

Within a few months Larry was already glowing with joy. The boys were eating up not just the tasty food but the quality of family time and relationship they were building together. A while later one of the boys asked if he could go on an overnight Friday night to a friend. The mother rightly told him “no” because this is their special family time.

The next week Larry came home excited with hockey tickets for a Stanley Cup play-off final that somebody in the office had given him. It was for Friday night. He wife looked at him and said, “If you go there on our Friday night then I will never be able to say “no” to the boys when they might make a similar request.”

With the courage of Abraham at *Akedat Yitzhak*, Larry courageously and wisely obeyed his wife and “sending forth his hand” - forfeited those treasured tickets. He missed the Stanley Cup Play-Off Game that year but he kept his family together over many years. He reports to me how close they have grown as a family unit because of their tenacious loyalty to that sacred appointment.

A 7<sup>th</sup> grade boy was begging me last week to find out how he could get a custom filter fitted for his Smart Phone. On his own he went to a designated location where some volunteer tech guys could adjust his phone and remove temptation from his reach. It was heroic and perhaps on his level not less than Abraham *Abinu* giving up his beloved son.

Taking a bold step in the right direction, curbing a debilitating habit, giving up on what we love for something greater is a not just a mini-replica, it's our *Akedat Yitzhak*! (Rabbi Label Lam)

### Weekly Pele Yoetz

Each week we will offer a brief excerpt from the *sefer Pele Yoetz*. **This week's topic is: Love between husband and wife (Part I).**

The *Gemara* teaches that a man should love his wife like he loves himself, and honor her even more than he honors himself. One way to prevent disputes in the household is to avoid being too strict regarding the expenditures of the home. A man should seek to make his wife happy, as the *Gemara* states, “Blessing is found in one's home due to the wife.”

A wife should show great honor to her husband and seek to understand his needs and fulfill them. She should gently encourage him in his service of Hashem, and console him when he is in distress. If they are experiencing financial difficulty, she should comfort him and should never complain about their situation.

### How Much Is It Worth?

Kalman, a young American, was very careful to pray with a *minyan* three times a day. He once traveled to *Eress Yisrael*, and by the time the plane landed and his taxi pulled into Yerushalayim, it was way past midnight. There were no more *minyanim* to be found, even at the famous “*minyan factory*” in *Zichron Moshe*. Kalman, who was so committed to praying with a *minyan*, was now left without one. What a shame that his first opportunity to pray in *Eress Yisrael* would be without a *minyan*.

The taxi driver senses Kalman's frustration and asked what was bothering him. When Kalman explained his predicament, the driver came up with a radical suggestion; he would gather a *minyan* from among his fellow taxi drivers. Putting action to word, he got onto his walkie-talkie and began summoning his buddies to come together. Within a few moments, ten cabbies answered the call and met in one central location. Indeed, Kalman had his *minyan*: the most unusual *minyan* he had even joined.

After *Arbit*, Kalman thanked the drivers profusely and offered to pay their tab, but they refused to take the money. They smiled and thanked him for the opportunity to participate in this *misvah*. (A Touch of *Chizuk*)

*The Lorraine Gammal A"H Edition*

לְעִילּוֹי נְשֻׁמָּת לְאָה בַּת בִּרְיָה

בס"ד

## Congregation Magen Abraham

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שַׁבָּת וַיָּעֶרָא ☆ יִרְחָא

Haftarah: Melachim II 4:1-23

**NOVEMBER 11-12, 2022 18 HESHVAN 5783**

Shir Hashirim/Minhah: 4:14 pm (upstairs) Shaharit: 5:40, 6:45, 8:25, 8:30, 9:00 am

Minhah: 4:24 (main shul) Morning Shema by: 8:33 am

Candlelighting: 4:24 pm Shabbat Minhah: 1:30 & 4:00 pm

Evening Shema after: 5:22 pm Shabbat Class: 5:21 pm

These times are applicable only for the Deal area. Shabbat Ends: 5:21, R"Y 5:53 pm

Weekday Shaharit: 6:45, 7:10 am, Sundays: 6:45, 8:00 am, Weekday Minhah: 4:20 pm

**This bulletin is dedicated by Steven Levy  
in memory of his father, Eliyahu ben Simbol.**

**This bulletin is dedicated in memory of Maureen bat Rose, Maureen August Heiney.**

**You will forever be in our hearts.**

**With much love from your sisters, Vikki and Debbie, and your husband, Alan.**

### A Message from our Rabbi

(Beresheet 18:17) "וְהָאֵלֹהִים אָמַר הַמַּכְסָּה אֲנִי מַאֲבִירָהּ אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה"

"And Hashem said, 'Shall I conceal from Abraham what I am doing?'"

As the wickedness and corruption of Sedom reached an all-time high, Hashem decided that the city must be destroyed. The Torah tells us that Hashem said, "Shall I conceal from Abraham what I am doing?" Therefore Hashem decides to reveal his plan of destruction.

Rabbi Mordechai Appel asks, this is a phenomenon that has no parallel anywhere else in the entire *Tanach*. Nowhere do we find Hashem "unsure" if he should reveal his plan to the *navi*. When there was information available to Yeshaya, Yirmiya, Yehezkel or any of the other *nevi'im*, Hashem revealed it. Yet by Abraham it seems as if Hashem wavers (כביכול), ultimately deciding to tell Abraham.

The *Hatam Sofer* discusses this question. Before getting to the answer, we should preface by mentioning that the *Hatam Sofer* was one of the busiest people in the world. He filled three vital roles. He was a Rav of a large *kehillah*, he was a *Rosh Yeshivah*, and he wrote responses to questions that came to him from all over the world. The answer we will present is most definitely befitting the one who said it.

The reason Hashem was vacillating (כביכול) about revealing the information to

Abraham was because in reality, the great Abraham *Abinu* was not on a high enough level to receive prophecy (a totally amazing statement from the *Hatam Sofer*)! Surely had he been on the required level, Hashem would have told him as was his practice with all *nevi'im*. However, even though Abraham was simply not holding there, Hashem decided to reveal it to him.

But we know that Abraham was a *navi*. *Rashi* (20:8) writes “that he was a *navi*.” But in order to gain prophecy, one must be in the proper frame of mind. Abraham was not able to do these things, but not because he was not great enough. Abraham was too busy to become a higher level *navi*! He was busy influencing the world, bringing them close to Hashem.

In order to influence the masses and raise them up, he needed to do it from their lowly level. As a result of Abraham’s great love for Hashem, he decided to forgo prophecy in order to be available to change the world, which he did!

Hashem is really saying, “I have prophecy to tell him, but he is not on the level, so I can’t tell him. He isn’t on the level because of his love for me. Should he lose as a result?” One never loses out from doing the right thing, so Hashem granted him prophecy. Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

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## *Suspect Subtly*

In the beginning of our *perashah*, the *Malachim* come to Abraham *Abinu* (who does not realize they are Angels). Abraham *Abinu* offers them to wash their feet, and rest up a bit. *Rashi* explains that the reason he asked them to wash their feet was because he thought that they were Arabs who bow down to the dust of their feet.

There were different forms of *Abodah Zarah*. Some people worshipped the sun. Other people worshipped the moon. There was, apparently, a particular sect that worshipped the dust of their feet. Abraham did not want these visitors to walk into his tent with their *Abodah Zarah* on their bodies, so he asked them to first wash their feet.

*Hazal* have an expression (found in *Masechet Derech Eress*): All people should be in your eyes as if they were robbers, but honor them like Rabban Gamliel (the *Nasi* of the Jewish people). This is a very difficult thing to do. You must suspect that a person is going to steal you blind, but at the same time treat him like he is the Prince of Israel.

*Masechet Derech Eress* then tells a story: There was an incident with Rav Yehoshua. He had a guest who he fed and provided with everything that he needed. He then took him up to the roof. He told him “My guest room is in the attic.” Fine. Good night. Rabbi Yehoshua then (unbeknownst to his visitor) removed the ladder which served as the stairs between the attic and the main dwelling area.

In the middle of the night, this visitor went around collecting all the valuables he found in the upper story of the dwelling. He went to the place where the ladder was supposed to be. Lo and behold the ladder was not there. The guest falls to the ground and is left lying there until the next morning. The next morning, he complains to his host “You took away the ladder!” Meanwhile, the valuables are spread out all over the floor. Rabbi Yehoshua tells him “You thief! We know how to deal with your type!”

Rabbi Yehoshua commented: “Any person (who you don’t know) should be in your eyes as if he is a thief, but you must honor him as if he were Rabban Gamliel.”

Similarly, in this *perashah*, Avraham *Abinu* is demonstrating how to properly be suspicious of your guest. In practical terms, how do you implement this? When the guest is about to leave, do we ask to look through his luggage before he steps out of our house?

We obviously don’t do that, because that is insulting. When you suspect a person, you need to do so in such a subtle manner that he does not even begin to grasp that you are suspicious of him. This is why Abraham says “Please take **a little bit** of water.” If he

would give each one a barrel of water like he gave each one a tongue, they would ask, “Why is he giving us so much water to wash? Does he think we are that dirty?” Abraham very delicately says, “Please take a little bit of water to wash yourselves” so that they do not have the slightest inclination that this has to do with *Abodah Zarah*.

On the surface, this maxim that Rav Yehoshua says (that people should suspect every stranger of being a thief and yet honor them like Rabban Gamliel) means that the person should be honored as if he were Rabban Gamliel. However, the Tolner Rebbe says, there is also a hidden message here. Rav Yehoshua and Rabban Gamliel had a history between them. In *Masechet Rosh HaShannah* [25a], Rav Yehoshua calculated a different day when Yom Kippur should be observed than did Rabban Gamliel. Rabban Gamliel, who was the *Nasi*, insisted that Rabbi Yehoshua accept the date that Rabban Gamliel calculated as Yom Kippur, and ordered Rabbi Yehoshua to appear before him on the date Rabbi Yehoshua thought was Yom Kippur, carrying his staff and his money bag.

The Gerer Rebbe asks a question on this incident: If Rabban Gamliel wanted Rabbi Yehoshua to admit that he was wrong, why didn’t Rabban Gamliel order him to eat a sandwich on the day he thought was Yom Kippur? Taking a money bag and a staff is only a rabbinic prohibition of *muktzeh*, while breaking one’s fast would be a Biblical offense involving the *karet* punishment. The answer is that Rabban Gamliel did not want to do that to Rav Yehoshua. Rabban Gamliel had that sensitivity. He did not want to crush Rabbi Yehoshua by asking him to eat on what he believed to be Yom Kippur.

This explanation allows us to view Rabbi Yehoshua’s maxim “...and respect him like Rabban Gamliel” in a new light. He did not mean that a person should respect the suspected thief **as if he were** Rabban Gamliel. He meant a person should show respect to this person **like Rabban Gamliel showed respect to me**. Just like Rabban Gamliel did not make me eat on Yom Kippur even though he held I was wrong, but rather he had respect for my self-esteem and personal dignity – that is how you should treat everyone, even if you suspect their character and integrity. There is no *misvah* to crush people or to break them. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

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## *Our Akedat Yitzhak*

What is the current relevance of *Akedat Yitzhak*? There it is in our *Siddur* to be read every day. What is it telling the “you” and “me” of the world? Sure Abraham *Abinu*, without question, passed the supreme test of history. That was the height of the heights and yet we find ourselves now as amateur climbers at the base of a tall mountain, gazing with awe in search of a peak which is shrouded in mysterious cloud cover. How does that loftiest of all accomplishments translate to our ordinary struggles?

A fellow I was learning with, Larry, once told me that he feared that if he didn’t do something dramatic, his boys, Jonathan and David, would graduate in a few years from his house without his having ever known them. Until now when he would try to ask them about school they would answer in the shortest way “OK,” or “Aha,” and he felt he had only the smallest window into their world. What happened to him at work was even less important to them. They would only speak to him sincerely if they were asking for \$5 or a ride. He felt more like a banker or a cabby than a parent.

I strongly suggested he turn Friday night into Shabbat, even though he was not yet a complete Shomer Shabbat. Buy the boys’ favorite foods. Get some grape juice and fluffy raisin Challot. Arrange your schedule to be home from work on time and have your wife light a couple of candles. Bless the boys in a formal way and require that everyone attend.

Prepare with your wife some stories or lessons that deal with issues you wish to address. Read from a book each week and play games with them. The hardest and steepest challenge will be not to answer the holy telephone. Let the message machine do its job.