

ספר מי השילוח - חלק ראשון - פרשת וירא

**Mei Hashiloach Vol I. Genesis *B'reishith - Vayera***

\*\*\*\*\*

**ON SEEING GOD**

This week's Sidra discusses the birth of Isaac and his place in the divine scheme of things. Jewish scholarship traditionally places Isaac in the realm of *Gevurah* - Restriction and Withholding, Judgment and Fear: the left side. Traditional biases have painted the left side into near-demonic negativism, treating it as something to be avoided and loathed.

Izbicy Torah is really the first to tilt that narrative, shifting it into the light, connecting *Gevurah* to what is most joyful and precious.

As was discussed in the previous Sidra, Abraham's deepest longing was for God to reveal Himself to all mankind. 'Just show Yourself to people,' he would plead with God. 'If You only revealed Yourself to the world, I know for sure that everyone would fall over themselves to worship You,' Abraham insisted.

In this week's Sidra Abraham's wish is granted and his dream fulfilled, as God reveals His presence on Earth for all to see. Now, for those of us stuck inside the narrative of a Hollywood-style religious event, the revelation of God on Earth comes as something of an anti-climax. It has none of the dramatic effect of the Exodus from Egypt or the Ten Commandments at Sinai. The birth of Isaac is the manifestation of the Shechina in the life of everyman. Isaac is the naked divine presence.

The First Izbicy Torah opens with a discussion on the meaning of Torah. We who learn Torah and live close to the world of Torah still need reminding what Torah is and what it means. We get so caught up in the words, sentences and paragraphs that we stop seeing the page of holy text for what it is. Torah is God giving Himself to us, begging us to take Him.

Without asking the question out loud, the Izbicy wants to know the actual meaning of the opening phrase in this Sidra, 'God appeared to him'. The narrative doesn't appear to suggest Abraham's having any kind of viewed epiphany or visional prophecy until he caught sight of three men who turn out to be angels. What then was God's appearance? According to Izbicy 'appearance' means that Abraham was granted Torah of the utmost clarity.

If the definition of Torah is God giving Himself to us, then 'Torah of the utmost clarity' means God giving Himself to us so palpably that the Torah can be perceived with the human eye, not merely in words, sentences, text or writing, but the holy Torah itself. That's the meaning of the opening phrase of the Sidra, 'God appeared to him'.

\*\*\*\*\* Mei Hashiloach Text \*\*\*\*\*

**God appeared to him at the Oaks of Mamre, while he was sitting at the door of the tent, in the heat of the day.**

It is written, 'And there will rise for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness - with healing in its wings.' (Mal. 3:20) People 'who fear My name' are those with a proper grasp of Torah and God, which necessitates authentic reverence. The phrase 'fear My name' means fear growing out of one's awareness of Torah and God. It is to people with genuine reverence

that God promises the ‘sun of righteousness’, Torah of the utmost clarity.

וירא אליו ה' באלוני ממרא והוא יושב פתח האהל כחום היום, כתיב וזרחה לכם יראי שמי שמש צדקה ומרפא בכנפיה [מלאכי ג' כ'] יראי שמי היינו מי שיש לו תפיסה בד"ת ובהש"י וזאת יחייב להם היראה האמיתיות, וזה פי' יראי שמי ומבטיח להם הש"י כי יאיר להם שמש צדקה היינו ד"ת מבוררין,

‘With healing in its wings’ means with total confidence and command of one’s relationship to God and Torah; wings endow a creature with assurance and courage.

ומרפא בכנפ' היינו בטוחות ועוז בהש"י ובד"ת כמו הכנפי' שהם מבטח עוז לבעלי הכנף,

\*\*\*\*\*

When Torah is sufficiently clear and transparent enough to convey God, it is a source of total confidence - like the relationship of a bird to its wings. Whenever we have a clear Torah, we are filled with optimism and courage around that issue; nothing deters us.

In the next paragraph the Izbicy explains how Abraham prepared himself for God’s appearance by making his longing for God the highest object in his life. For Abraham, nothing was as prominent as his quest for God. It was with him all the time, whatever he was doing and wherever he was - it’s all he cared about.

The clarity of Torah and vision granted to Abraham in this narrative is simply measure for measure - Abraham’s prior clarity about his mission and the power of his longing to have God enter his life, created the perfect space for it to happen.

\*\*\*\*\* Mei Hashiloach Text \*\*\*\*\*

Before God appeared to him, the intrusive details of his mundane life never gave Abraham a moment’s peace. He hated everything about life that was not directly connected to his quest for the sacred. He longed only to discover ‘who’s governing the castle?’ as it is written, ‘The path of life is on high for the wise.’ (Prov. 15:24) What it means is that Abraham always kept the quest for God at the apex of his priorities, as though it overlay everything else. That’s why God appeared to him, providing him with a confident, commanding and perfectly transparent Torah.

והנה אאע"ה קודם שנגלה אליו הש"י לא הי' לו שום נייחא מכל עניני עו"הו והי' ממאס בהם ועיקר הי' אצלו תשוקה לידע מי הוא בעל הבירה כמ"ש אורח חיים למעלה למשכיל היינו כי זאת הי' אצלו עיקר וראש לכל דבר כמו שמונח למעלה, ע"כ נראה אליו הש"י ונתן לו תקופות לד"ת מבוררים,

\*\*\*\*\*

Why does the Torah need to repeat the details of Abraham's location at the time of this event? Because the phrase 'Oaks of Mamre' hints at something else. The Izbicy rebbe often examines Hebrew names of people, places and things for a deeper meaning. Because they are Hebrew, Torah words can be translated and interpreted on more than one level.

The daily grind, reality and state of affairs of life on life's terms, all made Abraham want to fight to free himself. He became confident and commanding, the ultimate spiritual warrior who nurtured and honored the rebellious within himself.

\*\*\*\*\* Mei Hashiloach Text \*\*\*\*\*

This explains the reference to the Oaks of Mamre. Oak trees represent confidence and command, while the Hebrew word, Mamre hints at rebellion. Abraham was constantly rebelling against the tyranny of the mundane in his life.

כי אלוני הוא לשון תקופות וממרא היינו לפי שסירב ומרה בכל עניני עו"הז,

'He was sitting at the door of the tent in the heat of the day' means Abraham's love for God grew fierce and passionate inside him. The phrase, 'heat of the day' in this verse refers to God, who is the Day. Abraham's heat was day-heat, i.e. passion for God; he could see it all plainly. That's why the verse tells us about the door of the tent, because it was all suddenly so obvious and open to him.

והוא ישב פתח האהל כחום היום היינו שהי' מתחמם ומתלהב בו אהבת הש"י שנקרא יום, והי' מפורש לפניו, וזה פי' פתח האהל היינו שהי' פתוח לפניו,

\*\*\*\*\*

It's the third day after his circumcision and Abraham is sore, his wound is throbbing, but the pain is just background noise. It is *his* Mitzvah - all his Torah is invested in this one Commandment. All the *Simcha* - Joy, energy and passion he can possibly experience, is concentrated in this one place on his body, the flesh of his penis, into which he has just carved a luminous and matchless Mitzvah.

Abraham grows powerful with the clarity of the Torah he has just received, he feels so confident he's practically flying. Then suddenly he sees God in it - in this Mitzvah/Torah flesh. That is what the Izbicy Torah we have just read, essentially means. We each have our own Mitzvot and Torah, our personal areas of expertise, skill or talent, where the divine has prominence in our soul. It is up to us to nurture the passion and focus our awareness, putting God uppermost on any list of our priorities, if we are to achieve the clarity of Torah and vision described above.

\*\*\*\*\*

Next we meet Abraham's three visitors: the angels. Angels have changed over time. It's virtually impossible for us, standing in the 21st century, to comprehend what the word 'angel' meant to someone in medieval times, let alone in antiquity. It is not much clearer how the Izbicy, in mid 19th century, understood or conceptualized angels. He refers us to a Talmudic and Midrashic exegesis where the sages, using a mathematical formula, based on a verse from

the Book of Daniel, calculate the size of an angel. What the Izbicy 'personally' thinks of angels is not entirely clear, but the Mei Hashiloach rarely says anything complimentary about them.

They are not perfect beings by any measure or standard. Moses can think rings around them, so they're probably not that bright. Angels are capable of spite and can be simultaneously both scornful and jealous of the same person.

In the context of this Sidra we discover, as the narrative unfolds, that the three strangers are non other than Archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, who are the apotheoses of the qualities of *Hesed* - Giving, *Gevurah* - Withholding and *Tiferet* - Balance. These three qualities are subsequently embodied in the person and character of the three patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In essence, the three angels who visit Abraham in this text are non other than Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

It is at this point in history that Abraham becomes the locus or focal point of the universe, as was discussed in the introduction to the first Mishna in Sefer Yetzira: everything pivots on him.

\*\*\*\*\* Mei Hashiloach Text \*\*\*\*\*

## He looked and saw three men standing over him.

The Hebrew word עליו *ALAV* - *Over*, may just as accurately be translated as *upon*. The men were not standing over him, they were standing on him. God showed Abraham how the whole world rests on him. An angel is a third the size of the world, as we learn in the Talmud. (Chulin 91b) Essentially, God was demonstrating to Abraham how important he is - how the whole world exists in his merit.

וירא והנה שלשה אנשים נצבים עליו. היינו שהראה לו הש"י כי כל העולם כלו עומד עליו כי מלאך הוא שלישי עולם כדאיתא במסכת חולין [צ"א:] והראה לו כי כל העולם עומד בזכותו של אברהם אבינו.

\*\*\*\*\*

The second Torah builds on the previous thesis, that something astonishing has happened to the world with Abraham's circumcision and subsequent election to a new role as fulcrum of the world. Now his wish to have God reveal Himself for the world to see in all His glory, is about to be fulfilled. Although Abraham does not yet realize it, the event is not a one-time fix-all. It is a process which will take many lifetimes and thousands of years. It is still unfolding today.

The process will begin with the birth of Isaac, but before that can happen, the Izbicy notes, the whole world must be *Mukhshar* - Made Kosher - Prepared. The world Isaac is to enter needs fixing, redecorating and rededication, as we might treat a room we plan to convert into a synagogue, or a piece of furniture to be turned into an ark to house a Torah scroll, or a basket we will use as a newborn infant's crib, The advent of three archangels changes the atmosphere of the whole world, purifying and dedicating it in preparation for the birth of Isaac and the revelation of the *Shechina*.

\*\*\*\*\* Mei Hashiloach Text \*\*\*\*\*

## He looked and saw three men standing over him.

The reason angels had to appear before the birth of Isaac is because the world was not really ready or in any condition to contain a precious soul of Isaac's caliber. The birth of Isaac was like the *Shechina* - Divine Presence coming down to dwell in this world, because Isaac was essentially *Gevurah* - Judgment, and the *Shechina* is often called *Gevurah*, as we read in the Talmud: "This is what Moses heard from the mouth of *Gevurah*." (Megillah 31b)

וירא והנה שלשה אנשים נצבים עליו. ענין המלאכים שבאו קודם לידת יצחק, כי העולם לא היה כדאי שיוולד בה נפש יקר כיצחק, כי הוא כמו ירדת שכינה בעוה"ז כי מדותיו היה מדות גבורה וגם השכינה נקראת גבורה כדאיתא [מגילה ל"א]: כך שמע משה מפי הגבורה,

Which explains why it had to be specifically *three* angels who appeared in order to sanctify the atmosphere, since an angel is a third of the world, as was said above. Only after they came into the world was it possible for Isaac to be born here.

לזה היה מהצורך לבוא אליו ג' מלאכים בכדי שעי"ז יהיה אור העולם מלא קדושה, כי מלאך הוא שלישי עולם כנ"ל, ואח"ז היה יכול יצחק להוולד.

\*\*\*\*\*

The third Torah is really the Izbicy's main teaching on this section of the Genesis narrative. Both at the beginning and end of it the rebbe urges his students to be aware how profound it is, by using the Hebrew word *עמק* - *Omeq* - Deep over and over again.

It seems to be axiomatic in Jewish philosophy and theology that we have free-will. Rabbinic Judaism which dates back to the later centuries of the Temple in Jerusalem, (from about 200 BCE onward) can be said to treat free will as a premise; an assumed basis on which all religious reasoning can proceed. Maimonides takes it on as an article of faith without which there can be no platform of reward and punishment. Judaism hardly seems possible without some firm belief in freedom of choice and action.

Izbicy sees all that, and rejects it out of hand. God is in charge of the world, and that's all there is. The world started out that way and continues precisely so. God has not abdicated His regime or disconnected from His manifold works. Nothing changed in Creation. Why should it change, it's a perfect universe? Any system of thought that restricts or impinges on God's mastery and providence is heretical.

Questions the reader may have concerning the propriety of 'reward and punishment' in a world without free-will can be answered without stretching and distorting one's religious sensibilities too badly. Indeed, it is the accepted Orthodox Jewish dogma that is irreconcilable with logic.

\*\*\*\*\* Mei Hashiloach Text \*\*\*\*\*

**Sarah denied it, saying, “I did not laugh,” as she was afraid.**

To grasp the profound subtext of this exchange we first have to understand that the Talmudic dictum ‘everything is in the hands of heaven except for the fear of heaven’, (Berachoth 33b) is only true from the limited perspective of the human mind. The truth is that everything is in the hands of heaven, including fear of heaven, it’s just that God hides His ways from us in this world

ותכחש שרה לאמר לא צחקתי כי יראה. עומק הענין בזה, כי מה דאיתא בגמ' [ברכות ל"ג:] הכל בידי שמים חוץ מיראת שמים הוא רק לפי גבול תפיסת האדם, אבל באמת הכל בידי שמים ואף יראת שמים ורק בעוה"ז הסתיר הש"י דרכו.

\*\*\*\*\*

A powerful theme running through the Mei Hashiloach is the conviction that God engineers drama and controversy in the lives of biblical figures in order to advance an agenda of which the protagonists may be in complete ignorance. In this instance Izbicy has a rabbinic text to support his thesis. In the Palestinian Talmud we read: R. Biri said of Sarah, ‘What a circuitous and roundabout way God had to take in order to fulfill His desire to hear righteous women talk, as it is written, And [God] said, ‘No! but you did laugh.’ (Gen. 18:15) (Jer. Sotah 29a)

It’s a three ring circus. Abraham, occupying the outer ring, has finished jumping through his hoops; now it’s Sarah’s turn. One way or another she has to be brought to a place of complete obliviousness, to where she is clueless of the intentions of the Master. Unbeknownst to Abraham or Sarah the Ringmaster has a program in which they are merely opening acts, they don’t even realize there is a third and inner ring where the chief drama is to be played out later.

God sets Sarah up to suggest that He is incapable of fully carrying out His will or purpose, by supposing that for Abraham to father a child he would have to become someone he was not. Abraham might undergo miraculous regeneration and rejuvenation to become vigorous and potent again, but then he would not feel it was him who fathered a baby. Sarah’s denial of God’s power sets up the ideal scene for God to contradict her in a way that is clear and unambiguous: ‘You say I can’t make Abraham father a child and have it feel natural to him? I’ll show you what I can really do when I want to!’

Of course, when God shows what He is capable of, all masks and curtains disappear, all stagecraft and artifice dissolve. What remains is God visibly running the world without props or illusion, which is another way of saying, ‘everything is in the hands of heaven, even fear of heaven’.

In order for Isaac to be born, God had to be ‘tricked’ or ‘induced’ into saying ‘everything is in the hands of heaven, even fear of heaven’. For that bit of dialogue to be spoken, Sarah had to challenge God’s omnipotence. For that to happen, Abraham and Sarah had to lose faith in themselves and their abilities to become parents. For that to happen, Abraham and Sarah had to forget the strength and depth of their lifelong faith in God. For God to be tricked into affirming His power, Abraham and Sarah had to be tricked into denying or challenging it.

God is always pulling the strings in Izbicy Torah.

\*\*\*\*\* Mei Hashiloach Text \*\*\*\*\*

The essence of Isaac's special character is his awareness that even one's Fear of God is in God's hands.

The world just wasn't worthy of such a precious revelation, that's why it was necessary for Sarah to say, 'my husband is [too] old,' hinting that it may not even be in God's hands to do bring His plans to fruition. Thereupon God was able to respond, measure for measure, revealing that not only is everything in the hands of heaven, but that even fear of heaven is in His hands, which is what the birth of Isaac means.

If not for Sarah losing sight of the fact that God is in charge of everything that happens, Isaac could not have been born into this world. Because Isaac's very existence demonstrates and proves how even fear of heaven is in heaven's hands. That's what's so precious about his birth.

ומדות יצחק אבינו היה להכיר שאף יראת שמים הוא ביד הש"י אך העולם לא היה ראוי ליקרות כזה, לכך הוצרכה שרה לאמור ואדוני זקן שנראה שמכחשת שאין הכל בידי שמים, ועי"ז הראה לה הקב"ה מידה במידה כי אף יראת שמים הוא בידו וזאת הוא הולדת יצחק, ובלתי ההסתר הזה שנסתר מאתה לא היה יצחק אבינו יוכל להולד בעוה"ז, כי יקרת מדות יצחק אבינו היה לברר ולהראות כי אף יראת שמים הוא בידי שמים,

\*\*\*\*\*

In case there remains any ambiguity, (perhaps there are students of the Mei Hashiloach who may attempt reconciling Izbicy Torah with other Jewish philosophies) the rebbe goes back, dotting the 'i's and crossing the 't's.

There are no ways to mitigate the implications of this Torah, it is what it is. Get used to it.

\*\*\*\*\* Mei Hashiloach Text \*\*\*\*\*

All of Israel's sins are under the superintendence and direction of God, because it is through them that God's Name is magnified and glorified. Understand this, because it is very profound concept.

ואף כל החטאים של ישראל הם בהשגחות השי"ת כי ע"י זה יתגדל ויתקדש שמייה רבא, והבן כי עמוק עמוק הוא.

\*\*\*\*\*

The final section of this Torah is from the *Gilyon* - Appendix to the Mei Hashiloach.

Vol. I of the Mei Hashiloach was redacted and published by R. Gershon Chanoch Henoch Lainer, the Radziner rebbe, a grandson of the Izbicy, in the year 1860, six years after the passing of the Izbicy rebbe.

Vol. II which was published in 1922 by the Radziner rebbe's younger brother contained material he found written into the margins of the copy of Vol. I that had belonged to his older brother, who had already passed away. The following Torah is taken from those marginal notes, known throughout this translation as the Appendix.

Izbicy Torah often discusses, albeit indirectly, the way humans think about problems, remember events and process emotions. One of many remarkable aspects of Izbicy Torah is its modern approach to understanding psychology and human behavior. Humans have various levels of awareness. The surface of the mind, so to speak, is extremely busy dealing with the influx of sensory data streaming in from the world around us. The sheer volume of activity in the brain can drown the voice of reason. We may not even notice what we are thinking, because our thoughts are being buried under masses of high priority 'news' - sights, sounds, smells and other stimuli demanding our attention. Most people can freely relate this concept; that situations develop where we miss the signals and clues surfacing out of our own mind, due to an overload of 'chaff' or internal noise.

The same is true, says the Izbicy, on deeper levels. I may be so caught up in emotions of despair or frustration I cannot connect to my own faith. Not that my faith has evaporated, but that I in my emotional state cannot access it.

Abraham and Sarah were chagrined to discover that they had lost faith in the promise that they would become parents. God had promised them they would have children, grandchildren and descendants who would be numerous as the stars. But years passed, Abraham and Sarah aged and lost that feeling of impending salvation they had enjoyed when the prophecy was fresh in their minds. The dulling changes happening to flesh and blood as a body moves into old age have parallels in the brain. As a body passes a certain point in its physical maturity, the mind also matures and bridges previously unthinkable gaps. We begin to feel mortal and start looking toward our own future death with resignation if not eagerness. Physical changes associated with aging are accompanied by psychological equivalents.

When God reiterated His promise to both Abraham and Sarah that they were indeed going to become parents to Isaac, the couple were saddened to discover they were receiving good the news in a different frame of mind. Previously they had felt energized by it, now they merely felt shocked. They believed God can do anything, the miraculous is no more difficult for God than a natural event. It was inside themselves that some change had occurred, something young and optimistic had died.

Izbicy Torah stresses the following point quite often. We underestimate ourselves. We think we have lost certain faculties or memories when in fact we are still in possession of them. Neither Abraham nor Sarah had lost any of their optimism, faith and enthusiasm. They just didn't feel them anymore, but feelings are not facts.

The most amazing thing happened to Abraham when Isaac was born, it became clear to him that he had never lost a bit of his faith. His enthusiasm was intact, he had merely buried it all under sadness, busyness or carelessness. Half his joy came at the realization that even his joy had been there all the time.

\*\*\*\*\* Mei Hashiloach Text \*\*\*\*\*

From the appendix to the Mei Hashiloach:

The meaning of Sarah's laughing statement, 'After I am worn out shall I yet



have youth, when my husband is so old?’ is interpreted in the writings of the Ariza (R. Isaac Luria) to mean that Sarah was implying, God forbid, that God does not have the power to save her.

גליון: דהנה ענין שאמרה ואדני זקן מבואר בכתבי האר"י ז"ל דאמרה על השי"ת כי חס ושלום אין בכוחו להושיע,

God, in His infinite mercy however, quote Sarah saying, ‘Shall I yet have youth when I am so old?’

אכן השי"ת ברוב חסדו אמר, כי לא אמרה בלתי ואני זקנת.

The truth is that Abraham also scoffed, as we read, ‘Abraham fell upon his face and laughed,’ when God told him he would have a son called Isaac. (Gen. 17:17). But Abraham’s laughter was of a different order. Abraham believed that God could make him father children, God can do miracles, but it would mean God had created him anew, like anything else God creates out of nothing. This is the meaning of Abraham’s laughter, ‘Can I, at the a hundred years of age, father a child, and still feel like it was me who made the baby?’

This also explains why the text then says, pointedly, ‘Sarah bore a son to Abraham in his old age.’ What it means is that at Isaac’s birth God suddenly made Abraham see into himself, to recognize how his faith that he would father a child had never been shaken at all.

This explains what God was to Sarah about her own doubts and faith. She might have been referring to her husband’s age, but she was really thinking along the same lines as Abraham.

כי באמת גם אברהם צחק כמו שכתוב (בראשית י"ז) ויפל אברהם על פניו ויצחק, אכן צחיקת אברהם היה בענין אחר, כי באמת האמין כי השי"ת יכול להושיע לו שיוליד, אכן אין זו הולדה מצדו בלתי כמו שהשי"ת יכול לברוא דבר חדש וזה היה צחיקת אברהם הלבן מאה שנה יולד, כי איך יקרא זה על שמי. וזה שנאמר ותלד שרה לאברהם בן לזקניו, היינו שהאיר לו השי"ת כי בעומק לבו היה לו בטחון שיוליד, וזה הענין שהקב"ה אמר על שרה כי גם כן לא היה כוונתה בלתי ככונת אברהם מצדו.

\*\*\*\*\*

The fourth Torah

### **Abraham returned to his place.**

What this refers to is Abraham's response after risking his life to save the people of Sodom from destruction. Now, when all his prayer and intervention on their behalf was over - only to be informed by God that the Sodomites were very wicked, God haters - Abraham was filled with regret at all the energy and worship he had wasted on behalf of such God haters.

ואברהם שב למקומו, היינו אחר שמסר א"ע והציל אנשי סדום, ועתה אחרי רוב התפלה שהרבה עבורם להצילם והש"י השיב לו כי הם שונאי ה' מאוד הצר לו רוב יגיעתו על שונאי ה',

Nevertheless, the Torah tells us, Abraham returned to his place, meaning, to his original conviction that Sodom deserved his prayers. Because Abraham knew in his heart that he truly loved only those who love God, and that that there must be something deeper at stake of which he was unaware.

ועכ"ז ואברהם שב למקומו, היינו מקומו הראשון על תוקף שלו, לאשר ידע באמת שאינו אוהב בלתי לאוהבי ה' ובודאי נמצא בזה עומק יותר מכפי השגתו.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **And from there Abraham journeyed to the land of the Negev.**

What this means is that Abraham had distilled all kinds of love in the world so that there only remained the purest love of God. But upon discovering that the incestuous act between Lot and his daughters had come about, he said to himself, 'It's obvious there's a need to begin purifying Love.' And this is why the text says 'he journeyed from there,' i.e. from that very act, towards the land of the Negev, *Negev* meaning the dryness. Because it was as though he didn't have anywhere to begin at all.

ויסע משם אברהם ארצה הנגב, היינו כי אאע"ה מאד בירר כל מיני אהבה שבעולם שלא יהי' בלתי לה' לבדו, וכאשר ראה איך נעשה מעשה כזו בלוט שבא על שתי בנותיו אז אמר כפי הנראה מהצורך עוד להתחיל לברר האהבה, וזה ויסע משם מהמעשה הלז ארצה הנגב היינו יבש כאילו הי' בלי שום התחלה לפעול כלל.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **... Because God had locked her womb... And God remembered Sarah...**

The Midrash (Tanchuma Vayechi 8) quotes the verse:

I am God; I shriveled the verdant tree and blossomed the shriveled tree.

The Midrash says: The verdant tree is Abimelech, and the shriveled tree is Abraham.

Concerning Abraham is written: (Ezekiel 33:24) Abraham was one. That is to say, for his part Abraham was incapable of fathering a child. He was attached to God in such a simple and complete way, it was impossible. Anyone attached to God so wholly contains nothing of a composite nature and is united with TrueLife in its purest and simplest form.

כי עצר עצר ה' וכו' וה' פקד את שרה וכו'. במדרש [תנחומא ויחי ח'] אני ה' הובשתי עץ לח הפרחתי עץ יבש. הובשתי עץ לח, זה אבימלך. הפרחתי עץ יבש, זה אברהם. באברהם כתיב [יחזקאל ל"ג, כ"ד] אחד היה אברהם, היינו מצדו לא היה אברהם ראוי להוליד כי היה דבוק בהש"י בתכלית הפשיטות ומי שהוא דבוק בהש"י בשלימות אינו נמצא בו דבר בלתי פשיטות ואחדות לחיים האמיתים,

That explains why when God decided that Isaac would be born from Abraham it was necessary, first, for the story of Abimelech to happen. Abimelech wanted to steal what belonged to Abraham, that which Abraham had to hand; so justice awarded Abraham measure for measure. Philistinism represents *Gevurah* - Might in the world; that's why Samson the Mighty was always at war with them. So, Abraham was given Abimelech's *Gevurah* - Might.

ולכן כאשר רצה הקב"ה שיולד יצחק אבינו מאברהם היה קודם מעשה אבימלך, כי אבימלך רצה לגזול מאברהם שתחת ידו, והיה המשפט מדה כנגד מדה, ואצל הפלישתים הוא כח הגבורה שבעולם ולכן שמשון הגבור היה תמיד מתלחם עמם, ולכן כח הגבורה הלזה ניתן לאברהם,

But when *Gevurah* was given to Abraham it was given in a infinite quality, without any boundaries. All genius of the nations of the world has a finite quality so long as it dwells among them. It is only when it is assimilated into the Jewish People it becomes infinite in quality, because Jews are also attached to God at their very core, without boundaries.

וכאשר ניתן לאברהם היה בלי שום גבול, כי כל כחות האו"ה אצלם הוא בגבול וכאשר יבאו לתוך ישראל אז יהיה בלי שום גבול כי הם דבוקים בהש"י ג"כ בשורשם ולא בשום גבול,

That's why the Jewish People are dispersed all over the world, in order to absorb all the genius to be found among the seventy nations; that their infinite qualities can develop.

ולזאת יתפזרו ישראל לבין האומות כדי שיקבלו כי כחותם שנמצא אצל כל אחד מהשבעים אומות, ואצלם יהיה בלי שום גבול,

That's why we are told in the Talmud (Bava Metzia 86b) that King Solomon took wives from among many, many different nations. Because all the power driving a nation's genius is to be found rooted chiefly in its women, and most particularly in the princess. Therefore when all this genius is assimilated by the Jewish People great good will grow out of it, Israel sprout of my seedling.

וכן כתיב בשלמה המלך ע"ה [בבא מציעא פ"ו:] שלקח נשים מהרבה אומות, כי כל תוקף שנמצא בין כל אומה היא העיקר בנקיבות ובפרט אצל בת מלך, ולכן כאשר יכבשו כל הכחות האלו יצמח מהם טובה אצל ישראל נצר מטעי.

From the *Mei Hashiloach* Vol I. 1 Kings 11.

### **King Solomon loved many foreign women as well as the daughter of Pharaoh.**

Because all the genius of the nations of the world is to be found, in the main, among its females, especially among its princesses. That's why he chose to marry all those princesses, in order to subjugate all their genius to holiness.

Moabites represent the genius of eating and drinking. Amonites represent the genius of lust. Sidonites represent the genius of money. Hittites represent the genius of power and might.

מי השילווח חלק ראשון מלאכים א' י"א:

והמלך שלמה אהב נשים נכריות רבות ואת בת פרעה. כי כל כח אומות העולם היותר הוא בנקיבותיהם ובפרט בבנות המלכים, ולכן בחר ליקח בנות מלכים כדי להכניע כל כחותם תחת הקדושה, מואביות הוא כח אכילה

ושתייה, עמוניות הוא התאווה, צידוניות כחם הוא בממון, חתיות בכח וגבורה.

\*\*\*\*\*

### God tested Abraham.

The test for Abraham was of his tremendous faith in God. For though he had been promised his offspring would be numerous as the stars, and though he had been told Isaac would enjoy God's covenant, and now he was being told to sacrifice him as a burnt offering, Abraham still went on believing in the original promises God had made him. They were in no way diminished.

והאלקים נסה את אברהם. ענין נסיון של העקידה היה גדול האמונה שהיה לאברהם אבינו בהש"י, כי אף שאמר לו כה יהיה זרעך, ונאמר לו את בריתי אקים את יצחק, ועכשיו כשנאמר לו העלהו לעולה עכ"ז האמין בדברים הראשונים כמו מקודם ולא נפלו אצלו,

Such faith seems beyond the grasp of a human to achieve. To be truthful, Abraham was never given a clear instruction by God to slaughter his son Isaac. That's why the text says *ELOHIM* tested Abraham, and not *YHVH*. Because Abraham's prophecy in this respect came through a glass darkly. *ELOHIM* here in the text is an expression of WillPower.

וזאת האמונה אין בשכל האדם להשיג, והנה באמת לא היה לאברהם דיבר מפורש מהש"י שישחוט את בנו, ע"כ לא נאמר וה' נסה רק והאלקים נסה, היינו שהיה אליו דבר באספקלריא דלא נהרא [זוה"ק בראשית ק"כ:] וע"ז נאמר והאלקים לשון תקופות,

And that explains why this was not a test of Isaac. Isaac believed Abraham when he said he was on a mission from God, the test was not so great. But for Abraham, because the command was imprecise it was a tremendous test. Had he been biased in the slightest way toward his son as any father might have been, he would have been forced into a place of compassion.

וע"ז לא נקרא הנסיון ע"ש יצחק כי יצחק האמין לאברהם כי מה' הוא ואיננו נסיון כ"כ, רק לאברהם היה נסיון לפי שלא היה אצלו דבר מפורש, ואם היה לו שום נגיעה כאב לבן אז היה מכריחו לרחם עליו,

In reality the imprecision was because God never intended Abraham to slaughter Isaac, God was only confusing Abraham.

כי באמת מאת ה' היה שלא ישחטו והנסיון היה רק למראה עיני אברהם,

Now we can better understand Abraham when upon praying for Sodom referred to himself with the phrase, "And I am but dust and ashes." Dust hints at things unclear, things that have the potential for life but require fixing first; because dust can be turned into earth to nurture growth. Ashes are things that have been utterly destroyed.

וזה שאמר בתפילתו על סדום ואנוכי עפר ואפר, עפר מורה על מעשה שאינו מבוררת וצריכה לתיקון כי מהעפר יכול לצמוח, ואפר היינו דבר שנאבד

Now, had Abraham, God forbid, slaughtered Isaac it would have been ashes, impossible to bring back to life. Paralleling his prayers on behalf of the men of Sodom; had Abraham succeeded in preserving them with his prayers and had they gone on to more wicked deeds, then Abraham's prayers would have been ashes, incapable of rectification.

וח"ו אם היה שוחטו לא היה לו תיקון, וכך באנשי סדום אם יפעול בתפלתו שיחיו ובאם יהיו עוד ברשעים אז יהיה כאפר שאין לו צמיחה,

God showed Abraham, however, that his prayers on behalf of Sodom were not for nothing. For, as we learn in the writings of the Ari - R. Isaac Luria, it was from the souls of dead of Sodom that the souls of the Generation of the Desert were reincarnated.

והש"י הראה לו שתפלתו לא היתה למגן עליהם כדאיתא בכתבי האר"י ז"ל [שער הפסוקים פר' שמות] כי מהם נולד דור המדבר.

\*\*\*\*\*