

PARSHAH INSIGHTS

“Do not sent forth your hand at the lad nor do anything to him, for now I know that you are G-d fearing... (22, 12)

Avrohom had already passed nine tests. Why is the tenth test a more resounding proof that Avrohom is G-d fearing?

The other nine tests were not a clear indication that Avrohom had a fear of G-d. He may have been compassionate and therefore hosted guests. To perform the cruel act of slaughtering a son, which is against the nature of a father, proves that Avrohom is a G-d fearing person. (Vilna Gaon)

Nimrod threw Avrom into a furnace because Avrom would not deny the existence of Hashem (Rashi Noach 11, 28). Allowing oneself to be thrown into a furnace is definitely against human nature. If so, why wasn't that a proof of Avrom's fear of G-d?

We must first understand why the test of the Akeida is referred to as Avrohom's test; wasn't it also Yitzchok's test?

The Bais HaLevi explains that there is less of a challenge to die honoring Hashem's Name than to live after having honored His Name. Yitzchok's dying while honoring Hashem's Name is a momentary challenge, while Avrohom living the rest of his life with the feeling of a loss of a son in his heart is more difficult. Therefore, the test is referred to as Avrohom's, not Yitzchok's.

We can now answer the question on the Vilna Gaon. Avrom's test to be thrown into the furnace was not as great as the test of the Akeida. The test of the furnace was brief, while the test of the Akeida was a challenge that would be felt for a lifetime. Such a sacrifice justifiably earned him Hashem's compliment of being a G-d fearing person.

I will descend and see: If they acted in accordance with its outcry that came to me, then they deserve destruction! And if not, I will know. (18, 21)

And if they repent, I will not punish them. (Onkelos)

One may think that even a non-Jew can do teshuva. The posuk says, 'Hashem will turn his face to you' (Naso 6, 26), to teach that for you (Bnai Yisroel) teshuva helps but not for the nations of the world. (Tanchuma Haazinu 4)

If teshuva is not a concept that applies to a non-Jew, how could the people of Sodom do teshuva and escape retribution?

Another question must be addressed first. Chazal (Kidushin 40b) say that *even if a person was righteous all his life, and at the end of his life regrets the good deeds he had performed, he loses the reward of his mitzvos. If regret is sufficient to retract the mitzvos one has performed, why doesn't regret also apply to the withdrawal of one's sins? If the above hypothesis is correct, why is there a need for the institution of teshuva?*

Rav Elchonon Wasserman zt'l (Agados 3, 3) explained that since the source of a Jew's soul is Heaven, his sins also damage the Heavenly structure of the world, in addition to his own soul (Nefesh HaChaim 1, 3).

Regretting a sin is not enough to rebuild destruction. Therefore, when a Jew sins, a positive act of teshuva is necessary in order to rectify the devastation wrought upon the Heavenly world. If a Jew only regrets his bad deeds and does not repent, he cannot attain atonement because he has not rebuilt the damage he brought upon the world.

However, since the soul of a non-Jew is not connected to the Heavenly realm, his sins cannot wreak havoc in that world. Therefore, regrets are sufficient for him to not receive punishment. That is why Hashem went to see if the people of Sodom regretted their sinful actions, so that they wouldn't be punished for them.

TABLE TALK

PARSHA DILEMMA

He took cream and milk and the calf that he made and placed these before them...and they ate. (18, 8)

They appeared as if they ate. (Rashi)

Avrohom fed them meat and milk together. When Hashem wanted to give the Torah to Bnai Yisroel, the angels complained that the Torah should be kept in Heaven. Hashem responded, "In the Torah it is written, 'do not eat meat and milk together.' When you descended to earth, you ate meat and milk together, as it says, "He took cream and milk and the calf which he made and placed these before them." The angels were humbled and agreed with Hashem. (Medrash Socher Tov 8)

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If the angels only appeared to be eating but did not eat, we must explain Hashem's response to the angels?

WHO AM I ?

1. I am not found in salt
2. I became salty
3. I am not Talmud Bavli
4. We had a complete turn around

Last week's clues: My name is Name, Don't think I am a girl, I was king in Yerushalayim, I got a tenth.

Answer: Sheim / Malkitzedek

Congratulations to: Eliezer Lerman, Yechezkel Schulgasser, A. Hoberman, Shimshon Avigdor Gavriel Salamon, Shauli Farkas, Noach Ehrlich, Avi Admon, Yochai Yares

WHO AM I ?

1. I was tangled
2. Moshiach will use me
3. I don't beep
4. I was at Matan Torah

Last week's clues: I was a bris, Yet I was not on the eighth day, I caused sleep, With pieces.

Answer: Bris Bein HaBisarim

Congratulations to: Eliezer Lerman, Yechezkel Schulgasser, A. Hoberman, Shauli Farkas, Noach Ehrlich, Avi Admon

TORAH RIDDLE

From where, in this Parsha, do we learn the importance of Bikur Cholim?

Last week's riddle and answer:

Why do we wear talis and tefilin by Shacharis?

Answer: Bnai Yisroel merited the mitzva of talis and tefilin as a reward to Avrohom who denied the strings and straps offered to him by the King of Sodom. Since Avrohom instituted Shacharis, we wear these mitzvos then (Meshech Chochmo).

Congratulations to: Yechezkel Schulgasser

Please send "Who Am I" and "Torah Riddle" answers to onegshabbos@beachwoodkollel.com by next Wed.

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For the months of Cheshvan/Kislev

The answers will IY"H appear in next week's issue

A GLIMPSE OF GREATNESS

Lot's two daughters conceived from their father. The older called him Moab... the younger called his name Ben-Ami. (19, 36 - 38)

The older one, who was not so modest, explicitly declared that her son was from her father, however, the younger one named her son with polite language... (Rashi)

In the winter of 1921, a congregant of Rav Moshe Feinstein zt'l fell ill with an unusual illness. His tongue swelled in his mouth. As he was turning for the worse, Rav Moshe came to visit him. The sick man asked that all those in attendance should leave the room, so that he could talk privately with Rav Moshe. Upon their leaving, he recounted the following to Rav Moshe.

"Last week was Parshas Vayeira and I pointed out that the daughters of Lot were immodest and spoke derogatorily about them. That night, two old women came to me in a dream, and said that they were the daughters of Lot and explained to me why my criticism was incorrect. They added the following - Since you spoke about us in a despicable manner, you will be punished with a tongue disease and will die."

As soon as the man completed his story, he turned his face to the wall and passed away. Rav Moshe commented, "How careful one must be in choosing proper words to discuss any person mentioned in the Torah."

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