



Tiferet

ת פ א ר ת



TIFERET SHABBAT

This Week in Tiferet

While on a brief trip to America, **Rav Yehoshua Landau** gave an alumnae shiur to over 30 Tiferet alumnae. Rav Landau's shiur was inspiring to our students and we are very appreciative of Dr. Yussy and Estie Silverstein of Cedarhurst (parents of Talia, Tiferet 5772) for hosting this event. On Monday, Tiferet hosted a Bone Marrow Testing Drive, through the **Gift of Life Bone Marrow Donation Foundation**. We are proud that our students were eager to extend themselves for others in need.

תורת תפארת

Checking Your Messages

Rabbi Netanel Lebowtiz
Parashat Vayera

Sarah Imeinu is kidnapped...again. When Avraham moves to Gerar, he informs the residents that Sarah is his sister. Thinking that it is then okay for him to abduct Sarah, Avimelech "innocently" takes her. Hashem appears to Avimelech in a dream and warns him not to touch Sarah.

As frighteningly similar as this episode is to what happened in Mitzrayim in last week's parsha, there is one striking difference. For Pharaoh, there was no warning. He kidnapped Sarah and without a word, he was hit with an affliction. Why did Hashem give Avimelech the privilege of a warning but did not extend the same opportunity to Pharaoh?

Perhaps we can suggest that Hashem presents ideas to people in the way that they will understand the message and respond. Hashem is not interested in flexing His muscles in a show of strength just because someone did not follow His will. Hashem is interested in redirecting those who stray back on the correct path. When He sends the correcting message, He needs to do it in the way that the intended receiver will understand Hashem is talking to him.

For Avimelech, Hashem knew that just a warning would suffice. By just being warned Avimelech quickly returns Sarah to her rightful place with Avraham. Conversely, part of the characteristic of Mitzrayim is that they respond better to action than to words. This is exemplified by the ten plagues. Moshe constantly warns Pharaoh of an impending plague and Pharaoh invariably ignores him. It is only after there is action, there is an actual plague, that Pharaoh responds to Moshe's request to let the Jews out. Knowing that Egypt understands actions louder than words, Hashem skipped right to the action and punished Pharaoh without a warning.

When we read the tochacha later in the Torah, it is clear that Hashem is not interested in beating His people hard right at the start. Hashem only want to send a message begging His children to return to the correct path of life. The Torah repeats a number of times that bad things will happen and if we refuse to listen then He will be forced to take the wake up call to a new level.

Hashem is sending us messages all the time and the question is whether we are tuned in to hear Him. We can know with certainty is that He is calling. Are we allowing ourselves

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**Tiferet
Alumnae
Shiur by
Rav
Yehoshua
Landau at
the home
of Talia
Silverstein**



**Hands-on
Halacha Shiur
by Rav
Michael
Bramson**



Upcoming Tiferet Alumnae Events

Shabbat, December 7th – Alumnae Shabbaton at Stern College with Rav Azriel Rosner

Thursday, January 9th – Sunday, January 12th – Alumnae Program and Shabbaton in Tiferet

תורת תפארת (המשך)

to be in place where we can hear Him or are we too involved with too many things that distract us from hearing the Divine call? Are we too busy with work and studying, sports and facebook, self-indulgence and the pursuit of money? Are we too caught up in the “I” that we cannot hear the “He?”

One time a person with many troubles came to pour out his heart in tefilla. After feeling like nobody was listening, he screamed out “Do you hear me?” Unbeknownst to our davener, Rebbe Levi Yitzchak Miberditchev was in the shul and he started to cry. He said, Hashem certainly hears us and answers but the question he cries back is “Do YOU hear ME?”

To Life, To Life, L’chaim Estee Levi (5773, 5774)

One of the most intense, strange, and faith-challenging scenes in all of Torah takes place in this week’s parsha-- Akeidat Yitzchak. HaShem commands Avraham to take his son, his only son, the one he loves and give him as a korban. True to his faithful reputation, Avraham listens to this decree. He wakes up early in the morning, takes some lads, a donkey, some wood and Yitzchak, and leads them into the wilderness. They make their way, and fast forward a few psukim; Avraham is tying his son onto the mizbeiach and pulling out a knife. He raises his hand, looking up at the skies for mercy and down at his son, ready to slaughter what he had waited for, prayed for, and begged for his entire life. Ready to murder the son from whom he thought would come his descendants-- his children in numbers equal to the stars in the sky. God in His infinite mercy calls out and says, Avraham! Avraham! I now know that you are a God fearing man. Don't kill your son! And Avraham Avinu passed his test.

Let’s look at this from Yitzchak's eyes. He wakes up on a normal morning, and his dad says, hey son, let’s go for a walk. Help me carry this wood. Everything is innocent and he suspects nothing, as none of us would going on a casual walk with our fathers. They’re going to bring a Korban and have some father-son bonding time. They climb a mountain and Avraham tells him to lay down. You are the Korban and I am going to kill you now for HaShem. Yitzchak obeys with no mention by the Torah of a struggle. At a moment’s notice he is prepared to die. The biggest issue is, why is this not stressed as much as Avraham's test? Yitzchak is the one laying on the altar here. He is the korban. Not only that, but when you read the psukim, you see that there is basically no mention of anything Yitzchak related at all. He listened to his father and to Hashem without a flinch. No doubts. No crying. Not even a goodbye. The degree of his Kibbud Av is unfathomable. He can die without a problem because his father told him to and God told his father. And yet for some reason this is still known as Avraham's final and most troubling test.

As Jews, our job is to live for God. In every situation, mundane or extraordinary, our goal is to connect it to spirituality. Our test is not to die for Judaism. Although what Yitzchak did was very noble and brave, he is not our focus. Avraham is the one who would have to wake up the morning after slaughtering his son and move on. Therefore this is the person that we look up to as a role model. If the protagonist of the story was Yitzchak, we would learn from Parshat Vayeira that it is important to sacrifice our lives for Hashem, but we know that Hashem doesn't want us to die for Him. He wants us to live for Him in every single moment. Every day passing small tests and building a closer and stronger relationship with Hakadosh Baruch Hu. This is the powerful and relatable message of Akeidat Yitzchak. When our focus is to live for God, Avraham's test becomes attainable for every Jew.