

The Torah tells us that Gd visited Abraham as he sat at the entrance to his tent at the hottest time of the day (Breishis 18:1). When Abraham sees the 3 strangers, he runs to them and says Adon-y, please do not pass by the tent of your servant. Chazal (Shavuos 35b) say that this use of the word Adon-y is treated as Kodesh, as it refers to Gd. The Gemara (Berachos 7b) says that from the day that Gd created the world, Abraham was the first to call Him Adon-y. Abraham referred to Gd twice as Adon-y, once in Parashas Lech Lecha and the other in Parashas Vayera. Abraham asked Gd, מה תתן לי ואנכי הולך עריירי (Breishis 15:2), what will You give me, for I am childless. The second time is in Vayera when the 3 strangers pass by his tent. The fact that Abraham was the first to call Gd Adon-y was considered so important that Daniel relied on this merit of Abraham (Daniel 9:17) when he prayed for the Mikdash (Gemara Berachos 7b).

Abraham was the great intellect who searched for and discovered Gd. The Tetragrammaton is pronounced Adon-y but is written differently. The word Adon-y connotes ownership, that Gd is the master of the world, the be-all and end-all of existence. Elokim indicates that He created the world. Adon-y is used in all ברכות הנהנין, blessings we pronounce prior to deriving benefit from Gd's world, that the world, and everything in it, we enjoy belongs to Gd. As the Master of the world, He could choose just as easily to destroy it. It is through His kindness that He provided us with the things that we enjoy.

In Parashas Lech Lecha, Gd told Abraham that the reward that awaits him is great. Obviously since everything belongs to Gd, there were no limits what Gd could give him. Abraham said he realizes Gd is the Master of the world and can give Abraham anything. He uses the word Adon-y for the first time to indicate the total ownership and mastery of Gd over this world. But if he does not have a son, no reward would ever satisfy him, because in the final analysis, whatever Abraham has will eventually fall to his servant Eliezer. So Abraham said he had no doubts that Gd, Adon-y, could provide him with any reward, but requested a son in order that he have an heir to whom he could hand over his legacy.

In Vayera, where Abraham uses the word Adon-y for the second time, 2 things happened. Gd appeared to Abraham, then the strangers appeared to Abraham. Some Commentaries say that this was really one story. According to them, Gd appeared to Abraham through 3 angels, as it was quite common for angels to appear to the prophets at any time. In other words, Gd had appeared to Abraham, there was גילוי שכינה, divine revelation. Suddenly, he saw in his prophesy 3 angels standing before him and he ran to them. Others interpret that first Gd appeared to Abraham, then the 3 angels appeared to Abraham as ordinary people and he ran to

them and asked them, Adony (my masters), please do not pass by my tent without stopping there. According to this interpretation, the usage of the term Adony refers to the strangers, and should be considered חול, mundane. However, Chazal say that the use of the word Adon-y here is קודש, sacred, so we will operate with the premise that Adon-y is sacred.

Rashi interprets that Gd came to be מבקר חולה, to visit the sick. Why did Abraham leave the שכינה, Divine Countenance, and run to invite these 3 strangers into his house? How could he pass up such an honor, to have Gd be his personal מבקר חולה? Chazal derive from Abraham's leaving the שכינה to greet the 3 strangers that the Mitzva of הכנסת אורחים, welcoming guests, is greater than קבלת פני השכינה, receiving Gd's presence (Shavuos 35b).

The Midrash says Gd came to visit Abraham who was sitting. Why didn't Abraham stand out of respect for the presence of Gd? The Midrash says Abraham wanted to stand but Gd told him to sit as a symbol for later generations, where it says אלקים נצב בעדת קל, Gd will stand among the community of Gd, i.e., the rabbinical courts and judges. However, it seems odd that Abraham would not stand for Gd, yet he hovered over the 3 strangers to serve them. Why was it acceptable for Abraham to sit for Gd yet stand for the strangers?

The Midrash says when Gd appeared to Abraham to visit him, Abraham wanted to stand up for Gd out of courtesy, as the norm is for the master of the house to stand and welcome his guests. Gd told Abraham that there is no reason for him to stand, for after all, He is Adon-y, the same all-capable Gd that previously promised him great rewards. It is Gd that is the Master of the house and Abraham is the guest. So, it was proper that Abraham should sit. When the guests came, Abraham ran to them and he said to Gd that now I must stand to welcome them, because vis a vis these guests I am considered the master of the house. So Abraham stood up for them out of courtesy. He said to Gd, Adon-y, please don't pass by Your servant. When You appeared to me, I wanted to stand, but You, the Master of the universe told me to sit because it was I who was Your guest. Now that other guests have arrived at my house, please do not be insulted that I am standing for them while I did not stand for You.

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