

HAVURAT YISRAEL WEEKLY NEWS

20 Heshvan 5784

SHABBAT VAYEIRA

November 4, 2023

Shabbat Shalom!

5:32 pm Candle Lighting
5:35 pm Mincha & Kabbalat Shabbat

8:45 am Mishnayot Shiur
9:00 am Shacharit
10:01 am Latest Shema
Parsha: p. 78; Haftorah p. 1134
11:00 am Drasha
11:00 am Kids Program
4:30 pm Gemara and parasha Class
5:15 pm Mincha
6:30 pm Maariv, Havdalah

Kiddush is sponsored by Sheryl & Todd Hausman celebrating Zachary's Bar Mitzvah. Mazal Tov!

Seudah Shlisheet is sponsored by Rabbi David & Tamara Algaze commemorating the Yahrzeit of the Rabbi's father, Yaakov ben Roza Z"L

Upcoming Sponsorships

November 11: Daniel Cohen
November 18: David & Debbie Sosnowik

DONATIONS TO ISRAEL

Thank you for the contributions received from our members which were sent to different institutions in Israel. We made contributions to Yad Shoam (a group of volunteers recommended by Gary and Yael Emmanuel), Magen David Adom (with a multiplier by Bloomberg), Zaka, and for an ambulance for Sderot (organized by Shmuel Sacket). **Am Yisrael Chai!**

Thanks to Rabbi and Tamara Algaze, Caridad & Salvador Tavares, Maria Perez, Hadassah & Aaron Flores, Josefina Vicente, Pinchas & Rahel Contreras, Zvi & Leah Prado, Joseph and Rivka Constante, Gloria & Carlos Portela, Simcha Kulaya, Leah Rahel Quetell, Miriam Atencia and Sy Kaplan.

Add your name by sending a contribution to Havurat Yisrael Hesed Fund, marked Israel.

Kol Nidre Honor Roll

Rabbi & Tamara Algaze
Rachelle Alkalay
Eileen Alter
Mehran Arasheben
Gary & Yael Emmanuel
Avi Felder
Aron & Hadassah Flores
Victorino & Rubenia Flores
Andrew & Lana Glantz
Jack & Shulie Goldhaber
David & Renee Hirsch
Bruce & Miriam Jacobs
Matthew Jacobs
Sy Kaplan
Rafi Katz

Louis & Rachel Ordentlich
Elisheva Palala
Bezalel Paniagua
Irving Prus
Jerry & Jennifer Revich
Arlene Ross
Stuart & Judy Rosen
Mark & Gail Silverman
David & Debbie Sosnowik
Jane Stiefel
Kim & Joseph Trigoboff
Jay Waitzman
Daniel & Carol Yaghoubian
Yael Yopez
Add your name here!

All contributions of \$500 or more will be listed here.

Thursdays at 7 pm

Rabbi Avi Levitt

Sichos Mussar
with Carlebach Music

Free Class! Bring Friends and Family



Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz

Sichos mussar is the title of a book that collected the speeches of the famed Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz, Dean of Mir Yeshiva in Jerusalem. The speeches contain very deep philosophical and psychological insights that have molded a whole generation of students.

Light refreshments will be served.

ISRAEL AT WAR: WHAT CAN WE DO?



A series of 3 lectures on the *weapons* we can use to help the soldiers:

Shabbat, Prayer and Extra Dedication.

Breakfast and conversation
with Rabbis Algaze and Levitt

Sundays at 10:30 starting Sunday November 5th

Share with everyone and
bring your neighbors and friends.
Breakfast will be served



This coming Sunday, November 5th at 1:30 pm, there will be a Tefillah Asifa in Kew Gardens Hills in front of the Veigh Place library. The purpose is to daven and say Tehillim for Eretz Yisrael. Please bring your Tehillim. This event is being organized by all the major Jewish organizations in Queens. All the Queens Rosh Yeshivas and Rebbeim are on board and will be participating. Look forward to seeing you there, may our prayers bring peace to Eretz Yisrael!

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS

- EARLY SUNDAY MORNING
- TURN CLOCKS BACK 1 HOUR
- CHECK SMOKE DETECTORS

SUNDAY Nov. 5 / 21 Heshvan STANDARD TIME!	MONDAY Nov. 6 / 22 Heshvan	TUESDAY Nov. 7 / 23 Heshvan	WEDNESDAY Nov. 8 / 24 Heshvan	THURSDAY Nov. 9 / 25 Heshvan	FRIDAY Nov. 10 / 26 Heshvan
7:30 am Gemara Shiur 8:00 am Shacharit 9:00 am Breakfast 9:30 am Class in Spanish — Rabbi Algaze 10:30 am Israel At War — R. Algaze, R. Levitt	6:30 am Gemara Shiur 7:00 am Shacharit 7:00 pm Journey in Jewish Literature – Rabbi Algaze	6:30 am Gemara Shiur 7:00 am Shacharit 7:00 pm Parasha Class — Rabbi Algaze	6:30 am Gemara Shiur 7:00 am Shacharit	6:30 am Gemara Shiur 7:00 am Shacharit 7:00 pm Sichos Mussar – Rabbi Levitt	6:30 am Gemara Shiur 7:00 am Shacharit 4:25 pm Candle Lighting 4:30 pm Mincha & Kabbalat Shabbat

FROM G-D'S PERSPECTIVE

By Rabbi David Algaze

“And [G-d] said, “Please take your son, your only one, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the land of Moriah; bring him up there as an offering upon one of the mountains which I shall tell you.” (Beresheet 22:2)

These words so frightening and so commanding have resonated through the ages and viewed with awe and inspiration. The Sacrifice of Isaac as it is commonly designated, although a more accurate translation is “the binding of Isaac,” has been discussed, painted and told about much more than any other Biblical story. In Jewish tradition, this action by our forefather Abraham is viewed as the epitome of loving G-d. In fact, our prayers often allude to this great deed as one of the greatest merits of Abraham’s descendants and it is presented as the main argument for forgiving Israel and overcoming the justice of the Supreme Judge.

However, many have wondered how it is possible to admire Abraham’s decision to kill his own son? This is especially surprising since G-d describes Isaac in highly complimentary terms, thus indicating that he is blameless and not deserving of any punishment. Furthermore, Abraham had already known of G-d’s mercies and compassion and this command did not fit his concept of G-d. Although at that time human sacrifice may not have been totally rare, nevertheless for Abraham such custom would be regarded as cruel and not fitting his idea of G-d. From Isaac’s asking, “Where is the lamb for the sacrifice?” (ibid. 7) we must deduce that Isaac knew that human sacrifice was not the way of Abraham or his G-d and that Abraham had long ago abandoned this pagan custom. Why did Abraham do it or, more precisely why did Abraham obey such a command that flew in the face of all that he had understood and practiced before?

Some have gone so far from the Biblical text as to suggest that the real heroism in this decision was not to obey G-d. (Geiger) Rabbi S.R. Hirsch already disposed of this argument in his characteristic manner and quoting the verse at the end of the story, “I now know that you fear G-d and did not withhold your only son from Me.” (ibid. 12) Obviously the act of bringing Isaac to the altar was seen as the paragon of spirituality. The question then remains, how could Abraham obey such an order and why do we uphold this act as so sublime and inspirational? His personality was not passive or submissive as it is evident from his forceful arguments in defense of Sodom? His powerful words, “The Judge of the whole Earth shall not do justice?” (ib. 18:25) Why then did he accept so quietly this harsh command?

The commentators suggest that G-d never intended for Isaac to be sacrificed and that His stopping it at the end was part of His original plan. Rashi comments that G-d did not say “slay” him but only “bring him up” for G-d did not wish Isaac to be killed but only that he should be brought up and as soon as he was raised, he was taken down. The Malbim (acronym for Meir Leibush ben Yechiel Michel, 1809-1879) amplifies this idea by bringing several arguments demonstrating that G-d’s command was not at all to kill Isaac. For instance, he points out, the verb “*ha’alehu*” (bring him up) is never used in connection with sacrifices. The verbs normally used are *asya*, *haktara*, *hakravah* and not *ha’alah* as in our case. A careful understanding of G-d’s words would have spared Abraham his anguish. The Malbim ends by saying that G-d nevertheless intended for Abraham to commit such error of interpretation. Abraham, due to his immense love of G-d, his desire to fulfill His commandments and his joy in discovering that his beloved son would be the perfect sacrifice did not analyze G-d’s words carefully and ran as a deer to observe His commandments.

However one interprets the real meaning of G-d’s words, it is clear that His words were intentionally ambiguous and vague in order to

make Abraham believe that he was going to sacrifice his only son. G-d’s description of Isaac also calls for an explanation. Why was he described in such glorious terms right before his sacrifice other than making Abraham’s mission more difficult and also more meritorious? There is no doubt that Abraham thought that the order was to sacrifice Isaac. The verse that says “Now I know that you did not withhold your son from Me” also clearly implies that G-d recognized Abraham’s greatness in that he was ready to sacrifice even his only son for Him.

Since Abraham, as we wrote, had already abandoned the pagan adherence to human sacrifice, and the fact that he conceived of a G-d of mercy and love, how it is possible that he followed His order so carefully and so quietly? The Midrash adds a deep lament over this decision. “The Angels were crying and they said, “Master of the Universe, You are called Merciful and Kind who is compassionate towards His creatures—Have mercy on Isaac who is a human being and is being bound as an animal! (Pirke de R. Eliezer 30) Even the Angels were surprised, how is it that Abraham took it with apparent ease?

The answer may be in the unique role that Abraham has in the history of religion and especially in his trailblazing conduct as the Father of the Jewish people. Abraham was open to the possibility of things unseen and concepts never thought of before. His capacity to transcend the limits of his own personality is evident in this hard trial. The man who embodied mercy had to surpass and curtail his own tendencies in obeying

G-d’s word. More importantly, Abraham demonstrated that we need to be open to ideas that had never surfaced before, even when these ideas contradicted earlier concepts. His trust in G-d led him to accept what appeared as irrational and even counter to the ideas of G-d Himself. Above all, Abraham was prepared to leave aside his own concepts and allow himself to be educated and guided by a Higher Wisdom. This required a flexible and humble character and Abraham’s display of these qualities is what made him the great spiritual leader he was. Naturally, we cannot emulate Abraham completely as we now have a codified Torah and must abide by the decisions of Jewish law. However, Abraham’s ability to transcend his own concepts and logic as well as his own character teaches us something about the uniqueness and majesty of Judaism. The Torah demands from us that we accept G-d’s laws even when they may seem irrational and even when they defy the concepts of any given society. It also asks us to conquer our own character when necessary and to act with objective purpose. Finally, by Abraham’s suspension of judgment in favor of G-d’s, we learn that when we encounter difficult moments in our lives, we should view life not from the narrow perspective of our own limited intelligence and experience--and thus despair and be depressed, but rather from the perspective of the A-mighty Who is always just and merciful and Who never does anything but to bestow goodness on us. Give G-d the benefit of the doubt and allow that things look different when they are seen from G-d’s perspective.

PRAYER

During times of crisis for the Jews, The Hafetz Haim recommended that everyone go to minyan and bring their children. It’s not enough to pray alone; we must do it in a minyan and recite vigorously the yehe shme Rabba of the Kaddish that gives special strength to Am Israel.

Refuah Shlema Alte Ester Riva bat Devorah Shifra (Eileen Alter), Batya bat Rachel (Betty Feit), Zeev Zelig ben Sarah Tish (Tom Hamori), Zalman Mordechai Yitzchak Halevy ben Alta Chana (Stuart Greenberg), Chava Naomi bat Doba Chana, Yaakov ben Leah, Tzvi Ben Sara, Chavah Bat Rivka, Moshe Elimelech haLevi ben Bashe, Gloria bat Sarah, Talia Leah bat Sarah, Yeoshua David HaCohen ben Ariella Dinah (Rabbi’s grandson), Gabriela bat Sarah (Tamara’s mother).