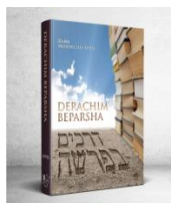


דרכים בפרשה וירא

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יהי בשחת אלקים את ערי הכנר ויזכר אלקים את אברהם וישלח את לוט מתוך ההפכה בהפך את אברהם אשר ישב בהן לוט - *And it was that when Hashem destroyed the cities of the Plain that He remembered Avraham, and so He sent Lot from the midst of the upheaval when He overturned the cities in which Lot had lived.*

Rashi explains the great mitzvah that Lot had performed which would ultimately save his life: מהו זכירתו של אברהם על לוט? נזכר שהיה לוט יודע ששרה אשתו של אברהם ושמע שאמר אברהם במצרים על שרה אחותי היא, ולא גלה הדבר, *What bearing has Hashem's remembering Avraham upon the rescue of Lot? He remembered that Lot knew that Sarah was Avraham's wife and that when he heard that Avraham said in Mitzrayim regarding Sarah, "She is my sister", he did not betray him because he had sympathy for him. For this reason, Hashem had mercy upon him (Lot).*

We may ask, "What is so great about this big mitzvah of not betraying Avraham", after all, didn't לוט do much greater mitzvos by putting his life on the line for the mitzvah of *hachnosas orchim* while in Sedom? Chazal (Sanhedrin 109 and Yalkut 247:83) relate that Lot's own daughter once gave a poor person some bread, and the "authorities" found out. As a punishment, they smeared her body with honey, causing her to be stung to death. We see from here that not only did Lot practice this mitzvah, but he even instilled it into the *chinuch* of his home.

Perhaps we can say that the mitzvah of *hachnosas orchim* was so ingrained in Lot already from Avraham's home, that it was second nature for him to do it, and therefore, that *mitzvah* alone would not have saved him. But we still need to understand a *pshat* in what Rashi is telling us, why it was so great this that Lot did.

We will suggest two ideas in explanation of Rashi. On a simple level, had Lot revealed Avraham's true identity, one can assume that Avraham would have been killed, for that is exactly what Avraham told Sarah- אמרי נא אחתי את וגו' - *Please say that you are my sister... and that I may remain alive thanks to you.* This would have obviously altered the entire future of Klal Yisroel. To an extent, Lot saved Avraham and the future Klal Yisroel, so as a reward, he got saved as well.

I believe there is another element in this answer as well. Keeping his mouth closed took but a second, yet its impact was eternal. It is close to four thousand years later and we are still here thanks to Lot. All too often, we find ourselves faced with small and seemingly insignificant mitzva opportunities, which end up getting brushed aside. Let us not forget the words of the Mishna in Avos, והוי זהיר במצוה קלה, *And be careful with a light mitzvah as with a stringent one, for you do not know the reward for the fulfillment of the mitzvos.* Furthermore, from Lot's actions one can clearly see the concept of יש קונה עולמו בשעה אחת.

The second idea is as follows: Imagine being offered a trip to the moon, but with one condition: You may not discuss with anyone anything that you saw. The Kuntrus Hasfeikus writes that a person would not be able to have any enjoyment whatsoever. He quotes Rabbeinu Yonah (Perek Ein Omdin), "When a person has something good to share, there is a tremendous desire to repeat it to others, and sometimes, fine judgement is overlooked." Similarly, the Chasam Sofer writes in Parshas Chukas that the difficult *gezeira DeOraisa* of para aduma that Moshe Rabbeinu was faced with was that he was not allowed to share the explanation of the mitzvah, thus depriving him of his yearning to share with others.

The greatness of Lot's (non)action was that he resisted the urge to divulge the information on Avraham Avinu. He could have posted it on his status, and it would have gone viral in moments. Just picture it, "Grand Rabbi is busted for lying about his identity." Even though 'friends don't forward', this post would have been different. It was way too juicy to pass up on. Lot could have become an overnight influencer sharing the latest and greatest *hock*, but he chose not to. By passing up on this, he literally saved his own life.

But what about posting pictures of our families and other great successes? Aside from the fact that it may poke out the eyes of other people causing major jealousy, is it really wrong? We all know that a moment before and a moment after the perfect post is taken, the picture is anything but perfect. Let us assume that the real situation is indeed picture perfect, it is worthwhile to keep in mind the words of Chazal: וא"ר יצחק אין הברכה מצוייה אלא בדבר הסמוי מן העין - *And Rabi Yitzchak says: Blessing is found only in a matter concealed from the eye, as it is says: "Hashem will command blessing with you in your storehouses" (where the grain is concealed.)*

מרדכי אפפאל, Good Shabbos,