

לעילוי נשמת
מרת נקא עדנה
צפורה ע"ה
בת משה מנחם הלוי ז"ל



עַלֵּי דֵשֶׁה

AL EI DESHE

Weekly Torah Insights and inspiration on the Parsha from the Rosh Yeshiva Shlit"za of Gur

Hindsight is 20/20

וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו ה' בְּאֵלֵי מַמְרֵי וְהוּא יָשֵׁב בְּפֶתַח הָאֹהֶל
כַּחַם הַיּוֹם

Hashem appeared to him in the plains of Mamrei while he was sitting at the entrance of the tent in the heat of the day.
(Bereishis 18:1)

What is the Torah's intent in relating that Avraham was sitting at the entrance of his tent? In explanation, the Sfas Emes¹ cites the Gemara (Shabbos

the treasury is *yiras Shamayim*. When Avraham sat "at the entrance to the tent," he was engaged in maintaining his level of *yiras Shamayim*.

The *mefarshim*² raise another question. The next pasuk relates that when Avraham saw the three men who had arrived, וַיֵּרָא וַיָּרַץ לִקְרֹאתָם מִפֶּתַח הָאֹהֶל, – *He saw, and he ran toward them from the entrance of the tent*. Why does the pasuk stress that Avraham left the entrance of his tent to tend to his guests? Since he had been sitting at that spot until then, it is obvious that when he went to serve his guests he went from that spot.

Based on the above explanation of the Sfas Emes, the answer seems clear. Avraham was aged, and was weak and in pain from his *bris milah*. Additionally, he was in the presence of the *Shechinah* which had come to visit him. He certainly could be excused for not tending to guests at that moment. And even if he wanted to serve his guests, it didn't have to be with the fervor of וַיֵּרָא וַיָּרַץ לִקְרֹאתָם. Nonetheless, he did all this. Why? Because his actions were fueled by מִפֶּתַח הָאֹהֶל, they were fueled by his *yiras Shamayim*. When he perceived

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Good Eye

אוֹלֵי יֵשׁ חֲמִשִּׁים צְדִיקִים בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר

Perhaps there may be fifty righteous people within the city? (Bereishis 18:24)

Chazal teach⁵ that one of the attributes that identifies a person as a *talmid* of Avraham Avinu is *ayin tovah*, a positive eye. Let us observe Avraham Avinu's actions, so that we may understand and glean this *middah* of *ayin tovah*.

Avraham davened that if fifty *tzaddikim* would be found in Sedom, Hashem should spare the city. Rashi explains that if ten *tzaddikim* would be found in each of Sedom and its four sister cities, the cities would all be spared. When Avraham later suggested that perhaps there were forty *tzaddikim*, he meant that four cities should be spared, and so on. When he raised the prospect of ten *tzaddikim*, he intended only that one city would be spared.

The Ramban⁶ challenges this approach, since the simple reading of the *pesukim* is that with each potential number of *tzaddikim*, Avraham meant that all five cities should be spared.⁷ Why does Rashi interpret it differently?

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5 Avos 5:19

6 18:24

7 We may add that when davening, one must be as specific as possible. When Avraham suggested lower numbers of *tzaddikim*, he did not change his wording to imply that he was asking for fewer cities to be spared.

What was the power behind Avraham's extraordinary, unchanging fulfillment of Hashem's word? It was his great level of *yiras Shamayim*, his seat at the "entrance of the tent."

31a), "A person who possesses Torah but not *yiras Shamayim* is like a treasurer who was given the treasury's inner keys but not its outer keys. How can he gain entry?" The point of entry into

1 *Lekutim*, s.v. *Vayeira eilav Hashem*

2 See Ramban

Hindsight is 20/20

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an opportunity for a mitzvah, he cast aside all *cheshbonos* – both the *gashmiyus* concern of his physical weakness on that day, and the *ruchniyus* concern that the *Shechinah* might leave him.

Avraham's *yiras Shamayim* expressed itself in other ways as well. The pasuk says of Avraham's journey to perform the *akeidah*, וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל הַמִּקְוֹם אֲשֶׁר אָמַר לוֹ הָאֱלֹקִים – *and he went to the place of which G-d had spoken to him* (22:3). And when he arrived, וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל הַמִּקְוֹם אֲשֶׁר אָמַר לוֹ הָאֱלֹקִים – *They arrived at the place of which G-d had spoken to him* (9). Why does the Torah repeatedly highlight that Avraham went to the place “of which G-d had spoken to him”?

Tiferes Shlomo explains³ that typically, anyone who receives a specific command from Hashem would set out enthusiastically, with *hislahavus* and *cheshek*, to fulfill his mission. After all, Hashem Himself has commanded him! But as time goes on, and as difficulties crop up, his passion would begin to subside. But Avraham Avinu was different. Even as he travelled to the place of the *akeidah* and faced significant adversity completing his task, his mindset did not change: he would fulfill the command הָאֱלֹקִים אָמַר לוֹ הָאֱלֹקִים, with the very same passion he felt when Hashem initially commanded him. Hashem's word is everlasting and is not subject to change.

In this manner, *Tiferes Shlomo* explains the pasuk (21:4), וַיִּמַּל אַבְרָהָם אֶת יְצַחָק בְּנוֹ בֶן שְׁמֹנֶת יָמִים כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה אֱתוֹ אֱלֹקִים

– *Avraham circumcised his son Yitzchak at the age of eight days, as G-d had commanded him*. Although Avraham had received the mitzvah of *milah* a long time earlier, his enthusiasm for the mitzvah did not wear off, and he fulfilled it on Yitzchak exactly כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה אֱתוֹ אֱלֹקִים, with the same fervor as when Hashem initially commanded him.

What was the power behind Avraham's extraordinary, unchanging fulfillment of Hashem's word? It was his great level of *yiras Shamayim*, his seat at the “entrance of the tent.”

With this we may explain a pasuk which we *lein* this Shabbos at *minchah*, from *Parshas Chayei Sarah* (23:6): וְנָשִׂיאָהּ אַתָּה בְּתוֹכֵנוּ – *You are a prince of G-d in our midst*. What is the meaning of this title that Efron bestowed on Avraham? The Mishnah (Horayos 10a) teaches: “Who is a *nasi*, a prince? One who has nobody above him but Hashem, his G-d.” Avraham was exactly that: nobody and nothing held any sway over him at all besides Hashem; he did as Hashem commanded without regard for other considerations. This is true *yiras Shamayim*. We, as well, must work to imbue ourselves with such *yiras Shamayim*, which will inspire us to properly fulfill our obligations at all times.

The pasuk relates that after Avraham passed the *nisayon* of the *akeidah*, וַיִּקְרָא אַבְרָהָם שֵׁם הַמִּקְוֹם הַהוּא ה' יְרֵאָה – *Avraham called the name of that place “Hashem Yireh”* (22:14). Targum Yerushalmi explains that Hashem is וְלֹא מִתְחַמֵּי

– *He sees but is not seen*. Simply, this means that Hashem sees us, but we cannot see Him; we have no observation or understanding of Him at all.

The Kozhnutzer Maggid explains it differently.⁴ At a time of *nisayon*, Hashem conceals Himself, so that a person finds his perception and awareness of Hashem minimized. When Avraham was preparing to carry out the *akeidah*, the pasuk says (22:4), וַיֵּרָא אֶת הַמִּקְוֹם מֵרְחוֹק – *he perceived the place from afar*. הַמִּקְוֹם is a reference to Hashem, Who is מְקוֹמוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, the Place of the world. As Avraham faced this great *nisayon*, his perception of Hashem was more distant than usual.

When Avraham passed the *nisayon*, his previous awareness of Hashem was restored, and he now understood that Hashem *sees but is not seen*: even when Hashem hides Himself, and a person's perception of Him is darkened, Hashem's focus is on the person throughout.

How can one overcome a *nisayon*, with his awareness of Hashem compromised? By tapping into his *yiras Shamayim*, and remembering Who it is that sent him down to this world, and for what purpose. After his *nisayon*, Avraham regained his clarity and perception of Hashem's ways, and the same is true throughout the ages: whenever a Jew remembers Hashem and overcomes his *nisayon*, he will gain increased enlightenment and clarity.

(וּיְרָא תִשְׁפִּיג – ס"ג מאמר א)

3 12:4

4 *Avodas Yisrael*, s.v. *Vayikra Avraham*

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The Sfias Emes explains⁸ that Rashi arrived at his understanding because of a problem: if Avraham, with his deep understanding, felt that he could ask Hashem to save the cities because of ten *tzaddikim*, why did he start with fifty? Why didn't he ask right from the start that Hashem spare the cities in the merit of ten *tzaddikim*? Because of this question, Rashi concluded that each group of ten *tzaddikim* could only save one city, and as Avraham lowered the number of

he assume that there was a large number of *tzaddikim* there? It was his *middah* of *ayin tovah*, which led him to think positively about the people of Sedom and assume that it contained numerous *tzaddikim*.

In fact, this mindset of Avraham influenced Lot as well. Lot was the judge of Sedom, and undoubtedly knew its residents quite well. Nonetheless, when the *malachim* asked Lot what type of people Sedom's inhabitants were, Lot replied merely that "most of them are *resha'im*."⁹ His attitude towards them changed only when **וְאִנְשֵׁי הָעִיר אֲנָשֵׁי סְדָם וְאִנְשֵׁי הָעִיר אֲנָשֵׁי סְדָם וְאִנְשֵׁי הָעִיר אֲנָשֵׁי סְדָם וְאִנְשֵׁי הָעִיר אֲנָשֵׁי סְדָם** – *the townspeople, the people of Sedom, converged upon the house, from young to old, all the people from every quarter* (9:4). Avraham's influence on Lot was such that until he saw *every single* resident of Sedom acting wickedly, he maintained a somewhat positive view of them.

However, this approach of the Sfias Emes, that Avraham assumed Sedom contained numerous *tzaddikim*, remains difficult to understand. Granted, Avraham originally assumed Sedom had at least fifty *tzaddikim*. But when Hashem told him that it did not, why did he lower his expectations only gradually, first proposing forty-five, then thirty, then twenty, and only then ten? Why didn't he realize immediately that his assumption about Sedom's residents was wrong, and ask Hashem to spare it if, at least, it contained ten *tzaddikim*?

The answer is that this was the extent of Avraham's *ayin tovah*. Avraham was well-acquainted with the wickedness

of Sedom. The Gemara (Sanhedrin 109b) relates that Avraham's servant Eliezer visited Sedom, and barely escaped with his life. He certainly related the incident to Avraham.¹⁰ Furthermore, Avraham was a *navi*, so he surely was aware of the behavior in Sedom. Nonetheless, Avraham's *ayin tovah* meant that when he was informed that Sedom did not contain fifty *tzaddikim*, he simply couldn't believe that it didn't have forty-five. When that, too, was disproven, he was certain that there must be at least forty, and so on. Such is the *middah* of *ayin tovah*: even when one is aware of problematic behavior, one is convinced that it must not be so severe or so widespread.

Avraham Avinu's *middah* of *ayin tovah* was directed at idolaters. How much more so must we train ourselves to focus an *ayin tovah* on our fellow Jews, so that even if there is some element of wrongdoing, we assume that it is not extensive.

Sefarim hakedoshim teach¹¹ that the *tefillos* that Avraham offered on behalf of Sedom did not go to waste; they continue to benefit Avraham's descendants throughout the ages. Surely, then, these *tefillos* can help us develop an *ayin tovah*, so that we can focus on the good of people. Whether we see the good people amid a group of less-than-righteous, or we see the good *side* of people from among their other traits; in either case, we must train our eyes to seek out the good.

May Hashem grant that in the *zechus* of our seeing our fellow Jews with an *ayin tovah*, may He, too, look upon us with an *ayin tovah*, and grant us all our needs.

(וירא תשכ"ג – ס"ג מאמר ג)

Such is the middah of ayin tovah: even when one is aware of problematic behavior, one is convinced that it must not be so severe or so widespread

proposed *tzaddikim*, the number of cities to be spared was lowered as well.

If so, we must understand how the Ramban would answer this question of Rashi: if ten *tzaddikim* would save all five cities, why didn't Avraham make this suggestion from the beginning?

In answer, the Sfias Emes writes that Avraham never imagined there could be fewer than fifty *tzaddikim* in Sedom and its environs, so he began with that number. Only when Avraham realized that in fact there were not fifty *tzaddikim* did he begin to lower his number.

Avraham Avinu was aware that Sedom was not a righteous city. Why did

8 *Lekutim*, s.v. B'Ramban

9 Rashi 19:4, citing Bereishis Rabbah 50:5

10 See *Pnei Menachem* (Noach p. 49), that Eliezer was sent to Sedom by Avraham.

11 See *Imrei Emes*, Chayei Sarah 5690 s.v. V'Avraham; *Tiferes Shlomo* on our parshah s.v. *Vayashkem Avraham; Pri Tzaddik*, no. 5.

Running Commentary

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי אִם נָא מְצָאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֵל נָא תַעֲבֹר מֵעַל עַבְדְּךָ

And he said, "Hashem, if I find favor in Your eyes, please pass not away from Your servant."
(Bereishis 18:3)

The Sfas Emes¹⁴ notes that following Onkeles and Rashi's interpretation, אֲדֹנָי refers to Hashem. Avraham was asking Hashem not to leave him as he tended to his guests. This leads to a problem: the previous pasuk describes how Avraham ran to serve his guests; shouldn't Avraham have asked Hashem to remain before he left to tend to his guests?¹⁵

The Sfas Emes explains based on a statement of the Gemara (Berachos 6b), that one should always run to perform a mitzvah, even on Shabbos (when one is ordinarily not allowed to run). The Gemara learns this from a pasuk (Hoshea 6:3), וְנִדְעָה נְדִדְכָה לְדַעַת אֶת ה' - Let us know, let us run to know Hashem. The Acharonim¹⁶ question this: granted, the pasuk encourages running for mitzvos, but perhaps this is only on other days, not Shabbos.

The Sfas Emes answers this question with a *chiddush*: running for a mitzvah is not an "add-on" to the mitzvah one is preparing to perform, but rather is itself a mitzvah. If one ran to perform a mitzvah but was prevented from fulfilling it, he nonetheless fulfilled the mitzvah of running for a mitzvah. If so, one should run to perform a mitzvah even on Shabbos, since when one is engaged in the mitzvah of running, he is exempt from the mitzvah which forbids running on Shabbos, in keeping with the principle of עוֹסֵק בַּמִּצְוָה פְּטוּר מִן הַמִּצְוָה.

Concludes the Sfas Emes: the mitzvah of running for a mitzvah only applies if one begins running the moment he sees an opportunity of mitzvah to run for. If, however, one pauses before beginning to run, his strong will to perform the mitzvah will dissipate, and the running is no longer a mitzvah. This is why Avraham began to run immediately to tend to his guests, even before asking Hashem to stay: so that he could gain the mitzvah of running for a mitzvah, and not lose it by delaying.

The Sfas Emes's understanding, that one can run for a mitzvah on Shabbos because of עוֹסֵק בַּמִּצְוָה פְּטוּר מִן הַמִּצְוָה, is novel. Typically, *osek b'mitzvah* is applied where one has two action-based mitzvos to perform, but is already engaged in one of them. In that case, he is exempt from the other one. But here, the mitzvah in question is *kavod Shabbos* - which forbids one from running on Shabbos. This is an *issur asei*, a negative application of a positive mitzvah. How can the mitzvah of running for a mitzvah exempt one - allow one to transgress - the prohibition of running on Shabbos? It would seem the Sfas Emes understood that running on Shabbos is not an actual *issur*, but rather merely a lack of *kavod Shabbos*, and can thus be overridden with *osek b'mitzvah*.

But there is another difficulty with the Sfas Emes's approach. *Osek b'mitzvah* only applies where the second mitzvah couldn't have been performed first. If it could have, engaging in the first mitzvah does not exempt one from

the second mitzvah. Since the transgression of running on Shabbos begins with the start of Shabbos, how could fulfilling the mitzvah of running for a mitzvah, performed in the middle of Shabbos, constitute *osek b'mitzvah*?

The answer is that the mitzvah of running for a mitzvah does not begin with the action of running. One runs to perform a mitzvah when he sees an opportunity for a mitzvah and is filled with a powerful desire to fulfill it. This leads him to run. In other words, the running is merely an outward expression of his inner yearning to fulfill the mitzvah. This yearning is the essence of the mitzvah of running for a mitzvah.

Whereas the mitzvah of walking slowly on Shabbos is only relevant once one begins to walk, the mitzvah of running for a mitzvah begins before one begins to move - at the moment he feels an intense desire to perform a mitzvah, which subsequently leads him to run. Thus, *osek b'mitzvah* may be applied, since the first mitzvah was applicable before the second mitzvah.

(בנאות דשא - וירא תשפ"ג)

Mesirus Nefesh on the Rise

קח נָא אֶת בְּנֶךְךָ אֲשֶׁר אָהַבְתָּ אֶת יִצְחָק

Take, please, your son, your only one, whom you love, Yitzchak. (Bereishis 22:2)

Rashi explains that Hashem didn't specify immediately whom He was referring to, in order to make the mitzvah dear to Avraham, and to grant him reward for each statement.

The Sfas Emes¹² wonders about this: why should Avraham get rewarded for each introductory statement Hashem made? What do they add to his actions? The Sfas Emes explains that with each expression - *your son, your only one, whom you love, Yitzchak* - Hashem was asking for a progressively greater level of *mesirus nefesh*; which Avraham, in turn, was prepared to carry out.

What was to be Avraham's reward? Hashem would reward him by paying back his descendants, in the form of טִיּוֹן לְבָנָיו - *the actions of the Avos are a harbinger*

for their descendants.¹³ The actions that the Avos (in this case, Avraham) took enabled Klal Yisrael for all time to follow in their footsteps. Had Hashem commanded Avraham to *shecht* "Yitzchak," with no introductory statements, Avraham would have done so immediately. But Klal Yisrael wouldn't have had the *ma'aseh avos of mesirus nefesh* on the levels of *your son, your only one, whom you love*. In other words, if someone wouldn't be on the *madreigah* of sacrificing something as immensely important to him as "Yitzchak," he would have no ability of *mesirus nefesh* at all. But because Avraham accepted the commands of *your son, your only one, whom you love*, all these levels of *mesirus nefesh* became available for his descendants. If someone is only capable of *mesirus nefesh* on the level of "your son," he can express that *mesirus nefesh* - and so on. This was Avraham's reward "for each statement."

(וירא תשפ"ג - ס"ג מאמר א)

14 Likutim

15 See Rashi

16 See Tzlach and Maharsha

12 5637 s.v. Es

13 See Tanchuma, Lech Lecha 9; Ramban 12:6

"ברוכים הבאים בשם ה'"

מקדמים אנו בברכה

את דבינו ראש הישיבה מגוד

הנאון דבי שאול אלתר שליט"א

לקראת בואו לארה"ב להגל מעמד סיום מסכת קידושין
הנלמד במסגרת לבנו בתורתו "עמוד הקהילה"

וכנס חיזוק לדגל המצב בארה"ק

שייערך בעזה"ת

ביום שלישי כ"ג השון

באלם

The palace hall

780 McDonald Ave

Brooklyn, NY 11218

תפילת מעדים והתחלת המעמד בשעה 8:30

ידו בואו לברכה לחיזוק קהילת אנ"ש וכל עמך ישראל