



The Chesed of Avraham

By Dubi Fischman, Editor-in-Chief, 12th Grade

The Passuk says in 18:4 “*Yukach nah miat mayim V'Rachatzu ragleichem V'Hisahu tachat HaEtz*” let some water be brought and wash your feet, and recline beneath the tree. Rashi on the Pasuk explains that Avraham got the water through a messenger. Because Avraham relied on a messenger, says Rashi, Hashem repaid him [I.E. *Bnei Yisroel*] *midah k'neged midah*, as can be seen in Bamidbar 20:11 by *Mei M'Rivah*. After Miriyam died and the *Bier* left, Hashem gave us our water through a messenger, Moshe Rabeinu.

The Siftei Chahamim points out the Bier is used twice in the narrative of the Torah- once in Parshat B'shalach, where Hashem told Moshe to hit the rock to draw the water, and once in Parshat Chukat, where Hashem told Moshe to speak to the rock and he hit it, causing the water to be drawn improperly. The Siftei Chachamim asks why Rashi chose the example from Chukat where the water was drawn improperly and which led to the punishment of Moshe Rabeinu? Why not use the story from B'shalach which shows the bracha of the Bier!

Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky answers the question. He explains that Rashi is teaching us a *chidush*- the fact that Avraham uses a *shaliach* instead of getting

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In Our Midst

By Avi Greenberg, 12th Grade

“Suppose there are fifty righteous people in the midst of the city. Would you still destroy it, and not bear with the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people inside it?”

Avraham is begging Hashem to have mercy on the cities of Sodom and Amorah using an interesting choice of words: “Perhaps there are fifty righteous people in the midst of the city”. Why did Avraham have to specify that it was “in the midst of the city?”

The definition of the words *tzaddik* and *rasha* are relative. Rav Zalman Sorotzkin *zt"l* described how one time he overheard some young irreligious teenagers detailing how they spent their Yom Kippur getting drunk in bars, but one of their friends did not come “because he’s a *tzaddik*!” On the other hand, a very learned and caring bachur from a very well-known yeshiva was regarded as “lacking in *Yiras Shamayim*”, because someone saw him reading a newspaper once. Obviously the “sinful” *bachur* from the yeshiva was on a greater level of Torah and mitzvos than the “*tzaddik*” who missed getting drunk on Yom Kippur. We see from here that in certain places a person can be called a “*tzaddik*” for doing almost nothing.

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Torah Teasers

By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum, 9th Grade Rebbe

Parshas Vayera**Questions**

1. Where is butter mentioned in this parsha? In what context is butter mentioned in the Prophets?
2. In this parsha, who is referred to as being "elderly" with the expression *Zaken* or *Zekainim*? (4 answers)
3. In this parsha, which two people question Hashem about killing a *tzaddik* (righteous person)?
4. In this parsha, which two people make a *Mishteh* - "a feast"?
5. Where is salt mentioned in this parsha? When is the next time that salt is mentioned in the Torah?

Answers

1. Avraham serves butter to the angels (Genesis 18:8). In the book of Judges, Yael serves butter to Sisra (Shoftim 5:25).
2. The Torah refers to both Avraham and Sarah as "elderly" (Genesis 18:11). Later on, the Torah describes the crowd that converged on Lot's house as ranging "from young to old" (Genesis 19:4). Lastly, the daughters of Lot called their father a *Zakein* (Genesis 19:31).
3. Avraham asks Hashem if He will kill the *tzaddikim* of Sodom (Genesis 18:25). Avimelech also asks Hashem if He will kill a *tzaddik* (referring to himself for not touching Sarah) (Genesis 20:4).
4. Lot makes a feast for the angels (Genesis 19:3), and Avraham makes a feast when Yitzhak is weaned (21:8).
5. Lot's wife turns around and becomes "a pillar of salt" (Genesis 19:26). Salt is not mentioned again until Leviticus 2:13 with regard to the salt required for *korbonot*.



1st Aliyah- At the beginning of the parsha, Hashem paid Avraham a visit. Avraham was sitting at the entrance of his tent and suddenly he saw three travelers passing by, and he ran to invite them into his home. These travelers, who were really three malachim in disguise, accepted Avraham's invitation, and Avraham and Sarah prepared a gourmet feast for them. The "travelers" informed Sarah that in exactly a year, she will give birth to a child. 89 years old having a baby? Sarah laughed, and Hashem was upset with the lack of faith that she had.

2nd Aliyah- In this Aliyah, we see that the travelers were escorted out of Avraham's home and onward with their journey. Their next destination was to Sodom, and their mission was to destroy Sodom and to rescue Lot and his family who lived there. Hashem told Avraham of His intentions to destroy Sodom because of the sins and the evil of the people living there. Avraham tried to save the city if he can find 50 *tzaddikim* that lived there. Avraham went on a search and saw that there were not 50 *tzaddikim*. Avraham kept on bargaining with Hashem and eventually came to asking even if there are only 10 *tzaddikim* to spare the city. But even 10 *tzaddikim* were not found.

3rd Aliyah- The angels arrive in Sodom in this Aliyah, and Lot invites them to come to his home to eat and to rest. The news spread like a wildfire throughout the city that Lot did something nice -- an act of kindness. The residents of the city, who are totally against kindness and being nice, surrounded Lot's house with intent to hurt the travelers. Lot refused the demands to surrender the angels to them and as the residents of Sodom were prepared to break down his door, the angels struck all the attackers with blindness. The angels then informed Lot of their mission and why they came to Sodom and encouraged Lot and

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Given by Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz
on yutorah.org

Transcribed by
Chezky Rothman

Folding a Tallis on Shabbos

Gemara Shabbos 113a: One may not fold clothing on Shabbos

Shulchan Aruch Siman 302 Seif 3: 5 qualifications that would make folding clothes on Shabbos permissible:

1. It something that will be worn again on Shabbos
2. You are folding it alone.
3. It hasn't been washed since the last use
4. It has to be white
5. You don't have an alternative garment

Since it is very uncommon to have all 5 of these qualifications, the Shulchan Aruch seemingly holds it is Assur.

Why would it be Assur to fold clothing on Shabbos?

Clothing serves 2 functions:

- A. Practical - it protects your body
- B. Stylistic - it projects a certain image

1. Rambam Hilchos Shabbos Perek 22 Halacha 22: Folding clothing is a violation of Misaken (fixing).
 - When clothing is crumpled, it is not stylized, so by making it nice, you are removing the creases, so that fixes its stylistic function
2. Raavid Hilchos Shabbos Perek 23 Halacha 7: It is an issue of Teircha Yiseira (unnecessary work to do on Shabbos).
 - Aruch Hashulchan 302 Seif 11: This is the reason Tosfos explicitly prohibits folding a Talis after davening. It is an issue of Hachana (something that can just as easily be done after Shabbos.)
 - a) Once the garment is no longer being worn, the practical function of the garment does not exist. Therefore, the folding is only for the next time you use it, and is unnecessary.

What are the allowances to fold a Tallis?

1. The Ravyah in name of the Mordechai: It is only Assur if you fold it on its creases.
 - a) It is an issue of Tircha Yiseira
 - Piskei Teshuva Daas Torah Mahrsham: You could only fold it off

the creases if you refold it, because then you show that you weren't happy with the first folding.

- Rav Ovadya Yichave Daas Chelek 2 Siman 40: No such requirement
- Kabalah: You should fold your Tallis right after Shabbos

b) Misaken— You may be preventing it from making it more crumpled, but you aren't sharpening the edges, not fixing it. So no issue.

Chayei Adam Klal 44 Seif 24: This allowance is only if you reuse the Talis on the same day

- Most say even without reusing it, it is o.k. to rely on not folding it on its creases.

2. Aruch Hashulchan 302 Seif 11: It is not normal to not fold your Talis at all, therefore, you should fold it in some way.

a) Seif 12: Maybe we hold like the Rambam that the whole issue is only of Misaken. However, that issue doesn't really apply nowadays because we don't fold it well enough that it removes the unwanted creases.

3. Rav Binyamin Zilber: A folding that is done in order that something won't be ruined, not to repair it, is fine to haphazardly fold.

Final Opinions:

1. Mishna Berurah Siman 302 Seif Kattan 19: You should not fold it at all.
2. Shmeiras Shabbos K'hilchasa Perk 15 Ois 44: Don't fold on the creases.
3. Rav Ovadya Yichavei Daas Chelek 2 Siman 40 : Best to not fold on the creases, but there is what to really on to be able to fold on the creases.
4. Aruch Hashulchan: Minhag Haolam is to fold on the creases so it is allowed.

- Yalkut Yosef: It is a Hiddur Mitzvah to keep your Talis nice and clean, and if you were to change the crease every Shabbos the Talis

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DYLAN BRODER

AVRAHAM VS. LOT

10TH GRADE

One of the greatest things we can learn from Avraham is the way he treated guests. Avraham waited outside in the hot sun to invite any passerby into his tent. When the three angels came to Avraham, Avraham fed them and gave them a place to rest. Avraham is recognized for this great act of *chesed*. A fundamental question must be asked on this though. Why is Avraham recognized for his great act of *chesed* over here more than his nephew Lot, who does the same act later on in the parsha?

The answer can be found in the difference between the two stories. When the angels are taken care of by Avraham, the Torah never says they were angels. It was only by the story of Lot later on that the Torah reveals their true identities. Lot knew that these ‘men’ were in fact angels and because of that he welcomed them as guests and took care of them. On the other hand, Avraham thought that these passerby were *anashim*, men, yet he still performed the mitzvah in the most honorable way. Avraham did not care about the identity of those that he served, he only cared that someone was passing by, and that that someone could benefit from his kindness.

(Aliyot Summary- Continued from page 2)

his family to run away. Lot, his wife, and two of his daughters were escorted out of the city safely, and were warned not to look back at the city being destroyed.

4th Aliyah- After being warned not to look back, Hashem showed His wrath and rained fire and sulfur on Sodom. Although she was warned not to, Lot’s wife looked back at the city being destroyed and Hashem transformed her into a pillar of salt. Lot and the rest of his family took shelter in a cave. Lot’s daughters assumed that the whole world was destroyed so they intoxicated their father and seduced him in order to repopulate the world. Each daughter gave birth to a son, Amon and Moav (who eventually started their own nations). Avraham then relocated to the city of Gerar, a Plishti city. Avimelech, the king of Gerar, took Sarah -- who was presented as Avraham’s sister -- to his palace. Hashem came into play when this happened, and a disease was brought on to all of the people of the palace. Along with the disease, Hashem appeared to Avimelech in a dream and told him to give Avraham back his wife and Avimelech listened. Along with freeing Sarah, he also gave them gifts, and the household was then healed from the disease. After this story, Sarah conceived a baby, and at the age of 90 gave birth to Yitzchak. Avraham gave him a bris milah eight days later.

5th Aliyah- Yitzchak grew older and Sarah noticed that Yishma’el, Hagar’s son, was a negative influence on Yitzchak. Sarah demanded that Avraham tell Yishma’el to leave along with his mother, Hagar. At first Avraham was not a fan of this, but then Hashem tells him “whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her voice!” (good advice for a married couple). Hagar and Yishma’el left and wandered in the desert until they ran out of water. Yishma’el was about to die from thirst and then an angel “opened Hagar’s eyes” and showed her a well of wa-

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TZVI YUDIN

MAMESH!

9TH GRADE

At the end of this week's Parsha, the Torah describes the remarkable story of Akidas Yitzchak. The story begins with Hashem asking Avraham to pass this final test. As shown by the pasuk which says, "*Kach Na Es Bincha*" in which rashi translates the word "*Na*" to mean "please." Rashi explains how Hashem begged Avraham to pass the test so other people wouldn't say that all the tests were for nought and that there was "*Ein Ba'hem Mamish*". A basic question that arises when learning Rashi's interpretation is, who would have the audacity to question the substance of the previous tests? Who would dare belittle the tests of *Bris* and *Lech Lecha* as a result of Avraham failing the test of the *Akeida*?

Rav Shimon Schwab offers an answer. Rav Schwab says that the word *Mamish* is the fundamental difference between the other 9 tests and the *Akidah*. But what "*Mamish*" really means, explains Rav Schwab, is that there was a fundamental difference between the *Akeida* and the other tests that Avraham faced. All the other tests were between Avraham and Hashem. The *Akeida*, explains Rav Schwab was the first test that included Abraham's son, Yitzchak. The other tests were real and special, but Hashem was nevertheless concerned that had Avraham not passed the *Akeida* people would say that there was once a religious fanatic named Avraham who failed to pass on his beliefs to subsequent generations. The true meaning of the word *Mamish* is something that endures for genera-

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(Avi Greenberg- Continued from page 1)

Similarly, Avraham knew that there were not actually any righteous people in Sodom, so he appealed on behalf of those people who were good "in the midst of the city" compared to the rest of the people. If these people who were "tzadikim" were destroyed, Hashem's name would be disrespected by others who saw these as "tzaddikim" and wouldn't understand why they were being punished.

Hashem then responded to Avraham saying, "If I will find fifty tzaddikim in the midst of the city, I will forgive the entire place." even for those people who were on a higher level than the other people living in the midst of the city, Hashem was willing to save the entire city. In the end, there weren't even ten tzaddikim in the city so the cities of Sodom and Amorah had no chance to be saved.

Adapted from Torah Tavlin.

(Stories of Greatness- Continued from page 8)

Avraham Avinu.

As Jews and Bnai Avraham, we too adopted all these traits of not only *hachnasas orchim*, but to help all those in need. We have been graciously given this **amazing** *midah* and it lives in our *neshamos*. We must put what were given into effect and use our abilities to help all in need... *Kal Vechomer* a Jew in need.

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the water himself means that there was a *chisaron*, a deficiency, in his actions, in his *chesed*, and that that action left a dark spot in *Shamayim*, affecting the entire bracha of the *Bier Miryam* in Mei M'Riva. The next few pesukim, conversely, describe that Avraham himself went and got bread and meat for his guests. The pasuk states, "Vayimheir Avraham" and Avraham went quickly to the tent; the following pasuk says, "V'El Habakar Ratz Avraham" and Avraham ran to get the meat. Because of the actions described in these two Pesukim, Hashem personally gave us the Maan, our food in the midbar- because Avraham himself went to get the meat and bread for the Malachim, so did Hashem.

But this is difficult to understand. We have an established rule of *Shaliach shel adam kimoto*- that an agent for the performance of a mitzvah is likened to the person himself. If this is the case, then why would Avraham sending a *Shaliach* to take care of his guests be a deficiency in his actions so much so that it affected Moshe Rabeinu almost 450 years later?!

We all are accustomed to using a *Shaliach*, and when necessary, the Torah tells us that we can be *Yotzei* a mitzvah through them. One the most common examples of this is the *Brit Milah*- we all have the mitzvah to give our son a *milah*, but most of us don't know how to do this, and so we hire a *Mohel* to be *motzei* our *chiyuv* for us.

Sometimes, however, a *Shaliyach* is less than ideal. Rashi's *Chidush* is that when it comes to *chesed*, we must strive to do the mitzvah in the best way, on our own. We must model ourselves after the Pasuk of "Vayimher Avraham" and "Ratz Avraham". The Torah shows us both types of *chesed*- "*Yukach na miat mayim*" which is through a *shaliyach*, and "*ratz Avraham*" where he did the *chesed* himself- specifically for us to learn from.

When we do *chesed*, we recognize someone is in need and we must train ourselves to recognize this and respond to it, and this is only done when we do the *chesed* ourselves, without a *shaliyach*.

(Aliyot Summary- Continued from page 4)

ter. Yishma'el grew up and became a skilled archer.

6th Aliyah- At that point in the parshah, Avimelech, king of Gerar came to Avraham and requested to create a treaty with him- neither party (Plishtim or Jewish nation) will harm each other for 3 generations. Avraham agreed, but rebuked Avimelech since Avraham dug a well and Avimelech's people stole it. Avraham then set apart seven sheep, telling Avimelech that he should take these as a testimony and a proof that I dug the well. Avraham then planted an orchard and created an inn in Be'er Sheva and told people who passed by about Hashem.

7th Aliyah- The parsha ends off with Hashem commanding Avraham to take Yitzchak and offer him as a karban on a mountain. This might sound crazy, but Avraham was prepared to offer him and took him to the mountain. They arrived and Avraham built the mizbeach and put Yitzchak on it. As Avraham stretched out his hand to take the knife, an angel ordered him not to, and instead to offer a ram which was in a nearby bush. Hashem promised Avraham great bracha as a reward for passing this difficult test. Avraham was notified after these events occurred that his sister in law had given birth to children, Besuel and Rivka, who was eventually the wife of his almost slaughtered son.

(10 Minute Halacha- Continued from page 3)

would look disgusting. So you can fold it on its creases. Furthermore, the Gemara in Shabbos 133 says the example of Hiddur Mitzvah is to have a nice Tallis.

(Mamesh!- Continued from page 5)

tions to come. The very name *Akeidas Yitzchak* suggests that not only did Avraham pass the test but he successfully transmitted his beliefs to the next generation.

Was Avraham Successful?

Yisrael Lebowitz 11th Grade

While we often think of Avraham Avinu as a very successful person, when you take a closer look he seems to have failed more often than he succeeded. So many of the things he tried to accomplish did not succeed. First, he tried to do hachnasas orchim, and feed his "guests" on an extraordinarily difficult day, but ultimately the "guests" turned out to be Malachim and they were just pretending to eat. Next, Avraham tried to save Sedom, and ultimately that effort failed as well.

Later, Avraham wanted to raise his oldest son, Yishmael well, and tried his hardest to do so, but ultimately he was forced to listen to Sarah's advice and send Yishmael away.

Finally, Avraham was given his biggest test - to slaughter his son Yitzchak and displayed great courage in showing the willingness to do so, but ultimately he wasn't able to follow through, because Hashem prevented him from slaughtering Yitzchak. It was only after all of these unsuccessful efforts, that Avraham was able to raise Yitzchak and initiate the future of Klal Yisrael. What can we learn from the string of seeming failures in the life of Avraham Avinu?

Avraham is still a hero of the Jewish people. Hashem loves Avraham and makes him the patriarch of a great nation, as the title Avraham AVINU suggests. Avraham is a great hero and role model for the Jewish people, not because of what he accomplished, but because of his willingness to always try his best to serve Hashem. We can learn from Avraham that all Hashem asks of us is that we try our best no matter how hard the challenges in life may be. Whether we accomplish all that we set out to do, and which of our efforts will be successful, is ultimately up to Hashem, but our effort, and our willingness to serve Hashem is up to us.

(Based on a shiur by Rav Andi Yudin on yutorah.org)



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Don't Judge A Book By It's Cover:

Rabbi Isser Zalman Melzer was once sitting with a group of students when suddenly one of them looked out the window and announced that one of Israel's leading Torah scholars was coming toward the home. Rav Melzer quickly prepared his modest Jerusalem apartment to greet the honored guest. The table was bedecked with a freshly laundered, tablecloth adorned with a bowl of fruit, in honor of the distinguished visitor. Rabbi Melzer changed into his Shabbos attire so as to show his respect. Suddenly there was a knock. Reb Isser Zalman rushed to the door to greet the honored guest. However there was no Rav at the door. In his stead, stood a simple poor Jew who needed a letter of approbation in order to raise funds. He appeared from the distance like the scholar, but obviously the student was mistaken. To the surprise of his wife, and even more so the visitor himself, Rav Melzer ushered the poor man into his dining room. He proceeded to seat him at the head of the table, converse with him, feed him, and give him the respect he would have afforded a revered guest. After discussing the man's needs, he wrote a letter full of complimentary descriptions regarding the man and his situation. After the old man had left, Reb Isser Zalman commented, "who really knows how to evaluate and differenti-

ate the value of people. Perhaps this is the way one must treat every Jew. I was happy to channel my enthusiastic expectations of the Rabbi's visit toward this simple Jew."

This midah of *hachnasas orchim* is seen throughout this week's Parsha. Even three days after his *Brit Milah*, (the third day being the most painful), *Avraham Avinu* sat outside of his tent in the heat of the day in order to greet and help out needy travelers. Rashi explains based on the words "*Kechom Hayom*" that Hashem took off the protective edge of the sun to make it excruciatingly hot. This, Hashem hoped, would make it impossible for Avraham to bear the pain of the bris, coupled with heat, and finally go into his house and get his much needed rest and recovery. But Avraham did not give in, his desire to help travelers was too great. Finally, Avraham got his wish. Eventually he sees the 3 "guests" coming. Regardless from them seeming like idol worshipers, Avraham runs to greet them with passion and *zrizut*. He lets them wash their feet, puts them under a tree, and gives them his best meat. It is only later that he learns that they are angels that came to give him good news.

From this story of Rabbi Isser Zalman we can see that he shared many traits with

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