



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

That Little Extra Push

Presented by Rabbi Zacharia Schwartz, Kollel Adjunct

“And Lot pressed them exceedingly, and they turned to him” (Genesis 19:3)

In Parshas Vayeira, Hashem sends angels to Sedom in order to extract Lot and his family and then destroy the city for its many sins. Upon entering Sedom, the angels are immediately noticed by Lot who, believing them to be human travelers, offers to provide them food and shelter for the night. The angels politely refuse Lot's offer, prompting Lot to continue to press them until they accept his invitation. Interestingly, these same angels visited Avraham earlier in the Parsha and upon receiving a similar invitation from him, they accepted right away. Why did they initially refuse Lot's offer?

The Ramban explains that the angels' intent was to generate more merit for Lot by causing him to put in extra effort to host them and fulfill the mitzvah of hosting guests. Perhaps Lot, who was not especially righteous, required extra merit in order to be worthy of being saved from the destruction of Sedom and this was his opportunity to gain that merit.

At times we may feel that we want to do the right thing but that other matters get in the way. Indeed, there are many anecdotes where people resolve to improve a character trait or their performance of a particular mitzvah and are suddenly faced with new challenges with regard to that very mitzvah or trait. But this is no reason to give up or lose hope. On the contrary, we see from our Parsha that these very challenges may be precisely what we need in order to ultimately be successful and attain the blessing that Hashem desires to bestow upon us. When faced with these challenges, let us remember that it may just be that little extra effort that Hashem is looking for.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

So Sarah said to Avraham, "Drive out this maidservant with her son, for the son of the maidservant will not inherit with my son, Yitzchak." The matter greatly distressed Avraham regarding his son. (21, 11)

According to the Midrash, Yishmael had been serving idols and trying to kill Yitzchak. Why would Avraham be interested in allowing Yishmael to stay? Why would the matter of Yishmael distress Avraham more than the issues that Yishmael threatened Yitzchak with?

Was a monetary issue being disputed that prompted Sarah to say, "He will not inherit?" If not, which inheritance was being spoken about?

Parsha Riddle

How old was Yishmael when he was sent away from Avraham's house? How old was Yitzchak at the time of the Akeida?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Why do we say "Adon Olam" at the beginning of Shacharis?

Answer: Since Avraham established the mitzva of davening Shacharis and he was the first to refer to G-d as "Adon/Master," we therefore introduce Shacharis with this tefilla. (Siddur Shaar Harachamim) When the Vilna Gaon saw this explanation, he exclaimed that this siddur would be worthy to be printed for this explanation alone!

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Vayeira* (21:17), the Torah relates that as Yishmael lay dying of thirst, an angel of Hashem told his mother "Fear not, for Hashem has heeded the cry of the youth **in his present state (*ba-asher hu sham*).**" The Talmud (*Rosh Hashanah* 16b) derives from this verse the principle that **"A man is judged only according to his deeds at the time** of his judgment, and not according to his future deeds." *Bereishis Rabbah* (#53) elaborates that the ministering angels had argued against saving Yishmael's life: "You are producing a well for a man who in the future will kill Your children by thirst?!" but Hashem replied that insofar as even the angels conceded that Yishmael is currently righteous, "I only judge a man according to his current status." (Rashi explains that the reference to Yishmael's killing the Jews by thirst is to a diabolical incident that occurred during Nebuchadnezzar's exile of the Jews from Israel.)

An apparently contradictory principle is articulated by the Mishnah (*Sanhedrin* 8:5) and Beraisa (*ibid.* 72a), in explanation of the death penalty prescribed by the Torah for the rebellious son (*ben sorer u-moreh*): despite the fact that so far he has only committed petty infractions, he is nevertheless "sentenced on account of his ultimate end (*nidon al sheim sofo*)," since we foresee that ultimately, "he will go out to the crossroads and rob people."

Our sages offer various reconciliations of the principles of *ba-asher hu sham* and *nidon al sheim sofo*: some explain that the rebellious son has already begun to walk down the path of his ultimate sin (*Chizkuni* here, *Mizrachi* to *Devarim* 21:18); others distinguish between the Heavenly Court, which limits its judgment to the current situation, and humans, who take the projected future into account (*Moshav Zekeinim* here, *Gur Aryeh* to *Devarim ibid.*).

A remarkable invocation of the precedent that the rebellious son is *nidon al sheim sofo* is made by R. Moshe of Zurich in justification of the killing of (Jewish) children (by Jews) during the Crusades out of concern that were they to live, they would assimilate among the Christians, "and it is better that they die innocent and not die guilty." (*ha-Semak mi-Zurich* [Jerusalem 5741] vol. 1 p. 58)

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I ?

1. I was from Sedom.
2. I looked.
3. I am high in sodium.
4. I am a pillar, though I don't hold up anything.

#2 WHO AM I ?

1. We were triple for Avraham.
2. We come Friday night.
3. We visited Lot.
4. We were on a ladder.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Nes/Nisayon (I could be a banner, I could even be a miracle, I am unwanted, I raise you.)

#2 Bris Milah (I for the eighth, I am a Korban Pesach requirement, I am a sign, I am a seal.)

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