

LIVING WITH THE PARSHAH 5780,

PARSHAS VAYEIRA

By HARAV YAAKOV FEITMAN, KEHILLAS BAIS YEHUDAH TZVI

HOW TO REACT SO AS NOT TO DETRACT

One of the themes of our Sedra is how to react and take note of Hashem's actions. This can be gleaned on the positive and on the negative side. The evil people of Sodom were going to kill Lot for the "sin" of his kindness to strangers (19:11) but Hashem struck them all blind, without exception. The Steipler zt"l points out that despite the great miracle of this punishment they stubbornly pursued their malicious goal by attempting to find the door even in their blindness. Finally they only gave up when they were thoroughly exhausted. Rav Chaim Kanievsky shlita adds to his father's thought by pointing out that Lot's sons-in-law, too, witnessed this great miracle, yet scoffed at their father-in-law for exiting the city. They, too, had no idea how to react properly to the word and actions of the Creator.

In truth, the Chidushei HaRim (Bereishis 14:21) teaches us what actually happens when Hashem descends from heaven to judge us. Hashem came down to Sodom and then it was destroyed. Why at that point? Surely they had been wicked for many years and perhaps decades. Yet, when Hashem descends there is suddenly an incredible increase of kedushah and taharah – holiness and purity – in that area. There should have been a general awakening and powerful inclination toward teshuvah and change. However, in their obdurate iniquity, the people of Sodom ignored the holiness in the air and became even worse. It was because of this lack of regard for Hashem's outstretched arm to them that they were destroyed.

Avrohom Avinu, on the other hand, learns from each one of his tests and rises to the level of the next. During their three days of traveling together, Avrohom and Yitzchok grew even closer to each other than ever. The Torah Ohr imagines for us how those last few days cemented the profound relationship between father and son. Yet, Avrohom soon realized that Hashem was just increasing the test so that it could never be said that Avrohom was willing to slaughter a son with whom he didn't even have such a close spiritual and emotional connection. In the beginning Hashem seems to almost cruelly be tempting Avrohom to pull out of the test by reminding him how special Yitzchok is to him. Yet, of course, as we know, Avrohom persisted and prevailed, because he recognized the stakes and the potential gain for the future as yet unknown Jewish people. This is how we have been taught to react to the word and especially the actions of Hashem.

We know from Rav Dessler in the Michtav M'Eliyahu that all the generations who gave up their lives in Kiddush Hashem gained their spiritual strength from Avrohom and Yitzchok at the Akeidah. This was not just being impressed by an ancestor; it was the creation of new DNA which had never existed before. We, too, can implant in our children amazing new traits of holiness and purity if we would only recognize them when we see them in our lives. The Akeidah is, in one way, the beginning of Am Yisrael, but we must each watch for our signals and for the cues and clues as to how we should grow from our trials and tribulations. May we always be alert to the signals Hashem is sending us, for they are plentiful and often obvious. They are what separates us from the Lots and Sodoms of the world and make us the B'nai Avrohom Yitzchok and Yaakov.

A GUTTEN SHABBOS

HALACHA OF THE WEEK 5780, PARSHAS VAYEIRA

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This week we will discuss several Hilchos Shabbos shaalos which emerged from our Dirshu Mishnah Berurah shiur:

Question: What can be done if muktzah items such as a phone, i-pad or other electronics are left on a bed or chair before Shabbos and someone wants to use this furniture on Shabbos?

Answer: These items are considered a *kli shelelachto l'siur* – a uten sil whose main purpose is a forbidden use. Such a kli usually may be moved if one needs the spot they are on (l'tzorech mekomo) or they will be used in a permissible way (l'tzorech mekomo). However the Mishnah Berurah (308:34) does not give a clear hetter --- permissibility. Nevertheless, several contemporary Poskim do allow the removal of the muktzah if the bed or chair are extremely needed (Rav Elyashiv and Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l quoted in Shalmei Yehudah on Muktzah, page 19; Rav Binyomin Zilber in Az Nidberu 8:67). Some Poskim also allow tilting the blanket chair to remove the electronic item (Mishnah Berurah 311:30) but the Chazon Ish (47:14) is strict and does not allow it. However the Chazon Is *does* allow the bedspread with the *muktzah* itme to be removed *if* the bedspread would normally be removed for someone to use the bed. *Many Rabboinim* today tend to be lenient in this matter.

Question: Doesn't the bed or bedspread become a *bosis* – a basis – for the muktzah item, adding another layer of prohibition?

Answer: No, since the item was not placed on the bed or chair with the plan to leave it there all Shabbos (Shulchan Aruch 309:4 with Mishnah Berurah).

Question: May one hang a picture or clock on a hook which is already knocked into the wall of a house?

Answer: Yes (Orchos Shabbos 8:14; Chut Shani 2:242).

Question: May one press a thumbtack into any part of a house?

Answer: No, this is considered boneh – building – on Shabbos (Shulchan Aruch Harav 314:2). The Mishnah Berurah (314:8) also holds that this is forbidden because of makeh b'patish).

Question: May one unplug an electric plug from its socket when the utensil is in the “off” position?

Answer: Yes, but only if it is a utensil which is not left plugged in for an extended period of time such as a refrigerator or oven (Chut Shani 2:243).

Question: May we open and shut a sefer or book which has words printed on the edges of the paper? This is very common with books or seforim which belong to a library.

Answer: The Mishnah Berurah (340:17) cites several Poskim who forbid this (Levush, Mogen Avrohom, Maamar Mordechai) but he also quotes the Teshuvos Harama (No. 119) who is lenient. Furthermore, the Nishmas Adam (37:3) explains that the Rama is lenient because he holds that since the sefer is made to be opened and closed constantly, it is considered an impermanent writing which may be opened and closed. The Sefer Binyan Olam (No.11) goes even further in asserting that seforim and books which by definition must be opened and closed are not subject to the laws of writing. He explains that writing implies something new which was not there before and erasing implies nullifies something permanently, which is not the case with books. The custom is to be lenient, despite the objections of the Levush etc. The Chazon Ish (61:1) is strict because one transgresses the prohibition of writing even when he is planning to erase what he has written. If possible, one should avoid such books on Shabbos but if necessary, one may rely upon the Teshuvos Haramah and those who endorse his position.

A GUTTEN SHABBOS