

Parshas Veyerah: Inspirations from the Haftarah
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Hachnosas Orchim: The Legacy Of Avraham and Sarah

There are a number of parallels between the Torah reading and the Haftarah. Perhaps the most well known is the similarity between Sarah Emainu and the Shunamite woman who both miraculously conceived and bore sons against natural circumstances.

Avraham, of course, was the one who started hachnosas orchim as a way of serving Hashem. We know his entire motif was chesed. However, Sefer Chevlei Mashiach by Rav Yisroel Eliezer Kanarek,zt"l, brings out that it was more than just chesed. Avraham Avinu was one of the few who really thought into the creation and realized that there had to be a master. It was precisely this understanding that he had that the world was not his which led him to be a true eved hashem. With this realization, doing chesed is not difficult at all because in such a case one realizes that all that he/she has is really owned by Hashem and he/she is only holding on to it. This is the type of realization that we should strive to achieve as well and thus emulate Avraham Avinu.

The Sefer Nesivos Neviim by Rabbi Meyer Blumenfeld zt"l [published 1963] points out another similarity; the Torah reading and the haftarah both focus on the practice of *hachanas Orchim*, inviting those in need of food and lodgings into one's home. Rabbi Blumenfeld brings from both the Torah and the Haftarah that we always had hachnosas orchim as a fundamental institution in our communities throughout our history. He also brings how Avraham stood 'over his guests under the tree' and they ate, meaning that Avraham himself stayed with his guests to attend to their needs and to make them feel important. He concludes his thoughts on the subject with the words that the Shunamite woman said to her husband, "Behold the holy man passes by us *tamid*," meaning always." The Torah uses the same term *tamid* for always regarding our daily sacrifice in the Bais Hamikdash. The conclusion is that we see that hachnosas orchim is something that should be practiced all the time and takes priority over many things.

We see a development of this Mitzvah in our history. First, we see how the concept of such a Mitzvah originated with Avraham and became part of our nature as his descendants. We see from the haftarah that hachnosas Orchim had already been established in our ways and culture. Furthermore, we know from our history that hachnosas Orchim has been a major institution in our communities to make sure that especially on Shabbos and Yom Tov, our fellow Jews should have a place to eat and rest. Till this day we continue in their footsteps as our communities have

various hospitality and chesed committees. But even in an unofficial way, we can help our fellow Jews as well. We can invite people to our homes to share not only our Shabbos and Yom Tov meals but also to show them beauty of the Torah's ways. This is especially true for many people in our communities who may not be poor financially but do not have family and friends to share our special days with. When we invite such people to our homes to share all of the aspects of the joy of Shabbos and Yom Tov, we are indeed following the ways of Avraham Aveinu and Sarah Emainu.