

**Yad Avraham Institute**  
**WEEKLY TORAH COMMENTARY SERIES**

*Parshas Vayeira*

October 29, 2004

*Presented By: Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky, Shlita*

***Inside This Week's Edition***

**Page**

- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b><i>1. The Amidah- an Audience with G'd</i></b>                      | <b>2</b> |
| <b><i>2. Seeing the Tzaddik for What He Is</i></b>                     | <b>3</b> |
| <b><i>3. Avraham's Single Objective In Life</i></b>                    | <b>4</b> |
| <b><i>4. Avraham- The Pillar of Chesed</i></b>                         | <b>5</b> |
| <b><i>5. The Importance of Doing A Mitzvah in a Public Setting</i></b> | <b>6</b> |
| <b><i>6. Lot- the Enigmatic Person</i></b>                             | <b>7</b> |

***Previous Topics:***

The Spiritual DNA of the Jew  
Avraham – the Founding Father of the Jewish People  
How to Misperceive the Obvious  
The Standard to Which a Jew is Held  
Avraham Our Patriarch- the Founding Father of Existence  
The Difficulty of Recognizing One's Own Failings

**About the Yad Avraham Institute**

The Yad Avraham is a Torah learning institute located in midtown Manhattan. Classes are offered every day during the week starting at 5:50am and throughout the day. Classes in Chumash, Halacha, Hashkofa, Gemara, and general topics are well attended by businessmen, professionals, and students. The Yad Avraham invites you to participate in our extensive offerings of classes and events.

If you would like to receive this Weekly Torah Commentary Series by email

Please call 212-371-9555 or email:

[info@yadavraham.org](mailto:info@yadavraham.org)

**TUNE IN TO OUR LIVE VIDEO BROADCAST OF CLASSES**

**[www.yadavraham.org](http://www.yadavraham.org)**

## Parshas Vayeira

Presented by

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky, *Shlita*

Dean

### 1. The Amidah- an Audience with G'd

The Midrash Tanchuma asks, "How many blessings does one recite every day. Our Rabbis teach us that every day one must recite eighteen blessings (*shemoneh esrei*) – Amidah (silent prayer) What is the basis for reciting eighteen blessings? Reb Shmuel bar Nachman says, 'To correspond to the eighteen times our holy Patriarchs are mentioned in the Torah.'" The Midrash counters, "We find that the holy Patriarchs are mentioned nineteen times not eighteen times...The reason there is no nineteenth blessing to correspond to this additional mention of the Patriarchs is because the Torah only states *Elokei Avraham* and *Elokei Yitzchak* (G'd of Avraham and Yitzchak). It does not include *Elokei Yaakov* - as the other instances when the Torah mentions all three Patriarchs together - *Elokei Avraham*, *Elokei Yitzchak*, *Elokei Yaakov* (G'd of Abraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov)."

Another opinion cited in the Midrash states, "Reb Yochanon says, 'The reason one must recite eighteen blessings every day is because regarding the Mishkan (Tabernacle) the Torah states 'As G'd had Commanded Moshe' eighteen times. Reb Simon says, "It is because there are eighteen vertebrae in the human spinal column. Thus each blessing corresponds to each one of the vertebra. This is because when one recites the Amidah (eighteen blessings) one must bow to the point that each of the vertebra should separate itself from the other. As it states in Tehillim, 'All my bones shall say –G'd, Who is like you?...' Reb Shimon says, "We recite eighteen blessings to correspond to the eighteen songs recited by King David which lead up to "Hashem will answer you in the time of your trouble..." Thus, the Midrash offers three opinions for the basis for reciting eighteen blessings (*shemoneh esrei*).

The Gemara in Tractate Berachos explains the inherent difference between the significance of the shema and the Amidah. The declaration of the shema is to accept upon oneself the dominion of G'd - "Yoke of Heaven." The Amidah on the other hand, is entering into an audience with G'd. It is the equivalent of standing before

The King. Thus, there are many halachic (laws regarding observance) differences between the shema and the Amidah. For example, one must recite the shema even if his clothing is tattered to the point his flesh is revealed. However, regarding the Amidah, this is considered inappropriate and he does not recite it in this state. If one is intoxicated, he must recite the shema; however, in this state he is not permitted to say the Amidah. One does not stand before the King with tattered clothing or in an intoxicated state; however, one must declare his belief despite his physical state (with the shema)

When one enters into the Amidah he does so by taking three steps forward to indicate that he is entering into an audience with G'd (the King). Why are the Jewish people privileged to call upon G'd whenever they choose to, while the nations of the world do not? It is because G'd identifies Himself with our Patriarchs- *Elokei Avraham*, *Elokei Yitzchak*, *Elokei Yaakov* (G'd of Abraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov). Thus, the Jewish people are privileged to enter into an audience with G'd whenever they choose to do so. The eighteen blessings of the Amidah correspond to the eighteen times the three Patriarchs are mentioned in the Torah in conjunction with G'd (Elokei), in order to emphasize the basis for our own relationship with G'd. It was only through the merit of our three Patriarchs that we became the chosen people – the Nation of G'd. Thus, the location in which *Elokei Yaakov* is not mentioned in the Torah (in conjunction with Avraham and Yitzchak) has no relevance to the Amidah.

The Torah states that when Yaakov wrestled with the angel (the archangel of Esav), "**Yaakov was left all by himself.**" The Midrash tells us, "Just as we find that the verse states, "G'd is on a plane unto Himself (alone)" so too is Yaakov, the most special of the Patriarchs, on a plane unto himself (alone)."

The second opinion cited by the Midrash states that the eighteen blessings of the Amidah correspond to the eighteen vertebrae in the spinal column. Bowing is an act of self-negation. When one bows at the waist, he is humbling himself before G'd. The Jewish people at Sinai negated themselves when they unequivocally accepted the

Torah with “*Naaseh V'nishma* – we will do and we will listen.” No other nation was willing to selflessly subordinate themselves to G'd as the Jewish people had. Thus, the Amidah, which represents one's total reliance on G'd's kindness, should be composed of eighteen blessings which correspond to the characteristic of the Jew- self-negation/subordination to G'd. It is only because the Jew submits to G'd that he merits to have an audience with the King.

The third opinion cited by the Midrash states that the eighteen blessings correspond to the eighteen songs recited by King David. The language that the Jew uses to communicate with G'd is that of King David (the psalmist) – Tehillim. The words of King David, the King of Israel, have a unique and specific ability to activate Divine forces which influence all existence. What quality or characteristic did King David possess in order to give him the ability to come upon the language of G'd?

The Torah tells us that when Yaakov blessed Yehudah (before his passing), he focused on Yehudah's special quality of self-control – despite his enormous power. Yehudah, as the leader among his brothers, could have killed Yosef, yet he restrained himself and did not. He could have remained silent and not revealed the fact that he had impregnated Tamar and allowed her to go to her death. However he did not remain silent – despite the embarrassment to himself. Yehudah's strength was compared to a lion - yet he subordinated himself to G'd, as the lion (despite its power) has total control. The only person who can be a true leader is one who despite his self-interest and ability, can humble and subordinate himself before G'd. This was Yehudah. The only one who could have the clarity that is necessary to express himself properly before G'd is one who does not allow his own inner conflicts to interfere. King David personified leadership and self-control. He merited the crown of Yehudah/Kingship. This is why King David merited to be the psalmist to express the words through which we communicate with G'd. Despite the fact that he was a conqueror and the King of Israel, he had profound humility. As he had said, “I am a worm and not a man.”

## 2. Seeing the Tzaddik for What He Is

The Torah states, “**And Hashem said, ‘Shall I conceal from Avraham what I am about to do, now that Avraham is surely to become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves through him?...**” G'd did not wish to conceal the imminent destruction of Sodom from Avraham; however, the verse seems to be interrupted with

a slight digression – “Avraham is surely to become a great and mighty nation...” What is the value of this interjection/digression?

Rashi cites Chazal who explain, “As it states in Mishlei (Proverbs) – *Zeicher tzaddik l'veracha* – a tzaddik should be remembered with blessing. Since Avraham is mentioned, he is mentioned with a blessing. The blessing relating to Avraham was that he should be a great nation.” It is interesting to note that regarding Noach, the Torah states, “**These are the offspring of Noach – Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generations...**” Rashi cites the same Chazal explaining why the Torah interjects “Noach was a righteous man...” when it was in the midst of discussing his progeny. Chazal answer that the digression is based on the verse – “*Zeicher tzaddik l'veracha* – a tzaddik should be remembered with blessing.” When a tzaddik is mentioned it should be within a context of blessing. Although both Noach and Avraham are mentioned within the context of “*Zeicher tzaddik l'veracha*,” nevertheless, the application of this principle is applied differently to Avraham.

King Solomon states in Mishlei (Proverbs), “The tzaddik should be remembered for/with blessing and the name of the evil (rasha) should rot.” When one mentions a tzaddik, he should be mentioned in the most illustrious manner so that others will appreciate, value, and emulate him. On the contrary, when one mentions the evil person, it should be in the most negative and deprecating manner in order for one to fully appreciate the evil of his ways – so that one should not emulate him. The objective is to bring about the equivalent of rotting/decomposition (being removed from existence).

When the Torah mentions Noach within the context of blessing, it is not that G'd is blessing him, but rather the Torah is identifying him as righteous/humble person. His qualities and attributes are being made known. However when the Torah mentions Avraham in this context, before the destruction of Sodom, it is within the context of G'd blessing him - **Avraham is surely to become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves through him.** How does one understand the difference between the application of the principle of *Zeicher tzaddik l'veracha* to Noach and Avraham?

When one receives a blessing, it can only affect him to the point and to the degree of relevance that he has to that blessing. The degree of worthiness will determine the impact of the blessing. When G'd blesses an individual it relates and has relevance to the essence of that person. The Torah identifies Noach as a righteous, humble and

perfect person to establish him as a model that one must emulate. Unless the Torah extols these virtues of Noach, one could have an appreciation for what a tzaddik is. Thus, only the person who values these qualities would emulate Noach.

Regarding Avraham, one does not need to understand and appreciate the essence of tzaddik in order to value and esteem him because he was a beneficiary of G'd's blessing. He is identified as one who will be a great and mighty nation who has the ability to bring blessing to all nations. Thus, the blessing that Avraham received will cause him to be esteemed and revered in the eyes of the world. People will want to emulate Avraham because of his prestigious status as one who is great and mighty.

Avraham, who succeeded in his mission to introduce monotheism to the world, had greater worthiness than Noach. Thus, he was the beneficiary of this exceptional blessing, which Noach was not.

The ultimate beneficiary of – *Zeicher tzaddik l'veracha*- is the tzaddik himself. The degree of impact that the tzaddik has on others will determine his level of merit. The more others appreciate and value the tzaddik, the greater will be his influence on them to walk the path of righteousness. Thus, causing him to be the greatest beneficiary of his own actions.

King Solomon states in Mishlei (Proverbs), “I (G'd) have given you a *lekach tov* (a good commodity/acquisition), My Torah you should not abandon.” The Chofetz Chaim zt'l explains this verse with an allegory. If a poor man has a small amount of money in his pocket he would consider himself well off. However, compared to a wealthy person this amount of money would be considered meaningless. The poor man, relative to his own situation, believes that he possesses something special; however, to the wealthy person it is something not to be valued. The minister of the king, who has at his disposal greater amounts of wealth, is not impressed with the possessions of the wealthy person. Whatever the minister may consider special and exceptional, the king who is the master of his kingdom and possesses (relatively speaking) unlimited wealth, considers it inconsequential.

Whatever the mere mortal values and considers special within the context of physical existence, is considered meaningless by the angel. Whatever is considered special and of enormous value to the greatest angel is considered meaningless by the Omnipotent Being – G'd Himself. Thus, if G'd, the Omnipotent Being and Creator of all existence, tells the Jewish people that He is giving them something that He, Himself, considers as

exceptional “*lekach tov* - special commodity,” then this is a confirmation (on the most absolute level) that the Torah is the most valuable commodity in existence.

This is similar to the concept of *Zeicher tzaddik l'veracha*- just as one must identify the attributes of the tzaddik to be valued; so too does G'd identify the value of the Torah to be appreciated.

### 3. Avraham's Single Objective In Life

The Torah tells us that Avraham pleaded with G'd on behalf of Sodom, “**Avraham came forward and said, ‘Will you stamp out the tzaddikim (righteous) along with the rashaim (wicked)? What if there should be fifty tzaddikim in the midst of the city? Would You still stamp it out rather than spare the place for the sake of the fifty tzaddikim within it?...It would be a sacrilege to You!...**” Avraham beseeched G'd not to annihilate Sodom because he was concerned that the righteous would be destroyed together with the evil. Additionally he pleaded that the evil should not be destroyed in the merit of the righteous. Avraham said to G'd that if He were to destroy Sodom it would be a desecration of G'd's Name (Chilul Hashem).

Why should the evil (rasha) be spared in the merit of the tzaddik? If the evil person deserves to be punished because of his own failings, why should the merit of the tzaddik intervene and cause him to be spared. What relevance does the state of affairs of the tzaddik have to the rasha? Seemingly there is a linkage between not destroying the righteous together with the evil and sustaining the evil in the merit of the righteous. How do we understand this?

If a tzaddik lives among the evil, why does he not have a positive effect on the evil? The Torah tells us that whenever the Jewish people had failed in the desert, despite the fact that it was only a failing of only a hand-full of people, G'd considered it as a failing of the entire Jewish people. For example, when Dasan and Aviram had transgressed the Word of G'd by going out to gather the manna on Shabbos, G'd said to Moshe, “the people have sinned.” Why should the entire Jewish people be held culpable for the failing of two evil individuals?

Had the Jewish people held themselves to a spiritual standard that would not tolerate any breach, Dasan and Aviram would have not considered defying the Word of G'd because they would have understood the reaction of the Jewish people. Their transgression is a direct result of the passivity of the Jewish people. Thus, if the behavior of the evil activates the Attribute of Justice,

then the tzaddik is subject to that Attribute. If he was not sufficiently influential towards the rasha (evil) then he has failed in his role as tzaddik. Thus, he will be destroyed together with the rasha. Thus, the annihilation of Sodom (righteous together with evil) reflects a failing on the part of both the tzaddik and the rasha.

Avraham beseeched G'd not to destroy Sodom not because of his humanitarian concern for his fellow human being, but rather, only to prevent a Chilul Hashem (Desecration of G'd's Name). Avraham's life was dedicated to Kiddush Hashem (Sanctification of G'd's Name) and not allowing Chilul Hashem. Avraham was concerned that the world would perceive G'd's destruction of the righteous with the evil as inequitable- G'd being seen as "unfair." Avraham understood that if G'd destroyed the righteous along with the evil, it was an indication that the tzaddikim were not perfect enough. However, he was concerned with the world's perception. If Avraham was motivated by his concern for his fellow man, then the degree to which he would beseech G'd would be determined by that feeling. However, this was not what motivated Avraham. His only concern was Kiddush Hashem and that there should not be Chilul Hashem.

Avraham was the individual who introduced monotheism to mankind. He was a tzaddik who detested evil. One would think that when he was informed of the imminent destruction of Sodom, he would have rejoiced. The Sodomite community personified evil on the most extreme level. They defied G'd. King Solomon states in Proverbs, "The destruction of evil brings song." If so, why was Avraham so adamant to save the community of Sodom?

Avraham's role in existence vis-à-vis himself and the world at large was only to glorify the Name of G'd and to prevent Its desecration. If the destruction of Sodom was misperceived it would cause a Desecration of G'd's Name. Despite the fact that Sodom was truly evil, he was compelled to beseech G'd not to destroy them because it would have resulted in something that the world could not appreciate and understand. What motivated Avraham to beseech G'd was unrelated to his personal loathing of evil or his value of righteousness. It was purely to avoid a Desecration of G'd's Name on a universal scale. However, when G'd informed him that there were no righteous people in Sodom, he understood that he did not need to be concerned about Chilul Hashem.

The Prophet tells us that G'd only created existence for His Glory. Avraham was completely dedicated to this principle. Thus, he was able to maintain his objectivity despite the circumstances. He should have

rejoiced when he was informed that the evil people of Sodom would be destroyed. Nevertheless, because of his focus on Kiddush Hashem, he pleaded with G'd not to do so in order to prevent a Chilul Hashem. He negated himself completely and lived only for G'd's glory.

#### 4. Avraham- The Pillar of Chesed

There is a Positive Commandment to emulate the ways of G'd - "*V'halachta b'derachav* – You shall walk in His ways". Each of the Patriarchs chose to emulate a specific Attribute of G'd. Avraham our Patriarch personified *chesed* (kindness). Yaakov our Patriarch, who was a man of Torah, represented *emmes* (truth). As we find the verse states, "Give truth to Yaakov and kindness to Avraham." Yaakov chose to emulate G'd through the Attribute of Mercy (Midas HaRachamim). Yitzchak chose to emulate G'd through the Midas HaDin (Attribute of Justice). Why did Avraham choose the Attribute of Kindness (Chesed)?

The Torah tells us that G'd added the letter "*hay*" to the name of Avram, transforming him into Avraham. The Midrash explains, "G'd said to Avram, '...Although the stars say that Avram will not have a son. Avraham (with the "*hay*" added to his name) will have a son.'" Thus, G'd added the letter "*hay*" to Avram, making him Avraham.

King David writes in Tehillim, "*B' kah Hashem tzur olamim* – with the Name of G'd ("*Yud*" and "*Hay*") G'd formed the worlds." The Gemara in Tractate Menachos explains, "The physical world was created with the spirituality of the letter "*hay*" and the world to come was created with the spirituality of the letter "*yud*." Meaning, the spiritual energy contained within the letter "*hay*" brought about all physical existence. G'd said to Avraham, "Just as the spiritual energy in the letter "*hay*" was needed to bring about all physical existence, that same dimension of energy is needed to bring about a change within you to be able to father a son." The additional "*hay*" is not merely another letter added to Avraham's name (a name change), but rather, it brought about a profound metamorphosis within him. His dimension of person assumed the status of all existence.

The Torah tells us that at the time G'd added the "*hay*" to Avraham's name, He commanded him to circumcise himself. The circumcision is referred to by the Torah as the "*os bris Kodesh* - sign of the Holy Covenant." Why is circumcision the sign of the Holy Covenant between G'd and Avraham? Why is

circumcision performed on the foreskin of the male organ? Why not on some other part of the body?

G'd's creation of existence emanated from His Attribute of Chesed/Kindness. As the verse states, "*Olam chesed yibaneh* - He created existence because of chesed (kindness)." G'd had no obligation to create existence. He only did so to provide man with the opportunity to achieve spiritual perfection- thus making him worthy of reward, which has infinite value. This was the Chesed of G'd. When the letter "hay" was added to Avraham's name, he became the equivalent of a new existence. Since Avraham was the beginning of a new existence, and G'd created the world out of chesed, thus Avraham chose the Attribute of Chesed through which he emulated G'd.

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh explains that Adam was created with no foreskin. It was only after he ate of the Tree of Knowledge that the foreskin developed and covered his male organ. Since the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge had an aspect of "evil" contained within it, that evil manifested itself in Adam through the foreskin.

The concept of "covering" (as in the foreskin) is that of concealment, which alludes to the lack of clarity. When something is obscured, it is covered. Before the sin, the Midrash tells us, "Adam was able to see from one end of the world to the other." He had nearly absolute clarity. However after eating of the Tree, he became convoluted and his clarity was diminished/obscured. This spiritual concealment of clarity was reflected through the physical concealment of the male organ with the foreskin. Thus, G'd gave the Jew the opportunity to remove the foreskin through circumcision, which causes him to have a semblance of Adam before the sin. The Jew in effect is creating a potential for clarity that was diminished.

The sign of the covenant (circumcision) that was given to Avraham is a confirmation that he was not a continuation of a previous existence, but rather, the beginning of a new one. This is why the mitzvah of circumcision was given to him at the time that his name was changed with the addition of the letter "hay." Just as at the beginning of Creation Adam had no foreskin, so too Avraham was to have no foreskin. Avraham was not only the founding father of the Jewish people, he was the father of a new dimension of existence.

## 5. The Importance of Doing A Mitzvah in a Public Setting

The Torah states regarding Yitzchak, "**The child grew and was weaned). Avraham made a great feast on the day Yitzchak was weaned (*b'yom hegameil*).**" Daas Zikanim Baalei Tosafos explains that the expression "*b'yom hegameil*" alludes to the day of the circumcision of Yitzchak. The letter "*hay*" is numerically the equivalent of five and the letter "*gimmel*" is the equivalent of three. Thus the Torah is telling us that on the day of "*hay gimmel* – which is eight" he was "*maal* – circumcised. Avraham made a great feast on the day of Yitzchak's circumcision.

Rashi cites the Midrash which explains that the reason the Torah refers to the feast as "a great feast" is because it was attended by the great leaders and personalities of the generation. Shem, Eiver, and Avimelech were the attendees of the feast.

It seems to be obvious that if Avraham were to make a feast to celebrate the circumcision of his son, it would be "a great feast." He was one of the wealthiest and most renowned personages of the generation. Why does the Torah need to tell us that Avraham made a "great feast"? Simply, we can understand that Chazal are telling us that the reason the Torah informs us that Avraham's feast was "great" is to communicate that its greatness was attributed to the dimension of the guests who attended rather than the grandeur of the feast itself. Why does the Torah need to allude that there were renowned individuals attending the feast of Yitzchak's circumcision?

Circumcision is the sign that is engraved in one's flesh indicating a special relationship with G'd. Circumcision was chosen to be the sign of this relationship because the act of circumcision uncovers that which is covered. When the foreskin is removed it exposes the male organ which was obscured by it. Ohr HaChaim explains, Adam was created without a foreskin. It was only after he sinned with the Tree of Knowledge that he grew a foreskin reflecting the evil that was introduced into him. When Adam became convoluted as a result of the sin (his clarity became obscured), it expressed itself in his male organ becoming covered (obscured). Thus, the mitzvah of circumcision allows one to be reinstated to have some semblance to the spiritual condition that was meant to be before the sin of Adam. When one enters into the holy covenant through circumcision he has relevance to performing mitzvos and advancing spiritually through Torah study and good deeds.

Avraham, was the most renowned spiritual personality in the world. He had dedicated his life to espousing monotheism and bringing about Kiddush Hashem (Sanctification of G'd's Name). Avraham, who was renowned to be the pillar of chesed (kindness) only did chesed as a vehicle to espouse monotheism and thus bring people under the wings of the Divine Presence. When Avraham made the feast to celebrate the circumcision of Yitzchak, his son, he invited the most renowned personalities of the generation in order to make a statement regarding man's purpose in existence. It was the ultimate opportunity for Avraham to expose these individuals to G'd. King David writes, "I speak Your testament before kings and I am not embarrassed."

The Torah tells us that Avraham, our Patriarch made a "great feast" to celebrate the circumcision of his son in order to communicate to us that he did so to bring about the ultimate Kiddush Hashem – exposing the leaders and personalities of his generation to G'd and His covenant in order to give them an understanding that all was created for His glory.

The Talmud tells us that if one returns safely after crossing a desert or from traveling the high seas, or is released from prison, or recovers from a serious illness, one is obligated to bring a Thanks Offering (Korban Todah). The Thanks Offering is comprised of 40 loaves of bread and an animal. Regarding offerings of this level of consecration, the Torah allows for its consumption two days and a night. If one allows it to remain past this period of time he is in violation of a Negative Commandment. However regarding the Thanks Offering, the Torah only allows a 24-hour period for its consumption. Considering that the offering is comprised of 40 loaves and an animal, how is one to consume such an enormous amount of food in such a limited time period? The only way one can accomplish this is to invite other people to share in the eating of the offering. In effect the Torah compels the individual to have an event in which multiple individuals must participate.

Nitziv z'tl in his commentary explains that since the Thanks Offering (Korban Todah) is an acknowledgement, through which one expresses his thankfulness to G'd for allowing him to be alive, he should expose as many people as possible to his reality. The Torah is compelling the individual to publicize the experience rather than to consume the offering in private. The Torah wants to bring about the greatest level of Kiddush Hashem.

The Torah is communicating to us that if a Jew has an opportunity to perform a mitzvah in a manner that would bring about a greater Kiddush Hashem, he should do so in that context. This was the case of Avraham making a "great feast."

## 6. Lot- the Enigmatic Person (from Lech Lecha)

The Torah tells us that Lot, the nephew of Avraham, had witnessed and was aware of many miracles that were performed on behalf of his uncle. Avraham had been cast into a fiery kiln because he would not bow to the idol and emerged unscathed. Lot's father was given a similar ultimatum (if he did not bow to the idol he would be cast into the kiln). However, he did not survive the kiln. This was an indication that Avraham was a person who had a special and unique relationship with G'd.

After the death of Lot's father, Avraham took him under his care and treated him as a son. When the famine came upon the Land of Canaan, Avraham, Sarah, and Lot were forced to go to Egypt until the famine passed. There, Lot witnessed many miracles performed on Avraham's behalf. When Pharaoh had taken Sarah, G'd immediately interceded through an angel on their behalf. Pharaoh, the monarch of the most advanced civilization of the time, thus understood who Avraham and Sarah were. Because Pharaoh had such a profound appreciation for Avraham, he chose to give him his daughter Hagar as a maidservant to him. Pharaoh had said, "It is better that she should be a maidservant in the household of Avraham, than a princess in my palace." Initially Avraham arrived in Egypt with minimal possessions; however, when he left Egypt he did so with such great wealth (gold, silver, livestock, slaves, etc.) that he was heavily laden. Lot himself, because of his relationship with his uncle also was a beneficiary of great wealth. One would think that after witnessing all of the miracles that had transpired in Egypt (and to what degree his uncle was esteemed), Lot should have revered Avraham and selflessly dedicated and subordinated himself to him. However, this was not the case.

When Lot had returned from Egypt together with Avraham, there was a disagreement between his shepherds and those of Avraham. His shepherds were grazing the flocks in fields that were not theirs. They were stealing from others. When Avraham was informed of this behavior, he chose to act upon it immediately. Lot did not heed the words of his uncle. Thus, Lot and Avraham parted their ways.

The Torah points out and alludes that not only did Lot part from Avraham and went to Sodom (the most evil

location in the world), he also chose to abandon and reject the G'd of Avraham. The Torah identifies Sodom as such - **“Now the people of Sodom were wicked and sinful towards Hashem, exceedingly.”** Despite the fact that Lot had witnessed many revealed miracles and was a beneficiary of them through his association with Avraham, he nevertheless chose to take residence in a location that was the antithesis of all that Avraham represented. How do we understand this? One could say that perhaps Lot simply made a mistake and at some point would realize his failing and do teshuvah (repent). However this never happened.

The Torah tells us that there was a war between the four kings and the five kings. One of the five kingdoms was that of Sodom. They were defeated by the four kings and Lot was taken captive. The Torah reveals to us that the reason Lot had been taken captive was because he had made the wrong choice in residing in Sodom - **“And they captured Lot and his possessions – Avraham’s nephew and they left; for he was residing in Sodom.”** After being informed that his nephew was taken captive, Avraham went to battle against the four kings and miraculously defeated them with his servant Eliezer. Lot was thus rescued from certain death and had all of his wealth returned to him. As the victor, Avraham was proclaimed and coronated by the nations of the world as the “Prince of G'd” because they had realized his unique relationship with G'd. However, Lot, after being rescued, again returned to Sodom. One would think that Lot would recognize his errors, after realizing that Avraham was not only the most spiritual person on Earth; but also the most prominent person as well. Yet he did not.

Ultimately G'd annihilated Sodom for its evil ways. Lot was once again rescued in the merit of Avraham. Lot did not do teshuvah despite continuously being the beneficiary of miracles performed on behalf of his uncle. He did not appreciate or recognize what the nations of the world had. He could have taken advantage of having a special relationship with his uncle Avraham but he chose not to do so. How do we understand this?

Lot understood that there was a cost factor to having a relationship with Avraham. He would have to subordinate and subjugate himself to G'd, which was contrary to all of his own interests and desires. He would be forced to live a life of righteousness and spirituality. This cost factor was too great for Lot. He did not allow all that he had witnessed and experienced to alter his life's pursuit – hedonism and sexuality. He continuously deluded himself into believing that he was able to survive and succeed on his own without an association with his uncle.

He was wrong on every occasion. When one chooses to pursue his own interests, desires, and aspirations (a life without any accountability), regardless of what one witnesses and sees, one is able to continue as if it never happened.

### YAD AVRAHAM DAILY CLASS SCHEDULE

*Energize your day...  
... with a solid morning of Torah study*

#### **Monday Through Friday**

5:50- 6:00 am	Chumash with Rashi
6:00- 6:15 am	Mishna
6:15- 6:30 am	Mishna Berurah
6:30- 7:25 am	Halacha
6:30 -6:45 am	Mussar
6:45 -7:25 am	Talmud—Tractate Shabbos
7:25 - 8:20 am	Davening Followed by Breakfast
8:20 - 8:45 am	Mishna
9:00 -10:00 am	Daf Yomi

2:00 pm Mincha

#### **Sunday**

7:30 - 8:30 am	Talmud –Tractate Avodah Zorah
8:30 - 9:30 am	Davening Followed by Breakfast
10:00 -11:00am	Daf Yomi

### Special Weekday Classes

#### **Monday**

11:15 – 12:15pm	<b>Talmud: Sanhedrin</b> Location: Sunrise Capital 641 Lexington (25 <sup>th</sup> FL.) Enter on 54 <sup>th</sup> Street
12:30 – 1:30pm	<b>Talmud: Avodah Zorah</b> Location: Shandholt 488 Madison Avenue Between E.51 <sup>st</sup> and E.52 <sup>st</sup>

#### **Tuesday**

12:15 - 1:15pm	<b>Torah Insight Based on the Parsha</b> Location: Yad Avraham
1:30 – 2:30 pm	<b>Talmud: Sanhedrin</b> Location: Sunrise Capital 641 Lexington (25 <sup>th</sup> FL.) Enter on 54 <sup>th</sup> Street

#### **Wednesday**

11:30 – 12:30 pm	<b>Talmud: Sanhedrin</b> Location: Sunrise Capital 641 Lexington (25 <sup>th</sup> FL.) Enter on 54 <sup>th</sup> Street
1:00—2:00 pm	<b>Derech Hashem</b> Location: Yad Avraham

#### **Thursday**

10:30 –11:30am	<b>Tehilim with Malbim</b> Location: Yad Avraham
12:00 – 1:00 pm	<b>Talmud: Sanhedrin</b> Location: Sunrise Capital 641 Lexington (25 <sup>th</sup> FL.) Enter on 54 <sup>th</sup> Street

**TUNE IN ON THE INTERNET  
FOR LIVE VIDEO BROADCAST OF SELECTED CLASSES**  
[WWW.YADAVRAHAM.ORG](http://WWW.YADAVRAHAM.ORG)