I (Adonai) Know Him (Abraham)

"[1]Then Adonai (יהוה) appeared (vayera יהוה) to him… [17]when Adonai said, "Should I keep secret from Abraham what I am about to do, [18]seeing that Abraham will most certainly become a great and mighty nation and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed? [19]For I have made myself known (Ki Yeda-ativ) to him so that he will command (tzevah) his sons and his household after him to keep (shomer) the Way of Adonai (Haderech Adonai) by doing righteousness and justice (tzedakah u-mishpat), so that Adonai may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him" (Gen. 18:1a, 17-19).

Have you ever had a personal (face-to-face) encounter the Holy One of Israel? With your own eyes? In your spirit as a vision? Well, if you have either heard or seen Him, you undoubtedly have an indelible image of either the voice or vision imprinted on your mind. If you realize it was the Holy One of Israel communicating personally with you, it will change your life forever. In today' *Parashah* we see that Abraham has a face-to-face encounter with *The Almighty* and it changes Abraham forever.

The men and women whom *The Almighty* chose to be the Fathers of our Faith each had personal, one on one encounter, with *The Holy One*. These experiences are recorded for us in the pages of the Holy Scriptures. What a blessing to our generation! How do we want His instructions to apply to our life? How much do you want to hear His voice? How much do you want to see His face?

BTW, look at the usage of the word *Adonai* (אֲדֹנָי) by Abraham in referring to יהוה in *Genesis 18:1-3*. It is clear from the text that Abraham was speaking to יהוה. Abraham used both terms *Adonai* and יהוה and *Moses* (the writer of *Genesis*) clearly did not think this was a term of disrespect. The Jewish Community use the term *Adonai* only when referring to יהוה and not in any other context for any other deity. The Jewish Community substitute *Hashem* (and not *Adonai*) in *any* usage outside the synagogue. This is why you hear in *chassidic* music such things as *"Lechu Neranenah Lashem"* instead of the proper *"Lechu Neranenah La-Adonai."* In *Kol Simcha* (and in the TLV Bible) we use the term *Adonai* (in like manner as Abraham did), when referring to יהוה *exclusively*. If it was good enough for father Abraham, it is good enough for us…

"Then יהוה appeared to him…Then he said,, My Lord (Adonai or אֲדֹנָי in Hebrew), if now I have found favor in your eyes…" (Gen. 18:1a,3a)

More importantly, in this week's *Parashat Vayera* (*Gen. 18:17-19*) we not only see that Father Abraham was a *Strong Spiritual Leader* but we also learn what compelled יהוה to give him the revelation of His plans. "*Ki Yeda-ativ*" because *The Almighty* knows him *intimately* – "*that he will command his sons and his household after him.*" In other words, that Abraham will *demonstrate* and *lead by example* his own family in the *ways of the Lord* and to *do justice and sound judgment*! The same thing obliges יהוה today – because *Adonai* is not a respecter of persons. You and I fathers and parents which are heads of households will receive a great revelation from *The Almighty* directly if we *assume the spiritual leadership* of our families and make that the number one priority in our lives.

The Hebrew word translated *command* in the TLV (יצוה) comes from the root word צוה (*Tzevah*). We recognize it when we put a *mem* in front of it, obtaining *mitzvah* (מצוה). The *yud* in front makes it future tense – *he will mitzvah* his family after him. Using the first definition of *tzevah* found in Strong's Concordance we get that Abraham *"will intensively constitute his children and family with the mitzvot of Torah."* Resulting in "*veshamru derech Adonai la-asot tzedakah u-mishpat* (וְשָׁמְרוּ דֶּרֶךְ יהוה לַעֲשׂוֹת צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט)"– they will keep (*shomer,* guard) *The WAY* of יהוה to do righteousness (*tzedakah* also means works of

charity, love) and exercise *good judgment* (judge righteously). *Abba Father*, we desperately need children who will do righteously and exercise godly judgment!

I love the emphasis in Scripture about the important role of proper spiritual leadership – it brings about revelation about the future. It impels *The Almighty* to come on the scene and reveal His plans. *"And יהוה said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before יהוה..."*(see *Gen. 18:20-33*). At the conclusion of chapter 18 Abraham interceded face to face with *Adonai* about the fate and upcoming judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham was concerned with his own family (Lot lived in Sodom) – his very own family that were in the world. Scripture refers to Lot as Abraham's brother. While it may have been true that Abraham cared for the people of Sodom in general, he stopped this daring intercession when the number reached ten. How big was Lot's family? 10! יהוה would not have destroyed Sodom for those ten relatives had they embraced the things of *Yah*. This is an awesome realization – our children's families count, and they count for everything!

Adonai's Word confronts our modern civilization with two alternatives: Restore family relationships and survive or allow family relationships go the way they have been going in the last few decades and continue to deteriorate. If we do, we will perish under *The Almighty curse*. Nevertheless, the final outcome of this crisis will be decided by the response of *men and fathers*. They are the ones whom *The Almighty* holds primarily responsible. In *Yah's* message through *Malachi 3:22-24* (Traditional Christian texts render these as *Malachi Chapter 4:4-6*), He requires first that the *hearts of the fathers turn to children*. Only after that will the hearts of the children be turned *toward their own fathers*. In our day *The Almighty* is judging us through our children. They are a *fatherless generation*!

There are many voices crying out today that Believers need to become socially relevant. In no area in society does the Congregation have a greater opportunity to become socially relevant than in *the area of family life*. In so doing we shall be responding to the *most urgent crisis of our time*. Our *Kol Simcha* Community needs to present a clear message depicting Believing families exactly *Yah* intended them to be – a message that defines the Scriptural roles of husbands, wives and children. This is a lifestyle in accordance with the great, *unchanging principles established in Scripture from Genesis to Revelation*. We cannot compromise with the humanism that has infiltrated the Body of Messiah. *Shabbat Shalom!*