To receive these Divrei Torah: Text the word "PARSHA" to 22828 or email us at jepqueens@gmail.com

www.JEPQUEENS.com
76-01 147 St | Flushing, NY

JEP Jewish Education Program Queens

(718) 544-5213
JEPQueens@gmail.com

by Rabbi Yaakov Finestone

LOOK FOR THE SILVER LINING IN THE CLOUD!

PARSHAS VAYERA

Hashem is constantly supervising and guiding what is going on in the world. Hashem has a master plan. That knowledge should help us maintain calm in our turbulent world.
Often, in our history, that which we thought would be the worst thing that could happen to the Jewish People, was actually the beginning of our salvation. The seeds of our future salvation were being planted.

Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Epstein *zt"l, the Slabodka Rosh Yeshiva, once said that on the very day Spain expelled its Jews, Columbus set sail for America. There is a historical debate if Columbus himself was Jewish. Historians record that there was a "traffic jam" in the Spanish harbor due to Jews trying to get out of Spain. That caused Columbus' ships to be delayed in exiting the harbor.*

Over the course of two centuries, the Jews had flourished in Spain. That period was called the Golden Age of Spain. Later, during the period of the Inquisition, the Jews were expelled. That caused a feeling of gloom to the Jews. The final day of expulsion was on Tisha B'Av. On Tisha B'Av it is forbidden to listen to music. However, on that day, in 1492, the rabbis permitted bands to play music as the Jews were leaving, to help lift their spirits.

The rabbis said that redemption is "born" amidst the destruction. While the Jews were being expelled from Spain, a new haven of safety was being "born". That very day of expulsion, Christopher Columbus left on a voyage in which he discovered America. Hundreds of years later, between 1880 and 1920, America became the safe haven for about three million Jews. They escaped to America from the pogroms and massacres in Russia, Ukraine, Poland and other Eastern European countries. During the Holocaust, thousands more Jews escaped from the Nazis by emigrating to America.

> *"But My covenant I will maintain with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this season next year." (Bereishis 17:21)*

Our forefather, Avraham, spent his entire life teaching people about Hashem. Avraham influenced many thousands of people to recognize that there is one G-D Who created the world and Who continues to control all that happens in it. Hashem gave Avraham and Sara a son, Yitzchak, when they were both exceedingly old. Avraham finally had a child who could continue his life's work. Hashem said that the Jewish People would descend from Yitzchak (See **Emek Davar** on 17:21). Unexpectedly, Hashem commanded Avraham to sacrifice this very son. Avraham listened to Hashem and took his son, Yitzchak, to sacrifice him. Avraham did not question Hashem as to how the Jewish nation would come into existence, if Yitzchak would be sacrificed before having children. Avraham trusted Hashem and went wholeheartedly to fulfill Hashem's command.

In reality, had Yitzchak not been offered as a sacrifice, the Jewish nation would <u>NOT</u> have been born. It was only because Yitzchak was offered as a sacrifice, that the Jewish nation could be born.

Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer (Chapter 31) writes that when Avraham Avinu put a knife to Yitzchak's neck, Yitzchak died. His soul flew away and left him. When Hashem told Avraham not to complete the act of sacrificing Yitzchak, Yitzchak's soul returned to his body. Yitzchak personally experienced the phenomenon of *Techiyas haMeisim*, the

by Rabbi Yaakov Finestone

resurrection of the dead. At that moment, Yitzchak recited the blessing, "Blessed Are You, Hashem, who brings the dead back to life.

The **Ari** Hakadosh zt"l teaches that before the *akeida*, the binding of Yitzchak (in preparation to be sacrificed), Yitzchak's soul was unable to father children. After the *akeida*, a NEW soul entered Yitzchak. That new soul **was** able to father children. What appeared to be the end of Avraham's legacy was really the means which enabled it to be!

Now, and only now, was Yitzchak able to find a wife and start a family. This explains the connection of the next few psukim to this. Immediately after this parsha of *Akeidas* Yitzchak, the Torah says, "Behold, Milcah, she too, has borne children to Nachor... and Besuel begot Rivka. (See Bereishis 22:20-24)

Interestingly, these last five psukim are included in the Torah reading for Rosh HaShanah. Why? Because these five psukim are not merely giving us the names of Avraham's relatives. These are the climax of the *Akeida*. Until now, Yitzchak could not father children. Now that his soul had departed and a new one entered, he was ready to get married and start a family. Therefore, it was essential that the Torah conclude the story by telling us that Rivka, Yitzchak's intended wife, had been born.

Often in Jewish history and often in our own lives, something happens which we think is the worst thing that could possibly happen. We panic and ask how we are ever going to get out of this? What is going to be with the future?

Avraham Avinu did not think that way because he believed in Hashem wholeheartedly. As things turned out, the *Akeidas Yitzchak* did not preclude the birth of the Jewish nation. Rather it was the beginning. Without this event, there would not have been a Jewish nation.

(based on Rabbi Frand at Torah,org)

Rabbi Henach Leibowitz zt"l explains a **Ramban** (Bereishis 17:1). The Ramban describes all the miracles that happened to Avraham as "hidden miracles". Those miracles included Avraham's being totally unharmed when thrown into a fiery furnace, Avraham's miraculous victory against the four powerful kings, and Avraham and Sarah having a child at very old ages. How can such obvious miracles be called "hidden miracles"? The answer is that people often blind themselves when it comes to seeing Hashem's involvement and control over all that happens. Some people tend to dismiss miraculous occurrences as being part of nature. That is because they don't believe in or recognize *Hashgacha peratis*, that Hashem runs the world. We must open our eyes and see Hashem's hand in everything that happens in the world

We don't have to worry about events that happen to us personally or as a nation. Hashem controls all that happens and Hashem has a plan! Often, an event that at first appears to be devastating can actually be the planting of a seed for the beginning of something new and good.

Sponsored In Memory of: Mindel Adina bat Natan Zvi; Shmuel ben Eliezer Lipa; Shirley Shaindel Yaffa bat Yehuda Shmuel; Hadassah bas Yaakov; Faiga bat Pinchas; Yaakov ben Yeshayahu; Gershon ben Hillel; Gita bat Gershon; Rav Chaim Dov Weissmandl ben Rav Yoseph; Shraga Fayvel Leb ben Shmuel Abraham; Moshe ben Yitzchok; Sarah Vital bas Avrohom Yitzchok; R' Yisroel ben R' Yaakov; Risha Toiba bas R' Gershon, Zichronam Livracha.

Rabbi Yaakov Finestone is the director of JEP Queens. For almost 50 years JEP Queens has been in the forefront of kiruv. JEP has changed the lives of thousands of Jewish children enrolled in public schools and kiruv schools. Many are shomrei Torah and mitzvos today because of JEP.

To receive these weekly divrei Torah by email, send a request to jepqueens@gmail.com