

SCHEDULE

שבת קדש

Mincha Erev Shabbos	5:50 PM
Shacharis- Followed by Kiddush	8:30 AM
Sof Zman K"ס- 10:12 גר"א < 9:36 מ"א	
Pirkei Avot Shiur ~Will resume after Pesach	
Mincha- Followed by Shalosh Seudos	5:45 PM
Maariv	6:57 PM



Sunday

Shacharis	8:30 AM
~Shiur to resume next week	
Mincha / Maariv	4:55 PM

Weekday Minyanim & Shiurim

Shacharis	
Monday, Thursday	6:40 AM & 8:10 AM
Tues, Wed, Fri.	6:45 AM & 8:10 AM
Dirshu Halacha Program (Mon-Fri)	7:30 AM
Mincha (Mon-Thur)	1:45 PM
Mincha / Maariv (Sunday-Th)	4:55 PM
Shiur Sefer Da Es Atzmecha (M-Th)	9:30 PM
Maariv (Mon-Thur)	9:45 PM

Thursday Night Shiur by Rabbi Teichman after Maariv

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Shalosh Seudos

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Issue #112

RABBI'S MESSAGE

What type of car do you drive? What kind of home do you live in? Where do you buy your clothes?

What type of car do you drive? What kind of home do you live in? Where do you buy your clothes?

Have you ever noticed that so much of who we “are” is identified by the objects we own! A large percentage of our lives is devoted to the “acquisition” of material gain.

The very first promise of “ברכה”, blessing, to אברהם אבינו is (בראשית יב, ב) “ואברכך” (בראשית יב, ב), on which רש”י explains, “בממון”, with money! The Hebrew term for possessions is רכוש, of which nine of the eighteen references in all of חומש are found in this weeks פרשה alone!

The inability of לוט and his shepherds to coexist with אברהם אבינו after their return from their sojourn in מצרים is due to the רכושם רב (שם יג, ו), *their abundant possessions*. It is after this episode that לוט becomes “good” neighbors with סדום. In the conquest of סדום during the epic battle of the four over the five Kings, the Torah emphasizes (שם יד, יא)... ויקחו את כל רכוש סדום, *they seized the wealth of Sodom*. In the very next verse it reports, ... ויקחו את לוט ואת רכשו בן אחי אברם... *and they captured Lot and his possessions, the son of the brother of Abram...* a strange phrasing, why does it insert “his possessions” prior to identifying him fully as the nephew of Abram? Wouldn't it have been more appropriate to state his identity as Lot the nephew of Abram and then his possessions? It almost seems to imply that the רכוש was part of his identity! Even more intriguing is the Torah's description of אברהם אבינו and his disciples freeing of the captives from the clutches of the four Kings, (שם יד, טו) *and they brought back all the possessions... also Lot... with his possessions, as well as the women and the people*. Are the belongings the most significant item recovered? Wasn't the objective Lot? Why are the human beings listed last?

Finally, what is the mystery behind אברהם's refusal to take up the offer from the King of Sodom, והרכש קח לך (שם יד, כא) *and take the possessions for yourself*, when אברהם forswears (שם יד, כג) *so much as thread to a shoestrapp*? His fear lest the King of Sodom claim that he enriched אברהם could certainly not justify his not taking something so valueless as a thread and shoestrapp?

The struggle between אברהם and לוט and their shepherds was a philosophical one, how do we approach wealth. Is monetary gain a tool to achieve pleasure, pride and power or is it a vehicle to assist us in advancing a deeper belief and connection to Hashem? After their journey in luxurious Egypt and achieving their newfound wealth, לוט becomes enamored with success. His abundant “רכוש” blinds him from the vision of the legacy of his Uncle. He is drawn to סדום, whose terrain is similar to that of Egypt, (שם יג, י) כארץ מצרים, a selfish place reminiscent of the sumptuousness of Egypt. He becomes “possessed”!

The four Kings, among them אמרפל who is none other than נמרוד, the antagonist of אברהם and all that he stands for, see an opportunity to quash the philosophy of אברהם by asserting their might, not in the slaughter of their victims but by using their wealth to impose their will and gain control. What better catch than לוט the very nephew of אברהם and his “רכוש” could affect a greater statement of their world view? It is then indeed לוט and his attitude toward “wealth” that is the greater objective in this war!

אברהם in his victory wants to express before the world the true purpose of acquisitions. He refers to Hashem, in his oath forswearing any personal gain from this triumph as the (שם יד, כב) *Possessor of heaven and earth*. רש”י elucidates that קונה refers to Hashem as עושה, the Maker, *for through His creating the heaven and earth He acquired it as His*. רש”י is teaching us that “possession” is not simply about ownership, it is rather about identifying an item as associated with it's owner perform his defining it. One who is a “עושה”, a “doer” is thus identified with that item. We emulate Hashem by being identified with the objects we own and the positive use we put them to. (*Kudos to Tuvya Miller for prodding forth this novel idea!*)

Perhaps this is the deeper meaning behind the Midrash that tells us that in the merit of אברהם's refusal to benefit even a “thread”, his children merited the מצוה of צניעות, and for shunning the “shoestrapp” we received the מצוה of תפילין. The symbol of אברהם's wealth was indicated in the “מקנה”, the livestock, the צאן and בקר, sheep and cattle. In the merit of the profound understanding of אבינו in the purpose of “possessions”, he indeed merited that from the “מקנה” he would produce from the wool of the sheep צניעות, and from the hide of the cattle, straps for תפילין, thus expressing this idea of a true “יקנין”! (*Thanks to Eli Sidransky for this brilliant observation!*)

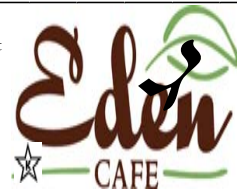
May we never allow our “possessions” to “possess us”, but rather “assess” our true worth by how we use our “assets”!

באהבה,
צבי טייכמן

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You don't want to miss this...

- For Men -

