

## SEDRAH SELECTIONS PARSHAS VA'YEIRO 5775 BS"D

Ch. 18, v. 3: "V'hi'nei shloshoh anoshim" – And behold three men – Each had a separate task to do. Although an angel is capable of doing numerous things, Hashem sends an angel to do only one thing. Why is this so? Rabbi Yaakov of Vienna writes that since Hashem has many angels He does not act as if He is on a tight budget, "ein anyus bimkome ashirus."

Ch. 18, v. 3: "V'hi'nei shloshoh anoshim" – And behold three men – One's task was to destroy S'dome and its environs (Rashi). How can this be? The verse clearly says in parshas Nitzovim, "Asher hofach Hashem b'apo uvachamoso," that Hashem Himself did this. Rabbeinu Bachyei answers that "b'apo uvachamoso" is through the sending of an angel.

Ch. 18, v. 3: "V'hi'nei shloshoh anoshim" – And behold three men – Michael came to herald in the news of Soroh's bearing a son, Refoel came to heal Avrohom, and Gavriel came to destroy S'dome. After healing Avrohom, Refoel went to save Lote from the destruction of S'dome. Why isn't this considered a second task for an angel in one dispatch? Had Lote been killed it would have had an adverse affect on Avrohom's health, so both acts are considered one.

Ch. 19, v. 1: "Va'yar Lote va'yokom likrosom" – And Lote saw and stood up in front of them – Why when the angels appeared to Avrohom does the verse say that he ran towards them and not here? The angels appeared to Avrohom by day and he saw them at a distance, hence he ran towards them. Here the angels came in the evening and Lote took no note of them until they were right in front of him, so there was no need to run towards them. (Rabbeinu Bachyei)  
We might make the same point, but not base it on the day/night difference. Avrohom was proactively looking for guests and thus saw them at a distance, while they appeared to Lote unexpectedly, and he only noticed them when they stood right in front of him. (n.l.)

Ch. 20, v. 11: "Ein yiras Elokim bamokome ha'zeh" – There is no fear of G-d in this place – Even though the nations of the world were circumspect when it came to adultery, as mentioned in Rashi in a few places, the people had no fear of Hashem, only fear of punishment. (Pri Tzadik)

Ch. 20, v. 13: "Va'y'hi kaasherhisu osi Elokim/elohim" – And it was when Hashem/false gods caused me to wander/attempted to lead me on a bad path – The gemara Yerushalmi Megiloh offers two opinions regarding the word Elokim/elohim. One is that it is holy and one is that it is secular. The flow of words in the verse would have to be understood in a manner that makes it flow properly.

Ch. 20, v. 17: "Va'yispa'leil Avrohom el hoElokim va'y'ra'pei Elokim es Avimelech" – And Avrohom prayed to G-d and G-d healed Avimelech – One of the nastiest things a person can do is take away someone's wife against his will. This happened to Avrohom, and nevertheless he prayed to Hashem to heal the perpetrator. This is quite a lesson for us to be forgiving and even caring for the welfare of someone who sinned grievously against us. (Medrash Hagodol)

Ch. 21, v. 20: "Va'y'hi ro'veh kashos" – And he was a bow shooter – In the war of 5638 between the Turks and the Russians, the Turks excelled at warfare by bow and arrow, while the Russians excelled at hand to hand combat with a sword. The Holy Chofetz Chaim explains that many of the Turks are descendants of Yishmoel, hence their power of shooting arrows, while the Russians descend from Eisov, who lives by the sword, "V'al char'b'cho tichyeh."

Ch. 21, v. 22: "Elokim itcho b'chol asher atoh o'seh" – Hashem is with you in all that you do – Everything that you do is done with the intention of fulfilling Hashem's wishes. (Toldos Yaakov Yoseif)

Ch. 21, v. 23: "K'chesed asher osisi imcho" – As the kindness I have done to you – Avimelech is telling Avrohom that just as he did not chase Avrohom away, correspondingly he asks Avrohom to swear to him to not chase away Avimelech or his descendants. He asked for this because he knew that Hashem promised Avrohom that his descendants would own and control Eretz Yisroel. (Rabbi Yoseif Bchor Shor)

Ch. 21, v. 25: "Asher gozlu avdei Avimelech" – That the servants of Avimelech stole – Avrohom criticized Avimelech, "V'hochiach Avrohom es Avimelech." Given that Avimelech was not the thief himself, why did Avrohom criticize him? He should have only reported the theft. This is likely in response to Avimelech's stating that there was no need for Avrohom to use a subterfuge to protect Soroh, as the laws of the country were upstanding and the people would never do anything wrong. On the coattails of this Avrohom criticized Avimelech, saying that he was living in dream land. A king has to be in touch with his people. (n.l.)

Ch. 21, v. 25: "Asher gozlu avdei Avimelech" – That the servants of Avimelech stole – Avrohom did not mention that he was the victim of the theft, only that they stole. (N'tzi"v)  
In the light of the previous offering this is very well understood.

Ch. 21, v. 27: "Va'yikach Avrohom tzone uvokor" – And Avrohom took sheep and cattle – In verse 30 he gave Avimelech seven sheep. These of our verse were for the covenant they made and the sheep were a living testimony. The medrash says that Avrohom's descendants, the bnei Yisroel, were later punished for the giving of the seven sheep. Why was there no issue with the animals given in our verse? Avimelech had given Avrohom many gifts including sheep and cattle. Of these Avrohom gave back to Avimelech, but the seven sheep were Avrohom's and he should not have given them. (Mahari"l Diskin)

You might wonder, as I did, how are seven sheep a testimony? They die after a while. The Medrash Hagadol answers that they stipulated between them that these seven sheep not be integrated into Avimelech's flocks, and when one would die Avimelech should replace it with another sheep.

Ch. 21, v. 27: "Va'yich'r'su shneihem bris" – And both of them cut a covenant – Avrohom's making a covenant with Avimelech to secure some level of safety for his descendants in the area of Plishtim cost his descendants dearly. It was for this reason that the bnei Yisroel could not go through the direct way of the land Plishtim to Eretz Yisroel after the exodus from Egypt. (Rabbi Chaim Vi'tal in Eitz Hadaas Tov)

Ch. 21, v. 30: "Chofarti" – I have dug – What is the difference between "chafiroh" and "krioh"? The Rok'ei'ach explains that "chafiroh" is used for digging into earth that is soft.

Ch. 21, v. 33: "Eishel" – The three letters of this word are an acronym for "Achiloh, SH'sioh, LinoH." Avrohom rectified the sins of those who sinned in these realms. Odom, primary man, sinned by eating from a forbidden tree, Noach behaved improperly by drinking copious amounts of wine, and the people of S'dom sinned by not offering proper sleeping accommodations. (GR"A)

Ch. 22, v. 11: "Avrohom Avrohom" – There is a dividing "psik" between the two words. This is because there were two Avrohoms, one before the test of the "akeidoh" and one afterwards. The

same is true where Yaakov and Shmuel were called twice. This is not the explanation by "Moshe Mosheh." (Holy Zohar)

#### OROH V'SIMCHOH - MESHECH CHOCHMOH ON PARSHAS VA'YEIRO

Ch. 22, v. 1: "V'hoElokim niso es Avrohom" - We find in the narrative of the great test of the Akeidoh that Avrohom was the great hero upon whom the spotlight shines. Why doesn't the Torah stress the greatness of Yitzchok who was willing to be slaughtered? This question is raised by the Holy Zohar page 120.

Answers: (Answer #7 is from the MESHECH CHOCHMOH)

1) The Beis haLevi notes that throughout the story of the Akeidoh we find Avrohom being the courageous hero, and in our prayers we mention the Akeidoh of Yitzchok as our merit, as in the musof prayers of Rosh Hashonoh we say "va'akeidas YITZCHOK l'zaro b'rachamim tizkor." He answers that to have a merit that carries over from the Ovos, or any previous ancestor, we require a connection to that merit. If we display a bit of that lofty characteristic, then we can cash in on the same merit in a larger dose from previous generations. The merit of Avrohom was his selflessness in being willing to sacrifice his child. Yitzchok's merit was his eagerness to be sacrificed. The trait that has carried over to us in a greater measure is that of Yitzchok, not of Avrohom. Indeed, Avrohom's deed was greater than Yitzchok's and it is therefore Avrohom who is highlighted in the story of the Akeidoh, but when we ask Hashem for the merit of our Patriarchs' actions, we must stress the action of Yitzchok.

2) Avrohom heard what seemed to be a prophecy that contradicted a previous statement of Hashem, "Ki b'Yitzchok yiko'rei l'cho zorah" (21:12), and still proceeded. (Ponim Yofos)

3) Fulfilling a mitzvoh actively is greater than fulfilling a mitzvoh passively (Ritvo ch. 1 of gemara Y'vomos). This is an insight into why "a'sei docheh lo saa'seh," when a positive and negative mitzvoh are in conflict, the positive mitzvoh is done at the expense of the negative mitzvoh. Avrohom participated with action, but Yitzchok as a sacrifice, was passive. (Ponim Yofos)

4) The gemara Kidushin 31a says, "Godol mitzu'veh v'oseh mimi she'eino mitzu'veh v'oseh," - One is greater if he is commanded to do and does than one who is not commanded to do and does. Avrohom was commanded while Yitzchok wasn't. (Ponim Yofos)

5) Avrohom envisioned that upon slaughtering his son he would suffer the terrible loss for the rest of his life, while Yitzchok was called upon to show heroism for a short period of time only. (See gemara K'subos 33b which makes this point regarding the test of Chananioh, Misho'eil, and Azarioh.) (Ponim Yofos)

6) Since Yitzchok already said to Yishmoel (M.R. 55:4) "I am ready to be offered as a sacrifice to Hashem," his test was not as demanding. (Nachalas Yaakov)

7) Had this test been attributed to Yitzchok, his son Eisov would have demanded a reward for his progeny as well. This does not apply to Yishmoel having a claim to the merit of Avrohom since he was specifically excluded from being the continued progeny of Avrohom when Hashem said, "Ki b'Yitzchok yiko'rei l'cho zorah" (21:12). (See Shaalose U's'shuvos Mahari"t O.Ch. vol. 2 teshuvoh #6.) (MESHECH CHOCHMOH)

8) Perhaps, since Avrohom taught the world that offering human sacrifices was not the will of Hashem, had he now done so himself, he would have been the laughing stock of society. This would have brought him life-long humiliation of the greatest order. Yitzchok was called upon to show heroism for a short period of time only. This thought is quite similar to answer #5.

9) Another possibility: I believe the Noam Elimelech says on the words "Va'yar es hamokome meirochoke" (22:4), that Avrohom saw Hashem (haMokome meaning Hashem the Omnipresent) from a distance, not perceiving Hashem's presence as he was used to perceiving. When totally in touch with Hashem this test would be relatively small. The main point of the test was to offer his

son while Avrohom was feeling like an average person, quite removed from Hashem. Hashem did not remove this closeness from Yitzchok, and his test was much easier.

10) Another possibility: Rabbi Mendel mi'Riminov explains the words "Va'yishlach Avrohom es yodo va'yikach es hamaa'chelles." Why doesn't the verse simply say "va'yikach es hamaa'chelles?" He answers that Avrohom had so thoroughly trained himself to do Hashem's bidding that his organs always sprang to the task. However, since it was not truly Hashem's intent to have Avrohom carry out the actual slaughtering of Yitzchok, Avrohom's hand did not respond with its normal alacrity. This required a special effort to stretch out his hand, hence the extra words "Va'yishlach Avrohom es yodo."

According to this, perhaps Avrohom's test was greater than Yitzchok's because Yitzchok responded to the call with alacrity, doing everything that Hashem intended him to actually do. Not so with Avrohom. He had to force himself to act at the crucial moment of taking the knife. By the way: Medrash Tanchumoh answers the question of the need to say "Va'yishlach Avrohom es yodo" in a different manner. It says that the "sitro acharo," the evil forces, attempted to stop Avrohom all along the way as he pursued fulfilling Hashem's will. Avrohom had already picked up the knife, but the "sitro acharo" knocked it out of his hand. This required a separate "Va'yishlach ..... yodo," "reaching out" his hand and again picking up the knife.

11) Perhaps an insight from HRH"G R' M.M. Shach shlit"a into the greatness of Avrohom at the time he received the prophecy of the Akeidoh will also answer the question. He says that we know that only Moshe was a prophet of such stature that he received a clear, unequivocal prophecy from Hashem (see Bmidbar 30:2). All other prophets, including Avrohom, received a clouded message, somewhat open to interpretation. This being the case, how might Avrohom have reacted upon receiving a prophecy to bring his son as a sacrifice? This was contrary to everything that Hashem had taught him and that he espoused to the world. Add to this the prophecy that through Yitzchok he would have a chain of descendants (21:12). Add the fact that Avrohom had this only son from Soroh at a very advanced age. It would have been exceedingly easy for him to read another interpretation into the prophecy. Yet he understood it properly and proceeded to fulfill it with alacrity. However, Yitzchok followed suit by relying on his father.

12) Perhaps an insight from the Malbim will also answer the question. He says that the greatest component of the test of the Akeidoh was when Avrohom heard that he should not slaughter his son. How would he react at this point? Would he say to himself, "B"H my son's life is saved," and immediately unbind him, or would he do this with the same attitude of fulfilling Hashem's wish? We see from the words of the angel, "Al tishlach yodcho el hanaar v'al taa'seh lo M'UMOH" (22:12), which the M.R. 56 says means "don't cause even the smallest blemish (mum mah) in Yitzchok," that Avrohom wasn't relieved at the turn of events, but to the contrary, he was still very eager to sacrifice Yitzchok. Only upon being specifically commanded to stop in his tracks did he relent. This is why Avrohom was credited with this test, while we have no such test for Yitzchok.

Ch. 22, v. 11: "Vayikra eilov malach Hashem min hashomayim" - Why did the angel call from the heavens rather than appear directly in front of Avrohom? The M.R. 56:7 says that had the angel waited to communicate with Avrohom on earth, the delay in time would have made it too late to save Yitzchok, as the blade was literally against his neck. I have difficulty in understanding this, as the angel could have been dispatched a bit earlier. Any insight would be appreciated.

The MESHECH CHOCHMOH answers that the angel was unable to appear in front of Avrohom by virtue of an halachic consideration. The M.R. 56:3 says that when Avrohom was attempting to sacrifice his son Yitzchok he had the status of a Kohein Godol. The Akeidoh took place on Yom Kippur according to the Yalkut Reuveini (This disagrees with the Psikta Rabosi 41:6 which says that it took place on Rosh Hashonoh, and also disagrees with the M.R. Shmos 15:15 which says that it took place during the month of Nison.), and as well it took place on the future Temple

Mount at the location of the Holy of Holies. He says that sacrificing Yitzchok was equivalent to offering the incense in the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur. When the Kohein Godol offers the incense on Yom Kippur no one is allowed to be with him (Vayikroh 16:17), not even an angel, as mentioned in the gemara Yerushalmi Yoma chapter one. Hence the angel was only able to speak to him from a distance.

A minor point might be added to the words of the MESHECH CHOCHMOH. The Torah requires that a cloud be present upon the offering of the incense on Yom Kippur, "Ki be'onon eiro'eh al hakaporres" (Vayikroh 16:2). The M.R. Breishis 56:1 says that when Avrohom came to the designated mountain he saw a cloud above the mountain. Besides being a sign that this was the mountain Hashem chose, it might also have served the purpose of "ki be'onon." The MESHECH CHOCHMOH (as well as the Sforno) mentions a similar concept in parshas Acharei regarding the clouds of glory.

#### CHAMISHOH MI YODEI'A – FIVE QUESTIONS ON THE WEEKLY SEDRAH – PARSHAS VA'YEIRO 5775 BS"D

- 1) Ch. 18, v. 2: "Shloshoh anoshim" – Three men – Rashi says that one of these three angels was sent to heal Avrohom. The gemara B.B. 16b quotes Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, who says that Avrohom had a special stone that he wore on a necklace, which brought healing to anyone who would look at it. If so, why didn't he simply look at the stone?
- 2) Ch. 18, v. 8: "Va'yikach chemoh v'cholov u'ven habokor" – And he took butter and milk and the young calf – The gemara Yoma 38b says that Avrohom fulfilled the commandments of the Torah even before it was given, and even "eiruvei tavshilin." The question raised on this is why "eiruvei tavshilin" is singled out from among all the mitzvos.
- 3) Ch. 18, v. 21: "Eirdoh noh v'er'eh" – I will now descend and I will see – Rashi derives from this that when a judge is involved in ruling a possible death penalty, he must see the facts himself. This is most puzzling, as a judge may accept the words of witnesses and does not have to be an eye-witness.
- 4) Ch. 19, v. 25: "Va'yahafoch es he'orim ho'eil" – And He overturned these cities – We know that Hashem destroyed these communities by raining down fire, sulfur, and salt. Why was it necessary to also plow these cities under?
- 5) Ch. 20, v. 15: "Hi'nei artzi l'fo'necho batov b'ei'necho sheiv" – Behold my land is available to you in the area that is best in your eyes reside – Contrast this appeasing offer with Paroh's abrupt send-off, "Hi'nei ish't'cho kach vo'leich" – Here is your wife take her and go (Breishis 12:19). Why the difference in behaviour?

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#### ANSWERS:

#1

On Breishis 21:17 Rashi says that the prayers of a sick person for his own healing are more readily accepted by Hashem than the prayers of another. The Baal Haturim asks from the gemara Brochos 5b, which says that one who is sick needs another to help him get better, just as one who is incarcerated needs an outsider to get him out of jail. The Baal Haturim answers by differentiating between prayers, where the ill person's prayers are more readily accepted over those of another, and a manner of healing that is supernatural, an "inyan s'guli." There, an

outsider is needed. Since the healing provided through this special stone was “s’guli” it is well understood why Avrohom needed an outsider, in this case an angel, to heal him. (Ramas Shmuel) I don’t fully grasp this, as the stone did heal. The fact that Avrohom had it in his possession does not make it as if the stone and the ill person are considered one.

#2

Chatzi Menasheh answers that “eiruvei tavshilin” does not mean what we usually call “eiruvei tavshilin,” a ritual that allows for preparation of foods on the eve of Shabbos that is Yom Tov for Shabbos. Rather, it means that Avrohom was careful to not mix cooked foods, milk and meat. He first gave his guests dairy products, and only afterwards meat products.

#3

The gemara Sanhedrin 81a says that when a person has committed two crimes, each deserving the death penalty, if there is a stricter death penalty, he is given the stricter one. Tosfos asks, “Since he was already judged for one of the crimes worthy of death how are the witnesses for the second crime accepted. He is already considered dead, so the second witnesses are testifying about a “dead man,” and if the witnesses were found lying in the “eidim zom’im” manner, they would not be liable for equal retribution. This disqualifies them.” Tosfos answers that the crime for the second death penalty was witnessed by the judges themselves. This requires no testimony. The verse here, “ki kovdoh m’ode” indicates that they had numerous sins, and now it had reached the point of “very serious sinning.” The consideration to respond with a devastating punishment for the heavier sins is akin to one who has two death penalties, one lighter and one stricter. To punish for the stricter of the two requires that the Judge Himself be an eye-witness. (Mogein Avrohom)

#4

The Shem miShmuel in the name of his father, the Avnei Nezer, cites a M.R. which relates a conversation in heaven before this world was created. The question was if this world and mankind should be created. There was a pro and con debate. The attribute of kindness said that mankind should be created because people will do kindness one with another. Since the cardinal sin of these communities was not doing acts of kindness, it was not enough to destroy them, they also had to be overturned, a symbol of total negation of their existence.

#5

- 1) Mitzrayim was a land with the lowest of morals and Soroh was in real danger. (Rashi)
- 2) Avimelech had a beautiful wife, and just wanted to add Soroh to his collection. Even if Avrohom were to remain, Avimelech had a glamorous wife. Paroh was single. The presence of Avrohom with his beautiful wife while the king was single would be a great embarrassment. (Rabbi Yehudoh Chosid in the name of his father)
- 3) The incident with Avimelech took place in G’ror, part of Eretz Yisroel. Avrohom surely wanted to remain in Eretz Yisroel, so Avimelech offered Avrohom to live in G’ror. It was obvious to Paroh that Avrohom would not want to remain in Egypt. (Rabbeinu Nisim)
- 4) Paroh’s telling Avrohom to leave immediately would be a forerunner for Paroh and his nation’s rushing the bnei Yisroel out of Egypt, (Va’techezak Mitzrayim al ho’om l’ma’heir l’shalchom min ho’oretz” (Shmos 12:33). (Rabbeinu Tovioh)
- 5) Avimelech was a “chosid umose ho’olom” and wanted a righteous person to reside in his land. (Rabbeinu Tovioh)
- 6) Avimelech feared that the angel who appeared to him in his dream was the one who destroyed S’dom. He feared the same would happen to G’ror. He therefore wanted the merit of Avrohom to protect his land. (Toldos Yitzchok)
- 7) Avimelech was more refined than Paroh. He went to lengths to show that he had not defiled Soroh. If a king had a union with a woman, she would no longer be allowed to have relations with

any other man, as this would be disrespectful to the king. Avimelech wanted to clearly demonstrate that he had not even touched Soroh. He therefore requested that Avrohom and Soroh remain in the land as husband and wife, and thus totally cleanse him of any negative innuendo. (Abarbanel)

8) Paroh suffered more severely from the skin affliction than did Avimelech, so he wanted to rid himself of Avrohom. (Tur)

9) Avimelech wanted to clear his country of the scourge, “Rak ein yiras Elokim bamokome ha’zeh” (verse 11). By encouraging Avrohom to stay on he was telling Avrohom that both he and his wife would be safe in this land and that indeed there is “yiras Elokim bamokome ha’zeh.” (Rabbeinu Shlomo Ashtruk)

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