



# GROWTH

## At The SHABBAT TABLE

### PARSHAT VAYERA

#### The Giveaway

Interestingly, by the *akeda*, it was Hashem Himself Who had told Avraham to sacrifice Yitzchak, but an angel who told Avraham to cease. How could Avraham have relied on an angel to stop performing a direct command of G-d? Why wasn't he concerned that maybe the angel was really the Satan just trying to prevent him from fulfilling the Mitzvah?

R' Menachem Goldberger answered with a profound line: when it comes to inflicting pain upon another Jew, the only One Who can give you directive is Hashem; no one else. When it comes to refraining from hurting a Jew, on the other hand, instruction can come from anybody. This idea stresses how careful we must be when it comes to the feelings and dignity of our fellow brethren...

Another answer with an inspiring message is as follows. Avraham knew that the Satan wasn't behind this, because the ram that he was to slaughter as a substitute was found caught stuck in the bushes. Avraham knew that the *yetzer hara* never makes it easy to do the right thing, so if the angel really was the Satan, the ram would have been readily accessible. Once he saw that even after he had been told not to kill Yitzchak, there was still a challenge, he had no doubt that the angel's words were consistent with Hashem's wishes.

*Let that serve as a reminder to all of us just trying our best; if it's hard, which it undoubtedly is, keep at it and never give up. Hashem is rooting for you.*

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

Ariel Ben Frida Rachamim Ben Shifra Chaim Shaul Ben Esther  
Frida Bat Yaffa Zev Dovid Ben Joan Miriam Bat Bakol  
Esther Bat Frida Yosef Chaim Ben Larissa Leah Gabriela Bat Leah  
Chana Bat Malka Ariella Bat Hila Yosef Haim Ben Elana  
Rivka Hila Hodaya Bat Rachel Yitzhak Ben Naama Angela Bat Sara

*"Never stop learning, because life never stops teaching."*

#### No Pain, No Gain

*Rashi* makes an astounding comment. Why was Lot spared from the catastrophic fate of Sedom? He writes that Lot was saved from annihilation because he didn't reveal to Pharaoh that Sarah was Avraham's wife.

This appears difficult to understand. Was the sheer fact that Lot avoided snitching on his own uncle really such a *zechut*? If anything, he had bigger merits, such as *hachnasat orchim* (when he welcomed the angels into his home)!

One answer is offered by R' Dessler, who explains that the harder it is for one to do the right thing, the greater the merit upon perseverance. Lot happened to be weak when it came to matters of money, as we see from him grazing his sheep in others' fields and him moving to the wicked city of Sedom to accumulate wealth. Therefore, it was actually a big test for Lot to not give up Avraham's identity, because had he done so, Avraham would have been killed and he would have inherited all his wealth (that he was to get from Pharaoh), being that he was Sarah's brother. Giving up these potential riches by not 'telling' on Avraham was a challenge for Lot, but he nevertheless passed and was spared in this merit.

R' Avraham Mirsky offered another fascinating answer, taking this idea a step further. As the Midrash famously recounts, Lot's father, Haran, was killed in the furnace after he saw that Avraham was impervious to it when Nimrod threw him in for denying his *avodah zara*. Haran, after seeing G-d perform a miracle for his brother, Avraham, started to believe in G-d himself and therefore sided with Avraham. But, because he was merely a follower of the winning team, no miracle was made for him when he stood with Avraham, and he was burned in the furnace. With this backdrop, we can begin to look deeper into Lot's mind.

Lot, who had entered Egypt with Avraham, felt a strange sense of familiarity. The feeling of *déjà vu* understandably took entry of his mind, as traumatic events of the past would repeat themselves. The same Avraham was again to stand up to a king, and, following the pattern from Nimrod, Avraham would come out unscathed, the king would be unsuccessful, and the one following Avraham would die – which, this time around, would be none other than Lot. With these thoughts running through his head, Lot was faced with a major *nisayon* to snitch on Avraham in order to save his own life, to prevent dying as his father had years earlier. Notwithstanding, Lot passed the test; he didn't let the cat out of the bag. And because it was such a personal challenge for him, he was *zocheh* to be spared from the destruction of Sedom.

*Let us never forget that in our own lives, too, just when things may seem the hardest to overcome, there is an unparalleled amount of blessings to conquer and rewards to reap. Never give up!*