

**The opening verse of this week's Parsha describes G-D's conversation with Avraham. The verse says, "And G-D appeared to him by the fields of Mamre." Who is Mamre that he merited not only that G-D should appear in his fields, but that the Torah found it necessary to record this fact for posterity?**

**The Midrash tells us that Avraham had three close friends, Aner, Eshkol, and Mamre. It was these three friends who Avraham consulted with before deciding whether or not he would follow G-D's directive to circumcise. Aner and Eshkol gave him unfavorable feedback. They did not feel that he should perform the circumcision that G-D had asked of him. However, Avraham unconvinced of their arguments, approached his acquaintance, Mamre to get his feelings on his pending circumcision. Mamre did not disappoint, he convinced Avraham that indeed he should heed G-D's directive and circumcise himself. It is because of the constructive role that he played in Avraham's circumcision that G-D rewarded him with the unique opportunity to host G-D on his property.**

**This Midrash is quite perplexing for many reasons. First of all, is it really possible that Avraham was unsure of whether or not he would circumcise himself unless he got the okay from his friends? This is the same person who first pledged his monotheistic beliefs even in the face of tyrannical opposition from the evil king Nimrod. In the next chapter, we will read that Avraham will gladly offer up his son as a sacrifice to G-D, yet he was unsure if he would perform a circumcision, which over half of the contemporary society considers a common medical procedure? If he was unsure of his commitment to circumcision, would he really have been convinced to perform this procedure by his friend? Why did Mamre offer a different perspective than the other two colleagues? Finally, why did Mamre receive as his reward the opportunity to have G-D appear in his property, what is the connection between the reward and Mamre's good deed?**

**The Gerrer Rebbe suggests that Avraham's concerns over his circumcision were not due to any safety concerns; certainly Avraham trusted that G-D would insure his physical safety even at his advanced age. After all, tradition tells us that G-D had already helped him escape the fiery furnace that that he was cast into by the hands of the evil king Nimrod. Rather explains the Rebbe, Avraham's whole mission in life was to change the mindset of the entire world population. In a pagan society where might makes right and moral decisions are the exception rather than the norm. Avraham wanted to bring his monotheistic faith into the general ethos of his time and to facilitate a complete paradigm shift in his generation. He strongly desired to bring the people of his time to a greater awareness of not only a creator, but a creator which demands honesty, compassion, and morality from his creations. Avraham felt that in order to have a greater sphere of influence over his people he must be a man of the people, not some religious ascetic whose life is so radically different from others that he would be cast aside and labeled a religious fanatic. Avraham was unsure if he would be able to achieve his lifelong mission and goal if he were circumcised. Would the people of his generation overlook his physically altered body or would they see it as a sign of religious fanaticism and cease to communicate with him?**

**Aner and Eshkol were certainly representative of their time, a populace that viewed all matters superficially. They told Avraham that he will lose all credibility if he is circumcised. The people will cease to view Avraham as a role model and Avraham would fail in his mission to change the world. Certainly this advice was insightful to Avraham and he must have carefully considered their words, however, when he turned to Mamre for his perspective he got a completely different answer. The Rebbe explains that Mamre was capable of seeing far beyond the superficial, he recognized the godliness and inherent holiness of Avraham. In Mamre's opinion, the fact that he was circumcised while the rest of the world was not would not inhibit Avraham's ability to impact the world around him, because the holiness of Avraham would be so apparent and clear that no one would be able to ignore the inspiring and holy words of this special individual. When Avraham heard Mamre's perspective and realized that intuitive and insightful people like Mamre will not be turned off by a simple physiological difference, he was reassured that he can affect the entire world around irrespective of his circumcised state. Immediately he decided to proceed with the circumcision.**

**Mamre's ability to recognize the holiness and godliness in the world and not get distracted by physical appearances made him not only the most deserving choice to host G-D, but perhaps the only choice, because only one who can truly appreciate holiness, will ever truly find holiness.**