

THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



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RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
TAL



EVERY STEP COUNTS!

It was a scorching hot day, and Avraham was recovering from his Brit Mila.

The Torah relates what happens next:

"And he lifted his eyes and saw, and behold, three men were standing beside him, and he saw and he ran toward them from the entrance of the tent, and he prostrated himself to the ground. (Bereshit 18:2)

The Torah seems to go out of its way to emphasize and explain in depth this whole episode. Why are we told that he lifted his eyes? Why the stress on "and he saw"? Why the description of him running and prostrating?

Tests play a great part in Avraham's life.

The Mishnah in Pirkei Avot relates how Avraham was tested ten times and surpassed them all.

From the moment we are really introduced to Avraham we are told about his tests.

Two of his most famous tests were the leaving of his home to go towards Eretz Yisrael (Lech Lecha) and the Akeida – binding/offering of his son Yitschak.

These two tests share something in common.

When Hashem tells Avraham to go to Israel, He says "Lech Lecha" – go from "your land, from your birth place and from your father's place to the land that I will show you."

Our Sages note that the wording here seems to be superfluous. The sentence could have been shortened to – Go to Israel!

The same thing seems to occur at the Akeida.

Hashem appears to Avraham and tells him Kach – "Take your son, your only son, the son you love, Yitschak and offer him up."

Why didn't Hashem just tell him from the beginning to take Yitschak?

Rashi citing the Midrash lends insight in to the matter.

When Hashem told Avraham to take his son Avraham responded "I have two sons". Hashem said to him: "Your only one."

Avraham said: "This one is the only son of his mother, and that one is the only son of his mother."

Hashem said to Avraham: "Whom you love."

Avraham responded: "I love them both."

To which Hashem said "Yitschak".

Rashi asks, why did Hashem not disclose this to him at the beginning?

One of the explanations he offers is that it was to endear the commandment to him and to reward him for each and every expression.

When Hashem increases the command, and explains bit by bit, it is in order to increase the reward of the Tsadik.

Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz zts'l once gave an awesome Mashal to explain this. ▶

19th Cheshvan

SHABBAT BEGINS: 4:06 PM

SHABBAT ENDS: 5:15 PM



THE WEEKLY QUOTE

*"Be careful with your words.
Once they are said, they can
only be forgiven, not forgotten."*

> UPCOMING EVENTS

- ▶ 5th NOV CHALLAH BAKE FB LIVE
- ▶ 8th NOV BAT MITZVAH PROGRAM
- ▶ 9th NOV MONDAY NIGHTS WITH RABBI TAWIL

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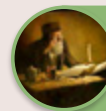
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Two people in the community had new houses; both were splendid and beautiful, but the owners referred to their houses differently.

The first received the house as a present. Unfortunately someone had passed away and had left the house as an inheritance. It was a beautiful house and when the first visitor came in he was impressed. Wow where did you get this from? I received it as a gift – was the reply.

The second person in the community had built his house from scratch and personally made it into the mansion it was.

When he received his first visitor, he sat him down with a coffee and started to explain to him the origins of his great project.

“I bought the land ten years ago, and then I brought four architects to survey the place. I chose the best...it took a year to draw up the plans. Then we made sure to get the most advanced building materials. We bought the stone from Jerusalem and the furniture from Italy. The marble was specially made, the lights

were designed with the latest technology and we have invested a great deal in this house.”

Rabbi Yerucham explained that when we build for ourselves then we take great pride in each step we take. We want all to know the hardships we have been through in order to make our house beautiful.

Rabbi Elazar said in the name of Rabbi Chanina: The students of the wise increase peace in the world, as it says, “And all your children (Banayich) will be taught of the Eternal and great shall be the peace of your children (Banayich). Do not read banayich (your children) but bonayich (your builders).” Berachot (64)

We are all builders. We take a step by step approach to life, building our destiny. We must be proud of the destiny we have built.

Avraham was in pain on the third day of his Brit Mila, nevertheless his eyes were lifted, he wanted guests, he looked, he saw and he ran towards them, each action a part of the building, each action warranting great reward.

When Hashem first appeared to Avraham and told him to go to Israel, He could have simply said go to Israel. But He wanted to stress that He understands that there were levels to this test; leaving his country, leaving his birthplace, leaving his fathers house, each level was appreciated and each level would be rewarded.

Similarly when Hashem commands Avraham regarding the Akeida He stresses, your son, your only son Yitschak – for He wants to bring out the idea that each level is cause for reward, each action and thought in the fight to serve Hashem will be rewarded.

Life’s tests are many, but we should be assured that we will be rewarded for every action we take towards the servitude of Hashem.

■ **Shabbat Shalom**

RABBI GARY WAYLAND - INDEPENDENT JEWISH EDUCATOR AND TEACHER



PARASHA INSIGHTS

Avraham and Lot had long since parted ways; the dispute between their shepherds was the catalyst for the protégé Lot leaving his famous uncle to forge his own path – better to be the judge in Sodom than in the shadow of my illustrious, prophet of an uncle.

His uncle Avraham, of course, never gave up on him – rescuing him from the war of kings, and, it was through his merits and prayers that he was to be saved from the annihilation of Sodom. Rav Hirsch is scathing in his criticism: ‘Lot was hardly worthy of being saved. Even his he had been born in Sofom he ought to have gone away from there long ago, but, as it was, the material advantages and the luxury of the place so attracted and held him, that of his own free will, he risked corruption.’

It was a miracle then that Lot was saved: the Radak notes that Avraham did not explicitly

pray for Lot as he was unsure if he was, indeed, worthy; Rashi comments he sinned along with the rest of the people of Sodom. And so Lot, being dragged from the Armageddon, was given a simple command: “do not gaze backwards, do not stand in the plain, flee towards the mountain lest you get caught into the destruction.”

Rashi, along with many of the classical commentators, explain that it was simply not appropriate for Lot to gaze at the destruction of the city with whom he, by rights, should have perished; the Ramban notes that Lot was in metaphysical danger, and, indeed, we know that tragically Lot’s wife failed this test, turning into a pillar of salt.

Yet the Midrash (Pirkei d’Rebbe Eliezer 25.11; see Torah Shelema 19.17) says something utterly remarkable: this was a result of the Shechina – Hashem’s Presence – descending in order to mete out punishment, at which the desirous Lot was unworthy to gaze.

Hashem has many agents: Parshat Vayera tells the story of His angels sent to visit and cure Avraham, inform Sarah of her pregnancy, and rescue Lot. The entire book of Iyov revolves

around Hashem handing the punishment, as it were, of Iyov, over to the Accuser. Yet, like a loving father, Hashem does not rely on His messengers to carry out the most painful punishments, just as in Egypt the final plague of the Death of the Firstborn was ‘not through an angel, not through a messenger, but I in My Glory.’ And, just as it is painful to gaze at the eye of the father who must punish out of love, so too Lot was not permitted to gaze at the awesome revelation of Hashem’s Divine Presence at the destruction of Sodom.

But Hashem was there, and He was there more than anyone could have possibly imagined. So too this past year has unfortunately felt like a time of metaphysical chaos: the world is at the mercy of something like which humanity has barely known. The Jewish people, our own community, has suffered greatly, along with the wider community and the rest of the world. And, just as when Sodom was on the brink, Hashem was there, so too Hashem is here.

■ **Shabbat Shalom**

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OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI YOSSEF DOV SOLOVEITCHIK OF BRISK · “THE AUTHOR OF BEIT HALEVI”

Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik was truly one of the greatest and most amazing personalities that Lithuanian Jewry has given to the Jewish people. Stories concerning this Tzaddik and Gaon abound. People speak of his genius, sharp intellect, integrity, and finesse, and especially about his good heart, for he had a heart of gold.

The son of Rabbi Yitzchak Zev Halevi Soloveitchik (who was the grandson of the Gaon of the generation, Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin), Rabbi Yosef Dov was born in 5580 (1820). From childhood, it was obvious that he was destined for greatness. People say that when he was seven years old, he already completely knew several chapters in tractates Nashim and Nezikin with the commentary of the Rambam.

He entered the renowned Volozhin yeshiva at a young age, and there he became famous for his keen intelligence. The Rosh Yeshiva and his great uncle, Rabbi Yitzchak (the son of Rabbi Chaim, the founder of the Volozhin yeshiva), rejoiced over his presence and said of him, “This boy is destined to become great.” In fact, sometime afterwards Rabbi Yosef Dov became very great in Torah, and while still young he was named as the Rosh Yeshiva of the Volozhin yeshiva. Several reasons forced him to quit this position after ten years, whereupon he was named as Rav of the town of Slutsk.

By nature, Rabbi Yosef Dov was a man of truth. He never demonstrated any partiality towards anyone, and he fought against every powerful and wealthy person who wanted to lord it over people. One day in Slutsk, it happened that a Reformer (a completely dishonorable man) was called up to the Torah. He ascended the Bimah and began to recite the blessing for the Torah reading with the intonation of a religious, G-d fearing Jew: “...Who has chosen us from among all the peoples and given us His Torah.”

Upon hearing this, Rabbi Yosef Dov began to laugh. He said, “He certainly did not

recite this blessing in vain, for if the Torah had been given to the other peoples, he would have felt obliged to carry it out in its smallest detail so he could be viewed as a perfect goy! However since the Torah was given to Israel, he feels free to reject its yoke, and that’s why he said the blessing with such sincerity by emphasizing, ‘and given us His Torah’ – to us, not to non-Jews – because he doesn’t feel obliged to carry it out!”

In addition to his greatness in Torah, Rabbi Yosef Dov had a caring heart that was open to all who were poor or dejected. He faithfully cared for the needs of the community and did much for the city’s poor. During one year of scarcity, he established an organization called “Food for the Poor” which he himself directed. He went from house to house collecting money for the needy, and his home was open wide to the downhearted and every soul in pain. Even when he himself was lacking, he spent his last cent on Tzeddakah.

After the departure of Rabbi Yehoshua Leib Diskin (the Rav of Brisk) for the Holy Land, the leaders of the Brisk community came to ask Rabbi Yosef Dov to take his place as their Rav, to which he agreed.

Rabbi Yosef Dov was accorded great honor in Brisk, and his fame spread throughout the Jewish world as a Rav par excellence. In Brisk he found rest and tranquility for his disquieted soul, and he was able to study Torah in peace and also write his marvelous four-part collection of responsa, Beit Halevi, and a commentary entitled Yad Halevi.

After a brief illness, Rabbi Yosef Dov died on Iyar 4, 5652 (1892). He not only left behind his books, but also his children, who themselves were great in Torah. Among these was Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik, who enlightened the world through his Torah and wisdom. ■



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

WHERE ON THE DOORPOST SHOULD A MEZUZA BE PLACED?

How high on the doorpost should a Mezuzah be placed?

The Ben Ish Hai (Rabbi Yosef Haim of Baghdad, 1833-1909) addresses this question in Parashat Ki Tabo, where he writes, based on the ruling of the Shulhan Aruch, that the Mezuzah should be placed in the upper third of the doorpost (listen to audio recording for precise citation). One should measure the height of the doorpost, divide the height by three, and then measure the quotient from the top of the doorpost to determine the upper third. The Mezuzah should then be placed on the lower part of the upper third of the doorpost. If one placed the Mezuzah lower than the upper third, he has not fulfilled the Misva.

Does this Halacha apply if the doorframe is very high, such that one cannot reach the upper third? In such a case, if one places the Mezuzah in the upper third he will be unable to touch the Mezuzah as he walks through the doorframe, as is customarily done. Should the Mezuzah nevertheless be placed in the upper third, or should it be placed lower down, so that it is within reach?

The Talmud Yerushalmi addresses this question and rules that in this case, the Mezuzah should be placed lower than the upper third, at the height of one’s shoulders. The Shach (Rabbi Shabtai Ha’kohen, 1621-1663) and the Taz (commentary by Rabbi David Ha’levi, 1586-1667) rule in accordance with this position of the Talmud Yerushalmi. The Taz even suggests an allusion to this Halacha in the verse, “He [God] resides between his shoulders” (“U’ben Ketefav Shachen” – Debarim 33:12), indicating that the Mezuzah, which contains the Name of God, should “reside” at the height of one’s shoulders.

However, although this is indeed the position taken by the Talmud Yerushalmi, the Talmud Babli makes no mention of this case, and never draws any distinction between doorframes of different heights. It thus appears that according to the Talmud Babli, one places the Mezuzah on the upper third of the doorpost regardless of its height, and this is the view of the Rambam (Rabbi Moshe Maimonides, Spain-Egypt, 1135-1204) and the Bet Yosef (work by Maran, author of the Shulhan Aruch). Hacham Ovadia Yosef indeed expresses astonishment over the fact that the Shach and the Taz prefer the Talmud Yerushalmi’s view over that of the Talmud Babli, which is generally accepted as the more authoritative text as far as practical Halacha is concerned. Thus, Hacham Ovadia rules that one must place the Mezuzah in the top third of the doorpost even if it will be beyond reach. In his work Yalkut Yosef, Hacham Ovadia goes so far as to say that if one placed the Mezuzah at shoulder’s height in such a case, he must remove it and affix it in the upper third of the doorpost, though without reciting a Beracha.

Summary: A Mezuzah must be placed in the upper third of the doorpost, even if the doorframe is very high and thus one will be unable to reach it. ■

KidsTime



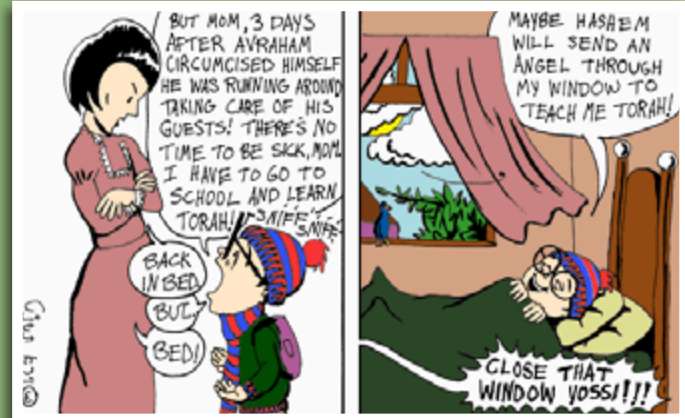
TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- ❶ Why was Avraham sitting at the entrance to his tent?
- ❷ What were the missions of the three angels?
- ❸ Why did Avraham ask specifically Yishmael, and not someone else, to prepare food for the guests?
- ❹ How many angels went to Sodom?
- ❺ Why did Lot delay when he left Sodom?

Answer

❶ 18:1 - He was looking for guests. ❷ 18:2 - To announce Yitzhak's birth, to heal Avraham and to destroy Sodom. ❸ 19:1 - Two; one to destroy the city and one to save Lot. ❹ 19:16 - He wanted to save his property. ❺ 18:7 - To train him in the performance of mitzvot.

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