

**Yad Avraham Institute**  
**WEEKLY TORAH COMMENTARIES SERIES**  
*Parshas Vayeira*  
 November 10, 2006

**Presented By: Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky, Shlita**

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Yad Avraham Institute  
New York  
November 10, 2006

B"H

## Parshas Vayeira

Presented by

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky, *Shlita*

Dean

### 1. The Ramifications of One Mitzvah Causing Another

The verse states, "...He (Avraham) was sitting at the entrance of the tent in the heat of the day. He lifted his eyes and saw: And behold! Three men were standing over him...so he ran towards them from the entrance of the tent, and bowed toward the ground." Rashi cites Chazal who explain that since it was the third day after his circumcision, which is the most difficult day of recovery, G'd had taken the sun out of its sheath in order to allow Avraham to convalesce and not be preoccupied with wayfarers. However, because Avraham was not able to engage in hospitality, he sat at the entrance of his tent pained. When G'd had seen Avraham's pain, He sent three angels in the form of human beings to be hosted.

The Torah tells us that when Avraham saw the three men, he ran towards them "**from the entrance of the tent.**" The Torah had already informed us that Avraham was sitting at the entrance of the tent. Why is it necessary for the Torah to repeat the fact that he was coming from "**the entrance of the tent?**" It would have been sufficient to say "**he ran towards them....**"

There is a principle of "*mitzvah goreres mitzvah* – the performance of a mitzvah brings about another mitzvah." Reb Chaim of Volozhin explains based on Zohar that when one performs a mitzvah it creates a spiritual energy that engulfs the individual and causes/motivates him to perform another mitzvah.

The level of the mitzvah which follows is determined by the quality and purity that was infused in the initial mitzvah. If one performs a mitzvah on a special qualitative level, the mitzvah that will emanate will be minimally of equivalent quality and purity.

The Mishna in Tractate Makkos tells us that if one wants to perform a mitzvah but is prevented from doing so because of circumstances beyond his control, he is fully credited for the performance of that mitzvah. Avraham wanted to perform the mitzvah of hospitality, but could not do so because G'd had created an environment that caused it to be impossible. Avraham was therefore credited for performing the mitzvah of hospitality that he did not perform. Since he is credited for performing the mitzvah of hospitality, another mitzvah needs to present itself. This is why G'd presented to him angels in human form. The Torah repeats the location from which he ran "the entrance of his tent" to identify the source of the opportunity to host the three wayfarers. Thus, the mitzvah of hosting the angels emanated from his being denied the opportunity of hospitality, which he had demonstrated by sitting at the entrance of his tent.

The Midrash tells us that when Avraham had run to greet his guests, the blood dripped from his wound of the circumcision. It was only three days after he had been circumcised. G'd said, "In the merit that you, Avraham was willing to give your life for performing this mitzvah, I will have mercy on your children because of the bloods (two droplets of blood had dripped from Avraham) Through these bloods they will be protected from their enemies. Yechezkel the prophet states, "I saw you wallowing in your bloods. Through your blood, you shall live. Through your blood you shall live." The "bloods" mentioned in the verse is referring to the blood of circumcision and the blood of the Pascal lamb. The reason the Jewish people merited these two mitzvos, which had relevance to blood, was because Avraham had sacrificed for the sake of the mitzvah of hospitality, despite his infirmity.

Seemingly, a rational person, even of Avraham's dimension of spirituality, should have been concerned with his own physical welfare. However, we find in this instance regarding hosting the angels, it was not the case.

When a person's drive and impetus to accomplish emanates from his understanding and evaluation of a situation, there would be an interplay with a rational/calculating perspective. However when one is compelled and carried by the spiritual momentum of a mitzvah, these rational concerns do not exist. In actuality, no harm could come to that individual because he will be protected by the mitzvah. Because initially Avraham was pained from being denied the opportunity to perform a mitzvah, he created an overwhelming energy that enveloped him and caused him to be engaged in another mitzvah. Consequently, the effects and ramifications of his actions touch upon the Jewish people until the end of time.

If one qualitatively (l'shma) fully invests himself in the performance of a mitzvah to the point that he is willing to sacrifice for it, it will generate another mitzvah opportunity of exceptional value and quality.

## 2. The Overwhelming Power of Chesed

After Avraham hosted the three angels, the Torah states **"The men got up from there and gazed (vayashkeefu) down toward Sodom, while Avraham walked with them to escort them."** Rashi cites Chazal who explain that whenever the Torah uses the term **"vayashkeefu – gaze"** it indicates something that is ominous and destructive, except when this term is associated with the distribution of tithes to the poor. In the case of the angels gazing upon Sodom, the term **vayashkeefu** is used in the context of destruction. However, the Torah tells us that after one has completed distributing his tithes to the poor he supplicates G'd in the following manner: **"Gaze (hashkeefa) down from Your holy abode, from the heavens, and bless Your people Israel."** The Midrash states, "How great is the merit of giving tithes to the poor! For it has the power to overturn the Attribute of Justice (Midas HaDin) to the Attribute of Mercy (Midas HaRachamim)." If the term **vayashkeefu** is used to communicate something ominous, then why does the Torah use this term regarding the blessing that will come upon the Jewish people for giving charity?

It is understood that there is no one who is perfect. As King Solomon states, "There is no tzaddik in the land who does good and does not sin." The classification of "tzaddik (righteous)" is given to the one whose accomplishments are mostly positive and his sins are minute. Although the tzaddik's failings are minor, they nevertheless cause him to be spiritually blemished. On the whole, one does not see the imperfection of the tzaddik. Thus, his record is seen in a positive light. However, if he

were to be subjected to exacting scrutiny and analysis, his shortcomings would make him subject to the Attribute of Justice. Because of the exacting nature of the analysis, no one could survive the scrutiny of the Attribute of Justice. This is the reason the term "hashkeefa – gazing" has a negative and ominous connotation – because in essence the individual is being scrutinized. Nevertheless, the Torah tells us that after one gives his tithes to the poor, one supplicates G'd and asks Him to "gaze" upon the Jewish people. Despite the fact that such close analysis evokes the Attribute of Justice, because of the merit of supporting the poor, it activates an overwhelming level of Mercy. How do we reconcile the seeming contradiction between evoking the Attribute of Justice and simultaneously activating the most overwhelming level of Mercy/blessing. What lies within the tithes that are given to the poor to bring about such a positive outcome?

King David writes in Psalms, "The world was created out of kindness (chesed)." The basis for creation was purely out of G'd's Kindness. There was no one who was deserving, of its creation; nevertheless, G'd created it out of His Kindness to give man the opportunity to make proper choices in order to be deserving of cleaving to Him. This was the ultimate chesed (kindness). Simultaneously, the Torah states, **"Bereishis bara Elokim ais hashemayim v'ais haaretz – In the beginning G'd created the heaven and the earth..."** Chazal explain that since the appellation of "Elokim (G'd)" connotes the Attribute of Justice, G'd initially intended to bring about existence through the Attribute of Justice. Since the world was created out of G'd's Kindness and Creation came about through the Attribute of Justice, it clearly indicates that it is only through the Attribute of Justice will man be the ultimate beneficiary. However, because G'd understood that man was prone to fail, *Chesed* could not coexist with Justice. G'd thus needed to "coalesce the Attribute of Justice with the Attribute of Mercy" in order for man to succeed. We see from the pattern of Creation that when a situation arises in which the Kindness of G'd cannot exist in the face of the Attribute of Justice, G'd evokes His Mercy. Therefore regarding the giving of the tithes, although we invoke the Attribute of Justice by asking G'd to "gaze" upon us, despite this, we activate the Attribute of Mercy through our act of chesed – the giving of the tithes to the poor.

It is interesting to note that each of the Patriarchs chose to emulate G'd through one of His characteristics. Avraham, the first of our Patriarchs, chose to emulate G'd's characteristic of chesed. This was fitting since just as chesed was the first characteristic that was expressed by G'd by bringing about existence, Avraham, who was the

individual who was the equivalent of a new spiritual existence, chose to emulate that same characteristic of chesed.

When one engages in chesed, despite his shortcomings, it will evoke the Attribute of Mercy and protect him from the exacting nature of Justice. Whenever the world experiences tragedy and uncertainty it is because G'd's Justice is in effect. Therefore, in our present time in which the world is experiencing turmoil and instability, we must engage in acts of chesed in order to overturn the Attribute of Justice and establish the Attribute of Mercy.

### ***3. The Renown of the Jewish People Throughout History***

The Torah tells us that Avimelech, the Philistine king, had sequestered himself with Sarah, because he was told by Avraham that she was his sister. The Torah states, **“G'd came to Avimelech in a dream and said to him, ‘Behold you are to die because of the woman you have taken; moreover she is a married woman...Avimelech said (to G'd), ‘O my L'rd, will You slay a nation even though it is righteous? Did not he himself tell me: ‘She is my sister’? And she too herself said, ‘He is my brother!’...G'd responded, ‘I too knew it was in innocence of your heart that you did this...that is why I prevented you from sinning against Me; that is why I did not permit you to touch her. But now return the man's wife for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live.’”** Because Avimelech had taken Sarah, he and his community became afflicted with many physical ailments. They had become muted and their reproductive systems became obstructed. However, after Avimelech returned Sarah to Avraham, the Torah states, **“Avraham prayed to G'd, and G'd healed Avimelech, his wife, and his maids, and they were relieved...Hashem remembered Sarah ...Sarah conceived and bore a son unto Avraham...”**

The Midrash asks, “Why does the Torah juxtapose Sarah's conceiving with the incident of Avraham praying on behalf of Avimelech and his community? It is to teach us that whoever prays on behalf of his fellow, and he personally is in need of the same thing, G'd will respond first to the need of the one who made the request.” Avraham had beseeched G'd to heal Avimelech and his community and restore their ability to conceive. As a result, G'd responded to Avraham's need by causing Sarah to conceive.

Initially, before G'd had added the letter “hey” to his name, he was known as Avrom. Chazal tell us that Avrom connotes that he as “the father/leader of Arom (location in Mesopotamia).” At that time he was an unknown entity on the world scene. However, after he defeated the Four Mighty kings, he was proclaimed by the world as “the father of all nations.” Subsequently, he was named “Avraham.” He was world-renowned. When Avraham initially descended to Egypt, Pharaoh was not aware of Avraham's stature. Avraham was thus concerned that Pharaoh would kill him and take his wife. Therefore he suggested to Sarah that she would be presented as his sister. However, when Avraham had gone to Geror, to the area of the Philistines, Avraham had already been proclaimed as the “father of all nations.” Seemingly, there should have not been any concern that Avimelech, the Philistine king would kill Avraham to take his wife. Nevertheless we see that Avraham was concerned. He thus again presented Sarah as his sister. After gaining world acclaim, why was Avraham concerned?

Evidently, Avraham had understood that the initial blessing that he received from G'd that he would gain world renown (*agadlah shmecha*) was in fact a process. The world would not truly appreciate his dimension of being immediately. After Avimelech had taken Sarah and suffered immediate consequences, as a result of his action, Avraham needed to pray to G'd on behalf of Avimelech and his community. Without Avraham's seeking mercy on their behalf, they would have perished. After recognizing that they were only saved because of Avraham's supplication, they understood and appreciated the spiritual dimension of Avraham. Avimelech and his community needed to become afflicted and subsequently saved by Avraham in order for him to gain renown in their eyes. It was because G'd's blessing to Avraham “I will make your name great” that all of these events needed to take place.

When Avraham went to into battle with the Four Mighty kings he was not concerned for his safety. However, when he entered into the Geror community, he was concerned that he would be killed. After defeating the Four Mighty kings, Avraham should have been confident that he would be able to defeat any challenge of lesser danger.

Regarding, the imitative to save Lot, his nephew who was taken captive, Avraham had no choice but to go into battle and rely on miracles in order to save him. However, regarding being protected from Avimelech, Avraham did not need to rely on miracles. He was not even permitted to evoke G'd's Mercy to perform a miracle on his behalf. He believed that he could protect himself

from harm by simply saying that Sarah was his sister. In addition, Avraham needed to save Lot by resorting to miracles in order to prevent a chilul Hashem (desecration of G'd's Name). As Ramban explains, the world knew that Lot had left his family and community in order to accompany his uncle Avraham into the unknown. He sacrificed on behalf of Avraham who was a tzaddik. Had Avraham not resorted to miracles in order to rescue him from captivity, it would have been a chilul Hashem because the world would have said, "This is what one experiences when accompanying a tzaddik like Avraham." In order to prevent this desecration of G'd's Name, G'd performed the miracles in order to protect Avraham and bring about victory. In contrast, the predicament of Avraham regarding Avimelech, it did not have the potential to cause a chilul Hashem. Thus, Avraham did not resort to miracles.

The blessing that Avraham had received from G'd that his name would become great/world renown was a process in the making – and it still continues to this very day. The Jewish people as a whole, are miniscule in number. They are almost on a non-existent level compared to the rest of the world. Yet, we see that throughout history the Jewish people are very much in the mind set of all of humanity. Mostly, they draw negative attention/ anti-Semitism. Why is this so? The fact that the Jewish people are known to the world to this degree is a consequence of G'd's blessing to Avraham- that he will gain world renown. Everyone in the world needs to know that there is a Jewish people – even if it is in the form of negative attention. This is because at the end of time when G'd will reveal His Glory and Dominion, the Jewish people will rise in prominence before the eyes of the world. Therefore, the nations of the world had to have been made aware previously of their existence.

#### 4. Gaining Clarity

The Torah states, "**Hashem had remembered Sarah...Sarah conceived...**" The Midrash explains, "There is a negative commandment 'Do not aggrieve your brother...' What is considered aggrieving? If one enters into a store and inquires about the price of an item without the intention of purchasing it, it is considered aggrieving one's fellow because the shop owner is led falsely to believe that he has a perspective customer. When he understands that the inquirer never intended to purchase the item, the shop owner is aggrieved. If one repented the ways of his past and became a *baal teshuvah*, one is not permitted to remind him of the misdeeds of his past...G'd said, 'I want you to emulate My ways. When I created the

world, I never afflicted any of My creations. I never revealed the species of the Tree of Knowledge from which Adam had eaten because the Tree would have been regarded in a negative light.' Thus, revealing information that would cause hardship to an individual is considered aggrieving him. One who aggrieves his fellow will be subjected to the Attribute of Justice and punished. Sarah, the Matriarch, because she put herself in a painful situation and afflicted herself for the sake of conceiving, she ultimately received her rightful reward. As it states, "**Sarah said to Avraham, 'See, now Hashem has restrained me from bearing; consort, now, with my maidservant (Hagar).'**" By asking Avraham to procreate with Hagar her maidservant, Sarah had aggrieved herself by allowing another woman to be intimate with her husband. She believed that perhaps in the merit of this pain, she would be able to conceive.

The Midrash continues, "G'd said to Sarah, 'You have created this painful situation for yourself. I swear on your life that with the same terminology that you used to express your pain, I will reward you by allowing you to conceive. When Avimelech took Sarah, G'd afflicted him and his community by denying them the ability to conceive. G'd said to Avraham, 'I want you to pray on behalf of Avimelech, the evil one, and there will be abundant Mercy upon him. Then Avraham will benefit from this.' Because Sarah had "pained" herself in the area of conception, G'd "pained" Avimelech and his community in this area.

When Pharaoh had taken Sarah, G'd afflicted him with plagues. Avimelech could have been afflicted in a similar manner; however, this was not the case because he needed to be afflicted in the same manner in which Sarah herself had been afflicted (she was restrained from conceiving). Sarah, Avimelech and his community needed to share the same physical problem in order for her to ultimately conceive. The Midrash asks, "Why does the Torah juxtapose Sarah's conceiving with the incident of Avraham praying on behalf of Avimelech and his community? It is to teach us that whoever prays on behalf of his fellow, and he personally is in need of the same thing, G'd will respond first to the need of the one who had made the request." In order for Avraham's supplication to result in Sarah's being able to conceive, Avimelech needed to share the same affliction.

The Midrash tells us that if one afflicts himself, he will be the beneficiary of G'd's Mercy. However, if one aggrieves his fellow and is not sensitive to his feelings, G'd will bring the Attribute of Justice upon him immediately.

What was the value of Sarah afflicting herself by allowing Avraham to procreate with her maidservant? The verse states, **“Sarah had said to Avraham, ‘I will be able to build through her...’** Meaning, in the merit of this, she would be able to conceive. The reason she had given her maidservant to her husband was she had believed that the reason she was not able to conceive was because of a spiritual deficiency that she could not identify. The reason one is blocked from seeing one’s own shortcomings is because of one’s ego or conflict of interest. However, if one is sufficiently humble, he will be able to identify his failing. Therefore Sarah understood that if she were to be humbled by the experience of sharing her husband her slave, she would be able to identify and address the spiritual failing that she had been unable to locate. Because she aggrieved herself for the sake of gaining the clarity to be worthy to conceive the future Patriarch, G’d saw her sacrifice and thus rewarded her.

The Gemara in Tractate Taanis tells us that one can only attain and retain Torah if he humbles himself. Similarly, if one denies himself material comforts for the sake of Torah, he will merit receiving the ultimate, which is the Crown of Torah. As the Mishna in the Ethics of our Fathers states regarding the acquisition of Torah, **“Bread and salt you shall eat, water in small measure you shall drink, on the ground you shall sleep, and a life of deprivation you shall live...”** If one is willing to sacrifice for the sake of Torah, it is an indication that he has negated himself for the sake of the ultimate – the Torah itself.

### **5. Avraham – The Most Integral Component of the Jewish People** *(from Lech Lecha)*

The Torah states at the beginning of the Portion of Lech Lecha regarding the blessing that G’d had given to Avraham, **“...Go for yourself from your land, from your relatives, and from your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great, and you shall be a blessing.”** The Midrash explains, “G’d said to Avraham, ‘I personally will give you a blessing. I will make your name great. You will gain world renown. ‘And you will be a blessing.’ What is the meaning of this? ‘Your (Avraham’s) blessing will precede My blessing.’ As we find in the Amidah (Silent Prayer) the first blessing concludes with ‘the shield of Avraham.’ The blessing that follows concludes, ‘Hashem, Who resuscitates the dead.’” What is the significance of Avraham’s blessing preceding G’d’s blessing in the Amidah?

Rashi cites the Midrash that explains the verse, **“I will make you into a great nation’** means I (G’d) will be identified as ‘the G’d of Avraham – *Elokei Avraham.*’ **‘I will bless you...’** Means I (G’d) will be identified as ‘the G’d of Yitzchak – *Elokei Yitzchak.*’ **‘I will make your name great...’** Means I (G’d) will be identified as ‘the G’d of Yaakov – *Elokei Yaakov.*’ You may think that since G’d identifies Himself with each of the Patriarchs that the first blessing of the Amidah should conclude with all of the Patriarchs (Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov). Nevertheless, **‘you shall be a blessing’** means that the blessing will only conclude with the name of Avraham - *Mogein Avraham.*”

Chazal tell us that Yaakov was the most special of all of the Patriarchs. He was the Patriarch who fathered the Twelve Tribes, who are referred to by King David in Psalms as **“Shiftei ka- the Tribes of G’d.”** Nevertheless the first blessing of the Amidah does not conclude with Yaakov. Why is this so?

Avraham existed in a pagan world in which G’d and His Omnipotence was not known. It was only because of Avraham’s unceasing quest for truth that he came upon G’d. Consequently, he introduced monotheism to all existence. Had it not been for Avraham’s belief and spiritual achievements, there would not have been a Yitzchak or a Yaakov to follow in his footsteps. Although Yaakov surpassed his father (Yitzchak) and his grandfather (Avraham) in his spiritual accomplishments, he was only able to ascend to that level because of the teachings of Avraham. Yaakov would not have recognized G’d on his own, as Avraham had.

Reb Meir Simcha of Dvinsk z’tl cites a verse that refers to Avraham as “Navone” (Perceptive and insightful) and Yitzchak, Yaakov, and Moshe as “Chachamim” (One who is a repository of knowledge). Chazal explain that term of “Navone” describes an individual who is able to perceive and appreciate something with a degree of depth – thus allowing him to understand many other things. A “Chacham” is one who only accumulates knowledge but is not able to go beyond his own knowledge base. Avraham is referred to as “Navone” because despite the fact he was born into a world devoid of G’d’s Presence, he came upon him, through his own depth of understanding. He thus shared this belief of G’d’s Omnipotence with his children. Subsequently it was passed on to Moshe. Moshe was the most spiritually accomplished person to walk the face of the earth. There was no human being in the history of existence that merited a relationship with the G’d as Moshe had. Nevertheless, had it not been for Avraham who had transmitted that belief from generation to

generation, Moshe would have not been aware of G'd's existence. Therefore the first blessing of the Amidah concludes only with Avraham because it was only through his initiative that the other Patriarchs were able to evolve and develop into the people who they were.

When G'd blessed Avraham by saying that his blessing would precede G'd's in the Amidah, He was acknowledging the fact that had it not been for Avraham, He (G'd) would have not been known to the world. Although G'd is the Omnipotent, Infinite Being, if it were not for Avraham's initiative of espousing monotheism, G'd would have remained an unknown entity.

Maharal of Prague explains that the number four signifies something that is not established and is lacking in substance. It connotes a disarray and an absence of cohesion. For example, dots on four corners of a square have no relation to one another. An application of this concept is: G'd had told Avraham during the Covenant Between the Parts that his progeny would be strangers in a land that was not theirs for 400 years. Meaning they would not have an identity. 400 is a 100 multiples of 4, to connote this non-descript status of the Jewish people. In contrast the number five is a symbol of substance and cohesion. If one were to place a dot in the center of a square that has a dot on each of its corners, the center dot draws all of the others together as a unit. The fifth element is the unifying factor.

When the Jewish people traveled in the desert, it was in a formation of four camps – each comprised of three Tribes. In the middle of the four camps was the Holy Ark which was known as “the camp of the Divine Presence – *Machneh Shechina*”- the focal point of the Jewish people. Without the Divine Presence located in their midst, indicating their belief and focus, the Jewish people would have had no value as a special people. The Name of G'd is composed of four letters “YKVK-Hashem,” which connotes that “He is the Infinite Being, He was, He is, and He is in the future.” The unifying element is the Jewish people, who are the equivalent of the fifth element. They are G'd's representation in the world. The knowledge of G'd's Presence in existence is attributed to Avraham. He is this the equivalent of the fifth.

## ***6. Avraham's Sensitivity to The Desecration of G'd's Name***

The Torah tells us that after the Five Mighty Kings were defeated by the Four Kings, the king of Sodom had fallen into a lime pit, from which there was no escape.

Miraculously, he emerged from the pit unscathed. Chazal explain, “...There was no individual who had ever survived falling into a lime pit. G'd performed this miracle on behalf of the King of Sodom so that the nations of the world would believe that just as the King of Sodom had survived the lime pit, so too Avraham had emerged unscathed from the fiery kiln of Kasdim. Until this point, the validity of this information was rejected.” What is the value of verifying this information? It is clear that it was not to prove that Avraham was a spiritual being who had merited a miracle, because the King of Sodom who personified evil, merited a similar miracle. If so, what is the value of performing a miracle on behalf of the King of Sodom for the sake of verification?

The reason G'd performed a miracle on his behalf was only so that the nations of the world should believe that Avraham had in fact gone into the fiery kiln and had emerged unharmed. Although at this moment, because the world was of pagan belief, it did not have any value vis-à-vis Avraham; however, it was important for them to know that he had a special relationship with G'd.

As a result of being the beneficiary of G'd's miracle, the King of Sodom believed that G'd was his protector. Thus, he felt that he had a relationship with G'd that was the equivalent of Avraham's. After Avraham had vanquished the Four Mighty Kings, who had taken Lot and the Sodom community captive, the King of Sodom had made demands upon Avraham saying, “**Give me the people and the possessions shall be yours.**” Avraham's response to the King of Sodom was, “**I will not take from you as much as a thread or a bootstrap.**” Seemingly, the King of Sodom's proposal was absurd. How is it possible that a person who is the chattel of the victor able to dictate such terms. The King of Sodom believed that Avraham's miraculous victory was only possible because G'd had brought it about. Therefore it was unrelated to Avraham's personal ability. If this is so, the King of Sodom, a survivor of the lime pit, is no less a victor than Avraham himself. Thus, he believed he could dictate terms to Avraham.

G'd had promised Avraham at the time that he was told to leave his homeland, community, and father's house that he would merit great wealth. If Avraham would have accepted the material wealth offered by the King of Sodom (although it was rightfully his as the victor) the King would have said to the world “I have made Avraham wealthy”- thus taking the credit for Avraham's wealth. It would be a Desecration of G'd's Name for the world to believe that Avraham's financial success was due to the beneficence of the King of Sodom and unrelated to G'd's

blessing. Therefore Avraham responded by rejecting the offer by saying, **“I will not take from you as much as a thread or a bootstrap.”** Chazal tell us that in the merit of Avraham’s not accepting as much as a “thread” from the King of Sodom, the Jewish people merited the mitzvah of tzitzis (fringes). In the merit of him not accepting as much as “a bootstrap” the Jewish people merited the mitzvah of tefilin (phylacteries). Both of these mitzvos identify the Jewish people as G’d’s people. Because Avraham had the clarity to refuse something that was rightfully his and of great value for the sake of G’d, the Jewish people merited mitzvos that also give them the ability to identify and experience G’d’s Presence.

The Torah tells us that because of the famine that had come upon the land of Cannan, Avraham had gone to Egypt with Sarah. The Torah states, **“When the officials of Pharaoh saw her (Sarah), they lauded her for Pharaoh, and the woman was taken to Pharaoh’s house. And he treated Avraham well for her sake, and he acquired sheep, cattle, donkeys, slaves and maidservants, female donkeys, and camels.”** Avraham accepted the wealth from Pharaoh without any reservation. He did not refuse it based on the concern that the world would mistakenly attribute his great financial wealth to the gift that he had received from Pharaoh. Why did Avraham agree to take the gift from Pharaoh and rejected it from the King of Sodom? It seems that the concern of the misperception of the world would have been identical to the setting of Sodom.

One could say that although both Pharaoh and the King of Sodom were pagans, the King of Sodom epitomized and personified evil. Thus, he would perpetuate and disseminate this falsehood to the world. However, Pharaoh would not.

The King of Sodom recognized that G’d had performed a miracle on his behalf and rescued him from the lime pit – similar to the miracle that He had performed for Avraham. However, simultaneously it was obvious that the King of Sodom’s belief was truly superficial. If the King of Sodom truly acknowledged G’d as the Omnipotent All-Encompassing/Powerful Being, he would have never considered offering the wealth to Avraham. This is because just as G’d Wills existence and life, so too does He Will one’s financial standing. Because of this dichotomy in the belief of the King of Sodom, Avraham could not agree to accept the wealth from him. Had he accepted it, it would be a confirmation of the King of Sodom’s perception of G’d’s limited ability. This would be the ultimate in Chilul Hashem. Avraham, himself could not be a participant in the Desecration of G’d’s Name.

This concern did not exist regarding Pharaoh because he did not believe in G’d at all. Therefore Avraham’s accepting of the wealth was not a confirmation of his own belief.

#### **YAD AVRAHAM DAILY CLASS SCHEDULE**

##### **Monday Through Friday**

5:50- 6:00 am	Chumash with Rashi
6:00- 6:15 am	Pirkei Avos (Maharal)
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 Avodah Zorah
7:25 - 8:20 am	Davening Followed by Breakfast
8:20 - 8:45 am	Mishna
9:00 -10:00 am	Daf Yomi
2:00pm	Mincha

##### **Special Weekday Classes**

##### **Monday**

11:15 – 12:15pm **Talmud: Taanis**  
Location: Sunrise Capital 641 Lexington (25<sup>th</sup> FL.)  
Enter on 54<sup>th</sup> Street

12:30 – 1:30pm **Talmud: Pesachim**  
Location: Shandholt 488 Madison Avenue  
Between E.51<sup>st</sup> and E.52<sup>st</sup>

##### **Tuesday**

12:15 - 1:15pm **Torah Insight Based on the Parsha**  
Location: Yad Avraham

##### **Wednesday**

11:30 – 12:30 pm **Talmud: Taanis**  
Location: Sunrise Capital 641 Lexington (25<sup>th</sup> FL.)  
Enter on 54<sup>th</sup> Street

1:00—2:00 pm **Derech Hashem**  
Location: Yad Avraham

##### **Thursday**

10:30 –11:30am **Tehilim with Malbim**  
Location: Yad Avraham

12:00 – 1:00 pm **Talmud: Taanis** Sunrise Capital 641 Lexington (25<sup>th</sup> FL)