

GROWTH

At The

SHABBAT TABLE

7th Edition
By Mishaël Sionov
BS"D

PARSHAT

VAYERA

Downhill

R' Leiby Burnham shared a beautiful insight.

Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian maidservant, had an interesting background. The Midrash tells us that Hagar was actually the daughter of Pharaoh. After Pharaoh tried taking Sarah as a wife for himself, and saw the miracles performed on her behalf, namely, that she commanded an angel to strike those who mistreated her, he was amazed by the power of these saintly people. Pharaoh thereupon proclaimed, "I prefer for my daughter to be a maidservant in a house with such righteous people, rather than a princess in some other house." We see here such *mesirut nefesh*, such dedication and sacrifice, that he's willing to give up his daughter with such noble intentions.

The question arises: What, then, went wrong? Why didn't Hagar make it? She ended up having a son with Avraham – Yishmael – who was close, but didn't make it into the Jewish people. We have a *halachah* that while it is forbidden for us to enter a church, since it carries the status of *avoda zara* for us, that isn't necessarily the case with a mosque, as that isn't considered *avoda zara* given that they serve the same monotheistic G-d as we do. As we can see, Hagar came really close, but not quite enough... why not? There was such incredible *mesirut nefesh* on Pharaoh's part, recognizing Avraham's greatness and sending the princess of his palace to go to be the maidservant of a *gado*. Why didn't it work?

The answer is: such is what happens when the approach of the parent is, "I don't want to do the right thing... but I sure want my *kids* to do the right thing. I don't want to change *my* lifestyle, but I do want my *kids* to be righteous." That's a problem; it's not genuine. And when that happens, the Torah teaches us, it just doesn't work...

We all want to raise amazing children; let's start their chinuch with our own personal growth, so that they have role models to aspire to.

Recorded

The Midrash relates that Reuven said upon himself: *Had I known that the Torah would report my actions of saving Yosef HaTzaddik for future generations to learn from, I would have acted different. Not only would I have saved his life, but I would have picked him up on my shoulders and ran to our father to save him.*

We need to face reality. Hashem put us in our current situation; He chose us, out of all the people in the world and all the generations in history. He chose **our** *neshamot* to live at this moment. That means He wants us to be responsible and respond properly to the tragic situation. And we have to understand that the way we react now will be reported for *dorei dorot*, for generations to come, as well. Our children, when they get older, and our grandchildren, will ask us: *You were by the Simchat Torah massacre; what did you do? How did you respond?* We must make sure to respond properly to such a tragedy; history is reporting everything we're doing right now.

*Choose your path and let it unfold.
Live the life you want retold.*

(R' Yaakov Rahimi)

"If the Nazis search out every Jew in hate, we will search out every Jew in love." (R' Jonathan Sacks)

Dedicated for the safety & success of our beloved Israeli Soldiers, our brothers & sisters in Eretz Yisrael, and all Am Yisrael.

Refuah Sheleimah, b'toch she'ar cholei Yisrael:

Ariel Ben Frida	Frida Bat Yaffa	Miriam Bat Bakol	Esther Bat Frida
R' Aharon Moshe Ben Fruma Rachel		Yitzchak Elimelech Ben Chana Sara	
Chaim Yosef ben Sima Perel	Chaya Dina Bat Chana Mindy	Yitzchak Ben Sara	
Noach Yisrael Ben Yaffah	Rachamim Ben Shifra	Yitzchak Ben Naama	
Menachem Mendel Chaim ben Merel	Chana Perel Bat Rachel	Rachel Bat Leah	