

## Parshat Vayera: Sodom Secret

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shira Smiles

Summary by Channie Koplowitz Stein

Our Sages link Lot's two daughters *hanimt-zaoth* who are found in Sodom to the verse in Tehillim, "**Motzoti David avdi** – I found my servant David." Where did I find David, they ask? In Sodom. Our Sages explain that the entire reason for saving Lot and his daughters from the destruction of Sodom was for the purpose of the eventual birth of King David and the Messiah.

The Parsha relates how, after the destruction, Lot's two daughters sinned with their father and two sons were born, Amon and Moab. Moab's descendent was Ruth, great grandmother of David, and Amon's descendent was Naamah, married to David's great grandson. Both women were ancestresses of the future Messiah.

But these events occurred after the destruction of Sodom. How can our Sages then claim that David was found in Sodom? And why does the Torah expend so much time on the details of this incident? If we take a closer look, we will realize that there was a duality of motivation which later achieved dual results. While there was the exalted motivation of repopulating the earth, there was also a tinge of incestuous desire. This duality, writes the *Chochmat Hamatzpun*, is most evident in Moab. The exalted motivation manifested itself in the persona of Ruth, but the incestuous motivation manifested itself in the Moabite women who seduced the Israelites. This kind of duality is present in each of us, a composite of heaven and earth, and Hashem allows

for both the reward and the punishment, as appropriate, for each of our actions.

Rabbi S. Grossbard points to two other incidents where one can observe similar dualities. Lot jeopardizes his own life by inviting the strangers. The trait of *chessed* he learned from Avraham is a clear indication of the future *chessed* of Ruth. Yet shortly thereafter Lot offers up his own two daughters as appeasement to the men of Sodom, a clear precursor to the later behavior of the Moabite women. This is an important point in education. We must train ourselves and our students to always look for that which is holy in everything, for everything has a dual nature. We see a similar contradictory duality in Ishmael. Sarah sees Ishmael *metzachek*, mocking God by worshipping idols. Yet he also worships Hashem, for, as the verse states, he is "the son of Hagar the Egyptian whom she bore to Avraham," and he contains within himself characteristics of both parents.

Rabbi Munk, quoting the Ohr Hachaim, explains that if the Davidic Dynasty culminating with the Messiah is to be a truly universal kingdom, perhaps they had to carry within them a drop of the tainted blood of other nations. In fact, the entire Davidic line seems to be shrouded in ambiguously incestuous relationships. There's the birth of Moab, the story of Yehuda and Tamar, and Boaz dying the day after his marriage to Ruth. That final future Redeemer will need to understand the feelings of all human beings from all nations if he is to reach them and lead them back on the

path to God.

When Hashem wants to create something new, He uses a form of grafting, taking a characteristic from something seemingly alien, and grafting it onto the host, writes the *Mimaamakim*. Here we are presented with two opposites, Avraham representing light and blessing, and Lot representing darkness and curse. When Chazal tell us that David was found in Sodom, they are highlighting the enormous chasm between these two ideas and entities, yet they are being grafted together. David represents the transformation of the negative traits of darkness and curses into light and blessing, as his ultimate descendent *Moshiach* will do. When will *Moshiach* come? At a time of darkness, when Judaism seems to be faltering with huge assimilation rates, when Jews are hated and the object of derision. Then he will come suddenly and unexpectedly.

Avraham prayed long and hard to avert the destruction of Sodom. Hashem agreed not to destroy it for the sake of the ten, and Avraham stopped praying and returned home. He awakened early in the morning, looked out over the mountains, and saw destruction, as if all his prayers literally went up in smoke. But in truth, Avraham's prayers were instrumental in saving Lot and his family from whom, ten generations from Yehudah, King David would descend. Avraham's prayers may not have been answered immediately, but like our own prayers, they were never lost.

## Introduction to Prayer

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller

*Tefilah* is one of the three pillars upon which the world stands. What does this mean? Doesn't the world exist because of Hashem's will? If you open a faucet, you must put a cup under the flow of water in order to drink. So too, the world was designed with three receptacles to take in Hashem's light. There are three human aspects that differentiate man from the animal kingdom- the body, emotions, and the mind. The three pillars of the world relate to these three human capacities. Hashem continuously pours so much into the world, but we need to be able to receive it.

There are three ways in which we can receive His light. The first receptacle is *Torah*. *Torah* changes the way we think. It makes us focus on Hashem's will, what He wants of us, what He says about reality, how He translates reality, and His purposefulness in creating the world.

The second receptacle is *Gemilat chasadim* which relates to the body. You have to be sensitized to people's physical needs and use your body to help others. Between these two points are the emotions. The Gra says the

heart is the captain of the ship. The heart is dependent on the mind just as a captain is dependent on the navigator. The pillar of *tefilah* involves the heart and in that sense, it's called the service of the heart. You take in reality through your senses. Your mind interprets it and your emotions give it vitality.

Without Torah you cannot get anywhere, because without knowing how to translate reality you cannot get to where you need to go. Acts of kindness stem from the desire to be a giver, which means being spiritually connected. When you give materially, you're

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losing something- either money, time, or energy. Therefore, you have to create an emotional reality which drives you to be a giver and that is nurtured through prayer. *Tefilah* gives expression to that desire to be connected to something bigger than yourself.

Prayer means talking to Hashem and expressing who you are to Him. Why isn't thinking enough? Why does it have to be verbal? The bridge between the mind and the body is the emotions, and that is expressed through words. You need to use your body in order to speak, but you also need your thoughts to flow through your emotions. In order to talk to Hashem, you need to be in real contact. That means using your body, mind, and emotions. You have to be able to bring yourself to Hashem and that's what

prayer is about.

One common obstacle to prayer is that we sometimes feel we are talking to Hashem but He isn't answering. Speech binds your body to your mind. Our physical body is finite, death bound, and gets a little worse for wear every day. Hashem isn't constrained by a body. Therefore, he doesn't have to be expressed in a physical way. He's expressed through reality and is in continued dialogue with us. Your breathing His air, standing on His gravitational floor. You're experiencing what Hashem gives you through your senses. He's talking to you every second and it doesn't have to be through words. Hashem is in constant contact with you, pouring forth everything you need to live. The energy of prayer is from below to above. Therefore, prayer has to be verbal.

In Hebrew, prayer is called in the feminine form, *tefilah*. There are ten measures of speech and woman were given nine. This tells us that communication is more a part of their essence. *Tefilah* has to be communicative, it has to be part of our being. We have to answer Hashem's communication with who we are. After Adam sinned, Hashem asked him, "Ayeka- Where are you?" He didn't mean it in the geographical sense. He wanted Adam to tell him where he was at. But Adam chose to be evasive. One of the biggest obstacles to prayer is avoidance. We don't feel that connected, so it's hard for us to talk to Hashem. The first thing we have to know about prayer is that we have to talk honestly to Hashem. He knows where we're at and is waiting to hear from us from that place.

## Muktza, Part 7: Muktza Machmat Gufo Part II

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Shimon Isaacson

The Mishna in Shabbat discusses a situation of a stone sitting on a barrel. If you want to use the barrel on *Shabbat*, *halacha* allows tilting the barrel so that the stone falls off, permitting the use of the barrel. If you have a lot of barrels intermixed and if you tilt the barrel, all the barrels will fall down, you can lift the barrel with the stone, tilt it, and then put it down. The Gemara asks, if the barrel is supporting the stone why would the barrel not be considered a *bosis l'davar h'assur*. That is, if you have something non-*muktza* supporting a *muktza*, it too becomes *muktza*. The Gemara answers that the barrel only becomes a *bosis* if the stone was left there intentionally. Rashi indicates that when you purposefully leave a stone which is *muktza machmat gufo* on a barrel for a length of time you are in effect saying that you had no

intention to use the barrel. It then loses its status of a vessel and becomes inherently *muktza* like the stone.

The Mishna cited in Gemara Beitzta tells us that if you want to clear up a table full of shells and bones, you may tilt it according to *Beit Hillel*. Tosfot asks, isn't the table a *bosis*, considering that the *muktza* was placed there intentionally? Tosfot offers several explanations. Firstly, the table is not exclusively a *bosis l'davar hassur* as it contains a mixture of *muktza* and permitted items. If the permitted items are more valuable than the *muktza* items, then the table does not become a *bosis*. Secondly, when you randomly throw shells or bones down on the table, that is not considered intentional. Rabbeinu Tam rules that if your intent was to leave the *muktza* for a small

amount of time on *Shabbat*, the supporting base does not become a *bosis*. He cites a Gemara in *Shabbat* that discusses the situation of when someone used a *muktza* item to insulate a pot. Can you remove the insulation on *Shabbat*? Rashi rules that if the pot is entirely surrounded by the *muktza* insulation, you're stuck. But if you can somehow tilt the pot, you can let the *muktza* slide off. Rashi asks, how is that permitted if the *muktza* was intentionally placed on the pot before *Shabbat*? Tosfos explains that the insulation was only meant to be there for the night time and therefore it does not become a *bosis* as it was never meant to be on the pot all day long. Rashi disagrees. If it was intended to be there for even a small period of time, it's still a *bosis*.