

The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center
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18 Cheshvan 5777

Vayeira

November 19, 2016

A Kind Man Speaks Harshly By Shraga Sherman

In this week's Torah reading, G-d unleashes his wrath on the city of Sodom. But before G-d carries out his plan, Abraham does a most remarkable thing. He attempts to nullify G-d's decree: "Abraham came forward and said, 'Will You sweep away the innocent along with the guilty?'"

The commentaries are puzzled by the expression "came forward," because the preceding verse has Abraham standing directly in front of G-d. Rashi explains that the Torah uses similar phrases in three different contexts: an "approach to battle," an "approach to appeasement" and an "approach to prayer." According to Rashi, Abraham employed all three tactics when he interceded on Sodom's behalf.

Through the Torah describing that Abraham "came forward" to draw near to G-d, we gain a very keen insight into the unique and special quality of Abraham's soul. We witness a change in his spiritual paradigm when he engages G-d in a manner vastly different from what he was accustomed to. He goes beyond prayer and employs a three-pronged approach, using harsh words and conciliation in addition to prayer.

The prophet Isaiah describes Abraham as the "beloved" of G-d. The writings of the mystics and Chasidic masters, too, expound on how Abraham represents the attribute of benevolence. So if kindness is his innate character trait, how is it possible for Abraham to speak harshly, all the more so to G-d? And not only did Abraham speak harshly with G-d, his remarks opened with a rebuke! What happened to Abraham's more natural, kind demeanor?

Action Instead of Contemplation

This one verse illuminates the true greatness of our first patriarch. There are those individuals who by nature are kind, and their behavior grows out of their natural kindness. But with Abraham, despite the fact that he was naturally kind, his kindness did not grow out of his nature. Abraham was kind not because it was his instinct, but because that was the proper way to serve G-d. So when Abraham saw that he had to act in a way diametrically opposed to his natural tendencies, he did so with complete selflessness and commitment.

Instead of his nature dictating his behavior, the necessities of the hour determined Abraham's course of action. Whatever would bring more G-dliness into the world, Abraham would do. So when he had the opportunity to save lives in Sodom, Abraham did what he had to, knowing that only "harsh words" would potentially mitigate G-d's anger.

Abraham's actions, which were immediate in spite of going against his inborn tendencies, are instructive for all generations. When the opportunity to save a Jewish soul presents itself, whether it is to feed a fellow Jew or to bring him or her closer to the Torah, it is improper to make calculations. That wastes valuable time and energy. We must move into action, with all of our strength and with all of our means, even if our nature would have otherwise. Only then can we be confident of the success of our divinely mandated service.

(Source: http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/257277/jewish/A-Kind-Man-Speaks-Harshly.htm)



The Rav's first "Hashkafa Q&A Shiur for Men" of the season will take place **this Friday night (Vayera, November 18th)** at 8:00PM at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Yechiel Rubin, 6527 Clarington Road (in Beazer South). Questions can be submitted in advance to rabbikaplan@chabadmd.com or anonymously in the shul mailbox.

DAVENING SCHEDULE

Friday	November 18	19 Cheshvan	Shacharit7:00 a.m. Candles4:31 p.m. Mincha4:30 p.m.
Shabbat	November 19	20 Cheshvan	Shacharit9:00 a.m. Sof Z'man Kriat Shema9:21 a.m. Gemora Shiur3:15 p.m. Mincha & Seuda Shilishit ..4:15 p.m. Maariv5:30 p.m.
Sunday	November 20	21 Cheshvan	Shacharit8:00 a.m. Mincha/Maariv4:30 p.m.
Monday	November 21	22 Cheshvan	Shacharit6:50 a.m. Maariv8:15 p.m.
Tuesday	November 22	23 Cheshvan	Shacharit7:00 a.m. Maariv8:15 p.m.
Wednesday	November 23	24 Cheshvan	Shacharit7:00 a.m. Maariv8:15 p.m.
Thursday	November 24	25 Cheshvan	Shacharit8:00 a.m. Thanksgiving Federal Holiday Maariv8:15 p.m.
Friday	November 25	26 Cheshvan	Shacharit7:00 a.m. Candles4:27 p.m. Mincha4:25 p.m.

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Kiddush and MAZAL TOV

Thank you to Jay and Dina Bernstein for sponsoring Kiddush this week in honor of their son Ezra's upcoming marriage to Ariella Ram, daughter of Shira and Ben Ram. **Mazal Tov** to Ezra on his upcoming marriage, and his ufruf this week.

Sholosh Seudos is sponsored this week by Mr. Marv and Mrs. Sara Itzkowitz on the occasion of the yahrzeit of Sara's mother, Mrs. Toby Rimler, Toybe bas Tziporah whose yahrzeit is 20 Cheshvan. May her neshamah have an aliya.



Yahzeits this Week:

Friday, 11/18/2016

Cheshvan 17, 5777

Allan Berman

Father Berman (Hillel ben Shmuel)

Monday, 11/21/2016

Cheshvan 20, 5777

Sarah Itzkowitz

Mother (Toba bas R' Dov Rimler)



Father/Son Learning

Weekly Father/Son learning Friday nights with chulent from O'Fishel. Time: 7:45 - 8:15, followed by a story. If anyone has any questions, please see Rabbi Eli Itzkowitz

Community Announcement: Baltimore Welcomes Chief Rabbi of Israel Rabbi David Lau. Rabbi Lau will be speaking Friday night at Shomrei Emunah (8 pm), Shabbos day at Suburban Orthodox (11:20 am and after 4:00 pm Mincha), and at a free, community wide event Saturday night at Bnai Jacob Shaarei Zion (8 pm) on the topic, "State of the Jewish People".