

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT VAYERA

11-12 NOVEMBER | 18 CHESHVAN

A lesson in hospitality



**HADAR
BECKER**

Tribe Fieldworker and
Youth Director @ South
Hampstead Synagogue

At the beginning of our parasha, the Torah tells us that even though Avraham Avinu was recovering from his circumcision, he sat and waited in the heat for passers-by to come so that he could host them. When three angels (disguised as men) arrive, Avraham goes above and beyond to make them feel comfortable.

There is a story about Rabbi Yechiel Meir of Gostynin, who lived in Poland in the 19th century and excelled in the mitzvah of hospitality.

One Friday night, Rabbi Yechiel Meir returned from the synagogue. After he entered his home, someone informed him that there was a visitor in the synagogue who didn't have a place to stay. Rabbi Yechiel Meir immediately returned to the synagogue to bring him home. The

guest was dressed in dirty clothes and had a bad smell, which made it difficult to eat with him at the table. When they sat down and began to sing "*Shalom Aleichem*", Rabbi Yechiel Meir saw that the guest did not say the words. When he asked him why, he replied, "I don't know the words". The Rabbi handed him a cup to make Kiddush and when he noticed that the man could not speak, he said the Kiddush with him word by word. A similar thing happened when they washed their hands for *Hamotzi*. During the meal, the man ate in an unpleasant way. When the Rabbi saw that the guest had finished his plate, he asked for more food to be brought. The Rabbi continued to bring more food to his guest so as not to embarrass him, until he had finished all the food that was prepared for Shabbat. After the guest finished, he rudely sat down on the couch and when they tried to wake him for the end of the meal, he refused to get up and pretended not to understand. During this entire ordeal, there was

not a trace of anger on the Rabbi's face, he treated the guest only with affection and was happy that God had given him the opportunity to do the important mitzvah of hospitality.

The next morning, Rabbi Yechiel Meir entered the room to check on his guest, but he was nowhere to be found. The Rabbi sent messengers to look for the guest, but no one had seen nor heard of him. Rabbi Yechiel Meir understood that the guest was a test from God, to see how far his hospitality went.

Both Avraham and Rabbi Yechiel Meir show us the importance of hospitality. Even if the time is not ideal for us, it is very important to try to make our guests comfortable.

As a guest from Israel in London, I would like to add how much I appreciate and thank the amazing families from South Hampstead Community for their warm and generous hospitality. I look forward to hosting my friends from England in Israel.

Parasha Quiz

1. Who was told: "don't look behind you"?

Lot
Yitzchak (Isaac)
Avraham (Abraham)

2. What did Avraham bring as a sacrifice instead of Yitzchak?

Cow
Goat
Ram

3. Who said to whom: "Please take some water and wash your feet"?

Yosef (Joseph) to his brothers
Avraham to the angels
Avraham to his servants

4. Who was told: "don't stretch out your hand against the boy"?

Yaakov (Jacob)
Avraham
The angel

