

How Great Is Hospitality!

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Parshat Vayera

G*d appeared to Abraham on the Plains of Mamrei as he was sitting at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. Abraham then looked again and saw three men standing nearby. He ran to greet them and bowed to the ground before them. (Genesis 18:1-2)

Thus begins this Parshah.

Abraham was sitting at the entrance of his tent, immersed in a Vision of G*d. Still, he had the presence of mind to interrupt his communing with G*d to run and greet three strangers (who, Abraham later – only later – learned , turned out to be angels) and to offer them refreshment. Welcoming guests, the ancient rabbis taught, is a higher duty even than welcoming Shekhinah, G*d's Presence.

Furthermore, Abraham, although he was ninety-nine years old and suffering the physical pain of recovery from his circumcision (of which we learned at the end of last week's Parshah, *Lech L'cha*), did not instruct a servant (of whom he, as a very wealthy sheikh, had many) to see to the strangers' needs. He himself ran – he ran! – to tell his wife Sarah to prepare bread, and he himself ran – he ran! – to get food for his guests, and he served them himself.

How important a duty is hospitality! A great, important, and wealthy sheikh, Abraham, at the age of ninety-nine, suffering the pain of recovery from his circumcision, interrupted his meditation and his communing with G*d and rushed and ran like a teenager to show proper hospitality to three strangers whom he had never before seen!

How great is hospitality!

Shabbat Shalom.

Hospitality

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