



Vayeira / וַיֵּרָא

The Tree Hotel

Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l



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Yossi, Itzik, and Esty were walking down the street with Totty to the butcher shop. An old friend of Totty's from America was coming to Eretz Yisroel and the Goldsteins had generously offered to host him for a few days. Totty remembered that his friend loved beef tongue and mustard, and they wanted to make sure they had their guest's favorite food ready when he arrived.

"Totty," Esty asked. "Doing *hachnosas orchim* reminds me of what we learned this week about Avrohom Avinu and the Malochim. But there was no Torah yet - how did Avrohom Avinu know to do *hachnosas orchim*?"

Just then the Goldsteins were startled by a loud **CRASH!** Looking up, they saw that Abdul, an Arab who was working on a nearby construction project, had smashed his pickup truck into the big apple tree down the road. Apples were falling from the tree all over the truck and the ground nearby and several birds took flight from the nests in the branches.

Amazed, Totty and the boys watched as Abdul staggered out of his truck and started shaking his fists, screaming at the tree.

Abdul grew red in the face and started hopping up and down as he got angrier and angrier.



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“Why is there a tree here? Why a tree? Why? Why?! Who put it here?!?” Abdul raged at the innocent tree.

As Abdul started punching the tree and his screaming switched to Arabic, Totty turned to the children.

“You know, Kinderlach,” he said. “What Abdul is saying reminds me of what Avrohom Avinu said.”

“Huh?” Itzik asked. “Did Avrohom Avinu crash his camel into a tree and get mad at it? That doesn’t sound like something he would do.”

“No, no,” chuckled Totty. “That’s not what I meant. But the question of ‘why is there a tree?’ is exactly something that Avrohom Avinu asked.”

“Oh I know the answer!” said Esty. “Avrohom Avinu had the tree so his guests could sit under it. Totty, do you think your friend will want to sit under the tree in our yard?”

“Maybe, Esty” smiled Totty. “And what you said is actually similar to what Rav Avigdor Miller says. You see, Avrohom Avinu didn’t just look at things in the world and say ‘interesting’ and move on. No, Avrohom Avinu took a look at trees and said ‘this is amazing! Hashem made a hotel!’”

“Hotel?” asked all three children.

“Yes, a hotel!” continued Totty. “Look at this tree. Do you see those birds’ nests up there? Trees provide homes for birds and other animals. And just like any five-star hotel, they serve delicious food as well.”

“Trees serve food?” asked Yossi. “I’ve never seen a tree serving food.”

“Of course you have!” exclaimed Totty, reaching down and picking up one of the big red shiny apples that had fallen to the ground.

“Look at this!” exclaimed Totty, holding up the apple. “This fruit is an amazing delicacy! This amazing

peel keeps the fruit perfectly fresh, and tiny cells keep all of the liquid in place until you bite into it, getting a mouthful of sweet apple juice with every crunch!

“The tree holds onto the apple tightly until it’s ripe, and then releases it so that it falls down for us to enjoy. Unless of course Abdul crashes his truck into the tree, then it might fall a bit earlier.

“Avrohom Avinu looked at a tree and saw that Hashem was hosting animals inside. He saw that Hashem provided delicious food through the tree, and also provided shade from the heat with a nice solid trunk for tired people to lean back on and rest.

“But Avrohom Avinu didn’t just stop there, oh no. Avrohom Avinu said ‘if Hashem is making these natural hotels sprout out of the ground everywhere, then Hashem wants me to learn something from this!’ So Avrohom Avinu got busy copying Hashem, providing food and a place to stay for anyone who happened to come by.

“The Avos Hakedoshim realized that everything Hashem put in this world was for us to learn from. That we have to stop and take the time to study Hashem’s amazing world and then to get busy copying Hashem and doing the same things that He does. And that’s what the Torah wants us to learn as well when it tells us about Avrohom Avinu’s *hachnosas orchim*. That we too are supposed to study this world and try to act as much like Hashem as possible.”

Just then Yossi started running ahead of the rest of the family.

“Yossi, where are you going?” called Totty.

“I’m going home to get the guest bedroom ready!” replied Yossi over his shoulder. “I also want to copy Hashem and provide the best possible place for our guest to rest and relax after his trip!”

Have A Wonderful Shabbos!



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