah's Laughter 19:8 Lot's Disgrace 22:1 The Meaning of a Trial 22:16 The Promise of Eternity Sforno 18:2 The Love of Kindness 18:22 Persistence 19:8 Lot's Reasoning 19:11 The Nature of the Wicked 19:37-8 Meaning Well

1. Why did Hashem appear to Avraham after the bris mila? 18:1 - Avraham was sick, so Hashem came to 'visit' him. 2. Why was Avraham sitting at the entrance to his tent? 18:1 - He was looking for guests. 3. What were the missions of the three angels? 18:2 - To announce that Sarah would give birth, to heal Avraham and to destroy Sodom. 4. Why did Avraham enjoin the guests to wash the dust off their feet? 18:4 - He thought they were Arabians who worship the dust, and he didn't want any object of idolatry in his home.

5. Why did Avraham ask Yishmael to prepare the food for the guests? 18:7 - To train him in the performance of mitzvos. 6. The angels asked Avraham where Sarah was. Why? 18:9 - To call attention to Sarah's modesty, so as to endear her to her husband. 7. When Hashem related Sarah's thoughts to Avraham, He did not relate them precisely. Why? 18:13 - For the sake of peace. 8. What "cry" from Sodom came before Hashem? 18:21 - The cry of a girl who was put to death because she gave food to a poor man. 9. How many angels went to Sodom? 19:1 - Two; one to destroy the city and one to save Lot. 10. Why was Lot sitting at the gate of Sodom? 19:1 - He was a judge. 11. Lot served the angels matzos. Why? 19:3 - It was Passover.

12. Why did Lot delay when he left Sodom? 19:16 - He wanted to save his property. 13. Why were Lot and his family not permitted to look back at Sodom? 19:17 - Since they too really should have been punished, it wasn't fitting for them to witness the destruction of Sodom. 14. Lot's wife looked back and became a pillar of salt. Why was she punished in this particular way? 19:26 - She was stingy, not wanting to give the guests salt. 15. In what merit did Hashem save Lot? 19:29 - Lot had protected Avraham by concealing from the Egyptians the fact that Sarah was his wife. 16. Why did Avraham relocate after the destruction of Sodom? 20:1 - Because travel in the region ceased and Avraham could no longer find guests. 17. Why did Avimelech give gifts to Avraham? 20:14 - So that Avraham would pray for him.

18. Why was Avraham told to listen to Sarah? 21:12 - Because she was greater in prophecy. 19. Why did Hashem listen to the prayer of Yishmael and not to that of Hagar? 21:17 - Because the prayer of a sick person is more readily accepted than the prayer of others on his behalf. 20. Who accompanied Avraham and Yitzchak to the akeidah (binding)? 22:3 - Yishmael and Eliezer.

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VAYERA - Parshat Vayera - The Challenge to Abraham
by Rabbi Chaim Rapoport - Ilford Synagogue

The last section of this week's Sidrah describes Abraham's "tenth trial", the Binding of Isaac. The "Akedah" has become part of our daily morning service, a central theme in much of the liturgy of the Selichot and High Holiday Services, and it is even given as the reason for choosing a "shofar" of a ram to blow on Rosh Hashanah, reminiscent of the ram Abraham offered in lieu of Isaac. The magnitude of this trial notwithstanding, we must still contemplate the question: Why? Surely Jewish history is replete with examples of complete self-sacrifice for G-d. From Hannah and her seven sons (Gittin 57b) to the martyrs of the Nazi and Communist regimes, even ordinary Jews have willingly given their own lives (and their children's lives) for much less than a direct Divine commandment. Why therefore is such a constant "tzimmes" made, when men of the calibre of our Patriarchs readily obeyed a "person-to-person" commandment from G-d? Several answers have been suggested by the medieval thinkers. In this week's Daf I will attempt to paraphrase two of the less well known explanations.

Rabbi Chaim Soloveichik of Brisk (The "Patriarch" of the Lithuanian Analytical method of learning) explains rather characteristically: Abraham was told (Bereshit 21:12) "only through Isaac will you be given offspring" and achieve continued posterity. This is understood in the broader sense to include all the promises that G-d had made to Abraham about the destiny of his children: A special nation, a People of the Torah, with independence and sovereignty in the Land of Israel. All these promises were invested in, and were therefore dependent on, Isaac. His person encapsulated all the potential that Abraham's progeny could realise. Abraham faced a most formidable test: he was being asked to give away on the altar his perpetual status and merit as the Patriarch of G-d's people. This was definitely the self-sacrifice of history "par excellence".

The Chassidic school offers a more philosophical and mystical explanation. In his work "Pri Ha'aretz" Rabbi Menachem of Horadok coins the phrase: "Abraham opened the channels of mesirut nefesh". Abraham's act was revolutionary: Abraham was the first human being to reach the epitome of self-sacrifice. In exerting the Herculean and almost super-human effort that was demanded of him, he ingrained in himself and in all of his descendants the spiritual "genes" of mesirut nefesh, the ability to transcend one's own "self" and sacrifice it for the Supreme Being. Abraham had already demonstrated his readiness to give up his life rather than worship the pagan deities of Nimrod in the famous episode of Ur Casdim. When he was given the choice of publicly embracing the culture of pagan idolatry or being thrown into the fiery furnace, he chose the latter. This is in total defiance of the greatest forces in his time. (Miraculously he was saved to live on and continue to pursue his life's ambition). However, it is the "Akedah" that will always be seen as the personification of "self-sacrifice". For in Ur Casdim, Abraham gave up his life for his ideals. Abraham's life was one long mission of preaching the values of righteousness and his steadfast belief in the One G-d. This is in contradistinction to the primitive, futile beliefs and practices which dominated that era. The stage at Ur Casdim offered Abraham an unparalleled opportunity to teach the meaning of true and unequivocal belief to the entire world. The trial was great, but there was a rational ingredient in Abraham's decision. He took his philosophy of belief to its logical conclusion. He was ready to die and leave humanity with an indelible impression of all that he stood for. Abraham would have died but the monotheistic religion he had created would have lived on for all perpetuity.

In sharp contrast to that scene stood the Akedah. Here Abraham was asked to sacrifice not only his life and his progeny, but everything he stood for, all for the totally incomprehensible WILL of G-d. Here the choice was no longer between permanent ideals and temporal life. It was a choice between the survival of his religious ideals, his life's work or the subordination of both mind, heart and soul to the Will of his creator. Slaughtering a human being went against the grain of everything Abraham

had ever believed and preached. The binding of his only son was contrary to any religious, let alone parental, feelings he had. Had he lost Isaac, he would have lost the single chain in the tradition he had initiated. The world at large, who were not privy to G-d's communication with Abraham, would have seen him as a total failure and the idolaters would have been triumphant. Yet G-d had spoken to him and told him: "Take up your only son whom you love etc., and offer him up....". Could Abraham meet this superhuman challenge? Even the angels didn't know! But the answer Abraham provided for us serves as the eternal and universal example and source of mesirut nefesh. Hence: It is only appropriate that when we wish to evoke G-d's mercy and unequivocal devotion to Israel as His People that we open the Holy Ark and say: "Remember the Covenant of Abraham and the Binding of Isaac".

[From last year:] MJ-Ravtorah@shamash.org vayera.97 Shiur HaRav
Soloveichik ZT"L on Parshas Vayera (Shiur date: 11/5/74)

The Torah tells us that Hashem visited Avraham as he sat at the entrance to his tent at the hottest time of the day (Breishis 18:1). When Avraham sees the 3 strangers, he runs to them and says Adon-y, please do not pass by the tent of your servant. Chazal (Shavuos 35b) say that this use of the word Adon-y is treated as Kodesh, as it refers to Hashem. The Gemara (Berachos 7b) says that from the day that Hashem created the world, Avraham was the first to call Him Adon-y. Avraham referred to Hashem twice as Adon-y, once in Parshas Lech Lecha and the other in Parshas Vayera. Avraham asked Hashem, Mah Titen Li Vanochi Holech Ariri (Breishis 15:2), what will You give me, for I am childless. The second time is in Vayera when the 3 strangers pass by his tent. The fact that Avraham was the first to call Hashem Adon-y was considered so important that Daniel relied on this merit of Avraham (Daniel 9:17) when he prayed for the Mikdash (Gemara Berachos 7b).

Avraham was the great intellect who searched for and discovered Hashem. Avraham used the term Adon-y twice. Once when Avraham asked Hashem for a son as he was childless. The second time was when the strangers passed by and he asked Hashem to remain and not pass by His servant. The Tetragrammatron is pronounced Adon-y but is written differently. The word Adon-y connotes ownership, that Hashem is the master of the world. The Tetragrammatron means that Hashem is the be-all and end-all of existence. Elokim indicates that He created the world. Adon-y is used in all Berachos Hanehenin, that the world and everything in it that we enjoy belongs to Hashem. As the Master of the world, He could choose just as easily to destroy it. It is through His kindness that he has provided us with the things that we enjoy.

In Parshas Lech Lecha, Hashem told Avraham that the reward that awaits him is great. Obviously since everything belongs to Hashem, there were no limits what Hashem could give him. Avraham said that he realizes that Hashem is the master of the world and can give Avraham anything. He uses the word Adon-y for the first time to indicate the total ownership and mastery of Hashem over this world. But if he does not have a son, no reward would ever satisfy him because in the final analysis, whatever Avraham has will eventually fall to his servant Eliezer. So Avraham said that he had no doubts that Hashem, Adon-y, could provide him with any reward, but requested a son in order that he would have an heir to whom he could hand over his legacy.

In Vayera, where Avraham uses the word Adon-y for the second time, 2 things happened. Hashem appeared to Avraham, then the strangers appeared to Avraham. Some Mefarshim say that this was really one story. According to them, Hashem appeared to Avraham through 3 angels, as it was quite common for angels to appear to the prophets at any time. In other words, Hashem had appeared to Avraham, there was Giluy Shechina. Suddenly he saw in his prophesy 3 angels standing before him and he ran to them. Others interpret that first Hashem appeared to Avraham, then the 3 angels appeared as ordinary people to Avraham and he ran to them and asked them, Adony (my masters), please do not pass by my tent without stopping there. According to this interpretation, the usage of the term Adon-y refers

to the strangers, and should be considered Chol. However, Chazal say that the use of the word Adon-y here is Kodesh, so we will operate with the premise that Adon-y is Kodesh.

Rashi interprets that Hashem came to be Mevaker Choleh, to visit the sick. Why did Avraham leave the Shechina and run to invite these 3 strangers into his house? How could he pass up such an honor, to have Hashem be his personal Mevaker Choleh? Chazal derive from Avraham's leaving the Shechina to greet the 3 strangers that the Mitzva of Hachnosas Orchim is greater than Kabbalas Pnay Shechina (Shavuos 35b).

The Midrash says that Hashem came to visit Avraham who was sitting. Why didn't Avraham stand up out of respect for the presence of Hashem? The Midrash says that Avraham wanted to stand but Hashem told him to sit as a symbol for later generations where it says Elokim Nitzav Badas Kel. However it seems odd that Avraham would not stand for Hashem, yet he hovered over the 3 strangers to serve them. Why was it acceptable for Avraham to sit for Hashem yet stand for the strangers?

The Midrash says that when Hashem appeared to Avraham to visit him, Avraham wanted to stand up for Hashem out of courtesy, as the norm is for the master of the house to stand and welcome his guests. Hashem told Avraham that there is no reason for him to stand, for after all, He is Adon-y, the same all-capable Hashem that previously promised him great rewards. It is Hashem that is the Master of the house and Avraham is the guest. So it was proper that Avraham should sit. When the guests came, Avraham ran to them and he said to Hashem that now I must stand to welcome them, because vis a vis these guests I am considered the master of the house. So Avraham stood up for them out of courtesy. He said to Hashem, Adon-y, please don't pass by your servant. When You appeared to me, I wanted to stand, but You, the Master of the universe told me to sit because it was I who was Your guest. Now that other guests have arrived at my house, please do not be insulted that I am standing for them while I did not stand for You.

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From: Jonathan Schwartz[SMTP:jschwartz@ymail.yu.edu] To: chabura
Subject: Internet Chabura -- Parshas VaYera

***** Only Part of the Praise, Please *****

The gemara in Eruvin (18b) notes that a person can speak a portion of another's praise in front of that person but not the complete praise. The source cited by the gemara as proof, is from Noach about whom we are told "ki otcha raiti tzaddik lifanai b'dor hazeh" Rashi comments that the proper derech erez, even for one who praises his friends more when he is not in their presence, is to use only a portion when he is with them. For if he were to overdo the praise, he would appear to be a machnif. Where does Rashi get the hint that the issue is that the offer of praise may appear to be a machnif? Perhaps the reason for the klal (rule) of miktzatz shevacho is to prevent Haughtiness (ga'ava) on behalf of the one being praised? Additionally, citing the source from noach, where the one offering praise was Hashem, could he fall into the category of machnif?

The gemara in Bava Basra (15b) makes an interesting comment regarding Iyov and Avraham. By Avraham the possuk says "Ata Yadati ki yirai elokim ata" "Now I know you fear God." About Iyov it is stated: "he was a stright and simple man, feared God and avoided evil". The gemara determines that what was said regarding Iyov is greater than that which was said regarding Avraham. Now, simply basing ourselves upon Rashi (Berashis 7:1), there is no proff to the gemara's conclusion. For Rashi notes that regarding Avraham it is miktzatz Shevacho b'fanav whereas it is not the case by Iyov. How are we to understand this gemara in light of Rashi?

In an attempt to answer these difficulties, we can note that Rashi holds that machnif can apply even to Hashem. Not literally, rather, he is teaching us that one could come to be a machnif if one were to completely praise a person in front of him. (See Torah Temima Berashis 6:9 who offers this answer) Now, the

Netziv (Sifrei Beha'alo'secha 44) notes that he has difficulty with this

understanding and feels that the more correct peshat is that when someone is in another's presence, he may get distracted and not complete the praise. In order to prevent people from getting upset, as a rule, we only say part of a person's praises aloud in his presence.

End result is 2 reasons for not not completing a person's praises in his presence. The first is because of machnif which is the problem of the person speaking the praise, and the second is that of the Netziv who notes that the other guy may get upset and the person at fault will be the one being praised.

According to Rashi who notes that the only problem is with the one offering praise, and Hashem has no problem of machnif, we understand why the gemara learned that what was said b iyov was greater than what was said by Avraham. Hashem didn't have to conceal things from Avraham, if he did, there was a reason, that reason is discussed in the gemara.

However, according to the Netziv who notes that the issue is based upon preventing the one being praised from sinning, what is peshat? The Ritva in Bava Basra answers that that Iyov was praised with 4 titles. Avraham was praised with 1. Had Hashem's only intention been to limit his praise in front of him, he would have used at least 2 titles. He didn't. hence, that which is said by Iyov is greater than that stated by Avraham.

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Relating to Parshas Vayeira By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

I will not destroy [Sodom] on account of ten (18:32)

TEFILLAH B' TZIBUR: HOW IMPORTANT?

The mitzvah of davening with a minyan (a religious quorum: ten males over bar mitzvah), though Rabbinic in nature, has a Biblical source: When Abraham impertuned G-d to save Sodom in the merit of the tzaddikim who dwelled there, he ceased pleading when he realized that there were fewer than ten righteous individuals. This, says the Ibn Ezra(1), is because the fewest number of people that can constitute a tzibur - the basic unit for communal prayer - is ten. It follows that tefillah, the daily prayer service, should be conducted within a tzibur so that its manifold benefits will be realized. Indeed, the Rambam(2) and the Shulchan Aruch(3) rule that all men should make every effort to daven all tefillos with a minyan, for tefillah b'tzibur is much more than a preferred course of action - it is a Rabbinic obligation(4). Despite the paramount importance of tefillah b'tzibur, however, there are several cases when it becomes secondary to other halachos or situations that take precedence. For example:

It is forbidden to eat before davening Shacharis. A weak person who must eat before davening should daven at home early in the morning, eat, and then go to shul to answer to Kaddish and Kedushah(5), etc.

If tefillah b'tzibur would cause a monetary loss, one may daven alone. But if it merely causes one to earn less profit, he is not allowed to skip tefillah b'tzibur(6). A deduction from a paycheck due to lateness caused by tefillah b'tzibur is considered a monetary loss(7).

It is forbidden for a scholar to learn till late at night if it will cause him to miss tefillah b'tzibur the next morning(8).

Even if one can concentrate better at home, he is still required to daven with a minyan as long as he can concentrate sufficiently to understand the simple translation of the words he is saying(9). Wearing tefillin during Shema and Shemoneh Esrei takes precedence over tefillah b'tzibur(10).

One who is particular to daven k'vasikin(11) on a steady basis may daven by himself when he cannot find a minyan(12). Even if he does not daven k'vasikin daily, but is particular to daven k'vasikin at specific times, e.g., on erev Rosh Chodesh, he may daven k'vasikin without a minyan on those specific days(13).

One who must leave for work at a certain time and is faced with a choice of davening in a slow minyan (such as a yeshiva or kollel) and leaving before the end of davening, or davening in a quicker minyan where it is difficult for him to daven properly, should rather daven in the slower minyan - even if it means that he will miss kerias ha-Torah on Mondays and Thursdays(14). Kerias ha-Torah takes precedence over tefillah b'tzibur(15) and tefillah k'vasikin(16).

QUESTION: How far must one travel from his home in order to daven tefillah b'tzibur?
DISCUSSION: If the closest minyan is an eighteen-minute walk or more [each way] from one's home, he is exempt from davening b'tzibur(17). If he owns a car and uses it routinely, he must travel by car for up to eighteen minutes [each way](18). If he uses his car only for emergencies, then he is not obligated to use his car for tefillah b'tzibur either(19).

QUESTION: How many people should be finished with Shemoneh Esrei before the chazan may begin his repetition of the Shemoneh Esrei(20)?
DISCUSSION: The poskim debate this issue. Some maintain that the chazan may not repeat Shemoneh Esrei until there are nine other people listening to him. Those who are still davening Shemoneh Esrei are not included(21). Other poskim are more lenient. They allow the chazan to begin the repetition as long as there are six people listening to him(22). The Mishnah Berurah does not directly rule on this issue. On a related matter, he quotes both views and suggests that in a situation when the chazan suspects that there may not be nine people answering "amen" to his repetition, he should make a condition (tenai) before starting that his Shemoneh Esrei is a tefillah nedavah, a voluntary prayer, should nine people not answer "amen" to his blessings(23).

L'chatchilah, therefore, since some poskim rule strictly on this issue, the chazan should wait for nine people to finish their Shemoneh Esrei. If, however, people are rushing to go to work, etc., we may rely(24) on the more lenient view and begin Shemoneh Esrei before all nine people have finished(25). The chazan should do so with the aforementioned precondition.

FOOTNOTES: 1 Bereishis 18:28. See also Targum Yonasan 18:24 for a similar idea. 2 Hilchos Tefillah 8:1. 3 O.C. 90:9. 4 Igros Moshe O.C. 2:27. See, however, ha-Tefillah B'tzibur (pg. 34) quoting the Eimek Brachah's view that the Rambam holds that tefillah b'tzibur is not an absolute obligation. 5 Beir Halachah 89:3. 6 Mishnah Berurah 90:29. 7 Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (quoted in Avnei Yashfei on Tefillah, 2nd edition, pg. 74). 8 Igros Moshe O.C. 2:27. 9 Igros Moshe O.C. 3:7. 10 Mishnah Berurah 66:40. 11 As explained in the Discussion on Parashas Vayigash. 12 Beir Halachah 58:1. According to the understanding of Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (quoted in Avnei Yashfei on Tefillah, 2nd edition, pg. 62) even one who does not daven regularly k'vasikin, but would like to daven k'vasikin on a certain day just for the sake of davening k'vasikin, may daven without a minyan. 13 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in ha-Tefillah B'tzibur, pg. 116). 14 Written responsum from Harav S.Z. Auerbach (published in ha-Tefillah B'tzibur, pg. 250) who adds that he should make sure that the other congregants - who see him leaving early - are aware of the reason for his early departure. Harav Auerbach adds that even if he is the tenth man who completes the slower minyan, and his early departure will break up the minyan before the last Kaddish, he should still do so. 15 Minchas Yitzchak 7:6; Harav S.Z. Auerbach and Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (quoted in Avnei Yashfei on Tefillah, 2nd edition, pg. 140). 16 Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (quoted in Tefillah K'hilchasa pg. 73). 17 Mishnah Berurah 90:52; Igros Moshe O.C. 2:27. 18 Based on Beir Halachah 163:1; Aruch ha-Shulchan Y.D. 375:17. See Hebrew Notes to Parashas Ha'azinu for elaboration. 19 Rulings of Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (quoted in Avnei Yashfei on Tefillah, 2nd edition, pg. 75 and in Tefillah K'hilchasa pg. 138). 20 Our discussion covers Chazaras ha-Shatz only. The halachos of Kaddish are more lenient. 21 Shulchan Aruch Harav 55:7; Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 20:2; Kaf ha-Chayim 55:48. This ruling is based on the view of the Taz 55:4. 22 Aruch ha-Shulchan 55:13; Imrei Yosher 2:9-1; Eimek Berachah, Tefillah 6. This ruling is based on the view of Magen Avraham 55:8. This also seems to be the view of the Pri Megadim (MZ 55:4) and Beir Halachah 55:6. See Tzitz Eliezer 12:9 for an explanation. 23 Mishnah Berurah 124:19. 24 See Salmas Chayim 1:24; Tzitz Eliezer 12:9; Beis Baruch 29:1; Yalkut Yosef 1:287. 25 According to Chayei Adam 29:1 and Eimek Berachah, Tefillah 6, this should not be relied upon unless there are at least eight people who finished Shemoneh Esrei. See also Orchos Rabbeinu 1:51 that this was the view of Harav Y.Y. Kanievsky.

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daf-insights@shemayisrael.com Insights to the Daf: Pesachim 76-84
INSIGHTS INTO THE DAILY DAF brought to you by Kollel Iyun Hadaf of Yerushalayim Rosh Kollel: Rabbi Mordecai Kornfeld
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Pesachim 76b HALACHAH: "REI'ACH" OPINIONS: Rav and Levi argue whether the "Rei'ach" (aroma) of a food is significant enough to forbid another item. Rav says that if Kosher meat was cooked in the same oven

with Neveilah meat, the Rei'ach of the Neveilah meat becomes absorbed into the Kosher meat and makes it forbidden. Levi argues and says that "Reicha *Lav* Milsa Hi;" since the vapor is insignificant, it does not prohibit the Kosher meat. What is the Halachah? (a) RASHI (DH Amar Lach Rav) says that the Halachah follows the opinion of Levi. Even though Rav was able to explain that all of the Tana'im agree with his opinion, the Halachah follows Levi. The reason is because elsewhere (Avodah Zarah 66b) Abaye and Rava also argue about Rei'ach, and Rava agrees with the opinion of Levi. Since the Halachah always follows Rava when he argues with Abaye, the Halachah is that Rei'ach is *not* considered significant. However, it is evident from the words of Rashi (DH Avad Uvda, as pointed out by TOSFOS DH Mai) that according to Levi, "Rei'ach" is insignificant only *b'Di'aved*. Levi agrees that l'Chatchilah we consider Rei'ach to transfer taste. This is also the ruling of the RIF in Chulin (32b of the pages of the Rif), who rules like Levi but only permits the food b'Di'aved, and the ruling of the RAMBAM (Hilchos Ma'achalos Asuros 15:33). (b) TOSFOS (DH Asrah) cites RABEINU TAM who rules like Rav, that Rei'ach *is* considered significant, even b'Di'aved. Even though Rava in Avodah Zarah (66b) seems to agree with Levi that Rei'ach is not significant, Tosfos asserts that he said that only with regard to the specific case under discussion in Avodah Zarah. In all other cases, though, Rava agrees that Rei'ach is significant. This is also the opinion of the ROSH (Avodah Zarah 5:8) according to the TUR (see, however, BEIS YOSEF who points out that the Rosh brings both opinions and does not seem to side like one in particular).

HALACHAH: The BEIS YOSEF (YD 97, DH u'l'Inyan Halachah) rules like the Rif and Rambam and says that l'Chatchilah it is Asur to cook a permitted item with a forbidden one in a small oven (in a large oven, or in one which has an exhaust fan, it may be permissible even l'Chatchilah), but b'Di'aved it is permitted. This is the ruling of the SHULCHAN ARUCH (YD 108:1). The REMA adds that this also applies to a meat food and a milk food cooked together in the same oven; b'Di'aved the foods are Mutar even if they were cooked together in a small oven. (There are some, though, they prohibit the food in this case unless it is a situation of great loss.) However, if either food was very spicy, then even b'Di'aved they are Asur. The SHULCHAN ARUCH (YD 92:8) adds, based on the ROSH (Teshuvos 20:26), that when two items are cooked in the same oven, there is also a problem of *steam* ("Ze'a"). Steam from a milk food that rises up to a meat food forbids it. Unlike Rei'ach, which is permitted b'Di'aved, the Shulchan Aruch rules that steam of milk actually makes a meat item prohibited even b'Di'aved.

In practice, there are three general approaches to whether one may cook meat and milk, after each other, in the same oven: 1. The ARUCH HA'SHULCHAN (YD 92:55) writes that in our modern ovens, steam is not a problem, only Rei'ach is. Rei'ach, though, is only a problem when the meat and milk are in the oven at the same time. One may, however, cook meat right *after* milk in our modern ovens. (The oven, though, must be clean.)

2. The MINCHAS YITZCHAK (YD 5:20) rules that since the difference between Rei'ach and Ze'a is not well defined, it is best for a person to have two ovens, one for meat and one for milk. He says that steam left in the oven from the meat food might enter the milk food, or that the steam becomes absorbed into the walls of the oven, which absorbs both the meat and milk steam, rendering the oven itself not Kosher. If one does not have two ovens, then one must either Kasher the oven between using it for meat and using it for milk (such as by heating it to the highest setting for an hour or so), or double-wrap either the meat or the milk item. This is also the ruling of the BE'ER MOSHE (3:105:2). 3. RAV MOSHE FEINSTEIN (Igros Moshe YD 1:40 and end of 59) takes a compromise stance, writing that steam is only a problem when it comes to liquid foods; we do not have to worry that solid foods will produce a significant amount of steam (unless one clearly observes them doing so). Similarly, the REMA (YD 92:8) says that steam is not a problem when the pot producing it is covered. Therefore, Rav Moshe suggests that one may cook meat immediately after cooking milk once the oven cools down, as long as neither one is a liquid food, or if one is covered. Thus, if one's oven is a meat oven, one may cook meat in it as normal, and

after the oven cools down, one may cook a solid milk food in it, or even a liquid milk food which is covered. Alternatively, a liquid milk item may be cooked in the meat oven uncovered if one waits twenty-four hours from the last time the oven was used for meat (so that the steam that is absorbed becomes Nosen Ta'am l'Pegam). (See also Rav Ovadyah Yosef in YABIA OMER 5, YD 7:5 and 7.) Of course, in practice, one should consult a competent rabbinic authority.

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[Didn't make Fri. AM distribution] vayera.98 Shiur HaRav
Soloveichik ZT"L on Parshas Vayera (Shiur date: 11/1/77)

On the surface, the connection between Parshas Vayera and its Haftorah is that both stories revolve around barren women who bore children late in life after receiving a prophecy foretelling the exact day of the birth of the child. Ashekenazim continue the Haftorah with the story of the Shunamite woman's confrontation with Elisha and his subsequent revival of the child, Techiyas Hamaysim. The Rav explained the connection between the second half of the Haftorah and the Parsha as well. Rashi comments on the

statement of the butler in Parshas Miketz (41:14), that cursed should be the wicked, for their acts of kindness are incomplete. The Rav explained that sometimes it is preferable do nothing, than to do a half-hearted favor. A half-hearted gesture can sometimes lead to extreme anguish, leading the recipient to wish the favor had never been done in the first place. When the Shunamite woman confronted Elisha, she told him that she never requested any favor from him, a human being, years back when they first met. She said that she and her husband were content with their lot in life. Though they had no children, they adapted to the fact that they had no heir and were resigned to the fate of never having children. Human beings can adapt to any situation, and they had grown accustomed to their fate. The woman told Elisha that the reason why she did not ask for anything from him, including a child, was because she did not want to be disappointed by a half hearted or incomplete gesture. The thought that she might lose the child that she had all but given up on ever having was too much for her to cope with. Losing the child that she had now come to love so dearly, was the ultimate disappointment. It was worse than never having the child in the first place. Her story was similar to that of other barren women in Tanach who longingly look forward to children, Sarah, Rebecca, Chana among others. [The Rav noted that many people who do not have children beseech God to grant them the gift of a child. Those that have children very often don't appreciate the wonderful act of kindness bestowed upon them by God.]

The Shunamite woman told Elisha that she did not want to be disappointed by losing the child. She would have preferred never to have the child then to go through this wrenching episode. She says that she originally pleaded with Elisha, Al Techazev Bi, do not disappoint me. [Note: in Tehillim we find, that King David said all men are Kozev. The classical interpretation is all men lie. According to the Rav's interpretation of Techazev as "don't disappoint", we can interpret it as all men are bound disappoint at some point.] Elisha responds that she is filled with bitterness towards him, because he did not listen to her years before and her fears of being disappointed by the loss of the child have come true. He therefore feels an obligation to revive the child through Techiyas Hamaysim. Avraham never prayed for a child. It was Chana who was the first to formally pray for a child, and Chazal learn many of the laws and nuances of prayer from Chana. [Even though Rivka prayed as well for a child, the Gemara derives much of Hilchos Tefila from Chana.] Avraham felt that had he been worthy of a child, Hashem would have given him one. Instead, Avraham asked what benefit do all the riches promised him by Hashem serve, if his servant, Damesek Eliezer, will inherit everything? Eventually Hashem grants him a child and he expresses unbounded joy to God, Tzechok Asa Li Elokim, God has granted me the greatest happiness, and a similar thought is expressed by Sarah. They finally escaped from the depressing, long shadow of those that are Ariri, the childless without hope of succeeding generations

to continue their legacy. Now Avraham, like the Shunamite woman, is confronted with the pending loss of his beloved child, of his Bincha Yachidcha, who he waited so long for. According to Chazal, Bincha Yechidcha, your singular child, was a message to Avraham that Yitzchak was his only son and would not be replaced under any circumstance after the Akeidah. Indeed, Avraham is told that he must sacrifice his child himself. Why didn't Avraham voice any objection to Hashem regarding the sacrifice of Yitzchak? Why didn't he ask Hashem why He disappointed him by giving him a child after all these years only to taken away from him? Why would Hashem give him a half-hearted gift that was only for sacrificial purposes? He would have preferred to remain childless, in the state that he had adjusted to over these many years? The Rav explained that the ability to accept such directions and the task of (even) sacrificing his own son, set Avraham apart from all others, especially the Shunamite woman, and showed his greatness and strength of faith in Hashem. Through the second half of the Haftorah we gain insight into the greatness and attitude of Avraham with regards to the possible loss of his beloved only child, as distinguished from that of the Shunamite woman and the loss of her child. [The Rav noted that Midrash says Avraham did ask Hashem why was he given an only child only to be asked to sacrifice him. However Avraham asked this question after the conclusion of the Akeidah, after the angel told him not to harm Yitzchak. He carried out the Akeidah itself with complete faith and trust in Hashem.] This summary is copyright 1998 by Dr. Israel Rivkin and Josh Rapps, Edison, N.J. Permission to distribute this summary, with this notice is granted.

[Didn't make Fri. AM distribution] "RavFrاند" List - Rabbi Frاند on Parshas Vayera
These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frاند's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 167, The Bris Milah Seudah. Good Shabbos!

The Relationship Between Avrohom and the Esrog Tree At the beginning of Parshas Vayera, Avraham looked up and noticed three people standing on the road. Avraham ran to greet them. [Bereshis 18:2]. The pasuk [verse] repeats the word 'Va-yar' (and he saw) twice. First it says "He looked up and he saw..."; and then it repeats "...and he saw and he ran toward them". What was this second "seeing"? The Mikdash Mordechai, Rav Mordechai Ilan, gives an interesting interpretation. He explains that there are many occasions when a situation arouses "enthusiasm of the moment". Our initial impulse is to rush in and do the mitzvah or good deed. But, with the passage of time, rational thought often overcomes emotion and the enthusiasm dissipates. This was not the case with our Patriarch Avraham. The pasuk is telling us that Avrohom was not merely the type of person who rushed into something on the spur of the moment. His enthusiasm maintained itself beyond the stage of the knee-jerk reaction. Even upon reevaluation -- giving the situation a second look, so to speak -- he remained determined to offer kindness and hospitality. His attribute of kindness emerged not only from emotion (the first sighting) but from rational consideration, as well (the second sighting). The Sages speak of this consistency regarding Avraham's attribute of Chesed. It was his hallmark. The Toras Kohanim comments that the expression "fruit of a beautiful tree (Pri Etz Hadar)" [Vayikra 23:40] refers to Avrohom Avinu. What is the analogy between Avrohom Avinu and the Esrog (which the Torah refers to as a Pri Etz Hadar)? The Talmud [Succah 35a] says that the comparison of Avrohom to an Esrog is based on an alternate translation of the phrase "Pri Etz Hadar". Literally, Pri Etz Hadar means, "fruit of a beautiful tree". However, the Talmud says that by switching the vowels, "Hadar" (beautiful) can be read "Hador" (that dwells). Therefore, the pasuk can be translated, "fruit of a tree that dwells". This refers to the fact that the Esrog, unlike other fruits, does not just grow, blossom, and fall off the tree within three months. The Esrog lives on its tree from year to year. It has a consistency that is not found in any other fruit. That was the attribute of Avrohom. He did not just have momentary enthusiasm that inspired kindness. When guests came, Avrohom was not only excited on the first day. What about guests that stayed three days? What about guests that stayed for a week? Avrohom did not tire of offering hospitality. Avrohom was consistent, just like the Esrog that is consistent on the tree from year to year. A verse regarding the Akeida [the sacrifice of Isaac] says, "On the third day Avraham lifted his eyes and saw the place from a distance" [22:4]. The Medrash Tanchuma asks why G-d waited until the third day, and did not show the place to Avraham on the first or second day. The Medrash answers: The purpose of waiting three days was so that the nations should not think that Avraham was seized by a momentary frenzy, in which he was overcome by emotion and did not have time to reflect on what he was doing. Avrohom Avinu had plenty of time to think about the Akeida. For three days he walked and thought it over. But that was Avrohom. He was not a flighty man of emotion whose spirit grabbed him for the moment. He was the consistent one, like the Esrog - dwelling on the tree from year to year. The Maharal in the Nesivos Olam brings an unbelievable Medrash: Ben Zoma says that we find an all-encompassing pasuk in the Torah -- "Hear Oh Israel, the L-rd Our G-d, the L-rd is One" [Devorim 6:4]. Ben Nannos states that there is an even more important pasuk in the Torah than that of Shma Yisrael. What is that? "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" [Vayikra 19:18]. Shimon ben Pazzi comes and says there is a pasuk that is even more significant and more meaningful and more inclusive than either of these two pasukim [verses]. What could that pasuk be? "And the one lamb you shall make in the morning..." [Shmos 29:39]. The Maharal explains ben Pazzi's seemingly strange choice. This verse refers to the Korban Tamid (the Continuous Daily Sacrifice). The pasuk is referring to consistency, the ability of man to serve G-d with total devotion. The day-in/day-out service is significant. Tamid -- Consistency day-in/day-out, year-in/year-out -- This is the great principle of the Torah. The Talmud records a number of occasions when disciples asked

different Amoraim [Talmudic Rabbis] the following question: "By what merit did you live so long?" One Amora answered, "I never took a shortcut through the Beis HaMedrash" [Study Hall]. One answered, "I never called a person by a nickname". Many answers are given, but there does not appear to be a common thread as to what provided the merit for longevity. I once heard that there is, in fact, a common thread. Each Amora answered "I NEVER..." (mei'olam lo...). The key is NEVER -- day-in/day-out, consistency. The key is the dwelling on the tree from year to year. The choice of the mitzva is not the central thread. The central thread is Temidiyus -- consistency. "The one lamb shall be offered each morning..."

The True Disciple of Avrohom Avinu The pasuk writes, "And Avrohom arose early to the place where he had previously stood..." [Bereshis 19:27]. After Avrohom's dialogue with G-d about Sodom in which Avrohom was unsuccessful in his petition to save the city, the pasuk tells us that Avrohom went back to the place where he originally petitioned G-d. The Talmud learns from this [Brochos 6b] that "Whoever establishes a fixed place for prayer, the G-d of Avrohom will help him." The Talmud learns the importance of a fixed place for prayers from Avrohom. The Talmud states that one who does pray in a fixed place will not only be answered by the G-d of Avrohom, but when he dies, people will say about him "such a modest person, such a pious person, a true disciple of Avrohom Avinu". The question can be asked: granted it is a nice idea to pray in the same place, but why does the Torah place such great emphasis on this concept? I saw a wonderful interpretation from Rav Bergman in the Sha'arei Orah. The Mishneh [Avos 5:19] contrasts the disciples of Avrohom with the disciples of Bilaam: "One who has these three attributes is a disciple of Avrohom Avinu; one who has three other attributes is a disciple of the wicked Bilaam. A person who is generous, humble and not haughty, he is a disciple of Avrohom Avinu; but one who is stingy, arrogant, and haughty is a disciple of Bilaam the wicked." That is the contrast between an Avrohom and a Bilaam. Bilaam also prayed. When Balak asked Bilaam to curse the Jewish people, Bilaam traveled to a certain location and he prayed and offered sacrifices, but he was not successful. G-d did not allow Bilaam to curse the Jewish people. Bilaam had to bless them. What was Bilaam's immediate reaction? Bilaam changed the location. "Let's go to a different place and pray." They went to a new place. They built new altars, and they brought new sacrifices. What happened when Bilaam tried again? He failed again. What was his reaction? "Change the place again!" Bilaam went to a third location and started the same procedure all over again... Again Bilaam was unsuccessful... What do we find by Avrohom? Avrohom pleaded with G-d for Sodom. But when Avrohom was not successful, what did he do? He went back to pray again at the exact same location where he originally prayed. What is the significance of the fact that Avrohom went back to the same place and Bilaam changed places? The difference between Bilaam and Avrohom is haughtiness. Bilaam is haughty. A haughty person can not accept "It's my fault!" A haughty person must rationalize, "If my prayers were not successful, there must be something wrong with the location. There must be some kind of extraneous factor. It couldn't be me. Nothing could be my fault." When a Bilaam is not successful in his prayers, he goes to another place, because he cannot accept the fact that he may be responsible for his own failure. However, when an Avrohom Avinu is not successful with his prayers, he says, "It's my fault; I am not worthy enough; I didn't pray well enough." It has nothing to do with the place. That is a feeble excuse. An Avrohom Avinu, who has a humble and modest spirit can own up and say the words "It's my fault." When our Rabbis say, "He who establishes a fixed place for his prayers, the G-d of Avrohom will help him..." they are not only referring to a person who always prays in the same place in the same synagogue all his years. Our Rabbis are speaking of a person whose ego is healthy enough to say, "It is my fault; it is my lack; I will not look for extraneous places or things to blame it on." If a person has this attitude throughout his life and his behavior reflects this, then we can truly say at his eulogy, "There goes a pious person, there goes a humble person, he is a true disciple of Avrohom Avinu."

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