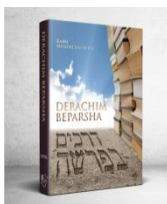


דרכים בפרשה וירא

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כי משחיתים אנחנו את המקום הזה..... וישלחנו
ה' לשחתה יט' ג - For we are about to destroy this
place.... So Hashem has sent us to destroy it (19:13)

Even in S'dom, Lot demonstrated that he was a good student of Avraham Avinu. Lot was in a position of power. On the very day that he was appointed as a judge, he violated the domestic laws that prohibited bringing guests into one's home. However, the Brisker Rav points out, Avraham was still greater than Lot in the *mitzvah* of *hachnosas orchim*, because although Lot was willing to put his life on the line for the *mitzvah*, that was exclusively for the *Malachim*. Avraham was even willing to do it for Arabs.

The *psukim* tell us that after Lot begged the Malachim to stay with him, they came inside of his home. Moments later there was loud banging and shouting coming from outside. The mob had arrived. They wanted Lot to hand over the “guests” to get to “know” them better. Lot willingly offered up his two unmarried daughters, rather than give up his guests. The Malachim then told Lot that Hashem had sent them to offer Lot a chance to save his family members before Sedom was destroyed.

The *Midrash* (B”R 50) tells us, that when they said “**כי משחיתים אנחנו**,” *For we are about to destroy this place* - Hashem put them into *cheirim*. They were not allowed to return to *shomayim* for 138 years. We can explain that their sin was that they put their own *kavod* on the table by getting offended when the *anshei s'dom* made their terrible suggestion. Only after that did they add, “**וישלחנו ה' לשחתה**”.

138 years later when Yaakov had his dream, it says that the *malachim* were “**olim v'yordim**”, they were going up and coming down the ladder. If the starting point of a Heavenly being is upstairs, it should have said that they were going down and coming up- *yordim v'olim*? It must be that these were the *Malachim* from earlier and they were still down below, and this was finally their chance to be allowed back upstairs.

The *Be'er Moshe* and others ask, why specifically at this point were they allowed back into *shamayim*? When Yaakov was chased down by his nephew, Elifaz, with instructions to kill him, Yaakov convinced him that “**עני נחשב כמת** - a poor man is considered dead”. So, Elifaz left Yaakov alive and stripped him of all his worldly

possessions. How humiliating it was, as he had not a stitch of clothing, only his walking stick. Nevertheless, that night the possuk tells us, **וישכב במקום ההוא**, Yaakov slept a very restful sleep. He dreamed of the **סולם מוצב** - the ladder standing on the ground; He saw the *malachim* ascending and descending.

After the malachim witnessed Yaakov's disregard for his personal *kavod*, his “at peace with whatever HaShem has planned for me” attitude, they realized that when it comes to *avodas HaShem*, there is no place for personal *kavod*. HaShem comes first. Only after this realization did HaShem give them the green light to come back upstairs.

Regarding Malachim, there is another idea in this parsha that I would like to share:

We find in the possuk: **שוב אשוב אליך כעת חיה והנה בן - לשרה אשתך** - *I shall surely return to you at the time of birth, and there shall be a son to Sarah your wife*” (18:10). There is a fascinating idea mentioned by Rashi. The Malach promised Avrohom and Sarah “I shall surely return to you at the time of birth, and there shall be a son to Sarah your wife”. Yet, if we look in Chumash, we find no mention of the Malach returning. Of course, the main point was that the Malach was guaranteeing the birth of Yitzchak, and since a child has been born, there would seemingly be no purpose to return now, just to receive a “*shkoyach*”. However, the wording of “*shov ashuv*” - I shall surely return seems to imply that he would actually come.

Rashi asks this question in the *Sefer HaPardes* (authored by Rashi circa 1100). Amazingly, he writes that the Malach did in fact return! 37 years after the birth of Yitzchak, at the famous incident of Akeidas Yitzchok, the Malach told Avraham not to take his son Yitzchok as a sacrifice. It was exactly at the moment when Yitzchok's life was hanging in the balance, “*k'ais chaya*”, that the malach made his return to save Yitzchok's life.

I found this idea to be an incredible concept. There are so many times in life that we expect things to happen a certain way at a certain time. We have expectations of HaShem, and then when things don't happen the way we assumed that they would, at times we even come with complaints. HaShem is the master accountant. All His *cheshbonos* are perfect. In 5785 years, He has never once fallen short of a promise. *Der Aibishter bankrupteert nisht!* But we must realize that HaShem has a plan and we are the ones that need to align ourselves with His schedule, and not the other way around. Let us strengthen ourselves in our *emunah* that HaShem runs the world flawlessly whether we see it or not, and everything will happen exactly when it is supposed to.

Good Shabbos, מרדכי אפפל