בעזהשי"ת

The Way of Emunah

Collected Thoughts
on the Weekly Parshah

From

Rabbi Meir Isamar Rosenbaum shlita

Vayeirah



The Way of Emunah

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Parshas Vayeirah

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וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו ה' בְּאֵלֹנֵי מַמְרֵא וְהוּא יֹשֵׁב פֶּתַח הָאֹהֶל וגו' (יח, א)

And Hashem appeared to him in the plains of Mamreh and he was sitting by the door to the tent... (18:1)

Ashamed to Enter:

Rashi states that Avrohom was sitting by the door of the tent to see if there were any passersby (over v'shav) that he could invite into his home. Rav Avrohom Yaakov of Sadiger *zy"a* notes that the words "*over v'shav*" actually mean people who are walking back and forth. He thus explains that all poor people knew about Avrohom's hospitality, and they would make their way to his home. However, they would often be embarrassed to knock on the door, so they would pace back and forth in front of the tent. Therefore, **Avrohom waited for them by the door to bring them inside.**

וַיִּשָּׂא עֵינָיו וַיַּרְא וְהִנֵּה שְׁלֹשָׁה אֲנָשִׁים נִצָּבִים עָלָיו וַיַּרְא וַיָּרָץ לִקְרָאתָם וגו' (יח, ב)

And he lifted his eyes, and he saw, behold, three men were approaching by him. And he saw, and he ran to greet them. (18:20)

A Tikkun for the Balhabos's Neshama:

Two guests once came to Kuzhmir in the middle of a rainy and cold winter night. The entire city was dark, as everyone had gone to sleep. However, they noticed a light coming from one house, which was the home of Rav Yechezkel of Kuzhmir *zy"a*.

The guests walked towards the light and knocked on the door. When Rav Yechezkel opened it, they asked if they could come in to rest. He warmly invited them in and prepared a nice meal for them. He then set up beds for them and wished them goodnight.

The *shamash* woke from the noise and saw how the Rebbe was personally caring for his guests. He assumed that if the Rebbe was exerting himself for them, they must not be regular people. He thought that they must be *neshamos* that had come down from the Upper World in search of a *tikkun*. This caused him to tremble in fear for the rest of the night.

In the morning, the guests left and went on their way. The *shamash* went to daven Shacharis in the bais medrash and told his friends that, in the middle of the night, he had witnessed the Rebbe providing a tikkun for two lost *neshamos*. When the Rebbe heard what the *shamash* had said, he told him,

"Usually, a *neshama* comes to this world in search of a *tikkun* for itself. In this case, **the *neshamos* that came to my home came to provide me with a *tikkun* by giving me the opportunity to do the mitzvah of *hachnasas orchim*."**

Hachanasas Orchim Overrides a Fast:

Rav Dovid of Lelov *zy"a* was accustomed to fast all week, from Shabbos to Shabbos. One *erev* Shabbos, a guest came to his home with a letter from Rav Elazar of Lizhensk *zy"a*. Rav Dovid greeted him happily and gave him some food and drink. However, the guest refused to eat, saying, "My Rabbeim taught me that a guest shouldn't start eating until the *balhabos* eats first."

Immediately, Rav Dovid made a bracha and ate something. He later told his *chasidim*, "**Fasting all week is a great thing, and making a guest feel good is even greater."**

One Who Benefits Others Benefits Himself:

The famed Magid, Rav Yaakov Galinsky *zt"l,* related the following story that illustrates the idea that one who provides benefit for guests is really benefiting himself:

During World War 2, Rav Yaakov was exiled to an internment camp in Siberia. Food was very scarce, and everyone was constantly hungry. Once every two days, the authorities would distribute noodles to all the prisoners, and that was all the food they were

given.

One day, Rav Yaakov received his portion of noodles, but they ran out before his friend, who was behind him in line, got any. The friend was very sad, and he tearfully asked Rav Yaakov, "What am I going to do?"

Rav Yaakov tried to comfort him by telling him to trust in Hashem and not to despair, but his friend could not be consoled. When he saw how hungry his friend was, he felt so bad for him that he gave him half his portion. The friend was now happy to have something to eat, and Rav Yaakov was happy to have performed such a great mitzvah.

Eventually, they both made their way to Eretz Yisroel, and they lost contact with each other. The friend became a policeman, while Rav Yaakov settled in Tel Aviv and became a *marbitz Torah* in the city of Chadera. At that time, it was illegal to raise chickens in Bnei Brak. One day, Rav Yaakov brought two chickens from Chadera to Bnei Brak, intending to *shecht* them for Shabbos. He hid them in a bag under his seat on the train.

In the middle of the trip, a policeman boarded the train and noticed the bag peeking out from under the seat. He asked what was in it, and Rav Yaakov did not respond. The policeman pushed the bag with his foot, and the chickens began to squawk. Rav Yaakov got scared that he was going to be punished, but the policeman lovingly said to him, "Yankel, don't you recognize me? A few years ago, you shared your food with me. Now, I will let you bring as many chickens on the train as you want

and I'll make sure nothing happens to you."

When Rav Yaakov related this story, he emotionally declared that we can see how a small act of chesed benefitted him years later.

Welcoming "Men" as Guests:

The Imrei Chaim of Vizhnitz *zy"a* related that when the Ropshitzer Rebbe *zy"a* was a young man, he once set out in the middle of the winter to visit the court of the Chozeh of Lublin *zy"a*. It was late at night, snow was falling heavily, and the wind was very strong. They were close to the city of Lublin, but, due to the weather conditions, the carriage couldn't travel anymore.

As the hours passed, the Ropshitzer Rebbe tried to think of where he could spend Shabbos. He remembered that in the nearby town, there was an inn, so he made his way there. He knocked on the door and asked the innkeeper if he could stay there for Shabbos. The innkeeper, however, said that he could not host him. The Ropshitzer begged to be allowed to stay, but his pleas fell upon deaf ears. After much pleading, the innkeeper finally said, "Fine, you can come in. But you cannot sit with my family and me by the Shabbos table. I will sell you a bit of food, and you can sit on a chair in the corner and eat there."

The Ropshitzer was forced to agree to these terms. After Shabbos, he went to Lublin. The next day, he asked the Chozeh to take a carriage ride with him,

and the Chozeh agreed. As they got on the carriage, the Ropshitzer whispered to the driver to pass by the inn where he had been for Shabbos. When they got there, the innkeeper came out to see who was coming. When he saw the Chozeh, he ran to greet his distinguished guest. When he saw the Ropshitzer with him, he got very worried. However, since the Chozeh did not seem upset, he calmed himself and called out, "The Rebbe is here! The Rebbe is here!"

He invited the Chozeh into his home and asked him to stay for lunch. One of the Chozeh's students who had come along *shechted* a few chickens, and the innkeeper salted and *kashered* them and put them in a pot to cook. He set the table nicely, with his finest tablecloth and best dishes and cutlery.

As the Chozeh sat down at the table with his entourage, the Ropshitzer pushed a pitcher of beer over, causing all the food to spill out and the tablecloth to become filthy. The innkeeper cried out, "Rebbe, you brought a *mazik* into my home. Look what he did!"

The Chozeh asked the Ropshitzer why he did what he did, and the Ropshitzer answered, "Rebbe, it was an accident."

The innkeeper had placed the pot of meat on the stove while a pot of milk was also warming up there. The Ropshitzer approached the stove with his pipe in his hand, as if he was going to light it from the fire. When he got close, he pushed the pot of milk so that some of it

spilled out and landed under the pot of meat. This caused the innkeeper to scream again, "Rebbe, this young man really is a *mazik*. He just made all the meat *treif*!"

The Chozeh again asked the Ropshitzer to explain himself, and he said, "Rebbe, it was an accident."

The Chozeh then said, "Naftali, that is too many accidents."

The Ropshitzer replied, "Rebbe, I always wondered why Avrohom Avinu is known as the '*machnis orech'*, while Lot, who also welcomed guests, is known as 'Lot the *shikkur* (drunk)'. I realized that the answer is that it says that Avrohom saw 'three men' approaching. He didn't know that they were angels, but he still ran to greet them and welcome them into his home. Regarding Lot, however, it says (19:1) that 'two angels' came to him. When he saw that they were angels, he hurried to invite them into his home. And it is no big deal to welcome angels."

He then related how this innkeeper had only given him a corner to sit in over Shabbos, but he greeted the Chozeh royally. When the Chozeh heard this, he got up and left the house immediately.

Greeting the Face of Hashem:

The Gemara states (Shabbos 127A): "Greeting guests is greater than greeting the face of the Shechinah." Sefer Yismach Yisroel explains that before one greets the Shechinah, he must prepare himself spiritually, which is a very difficult task. **If**

one warmly greets guests, however, even if they are lowly people, Hashem treats him measure for measure and allows him to reach the lofty level of being able to greet His face, even if he is unworthy.

וְאֶקְחָה פַת לֶחֶם וְסַעֲדוּ לִבְּכֶם אַחַר תַּעֲבֹרוּ כִּי עַל כֵּן עֲבַרְתֶּם עַל עַבְדְּכֶם וגו' (יח, ה)

And I will take a morsel of bread, and sustain your hearts; afterwards you shall move on…" (18:5)

Reaching the Level of Malachim:

Sefer Bais Avrohom quotes the Divrei Shalom of Slonim *zy"a* as saying that when friends get together to make a seudah, they merit the *segulah* of "*achar ta'avoru*", which means that they can remove from their hearts all thoughts of "*achar*", other gods.

This is the meaning of the words "to sustain their heart". The *pasuk* uses the word "heart" in the singular because it is speaking about malachim, who only have one heart to serve Hashem, unlike people who have both a *yeitzer hara* and a *yeitzer hatov*. Thus, the *pasuk* is saying that **when friends join together to eat, they merit reaching the level of angels of having only one heart that is focused on serving Hashem.**

The Three Pillars of the World:

The Bais Avrohom further states that the words "please take a little water" are a reference to the pillar of Torah, which is

compared to water. Thus, the *pasuk* is telling us to set aside time to learn Torah. The words "and wash your feet (*ragleichem*)" are a reference to the pillar of *avodah*, as these words can mean to wash away one's "*regilus*" (mundane activity) and focus on serving Hashem. The words "and recline under the tree" are a reference to the pillar of *gemilus chasadim*, which includes providing support for Torah scholars.

Thus, the three pillars of the world are hinted to in this verse. The *pasuk* then hints to the reward one receives for them: "Take a morsel of bread" – this is a reference to *parnassah*. "And sustain your heart" – this is a reference to long life. "Afterwards you shall pass on" – this is a reference to the children one leaves over.

וַיִּקַּח חֶמְאָה וְחָלָב וּבֶן הַבָּקָר וגו' וְהוּא עֹמֵד עֲלֵיהֶם תַּחַת הָעֵץ וַיֹּאכֵלוּ (יח, ח)

And he was standing over them under the tree, and they ate... (18:8)

"Standing" Like the Angels:

The Kedushas Levi says that an important rule of *hachnasas orchim* is hinted at in this *pasuk*.

A host should never make a guest feel that he is better than him. He should never do anything to cause the guest to envy him.

He explains that a *tzadik* is referred to as a "*mehalech*", a "goer". This is because he is constantly on the move, rising from the level he is currently on to a higher one. An angel, on the other hand, is called an "*omed*",

a "stander". This is because a *malach* always remains in the same lofty place and cannot rise any higher.

Avrohom did not want the *malachim* to envy him because he was a *mehalech*, while they were *omed*. Therefore, he acted like an *omed* as well, and did not allow them to see that he was a *mehalech*. For this reason, the *pasuk* says that he was "*omed*", standing, over them.

Receiving the Torah in the Merit of Milk and Meat:

The Medrash (Socher Tov, Mizmor 8) relates that the angels tried to convince Hashem not to give the Torah to Klal Yisroel. Hashem told them, "You ate milk and meat by Avrohom. How can you want Me to keep the Torah by you?"

The Satmar Rov *zy"a* (quoted in Bais D'li, page 19, Ois 7) states that we see from here how careful one must be to avoid any forbidden food. **With just one such transgression, one can lose the entire Torah!**

Sefer Neta'i Eishel adds that we eat dairy foods on Shavuos to remind us that because of *basar v'chalav*, we defeated the *malachim* and received the Torah.

כִּי יְדַעְתִּיו לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר יְצַוֶּה אֶת בָּנָיו וְאֶת בֵּיתוֹ אַחֲרָיו וְשָׁמְרוּ דֶּרֶךְ ה' לַעֲשׂוֹת צְדָקָה וגו' (יח, יט)

For I have known him because he commands his sons and his household after him, that they should keep the way of the Hashem to perform tzedakah... (18:19)

Going in the Ways of Hashem:

Chazal tell us (Yevamos 79A): "There are three distinguishing characteristics of this nation: They are merciful, bashful and benevolent…" It learns that they are benevolent from the words: "For I have known him because he commands his sons… to perform *tzedakah*."

Rabenu Bechaya (in Sefer Kad Vakemach) writes: "One must be careful with the *middah* of *chesed*, for through this *middah* one is compared to the Creator by following His ways, as this is one of His middos and it is with this that He guides the world. This is as we say in Tefilas Yotzer: 'He guides His world with chesed.' And with this, He created the world, as is stated (Tehillim 89:3): 'I said that I will build a world of *chesed*.' Anyone who is careful with this *middah*, has a humble spirit and fears Hashem, **and clings to this *middah* with his life, his soul will draw from the life in Olam Haba, and it will hover over him like a crown on his head.** This is as Dovid Hamelech says (Tehillim 103:17): 'And the *chesed* of Hashem is eternally upon those who fear Him, and His *tzedakah* is for their children's children.'"

Ohl Malchus Shomayim:

We recite in the *tefillah*: "And they all accept upon themselves the yoke of the kingdom of Heaven." The Ruzhiner Rebbe *zy"a* explains that **accepting this yoke means accepting to support the poor, widows, and orphans.**

אֵרְדָה נָּא וְאֶרְאֶה הַכְּצַעֲקָתָהּ הַבָּאָה אֵלַי עָשׂוּ כָּלָה וגו' (יח, כא)

I will descend now and see, whether according to her cry, which has come to Me, they have done; I will wreak destruction… (18:21)

Hashem Draws Close to Them:

Rav Meir Yechiel of Ostrovtza *zy"a* asks why Hashem needed to "descend" to see what was occurring. Doesn't He see everything without the need to lower Himself?

He answers that Hashem is a merciful, compassionate King, who wants wicked people to do *teshuva* and return to Him. Therefore, He brings Himself close to them, so to speak, in order to arouse them to repent. Accordingly, the *pasuk* is saying that Hashem drew close to the people of Sodom for this reason. If after this they still would not do teshuva, they surely deserved to be destroyed.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו הִנֵּה נָשָׂאתִי פָנֶיךָ גַּם לַדָּבָר הַזֶּה לְבִלְתִּי הָפְכִּי אֶת הָעִיר וגו' (יט, כא)

And he said to him, "Behold, I have favored you also as regards this matter, that I will not overturn the city…"

The Entire City Was Saved in Lot's Merit:

Rashi states: "Also as regards to this matter: Not only will you be saved, but the entire city will also be saved because of you."

The Shoel U'Meishiv *zt"l* (in Sefer Divrei Shaul) writes: "In my opinion, Lot's intentions were to save the city. However, he was worried that they might continue to sin. Therefore, he asked that he be saved by having the entire

city serve as a place of refuge for him. This is why the *malach* told him, 'Behold, I have favored you also as regards this matter, that I will not overturn the city.' It was informing him that his intentions were understood and the fact that he wanted to save the city was seen as a merit for him."

We see from this the power of speaking up for someone else. Although Lot was a sinner, he was able to save an entire city of wicked people. It is thus obvious that one who speaks in favor of holy Yidden has even more power.

וַתַּבֵּט אִשְׁתּוֹ מֵאַחֲרָיו וַתְּהִי נְצִיב וגו' (יט, כו)

And his wife looked behind him, and she became a pillar... (19:21)

What Lot's Wife Looked At:

Rashi states: "His wife looked behind him: Behind Lot."

Rav Shimshon of Ostropoli *zy"a* explains this Rashi by citing Rashi in Parshas Korach that says that Korach was a smart man but his eyes fooled him. He saw a chain of greatness descending from him, as his descendant would be Shmuel Hanavi, so he thought that he would be saved in Shmuel's merit.

Accordingly, it can be said that Lot's wife disobeyed the angel's command not to look back because she saw that Dovid Hamelech would descend from Lot, and she thought she would be saved in this merit.

וַיַּשְׁכֵּם אַבְרָהָם בַּבֹּקֶר אֶל הַמָּקוֹם וגו' עָמַד שָׁם אֶת פְּנֵי ה' (יט, כז)

And Avrohom woke up in the morning to the place where he had stood before the face of Hashem. (19:27)

Don't Give Up on Tefillah:

The Rodomsker Rebbe *zy'a* (Sefer Chesed L'Avrohom) asks why it is necessary for the Torah to tell us that Avrohom woke up in the morning and looked at the smoke rising from Sodom. He answers that this is meant as a lesson for us about *tefillah*. Avrohom had davened in the evening to save the city, but his *tefillah* had been rejected. Still and all, he got up early in the morning to daven for them again. However, once he saw the smoke rising, he realized that it was too late.

We can learn from this that one should never give up on *tefillah*. Even if his prayers went unanswered, he should redouble his efforts and daven again and again until he is heard.

וַיִּסַּע מִשָּׁם אַבְרָהָם אַרְצָה הַנֶּגֶב וגו' וַיָּגָר בִּגְרָר (כ, א)

And Avrohom traveled from there to the land of the south... and he lived in Gerar. (20:1)

The People of Sodom Sent Guests to Avrohom:

Rashi states: "When he saw that the cities had been destroyed and that travelers had ceased to pass by, he migrated from there."

Sefer Iturei Torah asks how the destruction of Sodom stopped travelers from passing by the house of Avrohom in Chevron, which was in a different area. He answers that since the residents

of Sodom were miserly and didn't want to welcome guests, whenever a traveler came by, they would direct him to Avrohom's home in Chevron. Thus, a good portion of Avrohom's guests were sent to him from Sodom, and now that Sodom was destroyed, he had much fewer guests.

We may add that this is one reason why Avrohom davened to save Sodom, as he did not want to lose his guests.

וַיִּטַּע אֵשֶׁל בִּבְאֵר וגו' וַיִּקְרָא שָׁם בְּשֵׁם ה' אֵ-ל עוֹלָם (כא, לג)

And he planted an eishel in Beersheva, and he called there in the name of Hashem, the G-d of the world. (21:33)

Instilling Chesed and the Power of Tefillah:

The Gemara (Sota 10B) states: "Don't read it '*vayikrah'* (and he called); rather, read it '*vayakri'* (and he caused others to call). This teaches us that Avrohom Avinu caused travelers to call Hashem's name. How did he do this? After they ate and drank, they got up to bless him. He said, 'Was it my food that you ate? It was the food of the Lord of the World. Thank, praise and bless Him."

Sefer Yismach Yisroel writes that Avrohom Avinu instilled the *middah* of *chesed* into the world, as he encouraged his guests to emulate him and to welcome guests into their own homes. This is the meaning of the words that he planted an "*eishel*" (tree). Just like a tree's roots spread, his *chesed* spread all over.

Furthermore, he also instilled the power of tefillah into the world by encouraging everyone who came to his home to praise and bless Hashem. Additionally,

his *tefillos* created a gateway for our prayers to reach Hashem as well.

Giving up an Esrog to Make Three People Happy:

The Tepliker Rov, Rav Shimshon Aharon Polansky *zt"l,* came to shul on one of the days of Sukkos, with a *lulav*, *hadasim* and *aravos*, but with no *esrog*. During davening, he asked the person sitting closest to him to give him his *esrog* as a "*matanah al m'nas l'hachzir"* so that he could make a *bracha* on it.

Everyone wondered how the Rov was left with no *esrog* on Yomtov. When they asked him about it, he at first did not want to answer. After much coaxing, he finally said, "On *erev* Yomtov, I was walking down the street when I heard bitter cries coming from one of the houses. I ran over and saw a woman yelling at her young daughter. When she saw me, she tearfully said that she was a widow, raising her daughter on her own. She was now engaged to marry her second husband. This man had bought an *esrog* for a lot of money and left it on the table. Her daughter had been playing with the *esrog*, and it had fallen on the floor. The *pitom* had broken off, rendering it *pasul*. This caused her to yell at the girl, "Look what you did? That *esrog* cost a lot of money! What will I do now?"

The Rov immediately said, "**I will give you my *esrog*. It is very *mehudar*. I'm sure your *chosson* will not be upset."**

The Rov was willing to give up his esrog mehudar to make

three people happy.

Numerous Messengers for One Pauper:

Rav Mordechai of Bilgorai *zy"a* related that his father, Rav Yissochor Dov of Belz *zy"a*, found many unique ways to give *tzedakah*. During the time that he lived in Munkatch, he had three people who distributed *tzedakah* funds for him - his Rebbitzen, a man named R' Mechel, and another resident of the city. Since they didn't share information with each other, poor people would often take money from more than one of them. When they realized this was happening, they went to the Rebbe and suggested that it would be better for only one person to give out the money. The Rebbe told them, "**I specifically want it to be this way. If a poor person gets money twice, he is happier than if he only gets once."**

A Segulah of Atonement:

The Mekor Boruch of Seret *zy"a* once visited Rav Aharon of Belz *zy"a* in Tel Aviv and told him that he heard in the name of his father, Rav Yissochor Dov *zy"a*: "**If one goes around the four corners of the land collecting *tzedakah* for the poor, it is a *segulah* for all his sins – even the most severe one, such as those that bear the punishment of *kareis* - to be forgiven."**

When Rav Aharon heard this, he grabbed onto his outer garment (his *razhvulka*) in excitement and said, "My father said that? Please repeat those holy words to me!"



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