

Lech Lecha

Abraham's Unique Approach to G-d

By Rabbi David Algaze

"And he said: O Lord G-d, [Ad-nay] how shall I know that I will inherit it?" (Beresheet 15:8)

Rabbi Yochanan, quoting Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai, teaches that from the moment G-d created the world, no person had ever addressed Him as "Master" until Abraham came and called Him by that title. (Berachot 7b) This is supported by the verse in Genesis 15:8, "And he said: O Lord G-d, [Ad-nay] how shall I know that I will inherit it?" In this passage, Abraham is the first to use the term "Master" in reference to G-d. In all previous passages, Hashem is referred to by the Tetragrammaton (Yod Ke Vav Ke) or Elokim, but only Abraham used the Name with the letters Ad-nay, using the term Adon, meaning master.

What was so special about this title, employed first in history, by Abraham? The use of the word "master" implies a relationship characterized by reciprocal attention. All other personalities, Adam, Noah, saw Hashem only as the Creator, distanced and Ineffable, but Abraham saw in Hashem a relatable entity. Abraham's choice to address G-d as "Master" suggests an awareness of G-d's authority and control, as well as a recognition of a personal connection between the two. This relationship is distinct, as it acknowledges both G-d's sovereignty and the possibility of communication and interaction between G-d and humanity. Rav Soloveitchik states that prophecy is only possible where there is a dialogue and thus Abraham becomes the first prophet in history.

The Rabbis explain that Abraham could have been the first human created by G-d. However, it was essential that he appeared in a world where humanity had already strayed from its original path and embraced idolatry. Abraham's emergence after this period signifies the beginning of a renewed relationship with G-d, one that contrasts with the prevailing pagan attitudes of his time. His rebellion against the popular attitudes of his time and his full commitment to this new approach to the Divine fashioned him into a strong champion of his ideals and a resolute teacher of his newfound attitude to G-d.

The term "master" typically refers to a person who has others working for him, such as servants or slaves. It denotes someone with control and authority over individuals performing some work or function over which he is responsible and judge. In the context of Abraham's relationship with G-d, this term highlights the role that Man would have in the world and his recognition that G-d is paying attention to his work. This acknowledges G-d's authority and guidance over creation, but it also highlights the fact that Man plays a role in the universe and that he is going to be held accountable for his actions.

Rabbi Schwab writes that the noun Ad-nay, with the first person possessive suffix, means My Master. This shows that we can have a personal relationship with G-d. He is not Master, He is My Master. This teaches us that each person has a

specific role to play in the world and that the Master is aware of whatever the servant does, either pleasing or the opposite.

Each of us has a function to develop in the world and the Master is watching over us. The Rabbis tell us, "Your employer is trusted to pay you the reward for your work." (Avot 2:16) signifying that there is a work that can be done only by us and no one else and that the Creator/Master/Employer has assigned to each a specific function for which when performed well we will receive a reward.

A question arises, why should we get a reward for doing what we must do, especially when we are the recipients of so much kindness from G-d? Rabbi Marcus Lehmann answered with a parable. A rich man takes in a poor orphan boy and brings him up with great care and much love. The young man is grateful and applies himself to his job with devotion and zeal. After ten years the benefactor hands him a large sum of money as reward for his work. The young man asks, all I did was to return your kindness by helping you. "That is true" says the man, "It is your duty, but you might have shirked your duty and you did not."

We all have a job to perform in this world, which the Master expects us to do, but we have the freedom to not do it. Our personal relationship with G-d implies that we are in a relationship and a constant dialogue. That is the legacy of Abraham calling G-d, My Master, as this is also our gift. In the Hymn Adon Olam, recited unsulky at the end of services, there is a line that reads "Ad-nay li ve lo ira. "Ad-nay is with me and I will not be afraid." It is noteworthy that in the hymn, the word Ad-nay is spelled that way, Adny, suggesting that when we make G-d our personal master, we will no longer have any fear.

Mark Your Calendar! — Important Membership Meeting

Sunday November 9th at 11 am, there will be a meeting of the HY membership. The agenda will include election of the board of trustees as well as revision of the shul's bylaws. In order for any business conducted at the meeting to be legally binding, we will need to have a quorum (a majority of the Havurat members attending the meeting in person or by proxy). Everyone is urged to pay their membership dues immediately and either attend the meeting in person, or give your proxy so that we can proceed. Proxies will be available shortly.

Zoom Classes with Rabbi Avrohom Levitt

Link for the zoom class :

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8868114170?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8868114170?pwd=Ulo4Yk5MU2YrcldJZWVpPaHNBTFoZz09)

[pwd=Ulo4Yk5MU2YrcldJZWVpPaHNBTFoZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8868114170?pwd=Ulo4Yk5MU2YrcldJZWVpPaHNBTFoZz09)

Topic : Living Shabbos by Rabbi Sutton

Monday to Friday 9:30 — 10:00 am

Everyone is welcome!

Refuah Shlema Alte Ester Riva bat Devorah Shifra, Yaakov ben Leah, Tzvi ben Sara, Talia Leah bat Sarah, Miriam bat Rivka, Reuben ben Malka, Baruch Chaim ben Basha, Malka bat Simcha, Hannah bat Yehudit, Binyamin Baer ben Chana, Hillel Zvi Yehuda ben Tzina, Joseph David ben Rachel, Abraham ben Devorah Shifra, Israel ben Devora Shifra, Sherry Plutzker, Chaya Sarah bat Bunye, Tuvia Moshe ben Chanah Miriam, Baruch Chaim ben Basha, Chavah Rivka bat Brucha