

Building Your Bible IQ - Parshas Vayeira & Chayei Sarah: Divine Chesed - Parts 1 & 2:

HASHEM VISITS AVRAHAM & AVRAHAM SHOWS HOSPITALITY:

1. **Rashi 18,1:** יושב. ישב כתיב, בקש לעמד, אמר לו הקב"ה שב ואני אעמד, ואתה סימן לבניך שעתיד אני יושב. literally, להתיצב בעדת הדינים והו יושבין, שנאמר אלהים נצב בעדת אל (תהילים פ"ב) (בראשית רבה) WAS SITTING — The word is written ישב (without the ו) and therefore may he translated "he sat": He wished to rise, but the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, Sit and I will stand. You shall form an example to your descendants — that I, in time to come, will stand in the assembly of the judges while they will sit, as it is said, (Psalms 82:1) "God standeth in the assembly of the judges" (Genesis Rabbah 48:7)
2. **Question #1:** How does the topic of judges fit into the story line?
3. **Question #2:** Why indeed does Hashem allow judges to sit in his presence? If anything, it should be the opposite?
4. **Rashi 18,3:** ויאמר אדני אם נא וגו'. אל נא תעבר, ד"א קדש הוא, והיה אומר להקב"ה להמתין לו עד שירוץ ויכניס את האורחים ואע"פ שכתוב אחר ויץ לקראתם, האמירה קדם לכו היתה, ודרך המקראות AND HE SAID, MY LORD, IF NOW etc. — Another explanation is that the word is "holy" (referring to God): he asked God to wait for him whilst he ran and invited the travellers. For although this is written after the words "and he ran to meet them", yet the conversation took place beforehand. It, indeed, is the way of the Scriptures to speak in this manner as I have explained....
5. **Question #3:** We only apply the rule of writing things out of order in two separate Torah sections - not in the middle of one section ?
6. **Talmud Shabbos 127a:** גדולה הכנסת אורחין מהקבלת פני שכניה דכתיב ויאמר (ה') אם נא מצאתי חן Hospitality toward guests is **greater than** receiving the Divine Presence, as when Abraham invited his guests it is written: "And he said: Lord, if now I have found favor in Your sight, please pass not from Your servant" (Genesis 18:3)
7. The Talmud deduces this from the fact that Avraham first left without asking Hashem's permission
8. **Talmud Bava Metzia 86b:** Abraham himself went out and saw the Holy One, Blessed be He, standing at the entrance to his tent. This is as it is written: "My Lord, if now I have found favor in your eyes, do not leave Your servant" (Genesis 18:3), (i.e., God's presence was there, and Abraham asked Him for permission to attend to the travelers.)
9. **Question #4:** The Talmud appears to say that Avraham is asking permission **before** he leaves (it appears that Hashem wants to go away) - this would seem to go against the principle that the Talmud learned In Shabbos 127a ?
10. **Rambam Ch. Hilchos Avel 14,2:** Hospitality to wayfarers וגדולה הכנסת אורחים כקבלת פני שכניה is **as** great as welcoming the Divine Presence.
11. **Observation:** Rambam had a different version of the text in Talmud Shabbos 127a.
12. **Question #5:** How could Avraham leave the Divine presence if hospitality is only equal to it ? Right now he is leaving the Divine Presence ? How could he either go without asking or even to say "Please don't go away?"
13. **Rashi 18,1:** חום היום. הוציא הקב"ה חמה מנרתיקה, שלא להטריחו באורחים, ולפי שראהו מצטער. IN THE HEAT OF THE DAY — The Holy One, blessed be He, brought the sun out of its sheath that he might not be troubled by travellers, and when He perceived that **he was grieved** that no travellers came He brought to him angels in the form of men (Bava Metzia 86b).
14. **Question #6:** Why must Hashem send angels? If no one is coming, and there is no need to help wayfarers - why create a faux reality that isn't even necessary? Just because Avraham likes to have

- guests and is even in pain over not having guests, is not enough of a reason to miraculously bring down angels? Moreover, do we have guests because we enjoy it, or because we are actually filling a need that exists regardless if we enjoy doing it? Right now, there is no need to do Chesed?
- 15. Talmud Bava Basra 10a:** Turnus Rufus the wicked asked Rabbi Akiva: If your God loves the poor, for what reason does He not support them Himself? Rabbi Akiva said to him: He commands us to sustain the poor, so that through them and the charity we give them we will be saved from the judgment of Gehenna.
- 16. Question #7:** Is Chesed a self-serving Mitzvah? Just because it is good for the rich, other people should become poor because of that!
- 17. Mesilas Yesharim:** שהאדם לא נברא אלא להתענג על ה' ולהנות מזיו שכינתו שזהו התענוג האמיתי man was created solely to delight in G-d and to derive pleasure in the radiance of the Shechina (divine presence). For this is the true delight and the greatest pleasure that can possibly exist.
- 18. Question #8:** Why indeed is Hachnosas Orchim greater than or even equal to Kabolas Penei Hashcina, if the latter is the purpose of creation?
- 19. Bereishis 18,19:** כִּי יִדְעָתוֹ לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר יִצְוֶה אֶת־בְּנָיו וְאֶת־בֵּיתוֹ אַחֲרָיו וְשָׁמְרוּ דְרֹךְ יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת צְדָקָה: For I have singled him out, that he may instruct his children and his posterity to keep **the way of the LORD** by doing what is just and right, in order that the LORD may bring about for Abraham what He has promised him.”
- 20. Targum Unkelos:** אַרְי גְּלִי קְדָמִי בְּדִיל דִּי יִפְקֵד יְת בְּנוֹהֵי וְיַת אֲנֶשׁ בֵּיתֵיהּ בְּתִירוֹהֵי וְיִטְרוּן אַרְחוֹן דְּתַקְנֹן קְדָם: I know regarding Avraham that he will instruct his children ...to follow the path of Hashem to do Tzedakah and Mishpat, and doing that, then I will be able to bring my blessings upon Avraham....
- 21. Rashi:** כִּי יִדְעָתוֹ לְשׁוֹן חֶבְדָּה, וְאִמְנָם עֵקֶר לְשׁוֹן בְּלָם אִינוּ אֵלָא לְשׁוֹן יְדִיעָה, שֶׁהַמְחַבֵּב אֶת הָאָדָם? FOR I KNOW HIM – this is an expression denoting “affection” (connected) ...Still the primary meaning of these terms connected with the root ידע is really that of knowing, for whoever holds a person in affection attaches him to himself, so that he knows him well and is familiar with him. And why do I hold him dear?
- 22.** למען אשר יצוה. לפי שהוא מצוה את בניו עלי לשמר דרכי. ואם תפרשהו כתרגומו, יודע אני בו שיצוה את. BECAUSE HE WILL GIVE HIS CHILDREN CHARGE CONCERNING ME TO KEEP MY WAYS. If, however, you explain it as the Targum, “I know “of” him that he will command his sons etc.”, then the word למען does not fit into the sense.
- 23.** מען הביא. כך הוא מצוה לבניו, שמרו דרך ה' כדי שיביא ה' על אברהם וגו'; על בית אברהם לא נאמר. IN ORDER THAT [THE LORD] MAY BRING – Thus will he ever command his children saying “Keep the way of the Lord **in order that** the Lord may bring upon Abraham etc.” Since it does not say here “upon the house of Abraham”, but upon Abraham himself, we may infer that he who trains up a righteous son is as though he never dies (Genesis Rabbah 49:4).
- 24. Question #9:** The pasuk is explaining that Hashem chose Avraham because he will instruct his children to go in the ways of hashem - why is it necessary to add “that I love him (I am close to him) ” ?
- 25. Question #10:** They are doing Tzedakah & Mishpat just so that the blessings of Hashem should come to Avraham? That appears to be for ulterior motives?
- 26. Question #11:** The main idea is that Avraham will instruct his children to do Tzedakah & Mishpat - what is being added with the words “to keep the way of the Lord - “Derech hashem?” Is this the same thing or something different?

37. When a Jew does Chesed properly, because he wants to emulate Hashem, then “Hashem goes with him” wherever he goes.
38. It is as if Hashem is doing the Chesed together with the Jew, when he does a Chesed. This is a joint effort.
39. “Hospitality to wayfarers is **as** great as welcoming the Divine Presence” really means that when a Jew does Hachnosas Orchim, **Hashem comes along with him to do the Mitzvah ! (this is as the Rambam tells us!)**
40. **Behaving like Hashem is “welcoming the Divine Presence!”** (Answers to #9, 10, 11) That itself brings an attachment of Hashem to him. That is the meaning of “Yedativ.”
41. **Proof:** First Hashem is visiting him, then Avraham runs to the guests, and then he says to Hashem “don’t go away” as Rashi explained.. **Even after Avraham left his tent, he is not telling Hashem to not leave this place, rather not to leave him as he goes - “come with me !”, since Hashem also went out of the tent with Avraham to greet the guests !** Rashi is teaching that Avraham could have said and probably did say “don’t go away” before and after he left the tent !
42. Why ? Because Hachnosas Orchaim and Kabolas Penei Shechina are not two separate things - but they are one and the same ! Hashem is always with you when you are on the Derech Hashem ! Since they are equal, Avraham can definitely leave his tent !
43. This explains why Avraham is able to run in spite of his physical ailment, because Hashem’s energy is pulsating though Avraham jointly accomplishing the task! (Answers to #, 4, 5, and 8.)
44. No matter how long Avraham is away from the tent, Hashem is with him, because Hachnosas Orchim generates Kabolas Penei Shechina in a joint effort.
45. “Ki Yedativ” - a person has a special Hashgacha from Hashem when he develops his character in the Derech Hashem. That person is never separated from him, and Hashem will insure his success.
46. Avraham is saying that he might as well do chesed out of his tent and keep the very same “Presence of Hashem” as when he was in his tent !
47. The greatness of a Jew who develops his character, is that then Hashem is brought into the world with our actions. An action done this way has a higher level of success because of Hashem protecting him. That is why he will be successful, as he is totally connected to Hashem.
48. **POINT:** This is not a reward for the person; rather, he is being empowered by hashem. This is so important, as that is the purpose of the world !
49. **POINT:** When you see a person doing a Mitzvah, you know there is a God in heaven, but when you see a person acting Divinely, **you sense the Godliness in the action of that person. The world has purpose because it has Godliness in the world !**
50. **Answer to #6 and #7:** Avraham knows that **the basis for doing Chesed is not responding to a need, but bringing God into the world,** which is the purpose of the world. Therefore he has anguish if he can not bring more Godliness into the world ! Doing Chesed creates a substantive presence of God into the world.
51. If there would be no poor people in the world, and no need for Chesed, then there would be no purpose to the world, as no one would be able to bring Divinity into the world !
52. This explains why we do not make a blessing on a mitzvah that is *ben adam lachaveiro*, because we do not need to make a blessing to remind us that we are doing a god-like act, because the act itself is bringing out the presence of hashem.
53. This is exactly what R’ Akiva explains to Turnus Rufus
54. **Answer #4:** Hashem initially wanted to leave Hashem because he saw that Avraham was suffering from his wounds and not being able to do the Mitzvah, as the shechina is not present when a person is sad, but then Hashem must follow Avraham if he is going to behave in a Divine fashion.

- 55.POINT:** Developing Midos is greater than doing Mitzvas. The Derech Hashem is in His Midos - which is a higher level of reality that is being created by man doing a Mitzvah. Doing a Mitzvah does not bring as much presence of Hashem as perfecting one's midos by emulating hashem, which brings out "Ki Yadativ!"
- 56.Understanding of Arizal:** That is why it is easy for a Ba'al Midos to do Mitzvos !
- 57.Ramban, Rambam:** Yiras Shomayim also creates the same presence of Hashem.
- 58.MOSHOL:** A slave senses his master's presence wherever the master is.
- 59.QUESTION:** Why does the Gemara only say that Hachnosas Orchim is like Kabolas Penei Schenis and not other acts of Chesed like visiting the sick or comforting mourners?
- 60.Tehilim 89,3:** עוֹלָם חֶסֶד יִבְנֶה שְׁמַיִם "Your steadfast love is confirmed forever.
- 61.**The greatest kindness Hashem did was to let mankind invade his space through the power of Tzimtzum. Not that Hashem gave us anything - but that he gave us space !
- 62.**The ultimate chesed that we can learn from the "Derech Hashem" is to give up your space for others.
- 63."my house is your house" mi casa es tu casa !** Is how Hashem created the world and how we emulate him.
- 64. Answer #1 & #2:** When a judge sits to bring Divine Judgment (Mishpat) into the world, he is bringing Hashem into the world and is jointly working on Justice. Why? As Justice is also a continuation of the legacy of Avraham, and **the same the expression of Derech Hashem.**
- 65.**When we do Hashem's work, Hashem wants us to be comfortable and to sit! So Hashem is giving us His seat, because He wants us to have His space.

CONTRASTING THE CHESED OF AVRAHAM & LOT:

- 66. Bereishis 18, 1-8:** Now the Lord appeared to him in **the plains of Mamre**, and **he was sitting at the entrance of the tent** when the day was hot.

אֲוִירָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה בְּאֵלָיו מִמָּרָא וְהוּא יֹשֵׁב פְּתַח־הָאֵהֶל בְּחַם הַיּוֹם:

- 2**And he lifted his eyes and saw, and behold, three **men** were standing beside him, and he saw and he ran toward them from the entrance of the tent, and **he prostrated himself to the ground.**

בּוֹיָשָׂא עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה שְׁלֹשָׁה אַנְשִׁים נֹצְבִים עָלָיו וַיֵּרָא וַיֵּרֶץ לְקִרְאתָם מִפְּתַח הָאֵהֶל וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַרְצָה:

- 3**And he said, "My lords, if only I have found favor in your eyes, **please do not pass on** from beside your servant.

גּוֹיָאמַר אֲדֹנָי אִם־נָא מִצְאֵתִי חוֹן בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֶל־נָא תַעֲבֹר מֵעַל עַבְדְּךָ:

- 4**Please let a **little water** be taken, and bathe your feet, and recline under the tree.

דִּיקַח־נָא מִעֵט־מַיִם וְרַחְצוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם וְהִשְׁעֲנוּ תַחַת הָעֵץ:

- 5**And I will take a **morsel of bread**, and sustain your hearts; **after[wards] you shall pass on**, because you have **passed by** your servant." And they said, "So shall you do, as you have spoken."

הַוָּאֵקַחְתָּה פַת־לֶחֶם וְסַעַדְו לִבְכֶם אַחַר תַּעֲבֹרוּ כִי־עַל־כֵּן עַבְדְּתֶם עַל־עַבְדְּכֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ כֵן תַּעֲשֶׂה כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ:

- 6**And Abraham **hastened** to the tent to Sarah, and he said, "**Hasten** three seah of meal [and] fine flour; knead and make cakes."

וַיִּמְהַר אַבְרָהָם הָאֵהֶלָה אֶל־שָׂרָה וַיֹּאמֶר מְהֵרָי שְׁלֹשׁ סָאִים קַמַח סֹלֶת לְיוֹשֵׁי וְעֵשִׂי עֲגוֹת:

- 7**And to the cattle did Abraham **run**, and he took a calf, tender and good, and he gave it to the youth, and he **hastened** to prepare it.

זוּאֶל־הַבָּקָר רָץ אַבְרָהָם וַיִּקַּח בֶּרֶךְ־קָדוֹר רַךְ וְטוֹב וַיִּתֵּן אֶל־הַנְּעָר וַיִּמְהַר לַעֲשׂוֹת אוֹתוֹ:

- 8**And he took cream and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and he placed [them] before them, and he was standing over them under the tree, and they ate.

חַוִּיִּקַּח חֲמָאָה וְחֹלֵב וּבֶרֶךְ־הַבָּקָר אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּתֵּן לַפְּנֵיהֶם וְהוּא־עֹמֵד עֲלֵיהֶם תַּחַת הָעֵץ וַיֹּאכְלוּ:

67. **Bereishis 19, 1-8:** And the two **angels** came to Sodom in the evening, and **Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom**, and Lot saw and arose toward them, and **he prostrated himself on his face to the ground**.

אָוִיבְאוּ שְׁנֵי הַמַּלְאָכִים סְדֹמָה בְּעֶרֶב וְלוֹט יֹשֵׁב בַּשַּׁעַר־סְדֹם וַיֵּרָא־לוֹט וַיִּקָּם לְקִרְאתָם וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַפָּיִם אַרְצָה:
 2And he said, "Behold now my lords, **please turn to your servant's house** and **stay overnight** and wash your feet, and you shall arise early and go on your way." And they said, "**No, but we will stay overnight in the street.**"

בַּיּוֹמָאֵר הִנֵּה גָא־אֲדֹנָי סוּרוּ נָא אֶל־בַּיִת עֲבָדְכֶם וְלִינּוּ וְרַחְצוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם וְהִשְׁכַּמְתֶּם וְהִלַּכְתֶּם לְדַרְכְּכֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא כִי בְּרֻחֹב נָלִינוּ:

3And he urged them strongly, and **they turned in to him**, and came into his house, and he made them a **feast**, and he baked unleavened cakes, and they ate.

גוֹיִפְצַרְבָּם מֵאֲד וַיִּסְרוּ אֵלָיו וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ וַיַּעַשׂ לָהֶם מִשְׁתֶּה וּמִצּוֹת אֶפֶה וַיֹּאכְלוּ:

4When they had not yet retired, and the people of the city, the people of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, the entire populace from every end[*of the city*].

דטָרְם יִשְׁכְּבוּ וְאֲנָשֵׁי הָעִיר אֲנָשֵׁי סְדֹם נִסְבּוּ עַל־הַבַּיִת מִנְעַר וְעַד־זָקוֹן כָּל־הָעָם מִקְּצָה:

5And they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, and let us be intimate with them."

הוִיִּקְרְאוּ אֶל־לוֹט וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ אַיֵּה הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־בָּאוּ אֵלֶיךָ הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה הוֹצִיָאם אֵלֵינוּ וְנִדְעָה אֹתָם:

6And Lot came out to them to the entrance, and he shut the door behind him.

וַיֵּצֵא אֱלֵהֶם לֹט הַפֶּתַח וְהִדְלִית סָגַר אַחֲרָיו:

7And he said, "My brethren, please do not do evil.

זוֹיֹאמַר אֶל־נָא אַחֵי תַרְעוּ:

8Behold now I have two daughters who were not intimate with a man. I will bring them out to you, and **do to them as you see fit**; only to these men do nothing, **because they have come under the shadow of my roof.**"

ח הִנֵּה־נָא לִי שְׁתֵּי בָנוֹת אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדְעוּ אִישׁ אוֹצִיָאָה־נָא אֶתְהוֹן אֵלֵיכֶם וַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶן כַּטּוֹב בְּעֵינֵיכֶם רַק לֹא־אֲנָשִׁים הָאֵל אֶל־תַּעֲשׂוּ דָבָר כִּי־עַל־כֵּן בָּאוּ בְּצֶל קַרְתִּי:

LOT APPEARS TO BE DOING MORE CHESED THAN AVRAHAM:

1)Avraham prostrates himself to the ground before his guests, but Lot gives more honor by prostrating himself **his face** to the ground.

2)Avraham invites his guests to stay outside under the tree, while Lot invites his guests to sleep overnight in his house.

3)Avraham's guests immediately agree to stay by him, while Lot had to insist until they agreed to stay.

4)Lot offers his guests a feast, while Avraham offers much less food.

5)Avraham looks for guest from the comfort of his own home, while Lot is actively looking for guests at the gates of Sodom.

6)Avraham is inviting guests in a friendly environment, while Lot is taking great personal risk by inviting guests in Sodom.

68. **Midrash Rabba 48,10:** אָמַר הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְאַבְרָהָם אֶתְהָ אָמַרְתָּ יִקַּח נָא מֵעַט מִיָּם, תִּיַיֵּךְ שְׁאֲנִי פוֹרַע, Hashem said to Avraham, "You said 'please take a little water,' I swear that I will repay your children likewise in the desert, in the settled lands, and in the world to come..."

- 69. Question #12:** Why does the Torah go into so much detail about this one act of Chesed that Avraham does ?
- 70. Question #13:** Why is the story of the Hachnosas Orchim of Lot with the angels mentioned at all ?
- 71. Question #14:** Why does Hashem test Avraham with a nearly identical test concerning the abduction of Sarah by Avimelech, when a similar test happened with Paroah ?
- 72. Question #15:** Why are the rewards that the Jews benefited in the desert attributed to the one act of Hachnosas Orchaim that Avraham did with the angels, who did not actually benefit at all from Avraham's kindness, and not for the many years that Avraham provided to actual people for the last 99 years ?
- 73. Talmud Betzah 32a:** Jews are compassionate children of compassionate parents, and one who shows no pity for fellow creatures is assuredly not the seed of Abraham, our father.
- 74. Talmud Yevamos 79a:** Three signs identify this people: They are merciful; they are bashful; and they perform deeds of loving-kindness.
- 75. Devarim 23, 4-5:** לֹא־יָבִיא עִמּוֹנֵי וּמוֹאָבִי בְּקִהְלֵי יְהוָה גַּם דְּוֹר עֲשִׂירֵי לֹא־יָבִיא לָהֶם בְּקִהְלֵי יְהוָה עַד־עוֹלָם: No Ammonite or Moabite shall be admitted into the congregation of the LORD; none of their descendants, even in the tenth generation, shall ever be admitted into the congregation of the LORD, עַל־דִּבְרֵי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־קִדְּמוּ אֶתְכֶם בְּלַחֵם וּבַמַּיִם בַּדֶּרֶךְ בְּצֵאתְכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם וְאֲשֶׁר שָׂכַר עָלֶיךָ אֶת־בַּלְעָם, בְּיָדֵי בָלָאָם בְּנֵי בְעוֹר מִפְּתוֹר אֶרֶץ נְהַרִים לְקַלְלֶךָ: because they did not meet you with food and water on your journey after you left Egypt, and because they hired Balaam son of Beor, from Pethor of Aram-naharaim, to curse you.

CONTRASTING AVRAHAM & EFRON:

- 76. Talmud Bava Metzia 87a:** It is written: "And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and satisfy your heart" (Genesis 18:5), and it is written: "And Abraham ran to the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good" (Genesis 18:7). Rabbi Elazar said: From here we learn that the righteous say little and do much, whereas the wicked say much and do not do even a little. From where do we derive this principle that the wicked say much and do not do even a little? We derive it from Ephron. Initially, it is written that Ephron said to Abraham: "A piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is that between me and you?" (Genesis 23:15). And ultimately it is written: "And Abraham listened to Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the hearing of the children of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant" (Genesis 23:16), i.e., shekels that could be used in any location. This teaches that not only did Ephron take shekels from Abraham, he took from him only centenaria [kantarei], i.e., superior coins, as there is a place where they call a shekel a centenarius.
- 77. Question #16:** We can understand that one should do much, but what is the value of saying little? Why not say what you intend to do? One should not overstate his intentions, but what really is wrong with simply being accurate?
- 78. Question #17:** Where did Avraham learn to behave like this ?

HOW TO ACHIEVE DIVINE KINDNESS:

- 79. THE CHALLENGE OF CHESED:** Chesed generates an opposite reaction of what Chesed is supposed to be ! Although the person doing the Chesed feels good about helping another person in need, but the recipient always feels uncomfortable. Why?
- 80.** Being the recipient comes with a feeling of dependence, and is therefore very uncomfortable, because he feels indebted to the giver.

81. **THE ENORMOUS TENSION OF CHESD:** You want to do Chesed; and yet through doing the Chesed, which makes him feel good in terms of his needs are taken care of, you create discomfort in the recipient by his feeling incapable and/or dependent!
82. The recipient of your Chesed, who benefits greatly from your munificence, pays an enormous price as he loses a certain amount of self-respect.
83. **CHAZAL:** receiving a favor suffers the shame and embarrassment of “Nahama DeKisufa” - “Bread of shame.”
84. **QUESTION:** How do we reconcile these two antithetical feelings of the recipient?
85. **WRONG APPROACH:** Does not try to reconcile these two feelings. The giver enjoys doing the Chesed and feels wonderful about doing more and more for the recipient; while the beneficiary feels an enormous amount of discomfort.
86. The giver is not focused on the receiver’s discomfort. He is focused on his tremendous desire to do the favour. He is focused on himself.
87. Chesed gives the giver tremendous sense of expansiveness (increasing oneself) at the expense of suffocating the recipient.
88. **CORRECT APPROACH:** Be extremely sensitive to the receiver’s discomfort. When you do help in order to alleviate a difficult situation, make sure that your Chesed does not create a negative reaction in the recipient.
89. **Simple solution:** Try your utmost to distance yourself from being the source of the favor.
90. Try to do the favor in such way that the recipient feels that he is receiving - but not getting it from anyone in particular. i.e. the benefit just happens to be there.
91. The giver must attempt to minimize himself as the giver.
92. **Shulchan Aruch, Laws of Tzedakah Siman 249:** The following are eight grades of charity work, arranged in a descending scale. The noblest form is to strengthen the hand of an Israelite in need, to give him a gift or a loan, or to join him in partnership, or to find him work, that he may not become a public charge and beggar; and it is with reference to such a mode of charity that the Bible says, “... thou shalt uphold him.” ...The next highest form of doing charity is to give in such a way that the giver should not know to whom he gives; nor should the receiver know from whom he receives. Contributing to a charity fund is a close analogy...A somewhat lower form than that is when the giver knows to whom he gives but the receiver knows not from whom he receives; as the greatest of our sages used to do when they would secretly throw money into the doorways of the poor.
93. This may be possible when it comes to giving charity, but more challenging when it comes to chesed, as this is impossible when doing Hachnosas Orchim.
94. **MOSHOL:** When does a guest feel more comfortable visiting your vacation home: When you are home taking care of you, or if you let him stay when you are not there?
95. Try creating a feeling for the recipient that he is not imposing upon you.
96. Instead of having it appear that you are the source for the Chesed and that everything is coming from you - make it seem that the receiver would receive even without your input. Or even better, make it seem that the receiver is doing your favor by taking something from you.

EXAMPLES OF THE DIVINE KINDNESS OF AVRAHAM:

- Avram runs after simple unimportant guests.
- Avram asks them to sit under the tree outside which is not such an imposition.
- He offers them very little food. Like a BBQ
- Even though he gives them a lot of food, he makes them feel that they are doing him a favour by getting rid of all the food that is left over, since there are no other guests.
- He stands over them like a waiter - not like the wealthy land owner that he is.
- The guests do not feel they are imposing on Avraham.

- This is evidenced by their immediate acceptance of Avraham's invitation.

EXAMPLES OF THE SELF-SERVING KINDNESS OF LOT:

- Lot is inviting guests because they seem to be important people.
- Lot is doing Chesed so that he should feel good as evidenced from...
- He tells the people of Sodom to not interfere because "**because they have come under the shadow of my roof.**" He does not say "How can you do this to innocent people!"
- He is willing to give away his daughters to immoral behaviour, as long as his guests can stay.
- He is overwhelming them with a feast.
- They see that he is self-sacrificing his safety and security for them.
- Lot is not taking "No" for an answer, and insists that he give them hospitality.
- This is all evidenced by them preferring to sleep in the dangerous streets of Sodom rather than submit themselves to Lot's kindness.

AVRAHAM LEARNS FROM HASHEM:

97. **Tehilim 89,3:** עֹלָם חֶסֶד יִבְנֶה שְׁמִים "Your steadfast love is confirmed forever.

98. Hashem minimizes Himself in order to create the world (see above).

99. The kindness of Hashem that created the world was not by Hashem extending himself, but by making Himself smaller.

100. After Tzimtzum there is an allusion of a place where Hashem does not exist, from which we benefit.

101. Hashem did not create man first and then created everything man would have needed. Rather, Hashem brought man into a world that was already finished, and Adam did not see the host that much.

102. Hashem did such an amazing job of minimizing himself from the picture, that people can easily be atheists!

103. Hashem does Chesed this way because He knows the nature of man, since He created him.

104. **QUESTION:** How does Avraham know this?

105. **Answer #1:** His brilliant mind and power of deduction.

106. **Answer #2:** He develops a Jewish mind, and realizes that counterintuitive things can be very Divinely accomplished!

107. **Answer #3:** He understood how people in need and recipients of kindness would feel because he himself was in need and a recipient of kindness during the famine.

108. **POINT:** Had Avraham not stood by his 3 tests, he never would have benefited from the knowledge of knowing how a recipient feels! He also learned how it feels when you:

- suffer from not having children
- don't know where you are going in life. (Lech Lecha)
- suffering from poverty (Famine)
- victim of a moral crime (Egypt)
- helping a person who is the victim of his own errors (Lot captured)
- helping a woman with no shidduch prospects (Hagar)
- the pain of sickness (Milah)
- victim of a crime against your power (Avimelech)
- go through the pain of divorce. (Hagar)
- go through the pain of a child going off the derech (Yishmael)
- go through the pain of losing child (Akeida)
- go through the pain of losing a wife (especially when she is a victim of your circumstances)

“helped”. True kindness means making your guest not realize the effort you are putting in. Make him feel you have done nothing out of the ordinary. Or better: it was a pleasure having him at your table. You enjoyed his honoring you with his presence and company.

122. **Talmud Sotah 46b:** Anyone who accompanies his friend four cubits in a city will come to no harm by accompanying him.

123. **Reason:** You are showing the guest that he is not the beggar who received his handout and is now slinking away. Rather, we are sending him a message that “It was such an honor having him over — *he did you such a favor* — that the least you can do is accompany him a bit along the way.

MISCHASAED IM KONO:

109. **Bereishis 12,1:** וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָם לֵךְ־לְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲרָאָךְ: The LORD said to Abram, “Go forth from your native land and from your father’s house to the land that I will show you.

110. Rashi interprets lech lecha as "go for yourself" - l'hanaascha u'le'tovasecha, "for your pleasure and for your benefit."

111. **Bereishis 12,4:** וַיֵּלֶךְ אַבְרָם כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֵלָיו יְהוָה: Abram went forth *as the LORD had commanded him*.

112. Hashem commanded Avraham Avinu to go for his own pleasure, but, according to some commentators, he did not follow instructions. He went simply because Hashem told him to go. Avraham went l'shem Shomayim, for the sake of Heaven.

113. Horav Shimshon Pincus, zl, feels that this is not correct. It does not sit right to suggest that Avraham did not follow Hashem's instruction. Indeed, in pasuk 4, the Torah writes, "So Avram went as Hashem had spoken to him." Hashem instructed him to go for his own pleasure and benefit. Avraham certainly did so.

114. **QUESTION:** What is the Torah teaching us?

115. Rav Pincus: when a person performs an act of kindness, such as giving a dollar to a poor man, two considerations are in play regarding this charitable act.

116. First, he achieved an act of chesed, loving-kindness. He availed a poor person the opportunity to purchase a slice of bread.

117. Second, he elevated his own spiritual persona. He made himself into a baal chesed.

118. **QUESTION: which of these two achievements has greater significance:** his completing an act of chesed which made the world a better place, or his own spiritual actualization?

119. The pasuk answers our question with: Lech lecha - go for yourself. As far as Hashem is concerned, He wanted Avraham to act for himself. He wanted the Patriarch to refine himself, to elevate his own ishkus, humanness. This is what was important to Hashem.

120. Why? Avraham was the pillar of chesed.

121. Navi says about the Jewish people who went into the desert “ So says hashem, I remember the kindness of your youth, you went after Me in the desert that was uninhabitable?

122. **Question:** Why is it called a Chesed?

123. **Question:** what does this sound similar to?

124. **Conclusion:** Avraham’s going out must be a chesed...but why?

125. **Zohar:** “Who is a Chosid? One who acts kindly with his Creator.” this defines true chesed as, ha'mischased im Kono

126. **POINT:** Authentic chesed is the act of kindness one performs for Hashem.

127. **EXPLANATION: Bona fide chesed is the act of providing a service or commodity for someone which they would otherwise not have.** On his own, the service entity is unobtainable for him. For example, giving someone a candy when, in fact, he has a candy in his pocket, might be an act of chesed, but it certainly is not the embodiment of chesed. If the individual has no candy -

and has no way of obtaining any candy - then the act is the typification of chesed.

128. **Chazal are teaching us that Hashem is the only "One" who lacks one thing, and it is something which He cannot secure without man's cooperation: the perfection that man achieves for himself.** When man perfects himself, when he makes himself a better person, he performs a chesed for Hashem.

129. This is the meaning of Lech Lecha, "go for yourself." Hashem's wish is that Avraham evolve himself into a better person. Hashem is capable of doing all of the wonderful things that Avraham is doing for the world. He can provide anything. **He cannot, however, make Avraham a better person**, because to do so would mean that Avraham is now a robot. He did nothing to better himself; Hashem did it for him.

130. Thus, Avraham must personally act kindly towards others, so that, in turn, he becomes a better person. Hashem's focus was on Avraham's lecha, "yourself"/himself. He wanted the Patriarch to act in a manner that would elevate his own personal spiritual stature. Avraham did, in fact, follow instructions.

131. Avraham understood what Hashem demanded of Avraham - perfection. Hashem does not need man to build and develop the world. Hashem can do that Himself. He does not need man to support the poor, feed the ill, and care for the needy. Hashem can do that.

132. **There is only one thing that man can do which Hashem cannot do and still allow man to continue functioning as a man: perfect himself.**

133. **In this manner, Avraham viewed every human being with awe and reverence. Each of them is capable of so much. Each could give Hashem what He desires, what He Himself cannot do. This is how Avraham stood in contradistinction to the rest of the world. He valued people. He saw their incredible potential.**

134. This is where the members of secular society have distanced themselves from what Hashem has planned for them. We are able to send a man to the moon, to establish space stations in the distant solar system, but has it had any effect on mankind? **Have we become better people?** Scientifically, we are light years beyond our primitive ancestors; we are still slaves to lust, greed, and every form of mind-altering narcotics, but we can fly to Mars! **We have done nothing to better ourselves.** Regrettably, some of the effects of the secular society has crept into our own Torah world, which seems to distinguish between mitzvos that are Heaven-oriented and those that deal with our fellow man.

135. Rav Pincus emphasizes that an individual's distinction is not measured by the great things that he does, his great acts of charity, his incredible diligence in Torah study and brilliance in Torah erudition. It is determined by the little, simple things, the subtle acts of kindness, the innocuous acts of thoughtfulness which no one recognizes - often not even the benefactor, where no plaques are dedicated and no dinners are proffered in his honor. It is the little things that one does which demonstrate the "real" person. These are the actions that serve to elevate him and make him a better person. It is these acts of kindness that are an expression of "acting kindly with Hashem."

MANIFESTATIONS OF DIVINE CHESD:

BEFORE:

- Look for daily examples of Hashem's Divine chesed as He interacts with mankind.
- Look at every personal misfortune that you go through as training to being a better Ba'al Chesed.
- Feel compelled to search out for opportunities to do Chesed even when none appear to exist. Be a "Chesed Machine." A day can not go by within you having done many acts of Chesed.
- View a day without Chesed as a day without special Hashgacha Pratis & Brocha from Hashem.
- Do not feel that any act of Chesed is beyond your abilities.
- Do not develop personal "policies" that will minimize how much Chesed you do.

- Although there is a Halachik hierarchy in terms with whom you should do Chesed, but you should happily do Chesed to whoever is available.
- Choose hidden acts of Chesed over highly visual ones.
- Know that a small act of Chesed is no less important than a big act of Chesed.
- Do not make big promises about what you are going to do, even if it is true.

DURING:

- Do not do Chesed because It “makes you feel good” - do it because it fulfills Hashem’s Divine will of 1) you're emulating Hashem, 2) perfecting yourself so that Hashem can come close to you, and 3) The Kiddush Hashem that your behaviour produces.
- Realize that every act of Chesed to another person is also a Chesed to Hashem.
- Feel that you are doing every act of Chesed as a joint partner with Hashem.
- Minimize your appearance during the Chesed that you do.
- Do Chesed with alacrity.
- Empathize with the recipients feelings; and insure that he does not feel minimized by your Chesed.
- Have the recipient feel that he is the one doing your favor.
- Involve other people to do Chesed with you.

AFTER:

- Don't EVER expect anything in return for your kindness.