

Parshas Vayeira

This week's parsha- Veyeira has many interesting narratives in it, this includes the story of Avraham's Bris, the arrival of the angels, the destruction of Sedom (prior to which Avraham begs to save the city), Lot's wife turning to salt, the birth of Amon and Moav, Avraham coming to Avimelech and him having dreams (similar to Paroh in last parsha), the official birth of Yitzchak¹ (the Torah reading for Rosh Hashana day 1), and the binding of Yitzchak.

Obviously, these events must have a link, and this link can also, in my opinion be seen in the Haftora.

The haftora is read from Melachin 2, Chapter 4 pesukim 1:37. It recounts the events of an elderly woman who was blessed with a child at an advanced age, the Isha Shunamis, who was visited by Elisha, who blessed her with a son, who passes away, and is revived by Elisha. (Just before the reading itself in chapter 3, there is an altercation between the Jews and Moav, who was born in this parsha).

Here are the following connections:

- 1) Like Sara, and elderly woman beseeched Hashem for a child, even at an advanced age.
- 2) The Isha Shunamis, who Elisha lauds her hospitality, this unlike Sedom's hospitality of the parsha where they wanted to commit heinous crimes against Lot's guests (the angels etc.).
- 3) Through the act of hospitality, and charitability, the world stands, and nature can be averted. (Pirkei Avos on 3 things the world stands chapter 1 mishna 2).

- a. The gemara in Tanis says there are 3 keys given to this world- For rain, birth, and revival of the dead, and they are not done through an intermediary, meaning Elisha reviving the dead child was an act direct from Hashem, which reflects on the zechus of gemilus chassadim being powerful enough to alter nature.

There must still be further connections linking the events of the parsha. In Halacha there is a concept of an Ir Hanidachas, a city destined to be destroyed for idol worship (learned from Devarim 13). Sedom, being destroyed for its heinous actions, was like an ir hanidachas, which Avraham tried praying for. Because in Halacha, if even a mezuzah is found in the city, it won't be destroyed (I read on a website koltorah.org an article by Rabbi Chaim Jachter who explains the Rebbe's position on this, and a reason why the Rebbe sent shluchim all over the world- to be a light in dark places). In halacha, there is an opinion that an Ir Hanidachas never occurred (after Sedom I guess). Which tells us that even when we may think the outcome of something is destruction, we have the power to change it (think Yona and the people of Ninveh, and Yona's stress about having to save a city that would repent, unlike the Jews of the time).

This is an esoteric connection to the parsha, in that when all seemed lost for the Isha Shunamis, Elisha was able to counter nature- which even Avraham Prayed for Sedom.

Furthermore, we are told in Lech Licha that from Yitzchak will birth the nation of the Jews (not from Yishmael- although he was like

¹ In parshas Lech Licha, Yitzchak is named and "birthed"- along with the blessing of his continuity Perek 17, posuk 18-19

Yakov blessed with 12 princes-i.e., his own 12 tribes, the connection is divine and can be discussed in another place). Then we find out in this parsha Avraham was told to bind Yitzchak and offer him as a sacrifice- premature to Yitzchak having children, birthing the nation.

Yitzchak, was perhaps, due to the test like a city destined to be brought back to its maker (not for the same reasons obviously- but again in Halacha, there is a specific category of items which are designated or allocated for Kedusha for the service of Hashem, such as a korban, which Yitzchak was, and therefore had a pre-determined destiny in a way. Yet, we know Avraham was stopped before the actual offering took place, and Yitzchak was replaced with an actual ox.

A few points to note:

- 1) Even though Avraham was blessed that the nation will birth from Yitzchak, nevertheless he believed that Hashem would control the outcome, not the predetermined human derived outcome, as we think it may happen (on the surface one can ask logically, if we are tested, wouldn't the blessing of children contradict the requirement of. So, even an Ir Hanidachas, has the power to be prayed for, and saved with a tiny mezuzah. Avraham even prayed for it.
- 2) This is seen with Elisha, and his ability to alter nature to revive the boy, because of the act of hospitality. Acts of goodness and kindness can change the course of the world- even uproot nature- as a direct act from Hashem.
- 3) Even though optically Yitzchak being bound could contradict that which was stated by Hashem to Avraham earlier, there is the ability to change courses of action, through our acts, and what

needs to result will Happen as Hashem controls the world.

- 4) The Rebbe explains that Avraham unlike Noach prayed for salvation, which is an important lesson to derive from here, and we see Elisha was able to perform acts beyond nature due to prayer (specifically, blessings for childbirth, and revival of the dead).
- 5) Finally, there is an outcome for every event. In the Yitzchak's case it was to be the forefather of our nation, that would result despite, the test to offer Yitzchak a Korban. A complete and opposite outcome that optically on the surface. That is Yitzchak should have been offered, and contradict Hashem's blessing to Avraham of offspring, but that doesn't happen. Similarly, Elisha, can revive the dead, even if the outcome would see like the boy shouldn't have lived. Hashem ultimately controls the world, and through prayer, and good deeds we can enact amazing results in our world.

There are a lot of disparate notes for this week's, parsha, hopefully thematically it makes sense.

Good Shabbos