SHABBOS TABLE

Parshat Vayeira

פרשת וירא

Friday, October 30 – Saturday, October 31, 2026

20 Cheshvan 5787 ♦ כ׳ חשון תשפ״ז

Torah: Bereishis 18:1–22:24 · Haftarah: Melachim II 4:1–37

Compiled by Rabbi Haim Tebeka

Sources: Chabad.org · Rav Haïm Dynovisz (YouTube) · Rabbi YY Jacobson · Rabbi Manis Friedman · Rabbi Reuven Wolf (YouTube lectures) · Rav Yitzchak Ginsburgh (inner.org) · Rabbi Shalom Arush (Breslev.com) · Rabbi Simon Jacobson

A note for parents: *this sheet tells the Torah's stories in full. Please read it first and decide what to share with younger children.*

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A Breath of Hashem, and the Light It Is Meant to Show

I. A Spark of Hashem Inside

When Hashem (G-d) formed Adam, He did not speak him into being the way He spoke the light or the seas. "He breathed into his nostrils the soul of life" (Bereishis [Genesis] 2:7). The Alter Rebbe (Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, founder of Chabad and author of the Tanya, the basic text of Chabad Chassidus) teaches that this soul is "truly 'a part of G-d above'," *chelek Eloka mima'al mamash* (Tanya ch. 2). I have long explained it this way: because Hashem breathed a part of Himself into us, we have chochmah, binah and daas (wisdom, understanding and knowledge), and so we too can bring something new out of nothing, a thought or an idea that did not exist before, as Hashem creates out of nothing. Artificial intelligence, for all its brilliance, derives something from something: it builds new from what already exists. That is very valuable, but it is a different kind of creating.

Something follows from this. A soul that is a part of Hashem will always seek its Source, the way a flame always reaches upward. Avraham was the first to show this. The Rambam (Maimonides, the 12th-century sage who wrote the Mishneh Torah) describes him as a child who began to wonder, and stresses: "He had no teacher, nor was there anyone to inform him." He worked his way to the truth on his own, and "Avraham was forty years old when he became aware of his Creator" (Hilchos Avodas Kochavim 1:3). The Gemara (the Talmud) goes further: "Avraham recognized his Creator at the age of three" (Nedarim 32a). Rabbi YY Jacobson adds a striking thought. Even before Avraham found the truth, his search was already holy: "Underlying Avraham's fiery idol worship was a soul yearning for the one living G-d" (theyeshiva.net, Ki Sisa essay).

And if that yearning was strong enough to carry Avraham all the way to Hashem, we have to ask what gets in its way for the rest of us.

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2. When the Ego Becomes an Idol

That yearning is in every one of us. But the ego and the yetzer hara (the evil inclination) can take that very drive and point it somewhere else, at an idol in place of Hashem. Today the pull has only grown stronger. We tend to believe our success is our own work, or the work of our education and our fancy diplomas. The Torah warned us long ago: "and you will say to yourself, 'My strength and the might of my hand that has accumulated this wealth for me.' But you must remember the L-rd your G-d, for it is He that gives you strength to make wealth" (Devarim [Deuteronomy] 8:17–18). Rav Haïm Dynovisz says it bluntly: « l'idolâtrie c'est quoi c'est l'homme qui se prosterne devant sa propre réussite », idol worship is man bowing down before his own success. It is « le culte de l'ego », the cult of the ego. Avraham shows us the way out, right here in our parsha: pleading for Sedom, he says, "although I am dust and ashes," *ve'anochi afar va'efer* (Bereishis 18:27). Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh puts it this way: "We naturally want to feel significant. Yet one of the deepest spiritual states is to experience oneself as dust. When the ego becomes small, we become more connected to the Source from which everything comes" (X, Oct 28, 2026, https://x.com/RabbiGinsburgh/status/2115512924848476357). He ties it to the words we ask for at the end of every Amidah, "may my soul be as dust to all," and explains: "when I experience myself as being actually dust... thereby I connect to the source of creation and to the purpose of creation." That is the very opposite of *kochi ve'otzem yadi*: whoever feels like dust knows that the strength to succeed comes from Hashem. And our Sages teach that as a reward for those words, "And I am but dust and ashes," Avraham's children merited two mitzvos, the ashes of the red heifer and the dust of the sotah (Sotah 17a). The ego can slip in even when we are doing good. Rabbi Manis Friedman tells of a father who said, "I'm so busy taking care of my kids, I have no time for my kids," and answers: "Don't be a good father, because then it's all about you. Just be a father." I would add: just be a father... that does good. As Rabbi Friedman puts it, "Don't become it, do it."

How can we tell when this is happening to us? I believe the clearest sign is anger. The Gemara says that one who tears his clothes, breaks his dishes or throws away his money in anger "should be like an idol worshipper in your eyes, as that is the craft of the evil inclination" (Shabbos 105b). The Rambam rules: "Anyone who becomes angry is like one who worships idols" (Hilchos De'os 2:3). And the Alter Rebbe explains why: "at the time of his anger faith has departed from him. For were he to believe that what happened to him is of the L-rd's doing, he would not become angry at all" (Iggeres HaKodesh, the letters section of the Tanya, 25). Rabbi Manis Friedman puts it simply: "by allowing ourselves to become angry, we fail to acknowledge that everything comes from G-d" (chabad.org, "Humility and Anger"). Rav Dynovisz reaches the same place from his own direction: « l'idolâtrie et la colère sont liés », idol worship and anger are bound together. This is the point I most want us to take home. If everything comes from Hashem, then everything is, by definition, for our good, even when it looks bad to us. Our Sages speak of the *Or HaGanuz*, the hidden light of the first day, which Hashem "concealed" and stored "for the righteous people in the future" (Chagigah 12a; Rashi, the classic commentator on the Torah and Talmud, on Bereishis 1:4). I understand it as a light so intense that it blinds, which is why so many events, in our own lives and in the world, look negative when they are really positive: the good is hidden inside the seemingly bad. The Alter Rebbe says exactly this: "no evil descends from above and everything is good, though it is not apprehended because of its immense and abundant goodness" (Iggeres HaKodesh 11). That is why the Talmudic sage Nachum Ish Gamzu would say of whatever happened to him, "This too is for the good" (Taanis 21a). Anger is the moment we forget all this.

> **TRANSLATION:** *"idol worship and anger are linked"*

Is this only a beautiful idea? Let us open our parsha and see the hidden good at work.

3. Four Hands for Four People

We can see this hidden good right in our parsha, inside its harshest story, the destruction of Sedom (Sodom). When Lot lingered, "the men took hold of his hand and his wife's hand, and the hand of his two daughters, out of the L-rd's pity for him, and they took him out and placed him outside the city" (Bereishis 19:16). I have always wondered: two angels have only four hands, so how did they hold four people? Look closely, and the Torah says *yad*, one hand, each time, even "the hand of his two daughters." The Chibbah Yeteirah (Rabbi Yehuda Herzl Henkin, a contemporary Orthodox commentator) counts it exactly: «ארבע ידים לארבעתם», four hands for the four of them. The Birkat Asher (Rabbi Asher Wassertheil, also a contemporary Orthodox commentator) explains that one angel held Lot and his wife, and the

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other held the two daughters. The Malbim (the 19th-century Torah commentator) sees it the other way: they took him out «בדרך הפלא», in a wondrous way, so that in an instant he was outside the city.

That raises a second question, and here is my own answer. Rashi teaches that one angel never carries out two missions (Rashi, Bereishis 18:2), and the Midrash (the Sages' teachings on the Torah) names them: Gavriel was sent to overturn Sedom and Refael to rescue Lot (Bereishis Rabbah 50:2). So only the rescuing angel should have taken them out, unless taking them out was itself a step needed to destroy Sedom. And it was. The angel tells Lot, "Hasten, flee there, for I will not be able to do anything until you arrive there" (Bereishis 19:22). This is the line of the Midrash and Rashi, and Tosafos (the medieval commentators on the Talmud, Bava Metzia 86b), the Ohr HaChaim (Rabbi Chaim ibn Attar) and the Gur Aryeh (the Maharal of Prague's commentary on Rashi) say it outright: both angels brought the family out of the city, but only one was the rescuer. That is why, Rashi notes, the Torah then says "and he said: Flee...," and not "and they said" (Rashi, Bereishis 19:16). The Tur HaAroch (Rabbi Yaakov ben Asher's Torah commentary) spells out the reason: since the destroyer could do nothing until Lot was saved, the rescue was needed for the destruction itself. The very mission that destroyed also saved. And for whose sake? "G-d remembered Avraham, and He sent Lot out of the midst of the destruction" (Bereishis 19:29). As Rashi puts it, "in Avraham's merit you are saved" (Rashi, Bereishis 19:17). Even inside the judgment, Hashem's kindness was there, for Avraham's sake.

What gave Avraham's merit such power? I believe it is what Hashem placed in each of us: a soul that can truly turn to Him and to another person.

4. A Soul, Not a Machine

This week Rabbi Ginsburgh, speaking about AI, gave words to what makes us different: "The human being is a subject. He's not an object. AI is an attempt to make an object subjective. But it will not ultimately succeed." AI, he says, should teach us "that the ultimate subject, which is the ability to truly relate to another and truly to relate to our Creator, to G-d, that's unique to the human soul." Ego and anger are exactly what cover up that ability.

So what is our task? As I see it, Avraham's mission, and the mission of the Jewish people after him, is to reveal Hashem's light, and to chase the darkness by showing light rather than by fighting it. Rabbi Ginsburgh, reading the first verses of the Torah, describes how the world first looks to us: "darkness was over the face of the abyss." Then comes hope, and then: "Light is the ability to see, to recognize that all is for good (and G-d saw the light to be good), for the individual and for all; let there be light for all, and there was light for each and every individual." That is the light Avraham came to reveal, the hidden light coming out into the open: behind our successes and our setbacks alike stands Hashem, and all of it is for good.

Revealing that light, though, takes more than good wishes. It takes balance, and Avraham shows us how.

5. Kindness With a Backbone

But showing light does not mean wishing the darkness away. When the world shows us a cruel face, there is a natural pull to live as if we were already in the World to Come, a "Disney-movie" world where every wolf is already a lamb. As I see it, that is rushing it, reaching for it too early, before human nature has healed; and kindness that is not balanced does not hold. Our parsha teaches this. Avraham was *chesed* (lovingkindness) itself, yet the Zohar (the classic text of Kabbalah) says of the *Akeidah* (the binding of Yitzchak): "Until this point, Avraham was not complete. Now water was blended with fire" (Zohar I 119b). His kindness took on *gevurah* (disciplined strength), and the angel could finally say, "Now I know that you fear G-d" (Bereishis 22:12). Yitzchak, the man of gevurah, went on to dig wells of living water. Each carried the other's *middah* (character trait). And if anything, I believe Yitzchak's gevurah toward Yishmael is what helped Yishmael grow: by Avraham's passing, Yishmael "repented of his evil ways ... and yielded the precedence to Yitzchak" at the burial (Rashi, Bereishis 25:9; Bava Basra 16b).

I noticed something else in our parsha that I want to share with you. Sarah is taken by Avimelech (Bereishis 20), comes home untouched, and right away "the L-rd remembered Sarah" (21:1), just like the innocent *sotah* (a wife wrongly suspected, who drank the "bitter waters" to clear her name), who is promised: "she shall be cleared and shall conceive seed" (Bamidbar 5:28). Then I discovered that Rabbi Yitzchak in the Midrash had already taught it, long before me:

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"This one, who entered the house of Pharaoh and the house of Avimelech and came out pure, is it not only right that she be remembered?" (Bereishis Rabbah 53:6). One view there adds that Yitzchak was born at nine months, "so that people should not say: he was scooped out of Avimelech's house." Chizkuni, Kitzur Baal HaTurim, Lekach Tov and Siftei Kohen (on 21:1) agree. Chizkuni: "Sarah was secluded and was not defiled." Pharaoh didn't count, explains the Kitzur Baal HaTurim, since only Avimelech actually reached out to touch her. The Ohr HaChaim (12:13) goes further: Avraham intended it. Like Chana, ready to be tested as a *sotah*, for "You will not make Your Torah false" (Berachos 31b; whether a barren wife then conceives is a Tannaitic dispute), "Avraham thought that through the woman's seclusion with the man while she is innocent, the L-rd would remember her with children." It worked "with Avimelech, and not this time with Pharaoh."

Avimelech gave Sarah *kesus einayim*, "a covering of the eyes," public proof of her innocence: "they will know that I returned you against my will, and through a miracle" (Rashi 20:16). And Avraham prayed for Avimelech's household: "whoever asks for mercy for his fellow while he needs the same thing is answered first" (Rashi 21:1; Bava Kamma 92a). To me this is kindness with a backbone at its clearest: the *gevurah* of the sotah's harsh test, and of Sarah's seclusion, gives birth to *chesed*, a child. And look which child: Yitzchak, whose own *middah* is gevurah, the "Pachad Yitzchak" (the "Fear of Yitzchak," Bereishis 31:42), of whom the Alter Rebbe writes: "In [Yitzchak]'s mode of Divine service, the fear is manifest while the love is hidden in a state of concealment and hiding" (Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh 13). This twist is my own: gevurah gave birth to chesed, and that chesed came into the world as a man of gevurah. The Rebbe teaches that Avraham's humble "I am dust and ashes" (18:27), as we saw, brought "the dust of the sotah," where even the bitter waters, *gevurah* (strictness), "perform an act of *chesed* (kindness): 'she shall be cleared and shall conceive seed'" (Likkutei Sichos vol. 25, Vayeira 2).

And this brings us right back to the ego. The Alter Rebbe explains that holy chesed shows itself in humility, like Avraham saying, as we saw, *anochi afar va'efer* ("I am dust and ashes"), while unbalanced chesed has a counterfeit. Yishmael is "'chesed of kelipah': the more kindness (manifested to him), the more he grows in pride, haughtiness, and self-satisfaction" (Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh 2), *kelipah* being the husk that hides holiness. Our Sages warn: "Anyone who becomes compassionate when he should be cruel will ultimately become cruel when he should be compassionate" (Koheles Rabbah 7:16). And the Rambam reminds us that even in the days of Mashiach (the Messiah) "the world will continue according to its pattern," and that the wolf dwelling with the lamb is "a metaphor and a parable" (Rambam, Hilchos Melachim 12:1). Only "in the future, at the end of days, G-d will bring the evil inclination and slaughter it" (Sukkah 52a). So we don't pretend. "Today to do them" (Eruvin 22a): today is for Torah, *mitzvos* (commandments) and kindness with a spine. Israel went to the polls this week, with final results due November 4, and America votes on November 3. Watching this season's elections, in Israel, here and abroad, I see how deeply people long for that better world. The longing is holy; let it move our hands, not cloud our eyes.

And while we wait and work for that day, there is something we are allowed to ask for.

6. Good We Can See

I want to add something I feel strongly about. Even while we understand that everything is good, we do not have to ask for the hidden kind. We pray to experience only revealed good, *tov hanir'eh v'haniglah*, good that we can see with our own eyes. There is no need for us to go through the harshness of the world to get there. The Rebbe (the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson) spoke about this many times. He taught that when we recognize hardships as hidden kindness, "the inner truth and ultimate source of what appears as hardships will be revealed even at present and G-d will grant us all revealed goodness," and that in the Redemption, "with our own eyes, we will see G-d's kindness in revealed and manifest goodness," in the Rebbe's own words *b'tov hanir'eh v'haniglah* (Likkutei Sichos, the Rebbe's collected talks, vol. 19, Re'eh 1).

People sometimes ask me about the hard road the prophets describe before the Redemption, and here I want to share an idea of my own. Last week we read of Avraham's war against the four kings (Bereishis 14), and our Sages see in it a preview of the end of history. The Ramban writes: "This event happened to [Avraham] in order to teach us that four kingdoms will arise to rule the world. In the end, his [Avraham's] children will prevail over them" (Ramban, Bereishis

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14:1). And the Midrash teaches: "If you see kingdoms clashing with one another, you should anticipate the coming of the Messiah. You may know that it is so, as in the days of [Avraham], as a result of the kingdoms clashing with one another, redemption came to [Avraham]" (Bereishis Rabbah 42:4). Our own parsha adds a link. For the end of days, the prophet Yechezkel foretells the war of Gog uMagog: Gog, king of the land of Magog, coming up against the Jewish people in the Land of Israel (Yechezkel 38–39). The "sulfurous fire" that Hashem rained on Sedom (Bereishis 19:24) is the very phrase Yechezkel uses for Gog: "sulfurous fire upon him and his hordes" (Yechezkel 38:22). And the Midrash says that Gog uMagog will come up against Yerushalayim three times (Midrash Tehillim 118:12).

Now put two "threes" side by side. Our Sages tie the three Batei Mikdash (Holy Temples; singular, Beis HaMikdash) to our three Avos (Patriarchs): Avraham called the site *har*, a mountain; Yitzchak, *sadeh*, a field; and Yaakov, *bayis*, a house (Pesachim 88a). The Rebbe explains: "the First Beis HaMikdash is representative of Avraham; the Second Beis HaMikdash is linked to Yitzchak; while the Third Beis HaMikdash corresponds to Yaakov... the attribute of Yaakov is truth, and truth will never be interrupted or changed" (Kuntres Shabbos Matos-Masei 5722, Sefer HaMaamarim Meluket IV). This is my own idea: just as there are three Batei Mikdash, I see three great wars that shake the whole world, the third being Gog uMagog, as the road that leads to the Third and eternal House. I have not found it in these words in any source; I offer it as a *remez* (a hint), not a prediction. The Ramban, on Yitzchak's three wells, points the same way: the first well hints at "the First House, concerning which the nations contended with us and instigated quarrels and wars with us until they destroyed it," while the third, [Rechovos], "is a reference to the Future House, which will be speedily built in our days, and it will be done without quarrel and feud" (Ramban, Bereishis 26:20).

But I want to be careful, as our Sages are. The Rambam teaches about the war of Gog uMagog: "All these and similar matters cannot be definitely known by man until they occur" (Hilchos Melachim 12:2), and we are not to calculate the end. What we do know is how the Rebbe met frightening times. In 5751 (1990–91), when many were afraid, he "gave the widest possible publicity" to the words of the Yalkut Shimoni (Yeshayahu 499): "My children, have no fear. Whatever I have done, I have done only for your sake. Why are you afraid? Have no fear: the time for your redemption has arrived!" And our Sages give each of us a shield at our own table: "Anyone who fulfills the obligation to eat three meals on [Shabbos] is rescued from three punishments... and from the war of Gog and Magog" (Shabbos 118a). So this is what I pray for: not the war, but the Third House, Yaakov's house of truth, built "without quarrel and feud," in good we can see.

That is where the whole story is heading. The Gemara asks about the verse "on that day shall the L-rd be one and His name one," the words we say at the end of Aleinu (the prayer that closes each service): "Is that to say that now He is not one?" And it answers: "In this world, upon good tidings one recites: Blessed...Who is good and does good, and over bad tidings one recites: Blessed...the true Judge. In the World-to-Come one will always recite: Blessed...Who is good and does good" (Pesachim 50a). Rashi reads the Shema (our daily declaration of Hashem's Oneness) the same way: "The L-rd who is now our G-d... He will at some future time be the One (sole) [L-rd]" (Rashi, Devarim 6:4). Then the Shema will be fully revealed, and *Hashem Echad uShmo Echad* (Hashem is One and His Name is One) will be true for everyone to see. The Torah promises: "And the L-rd, your G-d, will circumcise your heart" (Devarim 30:6). The Ramban (Nachmanides, the 13th-century Torah commentator) explains that "lust and desire are the 'foreskin' of the heart," and that "in the days of the Messiah, the choice of their [genuine] good will be natural." As I understand it, a circumcised heart is a heart whose ego has been tamed, so that nothing stands between us and the good, and everyone sees it. That was Avraham's ultimate vision and goal. Right here in our parsha (this week's Torah portion) he planted his eshel, his place of hospitality: according to one view in the Gemara it was an orchard to supply fruit for his guests, and according to the other an inn for lodging (Rashi, Bereishis 21:33). There he brought his guests to bless Hashem, and the Gemara says that through it "Avraham our forefather caused the name of the Holy One, Blessed be He, to be called out in the mouth of all passersby" (Sotah 10a–b, on Bereishis 21:33).

Our teachers this week fill in the picture. This Shabbos is Chof Cheshvan, the birthday of the Rebbe Rashab (Rabbi Sholom DovBer, the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe), who as a little boy cried because Hashem revealed Himself to Avraham and not to him. Rabbi Reuven Wolf, following that same line of the Rebbe's teaching, explains that Avraham's pain after his bris was a longing for the highest level, the fiftieth gate, and that in His visit "Hashem actually illuminates

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[Avraham Avinu's] soul with the 50th level and that's the healing." Rabbi Shalom Arush reminds us that "where the eyes of the person are, that's where the person is," and that "being stingy is being the opposite of Hashem," even with words. And Rabbi Simon Jacobson, teaching Tanya ch. 37, calls every mitzvah "a building block" of the Geulah (the Redemption): "We're not bystanders." Hagar learned it at the well: the water was there all along, and she only had to lift her eyes and see it.

May we credit every success to the One who gives us the strength, meet every frustration with faith instead of anger, and so add light to our homes and to the world. May Hashem show us only good that we can see, revealed and visible good; may He circumcise our hearts so that the ego no longer hides the light; and may we live to see Avraham's goal fulfilled, when Hashem is One and His name is One, with the coming of Mashiach, speedily in our days.

— Haim

Where to find them: Rav Yitzchak Ginsburgh, x.com/RabbiGinsburgh/status/2115512924848476357 and x.com/RabbiGinsburgh/status/2115150033486254309 · Rabbi Manis Friedman, x.com/ManisFriedman/status/2115170576717197703 · Rav Haïm Dynovisz, youtu.be/QRSWdjbhCBY and youtu.be/6N5kCEvl3VM · Rabbi YY Jacobson, theyeshiva.net · Rabbi Reuven Wolf, youtu.be/baSYpARWVzA · Rabbi Shalom Arush, x.com/ShalomArushEN/status/2114469433561534524 and x.com/ShalomArushEN/status/2115585442443911596 · Rabbi Simon Jacobson, youtu.be/jgPHQrn525k · Torah texts: chabad.org

For the table: *Think of a time this week when you felt proud of something you did, and a time you felt angry. In each moment, where was Hashem in the picture, and what would have changed if you had remembered that it all came from Him, for your good?*

Hagar's Well: The Water Was Already There

FOR THE FAMILY TABLE · CHABAD.ORG

Hagar and [Yishmael] are lost in the desert, the water is gone, and she sits a bowshot away so she won't have to watch him die. Then G-d "opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water" (Bereishis 21:19). Rabbi Eliezer Shemtov points out that the Torah doesn't say a well appeared. She saw one that had been there all along, and what changed was how she looked. The angel told her, "Arise, lift up the boy and hold him by the hand" (21:18). In other words, raise your gaze and don't stop at the empty canteen. As Rabbi Shemtov puts it: "Success depends on G-d; the effort depends on you."

For the table: *When did you find a "well" that was there all along, once you looked again?*

SOURCE **Rabbi Eliezer Shemtov, Chabad.org** · Bereishis 21:18–19 · chabad.org/7558015

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Full text of each teaching: *www.tebeka.com/parasha/2026-10-31-vayeira/*

1 The Rebbe

The Rebbe's teachings for Vayeira on 20 Cheshvan

In a ma'amar on this Shabbos in 5737, the Rebbe calls "the way of Hashem" (18:19) a king's road that runs both ways: Torah brings Hashem down to us, mitzvos lift us up. In 5750 he explained Avraham's pain after the bris as lovesickness (choleh = 49), healed by the fiftieth gate, and asked each of us, on a Shabbos Vayeira that is 20 Cheshvan, to reach "an even higher rung." Also: the eishel and the Akeidah (Likkutei Sichos 3, 20). Full teaching →

2 Rav Haïm Dynovisz

> *From several of his French classes on YouTube (details in each source line). French quotes are verbatim from the auto-captions, speech-recognition errors included; timestamps approximate (±30 s). His views as he states them.*

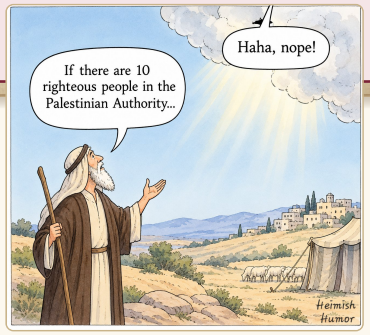
Chesed means going first, and never despairing

For Rav Dynovisz, chesed is the courage to take the first step alone, and Avraham is the first man who never despairs of people. The bargaining over Sedom is a code, and it worked: even out of the world's garbage came the light of the world, David and Mashiach. Also: the ego as modern idol worship, and anger as its sign. Full teaching →

A smile for the table

BEREISHIS 18:32

Avraham asks to spare Sedom even for ten tzaddikim (Bereishis 18:32). Heimish Humor imagines the same question today.



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3 Rabbi YY Jacobson

Women's Vayeira class, Bais Medrash Ohr Chaim, Monsey · quotes from the captions

Why nothing was hidden from Avraham

The Chasam Sofer, as taught by Rabbi YY Jacobson: Avraham was always among people, so by the usual rules his prophecy should have been limited. G-d revealed everything to him anyway, because "G-d wanted you to change the world." Full teaching →

4 Rabbi Manis Friedman

Quotes from the captions of his videos

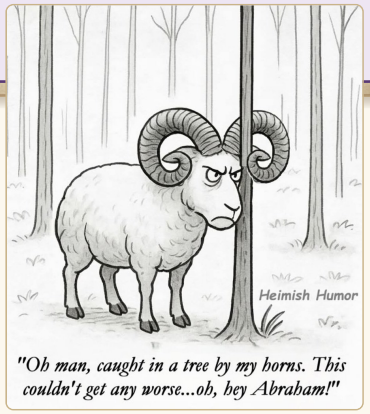
Selflessness, from the Akeidah to the home

At the Akeidah "the cause itself is going to die," and so Avraham became "the father of all selflessness that followed in the course of history." At home: "Don't be a good father, because then it's all about you. Just be a father," and marriage "demands from a person a lot of humility." Full teaching →

A smile for the table

BEREISHIS 22:13

"Avraham lifted his eyes and saw, behold, a ram caught in the thicket by its horns" (Bereishis 22:13).



Cartoon: Heimish Humor (sent by Rabbi Haim Tebeka)

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5 Rabbi Reuven Wolf

"Vayeira – A Healing Touch" (2018) · quotes from the captions

The visit that heals

Rabbi Wolf's class follows the questions of the Rebbe's 5750 sichah step by step (our match): Avraham was lovesick at the 49th gate, and "in that visitation Hashem actually illuminates [Avraham Avinu's] soul with the 50th level and that's the healing." Then: bring it all "down into daily normal living." Full teaching →

6 Rav Yitzchak Ginsburgh

Gal Einai (inner.org) and his posts this week

Avraham, Avraham: the two "I"s

Rav Ginsburgh: the angel calls "Avraham, Avraham" to his Divine ani and anochi, and the sum, 638, equals Avraham-Yitzchak-Yaakov. Also: He, You, I (Torah, prayer, kindness); the tzaddik who holds all four sides; אברהם = בא מהר, "come quickly"; and the eishel as "ask." Full teaching →

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7 Rabbi Shalom Arush

Breslev.com clips with English subtitles

Where your eyes are, there you are

Rabbi Shalom Arush: "Where the eyes of the person are, that's where the person is," and the blessing goes to "the one who has a good eye." "Be truly happy for others, and honor everyone." Full teaching →

Don't be stingy, especially with words

Rabbi Shalom Arush teaches: "being stingy is being the opposite of Hashem," because "Hashem is all giving and someone who is stingy only takes." "We are told to emulate Hashem - so don't be stingy! If this is true of money - then all the more so is it true of WORDS." So "Encourage your spouse, your kids, and your friends," and "Make sure you are heaping on many times the positivity than the criticism!". In Vayeira, G-d Himself visits Avraham after his bris, and the Gemara learns: "G-d visits the sick, as it is written, 'G-d appeared to him in the plains of Mamre'; so should you too visit the sick" (Sotah 14a).

For the table: *Don't be stingy with good words: each person says one encouraging word to someone else at the table.*

SOURCE **Rabbi Shalom Arush, X (Breslev.com)** · Oct 28, 2026 · x.com/ShalomArushEN/status/2115585442443911596
Sotah 14a, Parshah In Depth, Chabad.org · chabad.org

A smile for the table

BEREISHIS 19:26

Stinginess in Sedom went all the way down to the salt. Rashi on 19:26: "She sinned with salt, and she was punished with salt. He said to her, 'Give a little salt to these guests.' She replied, 'Also this evil custom you wish to introduce into this place?'"

Cartoon: Heimish Humor (sent by Rabbi Haim Tebeka)

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8 Torah on the News

This week's news

Rav Ginsburgh: AI "attempts to make an object into a subject," but relating "to another person and to G-d" stays unique to the human soul. Yosef, stabbed on 47th Street, was back the next day: "We'll just keep spreading more light." And at Pegisha, hundreds of Crown Heights homes opened to nearly 2,000 students, Avraham's tent today. Full teaching →

A smile for the table

BEREISHIS 19:30

A bit of dark humor about where Jews feel safe today.

Lot and his daughters escape Paris.

Cartoon: Heimish Humor (sent by Rabbi Haim Tebeka)

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9 Mashiach & Geulah

From Sedom to Mashiach

FOR THE FAMILY TABLE · CHABAD.ORG

After Sedom is destroyed, Lot and his two daughters, the only survivors of their family, hide in a cave in the mountains. The daughters believe the whole world has been destroyed, as in the Mabul (the Flood), and that they are the last people left (Bereishis Rabbah 51:8). Their mother is gone, and so is any hope of a husband. The older daughter says, "Our father is old, and there is no man in the world to marry us in the usual manner" (Bereishis 19:31). Two nights in a row they give Lot wine, and each daughter conceives a child from him. The older names her son Moav, "from father," and the younger names hers Ben-Ami, "son of my kindred," the ancestors of Moav and Ammon (Bereishis 19:37–38).

Who is to blame? Most of our Sages judge the daughters favorably and fault Lot. The Midrash reads "the isolated one seeks lust" (Mishlei 18:1) as being about Lot (Bereishis Rabbah 51:9). He had chosen Sedom in the first place, and even after he understood what had happened the first night, he drank again the second (Bereishis Rabbah 51:9; Midrash Tanchuma, Vayeira 12). The Gemara applies a verse to them: the daughters, who meant it for a mitzvah, "the righteous will walk in them," and Lot, "the transgressors will stumble in them" (Horayos 10b, on Hoshea 14:10). Avraham moved away right afterward, Rashi explains, to keep his distance from Lot's disgrace (Rashi, Bereishis 20:1).

Why the daughters are honored. They believed they had to keep the human race going. That is why the Torah's ban on marrying Moabites and Ammonites (Devarim 23:4) applies only to the men and not the women, in honor of the mothers' intentions (Pesikta Rabbati 42). The older daughter acted first, so her line joined the Jewish people four generations earlier (Bava Kamma 38b).

The light hidden in the darkness. From Moav came Rus (Ruth), great-grandmother of King David. From Ammon came Naamah, wife of King Shlomo and mother of Rechavam, from whom Mashiach descends (Bereishis Rabbah 51:8). The Midrash says the wine in the cave appeared by a miracle, a taste of Mashiach's time (Bereishis Rabbah 51:8). On the verse "I have found David My servant" (Tehillim 89:21), it asks, "Where did He find him? In Sedom!" (Bereishis Rabbah 41:4).

Why would the greatest soul come through such a low place? Rabbi Meir of Premishlan gave a parable: a merchant smuggling precious goods past customs covers them in dirt, so no one suspects their value. In the same way, Hashem sent the souls of David and Mashiach down through unions that look unworthy, so the forces of evil would not try to stop them (cf. Siftei Kohen, Bereishis 38:1). The Tzemach Tzedek, the third Lubavitcher Rebbe, explains that David's kingship comes from a source so lofty that it could only be drawn out from the deepest low (Derech Mitzvosecha, p. 58).

A story. In 1921, in Luban, a Torah scholar became fatally ill with a strange swelling of the tongue. He told his rav, Rav Moshe Feinstein, that the week before he had preached harshly against Lot's daughters. Two very old women had appeared to him in a dream, introduced themselves as Lot's daughters, and told him he was being punished through his tongue. They had believed they were the last people alive. They had made the story public on purpose, through their sons' names, so that no later generation could ever claim a child was born without a father and build a false messiah on it. For that, they said, they merited that the true Mashiach would come from them. He finished telling the dream and passed away (Igros Moshe, vol. 8, introduction).

For the table: *Have you ever seen something good grow out of something that looked like a disaster? And why might the Torah tell us this story openly instead of hiding it?*

SOURCE **Mendel Braun, "The Untold Story of Lot and His Daughters," Chabad.org** · chabad.org/7558016

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The boy who wept to see G-d

On 20 Cheshvan, the Rebbe Rashab's birthday: the boy who cried "Why did G-d reveal Himself to Avraham, but does not reveal Himself to us?" founded Tomchei Temimim, whose "soldiers" battle for the revelation of Mashiach, when "your eyes will perceive your Master." Rabbi Simon Jacobson: every mitzvah is a "building block" of the Geulah. "We're not bystanders." Full teaching →

The full list of sources and references is in the web version: tebeka.com/parasha/2026-10-31-vayeira/

שבת שלום

These notes are for learning and discussion at the Shabbos table. For practical halachic questions, please consult your rav.

Next week: Parshas Chayei Sarah

Shabbos, November 7, 2026 · 27 Cheshvan 5787 · Shabbos Mevarchim Kislev (the Shabbos we bless the coming month). Torah: Bereishis 23:1–25:18 · Haftarah: Melachim I 1:1–31. Rosh Chodesh Kislev is Tuesday and Wednesday, November 10–11; the molad is Monday night, 10:27 PM and 3 chalakim (Hebcal).

Candle lighting

	Candles	Shabbos ends
Israel		
Jerusalem	Fri before 4:11 PM	Sat 5:28 PM
Tel Aviv	Fri before 4:32 PM	Sat 5:29 PM
Haifa	Fri before 4:20 PM	Sat 5:28 PM
Netanya	Fri before 4:32 PM	Sat 5:29 PM
Herzliya	Fri before 4:32 PM	Sat 5:29 PM
Modiin	Fri before 4:32 PM	Sat 5:28 PM

	Candles	Shabbos ends
United States		
Las Vegas (Summerlin)	Fri before 5:28 PM	Sat 6:25 PM
Palo Alto	Fri before 5:54 PM	Sat 6:51 PM
New York	Fri before 5:36 PM	Sat 6:35 PM
Los Angeles	Fri before 5:43 PM	Sat 6:39 PM
Miami	Fri before 6:22 PM	Sat 7:15 PM
Chicago	Fri before 5:29 PM	Sat 6:29 PM

	Candles	Shabbos ends
Europe		
Paris	Fri before 5:15 PM	Sat 6:21 PM
Lyon	Fri before 5:12 PM	Sat 6:14 PM
Marseille	Fri before 5:14 PM	Sat 6:15 PM
London	Fri before 4:19 PM	Sat 5:27 PM
Antwerp	Fri before 5:01 PM	Sat 6:09 PM

Times from Hebcal.com: candles 18 min before sunset (Jerusalem 40, Haifa 30, other Israeli cities 20); ends at nightfall (8.5°). "before" = light no later than this time; "after" = light only after this time (nightfall), from an existing flame. Check your local rav or calendar.

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