



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

The Time is Now

Presented by Rabbi Moshe Sadwin, Kollel Adjunct

Lot raised his eyes and saw the entire plain of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere – before Hashem destroyed Sedom and Amora – like the garden of Hashem. (13:10)

Avraham and his nephew, Lot, had been traveling together ever since the beginning of our Parsha, when Hashem told Avraham to leave his homeland and travel to Eretz Yisrael. There came a time, however, when they were forced to part due to the unscrupulous behavior of Lot and his shepherds. Lot was attracted to the lush and fertile Jordan valley and decided to go settle in that area. In describing the lushness of the area, the Torah makes a point of mentioning that this was before Hashem destroyed Sedom and Amora – the principal cities of that location.

The Torah does not relate facts without reason. Why does the Torah make a point to tell us that this was before the location was destroyed by Hashem?

Rabbi Dovid Feinstein suggests the following answer. Lot, even with his shortcomings, grew up in the house of Avraham. As such, he was well aware that Hashem rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked. The wickedness of the people of Sedom and Amora was notorious, and surely Lot knew that Hashem would punish them for their immoral behavior. Thus, the Torah tells us that Lot knew retribution was coming and yet he chose to live there in spite of that knowledge. But why would Lot make such a choice?

Lot figured that, although Hashem does punish the wicked, He would not do so for some time. Lot said to himself, "One day, this area will be laid waste, but that's a long way off. In the meantime, I want to enjoy myself." As we know, the day of retribution *did* come and Lot was stuck in Sedom, barely making it out with his two daughters – losing his wife and other children in the process.

One of Hashem's thirteen attributes of mercy is *erech apayim* – He delays His anger. In His great mercy, Hashem gives us opportunity to right our wrongs before He exacts retribution. We must realize, however, that this opportunity does not last forever as Lot seemed to believe. Each day should be viewed as our last opportunity to correct our past failures and to develop the best version of ourselves.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

... and you shall be a blessing (12:2)

This refers to what we say in davening 'the G-d of Avraham' (Rashi).

The merits of our forefathers have expired (Shabbos 55a).

Why do we mention our forefathers in Shemoneh Esrei if their merits have expired?

Parsha Riddle

Who was the father of Eliezer, the servant of Avraham?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

The fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth and every bird of the heavens (9:2). What halachic implication does this verse have?

Answer: An animal that has gored another animal is not assumed to be an animal that will also gore a person because it has an inherent fear of people.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Parshas Lech-Lecha begins with Hashem's command to Avraham: "Go for yourself (*lech-lecha*) from your land, from your relatives, and from your father's house to the land that I will show you."

Bereishis Rabbah (39:7) relates that Avraham was worried about public opinion: "I will go, and people will desecrate the Name of Heaven through me and say: 'He left and abandoned his father in his old age!'" Hashem reassured him: "You (*lecha*) I exempt from *kibud av ve-eim* (the commandment of honoring one's father and mother), but I do not exempt another from *kibud av ve-eim*."

The *Panim Yafos* explains the *midrash* to be saying that in general, if one's father is in *chutz la-aretz*, then the son's *mitzvah* to make *aliyah* to Eretz Yisrael does not override his *mitzvah* of *kibud av ve-eim*, but this consideration did not apply to Avraham, since his father Terach was an evildoer. He seems to understand the *midrash* to be contrasting Terach, an evildoer, with other parents, who are not; according to this approach, the *mitzvah* of *kibud av ve-eim* does not apply to parents who are evildoers in general (at least where it conflicts with another *mitzvah*).

The *Birchei Yosef* (YD 241:4), however, apparently understands the *midrash* very differently. He brings a challenge to the opinion of R. Chaim ibn Attar that there is indeed no obligation to honor parents who are "utter evildoers, and sinners" from the above *midrash*, and *Shut. Yabia Omer* (8:YD:9) explains that the *Birchei Yosef* apparently understands the *midrash* to be saying that the *mitzvah* of *kibud av ve-eim* generally does apply even with regard to an evildoer such as Terach – an idol worshipper, and a sinner and one who caused others to sin – but Avraham was being granted a special dispensation (for an unspecified reason). So while the *Panim Yafos* seems to understand the *midrash* to imply that there generally is no obligation to honor a parent who is an evildoer (at least when this would conflict with another *mitzvah*), the *Birchei Yosef* seems to understand it to imply the opposite, that there generally is an obligation to do so.

See *Yabia Omer ibid.* for further discussion of this question; he concludes that one should generally honor even irreligious parents, particularly in contemporary times when irreligiosity is not tantamount to evildoing.

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I am not many.
2. I confused the generations.
3. I chose wickedness.
4. My uncle was a father of nations.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. We tested.
2. We begin with fire (according to some).
3. We end in a bind (according to some).
4. Ten for ten.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Teivah (Ark) (I was a box, I was later used as a "hanger," I was a life saver, I later caused death.)

#2 Bavel (Babylonia) (I had a tower, I had a Talmud, I am the drain, I am mixed together.)

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