

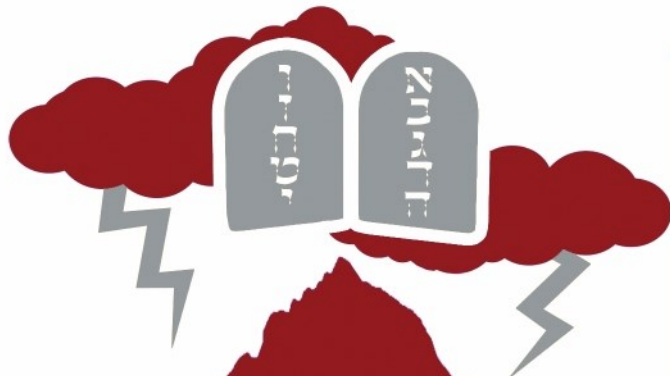


Parshat HaShavuah

**וַיְרָא**  
**VAYERA**  
OCTOBER 19, 2013  
ט"ו חשוון תשע"ד

A PUBLICATION OF

The Weinbaum  
**Yeshiva**  
High School  
INSPIRE & CHALLENGE




Candle Lighting  
**6:31**

S"Z Kriat Shema  
**10:13**

Sunset  
**6:48**

Motzei Shabbat  
**7:24**



**Ashreinu**

חלקינו מה טוב

Enriching and Enhancing Your Study of the Weekly Torah Portion

RABBI JOSH GRAJOWER	1
EMILY FIRESTONE ('15)	2
BAILA EISEN ('15)	2-3
LAURA BETESH ('15)	3-4
MICHALI MAZOR ('15)	4

**PROCESS NOT PRODUCT**  
RABBI JOSH GRAJOWER

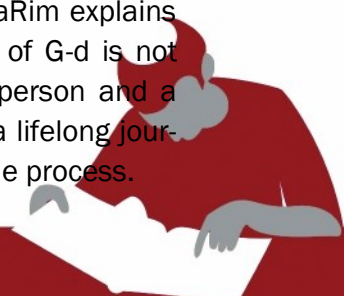
People generally focus on results. Most parents want to know their child's grades, not how they got them. Most businessmen want sales; they do not care about the manner in which those sales were made. In contrast, G-d is not focused on results. G-d cares much more about the process than the product.

I once heard from Rabbi Ari Marcus, a rebbe in Yeshiva Reishit Yerushalayim, that there is no better paradigm of this idea than Avraham Avinu. This week's parsha includes three well-known examples that illustrate Avraham's greatness. First, while recovering from his brit milah, he eagerly jumps at the opportunity to welcome strangers into his home and give them food. Next, upon hearing that the city of Sodom will be destroyed, Avraham begs Hashem to save the city. Finally, Avraham agrees to sacrifice his son Yitzchak.

However, upon closer examination of these three situations, we find that Avraham doesn't really accomplish anything! While we praise him for serving food to his guests, we know that angels don't even eat food! And while his care and concern for the residents of Sodom is heartwarming, we know that the city was ultimately destroyed despite his pleas for salvation. Lastly, Akeidat Yitzchak, the ultimate example of Avraham's belief in Hashem, did not, in fact, require Avraham to sacrifice his beloved son. Still, despite not actually accomplishing the tasks he set out to do, Avraham teaches us an invaluable lesson for all generations: our focus needs to be on the process, not on the end result.

In a similar vein, the mishna in Pirkei Avot says: "לא עליך המלאכה לגמור, ולא אתה בן חורין להבטל ממנה"—"It is not your responsibility to complete the work, but you are not free to refrain from it" (2:16). The simple meaning of this

teaching is that a person simply cannot finish all that needs to be done, but that does not excuse one from trying. The Chiddushei HaRim explains this a little differently. Our role in Judaism and our service of G-d is not simply completing a check list. The work of being a good person and a good Jew is not meant to be "completed," it is meant to be a lifelong journey. G-d is not interested in the product; He is interested in the process.





## BELIEVE IN MIRACLES

### EMILY FIRESTONE ('15)

The events in Parshat Vayera are comfortingly familiar. Avraham is circumcised at the age of ninety-nine. He then invites three men from the desert, brings them into his home, and treats them with kindness. These men announce themselves as angels and inform Avraham that Sarah, who is extremely old at the time, will give birth to a son. At that point, Sarah laughs in disbelief.

The *mefarshim* note that Sarah does not believe that the blessing is from G-d because she assumes that a miracle could not happen unless it comes straight from G-d, not angels. Sarah's reaction angers Hashem because Sarah should not have been so shocked that G-d could perform miracles in any manner or by any means.

Sarah's response teaches that we must not undermine Hashem's miracles. We take common occurrences in life for granted, instead of being grateful to Hashem and mindful that even the simplest things are the direct product of His design. Remembering Sarah's response should inspire us to live every day appreciating every minor event that transpires. We should reciprocate Hashem's kindness by doing His mitzvot and growing spiritually.

## GO OUT OF YOUR WAY

### BAILA EISEN ('15)

This week's parsha, Parshat Vayera, contains the famous story of three men (angels) who visit Avraham and tell him that he will have a son. When Avraham first sees the three figures coming towards him, the pasuk says, "And he raised his eyes and he saw and behold there were three men standing over him, and he saw and he ran to greet them from the opening of the tent, and he bowed to the ground" (Bereishit 18:2).

There are two obvious problems with this pasuk. First, if the angels are standing over him, how does he run to greet them? Furthermore, why does the text say "and he saw" twice?

As for the first question, Rashi tells us that "עָלָיו", which normally means "over him," in this case means "before him." This answer initially seems to make sense, but isn't Rashi ignoring the literal meaning? As a result, Rashi cites another answer. Quoting the gemara in Bava Metzia, Rashi explains that the angels indeed *are* standing over Avraham. However, when they notice that he is taking care of his injury, they begin to leave; they don't want to him exert himself to provide for them when he is obviously in pain. Avraham, a righteous man who is always eager to serve guests, decides to chase after them. Thus, at this moment, the "three men [are] standing before him"; then, as they turn to walk away, "he runs to greet them."

*Continued page 3*





Eisen continued

This answer also explains the second problem of repeating the phrase: “and he saw.” First, Avraham sees the men. Then he sees, or in this case, understands, that they are leaving. By showing that the pasuk is split into two separate events, Rashi is able to weave it all together.

Avraham’s actions show us the extent to which he goes to complete a mitzvah and demonstrate that we too must go to great lengths in order to perform a mitzvah.

Avraham teaches us that whenever we are presented with an opportunity to help someone, we must grab it and run with it because it will make the person we are helping, and ourselves, feel a sense of appreciation and respect.

---

## TESTING OUR FAITH

### LAURA BETESH (‘15)

Parshat Vayera contains many momentous events in Jewish history: the birth of Yitzchak, Avraham’s unsuccessful appeal to save the people of Sodom, and Avraham’s welcoming the three angels during his recuperation from his brit milah. Also found in this parsha is the climactic story of the akeida, the famous almost-sacrifice of Yitzchak. The reason for the akeida has been explored by many different *mefarshim*.

Rashi comments on the words “*achar hadevarim ha’eleh*,” interpreting “*devarim*” as “words.” He uses a midrash to explain what these specific words may have been, which supports his contention that the reason for the akeida was to show the degree of faith that Avraham had in Hashem. In addition, according to Rashi, the use of the word “*achar*” indicates a connection to an event that happened in the immediate past, which is why he chooses this particular midrash. One recent event recorded in this parsha is the feast for the weaning of Yitzchak. Rashi ties the current event, the akeida, to that feast. He does so using a conversation between the *satan* and Hashem in which the *satan* accuses Avraham of not even bringing a korban during the banquet to thank Hashem for giving him a son. Hashem answers that if He would ask Avraham to slaughter his son, Avraham would surely not refuse. In order to prove this to the *satan*, Hashem asks Avraham to do just that, to sacrifice his son. Rashi often quotes midrashim such as this one to support his explanation of the text. This particular midrash serves to underscore Rashi’s point: that Avraham had an incredible amount of faith in Hashem.

In contrast, the Ramban offers a completely different reason for why Hashem chose to test Avraham in this fashion. According to the Ramban, Hashem is omniscient and He knows the extent of Avraham’s belief in Him, therefore Hashem’s motivation can not be to test Avraham’s faith. Rather, the Ramban feels that the purpose of the akeida is to give Avraham the opportunity to act on those beliefs. Avraham further elevates his faith in Hashem by actively engaging in these particular actions, rather than just by thinking or talking about them.

Continued page 4



Betesh continued

In analyzing the explanations of each commentator, we find that Rashi and Ramban both offer explanations that satisfy the question and guide us to strive to improve ourselves. It is evident that each one has a unique way of interpreting difficulties in the text. Their interpretations are a result of their different philosophies, life experiences (time periods in which they lived), and outlooks. However, despite the differences, each interpretation is equally valid and acceptable. That is the beauty of the Torah!

## HASHEM HAS OUR BACKS MICHALI MAZOR ('15)

In this week's parsha, Sarah instructs Avraham to send Hagar and Yishmael out of the house. Avraham is unwilling to send them away and only does so when Hashem directs him to listen to Sarah. Why does Avraham disagree with Sarah? Furthermore, why does Hashem side with Sarah rather than with Avraham?

The reason Avraham and Sarah disagree is because they each understand human nature differently. While Avraham thinks Yitzchak will be able to withstand the pressure of being surrounded by the negative influences of Yishmael, Sarah believes that Yitzchak will be incapable of resisting the many temptations of Yishmael's ways. Avraham thinks Yishmael will eventually follow in the good ways exemplified by Yitzchak, and Sarah thinks it more likely that Yitzchak will follow in the ways of Yishmael.

Hashem sides with Sarah because Sarah is the one who has a better grasp of human nature, recognizing that the *yetzer hara* is inherently stronger and more appealing to people than the *yetzer hatov*. The mishna in Pirkei Avot also concurs with Sarah's position and suggests, "distance yourself from a bad neighbor and do not befriend a wicked person." Though in his later years Yitzchak matures into a great tzaddik, Yitzchak is not yet strong enough to resist the pull of immorality at that time.

This lesson is comforting because it shows that just as Hashem did not test Yitzchak before He deems Yitzchak ready, so too He only tests us once we have what it takes to meet the challenge. Hashem will never give us a challenge that we absolutely cannot overcome. We simply need to persevere to accomplish our goals.

### Editor-in-Chief

Jessica Griff ('15)

### Final Editor

Jared Samilow ('14)

### Senior Editor

Isaac Kurtz ('14)

### Faculty Advisor

Rabbi Avi Hochman

## Staff

Andrew Bronner ('15)

Ariel Bugay ('15)

Jacob Wells ('15)

Casey Winderbaum ('16)

Elie Zaghi ('16)

### Editing

Laura Betesh ('15)

Daniella Cohen ('15)

Ari Clements ('14)

Kira Dennis ('14)

Bailey Frohlich ('16)

Ari Mazor ('14)

Matthew Silkin ('14)

Simcha Stadlan ('16)

Interested in sponsoring Ashreinu?  
Contact Rabbi Hochman at  
RAVH@WYHS.NET

This publication contains Torah matter-  
Please treat it with respect



7902 Montoya Circle  
Boca Raton, FL 33433  
Phone: 561-417-7422  
Fax: 561-417-7028  
www.wyhs.net