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Shabbat P. Vayeira,

Sat. 3 - 4 Nov. 2017 - 15th of Cheshvan, 5778 -

טו מרחשון תשע"ח

שבת פ' וירא

Issue Number 818

Baal Koreh	Rabbi Asher Sebbag	(Page-78).
Mufteer & Haftarah	Mr Adel Darwish	(Page -1134).

Shir Hashirim, Mincha, Kabalat Shabbat & Arbit.	16:00
Shabbat Candles.	16:14
Shabbat Shahrit - Followed by Kiddush. (Shema 8:45).	08:30
Mincha Shabbat Followed by Seuda Shlishit. * (Sunset - 16:27).	15:40
Daf Hayomi with Rabbi Asher Sebbag Shlit"a.	*
Arbit Motzei Shabbat followed by Havdalah.	17:20
Shahrit Weekday - (Mon. & Thu. - 06:40) (Sunday & B/H - 07:30).	06:45
Mincha & Arbit	16:00
Daf Hayomi with Rabbi Asher Sebbag Shlit"a.	16:40
Next Shabbat: Shir Hashirim, Mincha, Kabalat Shabbat & Arbit.	15:45
Next Shabbat: Candles. P. Chayei Sarah.	16:02

Vayeira (Genesis 18-22)

Vayeira 5778

GOOD MORNING! Would you murder one person to save a million lives? What if that person were a 99 year old person who had already lived out the prime years of his life? Weighing one against the other, it might seem to make sense. Yet, intuitively we know that it is not right. Why?

What is the value of a life? How do we measure the value of one life versus another?

In the book Holocaust and Halacha, the situation is related of a concentration camp inmate asking a rabbi, "The Nazis have imprisoned

one hundred children who they plan to murder tomorrow morning. My son is among them. I can bribe the guard to free my son, but if I do, the Nazis will grab someone else's son to replace mine. Rabbi, may I bribe the guards to free him?"

The rabbi refused to answer. From his silence, the father derived the rabbi's answer -- he was forbidden to free his son at the expense of someone else's life ... and did not bribe the guard.

The Talmud (Sanhedrin 74a), discussing a similar predicament, states, "How do you know your blood is redder? Maybe his blood is redder?" Rashi, commenting on the Talmud,

elucidates: "Who knows that your blood is more precious and more dear to your Creator than the blood of someone else?" How can one weigh the value of one life against the value of another? How can one know which person is more precious? Each individual is an entire world.

This makes sense when dealing with one life versus another. However, how does it explain saving one life at the expense of a million? Can't we say with confidence that in God's eyes millions of lives are more precious than one?

At the heart of this issue is how one measures the value of life. Every person is born with a unique personality and set of circumstances and a certain amount of potential for growth. Where we begin is beyond our control. However, we are responsible for where we end up and the choices we make along the way.

A person's real worth is the result of the choices he makes in his effort to grow. To determine the value of his life we must take every factor and detail of his existence into account. The complexities involved in making such a judgment are staggering -- which is exactly why no human being is in the position to judge the worth of another. No one knows the challenges of another person or his potential or what the Almighty expects from him. We can never measure someone's true value. That is God's business alone.

And it is never a good idea to play God.

We can judge another person's actions, but not his worth. These two judgments are separate, the former belonging to man and the latter belonging only to God. Therefore, whether it is a million lives or millions of lives versus one 99 year old person, maybe that one life is more precious and dear to the Almighty. How can we know? The issue has nothing to do with numbers. The judgment is not ours to make, no matter how many lives are involved.

The Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin 37a, teaches us "If a person destroys a life, it is as if he destroyed an entire world. If a person saves a life, it is as if he saved an entire world." Each and every life has value, tremendous value!

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(The above is based on a chapter in the Aish HaTorah book, [Shmooze - A Guide to Thought-Provoking Discussions on Essential Jewish Issues](#) by Nechemia Coopersmith. It was created for students returning from their studies at Aish in the Old City of Jerusalem to have discussions with their college roommates. It is excellent for discussion with your children if you would like to discuss love, friends, marriage, free will, happiness, self-respect, intermarriage, intolerance, faith and knowledge, gossip... and more.



TORAH PORTION OF THE WEEK

Vayera, Genesis 18:1 - 22:24

Avraham, on the third day after his *brit mila*, sits outside his tent looking for guests to extend his hospitality. While talking with the Almighty, he sees three visitors (actually angels of the Almighty). Avraham interrupts his conversation with the Almighty to invite them to a meal. One angel informs him that in a year's time, Sarah, his wife, will give birth to a son, Yitzhak (Isaac).

God tells Avraham that He is going to destroy Sodom because of its absolute evil (the city is the source of the word sodomy). Avraham argues with God to spare Sodom if there can be found ten righteous people in Sodom. Avraham loses for the lack of a quorum. Lot escapes the destruction with his two daughters.

Other incidents: Avimelech, King of the Philistines, wants to marry Sarah (Avraham's wife), the birth of Yitzhak, the eviction of Hagar (Avraham's concubine) and Ishmael. Avimelech and Avraham make a treaty at Beersheva. Avraham is commanded to take up his son, Isaac, as an offering "on one of the mountains" (Akeidat Yitzhak). Lastly, the announcement of the birth of Rivka (Rebecca), the future wife of Yitzhak.

Do you want to know the reward for listening to the command of the

Almighty? This is what the Almighty told Avraham: "... I shall surely bless you and greatly increase your descendants like the stars of the heavens and like the sand on the seashore; and your offspring shall inherit the gate of its enemy. And all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your offspring, because you have listened to My voice."

* * *

Dvar Torah

*based on Love Your Neighbor by
Rabbi Zelig Pliskin*

Avraham travels to Philistia, and introduces Sarah as his sister. So, Avimelech, the King, abducts Sarah with intention to marry her. The Almighty comes to Avimelech in a dream and tells him that Sarah is a married woman and that he will die if he marries her. Avimelech returns her to Avraham and demands an explanation for claiming to be Sarah's brother. The Torah states:

"And Avraham said, 'Because I said there is no fear of God in this place, and they will slay me on account of my wife' (Genesis 20:11).

The Malbim, a 19th century rabbi, elucidates that Avraham told Avimelech that individuals or nations might appear to be great philosophers and humanitarians; they might even have proper manners and good character traits. However, as long as their morality is based on their own logic, we can never be certain that when their desire to do evil is strong,

their logic will be able to overcome that desire.

There is only one restraint that we can rely upon to prevent a person from committing a crime: fear of God. When a person has an overpowering desire to do something wrong, but realizes that God is aware of every hidden act, he will be ashamed to commit the offense. Avraham, therefore, said in effect: "Even if you are righteous, since you lack fear of God, I fear that you will murder me to take my wife."

It is interesting to note that the Philistines were not without moral scruples. They would not marry another man's wife. However, they had no problem in murdering the man in order to make his wife free to be married. Such is the power of "ethics" when left to the desires and logic of society.



Shabbat Shalom,
Kalman
Rabbi Kalman
Packouz

Refuah Shelema: to Michael Joshua, we all wish him a speedy recovery.

Seuda Shelishit: presented by Margaret, Sass, Abe, Ellis, Mel and Angela in memory of their late mother **Esther** Ezekiel bat Sasson Nissim ע"ה.

Security Alert: Please be very vigilant when you leave the Synagogue. Do not stand in groups and chat, go home without gathering on the main road. Be safe and alert.

THE KEHILLA WISHES חיים ארוכים "LONG LIFE" TO THE FOLLOWING WHO HAVE YAHRZEIT

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|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 03 Heshvan - Mr Yakdhan Cohen | 20 Heshvan - Mr Ezra H. Eddie Cohen |
| 03 Heshvan - Mr Ghassan Cohen | 20 Heshvan - Mr Abraham S. Cohen |
| 03 Heshvan - Mr Dhia Cohen | 21 Heshvan - Mr Adil S. Darwish |
| 03 Heshvan - Mr Asad Cohen | 22 Heshvan - Mr Nadir Baher |
| 05 Heshvan - Mr Nadir Baher | 23 Heshvan - Mr Joseph Laniado |
| 07 Heshvan - Mr Y. Kelly Saltoun | 26 Heshvan - Mr Yakdhan Cohen |
| 09 Heshvan - Mr Eliot M. Cohen | 26 Heshvan - Mr Ghassan Cohen |
| 12 Heshvan - Dr Maurice Gubbay | 26 Heshvan - Mr Dhia Cohen |
| 13 Heshvan - Mr Harry Fattal | 26 Heshvan - Mr Asad Cohen |
| 13 Heshvan - Mr Jack Fattal | 28 Heshvan - Mr Joseph Laniado |
| 13 Heshvan - Mr Meir Fattal | 28 Heshvan - Mrs Helen Georgy |
| 15 Heshvan - Mr Ernest Elias | |

Quote of the Week

God asks no one whether he will accept life.
This is not the choice.
The only choice you have as you go through life
is how you live it.