

THE CHUMASH COMPANION





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וִירָא אֶת־אֱלֹהִים

תרגום

(א) וִירָא אֶלָיו יְהוָה בְּאֵלָנָי מִמְרָא וְהוּא יֵשֵׁב פֶּתַח הָאֵהָל כַּחַם הַיּוֹם: (ב) וַיֵּשֶׂא עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא וְהִנֵּה שְׁלֹשָׁה אַנְשִׁים נֹצְבִים עָלָיו וַיִּרְא וַיִּרְץ לְקַרְאָתָם מִפֶּתַח הָאֵהָל וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַרְצָה: (ג) וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי אִמּוֹ נָא מִצְוַתִּי חֹן בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֵל נָא רַחֲמִינִי עֲדִמְךָ (ג"י, בְּעֵינֶיךָ) לֹא הָעֵן תִּעֲבֹר מֵעַל עֵבֶדְךָ: (ד) יִסְבוּן כְּעֵן זְעִיר מִיָּא וְאֶסְחֹו רַגְלֵיכֹון וְאֶסְתַּמְיִכוּ תַּחְוֹת אֵילָנָא:

רש"י

וירא (א) וירא אליו - לזכור את החולה. אמר רבי חמא בר חנינא יום שלישי למילתו היה, וצא הקב"ה ושאל בשלומו: באלוני ממרא - הוא שנתן לו עצה על המילה, לפיכך נגלה עליו בחלקו: ישב - ישב כתיב, צקש לעמוד, אמר לו הקב"ה שב ואני אעמוד, ואחיה סימן לזכור, שעמיד אני להתייבצ בעדת הדיינין והן יושבין, שנאמר (תהלים פז א) אלהים נצב בעדת אל: פתח האהל - לראות אם יש עובר ושז ויכניסם צדימו: כחום היום - הוציא הקב"ה חמה מנרתיקה שלא להטריחו באורחים, ולפי שראה מנטער שלא היו אורחים באים, הביא המלאכים עליו צדמות אנשים: (ב) והנה שלשה אנשים - אחד לזכור את שרה ואחד להפוך את קדום ואחד לרפאות את אברהם, שאין מלאך אחד עושה שתי שליחויות. מדע לך שכן כל הפרשה הוא מוכרן בלשון רבים (פסוק ח) ויאכלו, (פסוק ט) ויאמרו אליו, ובצורה נאמר (שם י) ויאמר שוב אשוב אליך, ובהפרכת קדום הוא אומר (יט כב) כי לא אוכל לעשות דבר, (שם כא), לזלתי הפכי. ורפאל שרפא את אברהם הלך משם להציל את לוט, הוא שנאמר (שם יז) והיה כהוציאם אותם החוצה ויאמר המלט על נפשך, למדת שהאחד היה מניל: נצבים עליו - לפניו, כמו (צמדבר ז כ) ועליו מטה מנשה. אצל לשון נקיה הוא כלפי המלאכים: וירא - מהו וירא וירא שני פעמים, הראשון כמשמעו והשני לשון הבנה, נסתכל שהיו נצבים במקום אחד והבין שלא היו רוצים להטריחו ואף על פי שידועים היו שיצא לקראתם, עמדו במקומם לכבודו ולהראותו שלא ראו להטריחו, וקדם הוא ורך לקראתם. צבא מניעה (פו ז) כתיב נצבים עליו, וכתיב וירך לקראתם, כד חזיה דהוה שרי ואסר פירשו הימנו, מיד וירך לקראתם: (א) ויאמר אדני אם נא וגו' - לגדול שבהם אמר, וקראם כולם אדונים ולגדול אמר אל נא תעבור, וכיון שלא יעבור הוא, יעמדו חבריו עמו, ובלשון זה הוא חול. דבר אחר קודם הוא, והיה אומר להקב"ה להמתין לו עד שירוך ויכניס את האורחים. ואף על פי שכתיב אחר (פסוק ז) וירך לקראתם, האמירה קודם לכן הייתה, ודרך המקראות לדבר כן, כמו שפירשתי אצל (ו א) לא ידון רועי צאדם, שנכתב אחר (ה לב) ויולד נת, ואי אפשר לומר אלא אם כן קודם גזירת מאה עשרים שנה, ושתי הלשונות



AVROHOM CONSULTS MAMREI REGARDING THE MITZVAH OF MILAH

Rashi explains that Mamrei received honourable mention in this Parashah because Avrohom consulted with him before performing Bris Milah on himself. Why would Avrohom, the faithful servant of Hashem, feel it was necessary to consult with Mamrei after receiving the commandment directly from Hashem?

The *Maharal* explains that the thought of disobeying the commandment certainly never crossed Avrohom's mind. He was only concerned, however, that cynics and scoffers would accuse him of rashness and lack of forethought. They would claim, that had Avrohom taken a moment to think it through, or discuss it with more level-headed people, he would never have acted so foolishly. The act of circumcision, then, would have been a source of derision rather than a Kiddush Hashem.

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Midrash

AVROHOM LEARNS THE LESSON OF KINDNESS FROM SHEM

Avrohom asked Shem the son of Noach, “In what merit did Hashem keep you alive in the Teivah?” “It was due to the Chesed we did with the animals,” replied Shem. “We stayed awake entire nights giving them food.”

Avrohom reasoned that if performing Chesed with animals is so great, how much more is it so when done for human beings!

AVROHOM CONVINCES HIS GUESTS TO ACKNOWLEDGE HASHEM

Avrohom planted a beautiful orchard in Be'er Sheva. His tent was constructed with four entrances open to attract guests from all directions. Soon the word spread about this wonderful free-for-all hotel in the desert. The guests streamed in from all sides. After their meal they thanked their host, and arose to leave.

Avrohom instructed them to recite a blessing after their meal. If they refused he would present them with bill – at prices befitting an inn in the middle of the desert. Upon hearing these exorbitant prices they would resort to thanking Hashem.

continued next page



Story

LOVING KINDNESS

The Navi says (Michah 6:8) “He has told you O man, what is good! What does Hashem require of you, but to do justice, to love kindness and walk modestly with your G-d “. The *Chofetz Chaim* explains that the mitzvah of Chesed differs from other Mitzvos. For example, on Shabbos we have a mitzvah to make Kiddush. When it is not Shabbos and we don't need to make Kiddush, do we need to feel bad that we can't make Kiddush? Of course not; no Shabbos no Kiddush. However, the Mitzvah of Chesed is to love it, which means we actively need to look for opportunities to perform act of kindness.

It was this in type of Chesed that Avrohom Avinu excelled. He was a man of 99 years old on the third day after circumcision. It was a hot sweltering day where the chances of a wayfarer passing his way were unlikely. Considering the circumstances, is he obligated to sit at the entrance to his tent? For someone like Avrohom Avinu who loved Chesed and whose whole life was built around Chesed, there were no mitigating factors to free him from performing this Mizvah.

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וִירָא אֶד:

תרגום

(ה) וְאָשֵׁב פָּתָא דְלִקְמָא וְסַעֲדוּ לְבָכּוֹן בְּתֵר כֵּן תַּעֲבְרוּן אָרִי עַל כֵּן עֲבַרְתֶּן עַל עֲבָדְכֶם וְאָמְרוּ כֵּן תַּעֲבִיד כִּמְא דִּי מִלְלָתָא: (ו) וְאֹחֵי אֲבֵרְהֶם לְמִשְׁכְּנָא לִנְת שָׂרָה וְאָמַר אֹחֵא תִּלְת סָאִין קִמְחָא דְסִלְתָא לִוְשִׁי וְעִבְדִּי גְרִיזָן: (ז) וְלִנְת תּוֹרֵי רֵהִט אֲבֵרְהֶם וְדָבַר בֵּר תּוֹרֵי רִבִּיךָ וְטַב וְיִהְיֶה לְעוֹלָמָא וְאֹחֵי לְמִעֲבָד יְתִידָה: (ח) וְנָסִיב שְׁמֵן וְחֻלְב וְבֵר תּוֹרֵי דִּי עֲבָד וְיִהְיֶה קְדָמֵיהוֹן וְהוּא מְשַׁמֵּשׁ עַלְיֵיהוֹן תְּחִוּת אֵילָנָא וְאָבְלוֹ: (ט) וְאָמְרוּ לִיהָ אֵן שָׂרָה אֲתִתְךָ וְאָמַר הָא בְּמִשְׁכְּנָא: (י) וְאָמַר מִתְב אֲתוּב

תַּעֲבֵר מֵעַל עֲבָדְךָ: (ד) יִקַּח נָא מֵעַט מִיָּם וְרַחֲצוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם וְהִשְׁעֵנוּ תַּחַת הָעֵץ: (ה) וְאָקַחְהָ פֶת לָחֶם וְסַעֲדוּ לְבַכְּם אַחֵר תַּעֲבְרוּ כִּי עַל כֵּן עֲבַרְתֶּם עַל עֲבָדְכֶם וְיֹאמְרוּ כֵּן תַּעֲשֶׂה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ: (ו) וְיִמְהַר אֲבֵרְהֶם הָאֵהֳלָה אֶל שָׂרָה וְיֹאמַר מִהְרֵי שָׁלַשׁ סָאִים קִמַּח סִלְתָּ לִוְשִׁי וְעֵשִׂי עֲגוּת: (ז) וְאֶל הַבָּקָר רֵץ אֲבֵרְהֶם וְיִקַּח בֶּן בָּקָר רֶךְ וְטוֹב וְיִתֵּן אֶל הַנְּעָר וְיִמְהַר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתוֹ: (ח) וְיִקַּח חֲמָאָה וְחֻלְב וְבֶן הַבָּקָר אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וְיִתֵּן לְפָנֵיהֶם וְהוּא עֹמֵד עֲלֵיהֶם תַּחַת הָעֵץ וְיֹאכְלוּ: (ט) וְיֹאמְרוּ אֵלָיו אֵיךָ שָׂרָה אֲשֶׁתְךָ וְיֹאמַר הִנֵּה בְּאֵהֶל: (י)

רש"י

צבראשית רבה (מח י): (ד) יקח נא - על ידי שליח, והקצ"ה שלם לצניו על ידי שליח שנאמר (צמדבר כ יא) וירם משה את ידו ויך את הסלע: ורחצו רגליכם - כסצור שהם ערביים שמשמחוים לאצק רגליהם והקפיד שלא להכניס עבודה זרה לצניו. אזל לוט שלא הקפיד, הקדים לינה לרחיבה, שנאמר (יע ז) ולינו ורחצו רגליכם: תחת העץ - תחת האילן: (ה) וסעדו לכם - צמורה צנצאים וצמורות מניו דפחא סעדחא דלצא. צמורה סעדו לכם. צנצאים (שופטים יט ה) סעד לזך פת לחם. צמורות (ההלים קד טו) ולחם לצא אנוש יסעד. אמר רבי חמא לצצכם אין כחצי כאן אלא לצצכם, מגיד שאין יצר הרע שולט במלאכים: אחר מעבורו - אחר כן חלכו: כי על כן עברתם - כי הדבר הזה אני מצקש מכס מאחר שעברתם עלי לכבודי: כי על כן - כמו על אשר, וכן כל כי על כן שצמקרא (לקמן יט ח) כי על כן צאו צלל קורחי, (לקמן לג י) כי על כן ראיתי פניך, (שם לח כו) כי על כן לא נחמתי, (צמדבר י לא) כי על כן ידעת חנותנו: (ו) קמח סלת - סלת לעוגות, קמח לעמלן של טבחים, לכסות את הקדירה, ולשאוב את הזוהמא: (ז) בן בקר רך וטוב - שלשה פרים היו כדי להאכילן שלש לשונות צמדברל: אל הנער - זה ישמעאל לחנכו צמנזות: (ח) ויקח חמאה וגו' - ולחם לא הביא לפי שפירסה שרה גדה, שחור לה אורח כנשים אותו היום, וטמאת העיסה: חמאה - שומן החלב שקולטין מעל פניו: וכן הבקר אשר עשה - אשר תקן, קמח קמח שחקן, אמתי ואייתי קמייאו: ויאלכו - גראו כמו שאכלו, מנחן שלא ישנה אדם מן המנהג: (ט) ויאמרו אליו - נקוד על אי"ו שבאליו, ותניא רבי שמעון בן אלעזר אומר כל מקום שהכתב רבה על הנקודה אתה דורש הכתב וכו', ובאן הנקודה רבה על הכתב אתה דורש הנקודה, שאף לשרה שאלו היו אצריהם, למדנו שישאל אדם באכסניא שלו לאיש על האשה ולאשה על האיש. צצא מניעה (פז ח) אומרים יודעים היו מלאכי השרת שרה אמנו היכן הייתה, אלא להודיע שנועה הייתה כדי לחצבה על בעלה. אמר רבי יוסי צר חנינא כדי לגרר לה כוס של צרכה: הנה צאהל - ננועה היא: (י) שוב



AVROHOM DISCOVERS THE CAVE OF MACHPELAH

When Avrohom ran to get three calves for his guests, one of the calves fled, and Avrohom followed it. The calf drew him all the way to Chevron and disappeared into a cave. Avrohom entered the cave and was overwhelmed by the sweet smell of Gan Eden that filled the air. He saw a light shining and had a vision that Adam and Chava were buried there. After the incident Avrohom sought possession of this cave, the Cave of Machpelah, as a burial place.



Divrei Torah cont.

To prevent this, Avrohom made a public show of careful deliberation and consultation with others. Now no one would be able to claim he had rushed into something he would later regret. Thus, his consultation with Mamrei was to ensure that his actions bring only honor to the name of Hashem.

HOSPITALITY IS GREATER THAN AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE SHECHINAH

Rashi quotes the Gemara that infers from the Posuk that hospitality is greater than an encounter with the Shechinah. But how can this be? The *Mesillas Yesharim* writes that the purpose of the Mitzvos is to forge a relationship with Hashem. Certainly there can be no relationship with Hashem that is more meaningful than a direct encounter with Him. If so, how can this particular mitzvah be greater than such an encounter?

continued next page



Story cont.

Rabbi Simcha Bunim of Pshischa related a story about a simple Jew, an innkeeper who understood the meaning of Ahavas Chesed.

On a cold rainy night during one of his travels, Rabbi Bunim stopped in a small town for the night and took a room at the local inn, which was owned by a simple Jew. After the innkeeper had served Rabbi Bunim his dinner, he stopped by his table to tell the Rebbe of his desperate plight. With hardly any travellers passing through the town he was on the verge of bankruptcy. Just then there was a loud knock at the door, and the innkeeper hurried off to open it. A man in shabby, drenched clothing stood on the doorstep, shivering in the cold. The man begged for a meal and a place to stay but confessed that he did not have money to pay for it. The innkeeper did not hesitate to invite the poor man inside

Having eaten a hearty meal he called to the innkeeper, thanked him, and asked for a glass of vodka to warm himself up. The innkeeper agreed. He went to the barrel and poured a glass of vodka. Then he looked at the glass and spilt the vodka on the ground. He filled another glass and looked at it, then he spilt it on the ground. He did this a third time as well. The fourth time he filled the glass it seemed to satisfy him. He brought it to the penniless traveller, placed it before him and walked away.

Rabbi Bunim was watching in amazement as all this transpired. He signalled to the innkeeper to come over "What were you doing?" he asked. "Vodka is expensive. You tell me you are having money problems and then you spill three glasses of vodka on the ground? I don't understand".

וירא א:ד

תרגום

לְוַתֵּךְ כְּעֵדֶן דְּאֵתוֹן קְזִמִּין וְהָא
בְּרַ לְשָׂרָה אֶתְוַתֵּךְ וְשָׂרָה שְׂמַעַת
בְּתַרְעַת מִשְׁכָּנָא וְהוּא אַחֲוֵרֵהּ:
(יא) וְאֶבְרָהָם וְשָׂרָה סִיבּוּ עֲלוּ
בְּיֻמִּין פֶּסַק מִלְמַהְיֵי לְשָׂרָה
אוֹרַח כְּנִשְׂאָא: (יב) וְחִזְכַּת שָׂרָה
בְּמַעֲהָה לְמִימַר בְּתַר דְּסִיבֵיבֵית
הַנֵּת לִי עוֹלָמִי וְרַבּוּנֵי סִיבּ:
(יג) וְנֹאמַר וְיִ לְאֶבְרָהָם לְמֵא
דָּנָן חִזְכַּת שָׂרָה לְמִימַר הַבְּרָם
בְּקוּשְׂטָא אוֹלִיד וְנֹאנָא סִיבֵיבֵית:
(יד) הִיִּתְבְּסִי מִן קָרָם וְיִ פְתַגְמָא
לְזִמְן אֶתוּב לְוַתֵּךְ כְּעֵדֶן דְּאֵתוֹן
קְזִמִּין וְלְשָׂרָה בְּרַ:

וַיֹּאמֶר שׁוֹב אֲשׁוּב אֵלֶיךָ כְּעֵת חַיָּה וְהִנֵּה בֵּן לְשָׂרָה אֲשֶׁתְּךָ
וְשָׂרָה שְׂמַעַת פֶּתַח הָאֵהָל וְהוּא אַחֲרָיו: (יא) וְאֶבְרָהָם וְשָׂרָה
זְקֵנִים בָּאִים בְּיָמִים חֲדָל לְהִיּוֹת לְשָׂרָה אֶרֶח כְּנָשִׁים: (יב)
וַתִּצְחַק שָׂרָה בְּקִרְבָּהּ לֵאמֹר אַחֲרַי בְּלַתִּי הִיְתָה לִי עַדְנָה
וְאֲדֹנָי זָקֵן: (יג) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל אֶבְרָהָם לְמָה זֶה צִחְקָה
שָׂרָה לֵאמֹר הֲאֵף אֲמַנָּם אֶלֶד וְאֲנִי זְקֵנָתִי: (יד) הִיִּפְלֵא
מִיְהוָה דְּבַר לְמוֹעֵד אֲשׁוּב אֵלֶיךָ כְּעֵת חַיָּה וְלְשָׂרָה בֵּן:

רש"י

אָשׁוּב - לֹא צִשְׂרוּ הַמַּלְאָךְ שִׁשְׁבוּ אֵלָיו אֲלֵא בְשִׁלְיֻחוֹתוֹ שֶׁל מִקּוֹם אֲמַר לוֹ, כְּמוֹ (טו ז) וַיֹּאמֶר לֵה מַלְאָךְ ה' הִרְצֵה אֶרְצָה, וְהוּא אֵין צִידוֹ
לְהִרְצוֹת, אֲלֵא בְשִׁלְיֻחוֹתוֹ שֶׁל מִקּוֹם, אֵף כֹּאן בְשִׁלְיֻחוֹתוֹ שֶׁל מִקּוֹם אֲמַר לוֹ כֵּן. אֲלִישַׁע אֲמַר לְשׁוֹנְמִית (מַלְכִים ז' ד טו) לְמוֹעֵד הַזֶּה
כְּעֵת חַיָּה אֵת חוֹבְקָת בֵּן וְחֹמֶר אֵל אֲדוּנֵי אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים אֵל תְּכַזֵּב בְּשִׁפְחָתְךָ, אִתּוֹן הַמַּלְאָכִים שֶׁצִּשְׂרוּ אֵת שְׂרָה אֲמַר לְמוֹעֵד אֲשׁוּב.
אֲמַר לֵה אֲלִישַׁע אִתּוֹם הַמַּלְאָכִים שֶׁהֵם חַיִּים וְקִיִּימִים לְעוֹלָם אֲמַר לְמוֹעֵד אֲשׁוּב, אֲזַל אֵין צִשְׂר וְדַם שְׂהִיִּם חַי וְחֹמֶר מֵת, צִין חַי וְצִין
מֵת לְמוֹעֵד הַזֶּה וְגו': כְּעֵת חַיָּה - כְּעֵת הַזֹּאת לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה, וְפֶסַח הִיָּה, וְלִפְסַח הַבָּא נוֹלֵד יִתְחַק, מְדַלָּא קִרְיָן כְּעֵת אֲלֵא כְּעֵת. כְּעֵת
חַיָּה כְּעֵת הַזֹּאת שְׂמַחָה חַיָּה לְכֵס שְׂמַחָה כֻּלְּכֵם שְׁלִימִים וְקִיִּימִים: וְהוּא אַחֲרָיו - הַפְתַּח הִיָּה אַחַר הַמַּלְאָךְ: (יא) חֲדָל לְהִיּוֹת - פֶּסַק
מִמְנָה: אֶרֶח כְּנָשִׁים - אִרְחַח נְדוּת: (יב) צִקְרָבָה - מִסְתַּכְלַת צְמַעִיהָ וְחֹמֶרָה אֲפֶשֶׁר הַקְּרִצִּים הִלְלוּ טְעוּנֵין וְלֵד, הַשְּׂדִים הִלְלוּ שְׂמַחְקוֹ
מוֹשְׁכֵין חֲלָב, תְּנַחֲמָה (שׁוֹפְטִים יח): עַדְנָה - חֲחֻזָּת צִשְׂר, וְלִשׁוֹן מִשְׁנֵה (מִנְחוֹת פו א) מִשְׂרֵי אֵת הַשְּׂעֵר וְמוֹעֵדֵן אֵת הַבְּשָׂר. דְּבַר אַחַר
לְשׁוֹן עֵידָן, זְמַן וְסַת נְדוּת: (יג) הֲאֵף אֲמַנָּם - הַגֵּם אֲמַת אֶלֶד: וְאֲנִי זְקֵנָתִי - שְׂנֵיהַ הַכְּחֻז מִפְּנֵי הַשְּׁלוֹם, שְׂהִרֵי הִיָּה אֲמַרָה וְאֲדוּנֵי
זָקֵן: (יד) הִיִּפְלֵא - כְּתַרְגוּמוֹ הִתְכַּסֵּךְ, וְכִי שׁוֹם דְּבַר מוֹפְלָא וְמוֹפְרָד וְמוֹכֹסָה מִמְּנֵי מַלְעָשׂוֹת כְּרָזוּנֵי: לְמוֹעֵד - לְאוֹתוֹ מוֹעֵד הַמִּיּוֹדָד
שֶׁקְּבַעְתִּי לָךְ אֲחֻמוֹל לְמוֹעֵד הַזֶּה בְּשָׁנָה הַאֲחֵרָת:



Divrei Torah cont.

The Rebbe of Slonim explains by way of a parable. A person hearing that his friend had come to town invited him into his house and treated him royally. A second person did the same to the son of his friend. Which of these two people would you say exhibited the greater devotion to the friend? Clearly the second was more devoted, for his devotion extended even to the children of his friend with whom he enjoyed no personal relationship.

In this light we can understand why hospitality surpasses an encounter with the Shechinah. If an encounter is an expression of devotion to the Shechinah, then hospitality is even greater, because we demonstrate that we are even prepared to show kindness to his children whom we do not necessarily know at all.

A WHOLE LOAF BUT LITTLE WATER

Why did Avrohom offer only “a little water” but when it came to the bread he offered a “whole loaf of bread”? The *Nachal Eliyahu* explains that the water was brought by a servant, as pointed out by Rashi. The bread, however, was brought by Avrohom himself. The effort Avrohom applied when performing Hachnosas Orchim was unlimited, but not if it was at somebody else’s expense.

Once Rabbi Yisroel Salanter was staying at one of the homes he usually visited on his travels. The host wanted Rabbi Yisroel to feel free to use as much water as he liked, in accordance with dictum of the Sages, that washing the hands with a lot of water is rewarded with great wealth. He informed Rabbi Yisroel that he had just hired a young Jewish girl to help with the heavy work in the kitchen and that more than enough water was available for all their needs.

Rabbi Yisroel, however, declined the offer. He did not feel it was right to enrich himself at the expense of the back-breaking labors of the poor Jewish orphan girl who worked in the kitchen.

THE CONTRAST BETWEEN AVROHOM’S HOSPITALITY AND LOT’S

This Parsha tells of two people who practiced the mitzvah of Hachnosas Orchim. Avrohom and his nephew Lot. On the face of things, it would seem that Lot’s hospitality outshone Avrohom’s, for he was even prepared to risk his life to protect his guests from the people of Sodom, something which we are not told that Avrohom ever did.

The *Beis Halevi* explains that Avrohom’s guests appeared to him as “three men”, ordinary people, whom he mistook for Arabs. However, the two angels that came to Sodom are referred to as “two angels” which means they appeared to Lot not as men but angels. To offer hospitality to angels even if it involves personal risk does not demonstrate an appreciation for the Mitzvah of Hachnosas Orchim. However, offering hospitality to dusty Arabs does.

Someone once announced to Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer, “The Chazon Ish is coming to the house!” Rabbi Meltzer ran out to greet the distinguished guest, but immediately noticed that the person who made the announcement was in error. The visitor was an ordinary person who resembled the Chazon Ish. Nevertheless, Rabbi Meltzer bestowed great honour upon his guest.

After the guest had left, his family asked him why he treated this stranger with such honour. Rabbi Melzer replied, “Having guests is an important mitzvah and every guest should be treated with great honor, just as Avrohom honored his guests. But we are lax in this matter, and only honor distinguished visitors. This time I was prepared to greet the Chazon Ish, and such a guest I would treat properly. That the visitor turned out to be someone else, was no reason for me to behave differently.”

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AVROHOM OFFERS A MORSEL OF BREAD

Why did Avrohom tell his guests “I will fetch a morsel of bread” when in fact he served a lavish meal.

The *Daas Sofer* explains that Avrohom was afraid to tell them that he was going to serve a lavish meal, as they might decline the invitation so as not to bother him. He therefore offered them a simple bread meal so they should accept the invitation.

A group of tourists from abroad came to Yerusalayim to celebrate Pesach. They had heard about the extraordinary seder Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld’s conducted, and asked if they could be his guests. They also insisted on paying for their meal. Rabbi Sonnenfeld agreed, and in his presence they gave his wife the money.

On the first day of Chol hamoed the guests celebrated the second day of Yom Tov at the hotel where they were staying. To their surprise, Rabbi Sonnenfeld came to their room and placed under the tablecloth the money they had given him. Since they had to refrain from touching money because it was still Yom Tov for them, they could not return it to Rabbi Sonnenfeld. They pleaded with him to take it back, as he agreed to accept payment.

“True” said Rabbi Sonnenfeld, “but that was only in order that you wouldn’t hesitate to eat freely without fearing that I couldn’t afford guests.”

LOT DOESN’T GET HIS OWN ANGEL

Rashi explains that the three angels were sent to carry out specific missions. One angel was to inform Sarah that she was going to have a baby boy, another angel was sent to destroy Sodom and another to heal Avrohom. A separate angel for each task, as an angel can only be sent to carry out one task. If so, how could that the same angel that healed Avrohom, save Lot?

The *Chofetz Chaim* answers this with a fascinating story told of Rabbi Shlomo Kluger.

There was once a family who wanted to postpone the circumcision of their son in order to name the child after the father who had a life threatening illness, and was about to pass away at any given moment. Rabbi Kluger told the family to go ahead with the Bris, and not to wait any longer. The family followed the Rav’s advice. The father made a miraculous recovery. News of the miracle spread like wild fire, and people began to think of the Rav as a miracle performer.

The Rav dismissed the rumours and explained that his decision was based on the above Rashi. Why was Lot not granted a separate angel so that an angel that healed Avrohom shouldn’t have to carry out two missions?

“It must be” Rabbi Shlomo explained “that Lot did not have enough merit to be saved in his own right. But once Hashem had to send an angel to heal Avrohom, the same angel could then go and save Lot.

“I thought” said the Rav, “It could be that the father doesn’t have enough merit for an angel to be sent specially for his sake. But once Eliyahu Hanavi comes to attend the Bris, it would be possible he would cure the father at the same time”.

HASHEM CONVEYS HIS ANGER AGAINST SARAH THROUGH AVROHOM

When Sarah was told she was going to give birth to a son she laughed. Hashem showed his displeasure to her reaction through Avrohom. Why didn’t Hashem rebuke Sarah directly? After all she was a prophetess in her own right?

Rabbi Yisroel explains with a parable.

A rabbi once walked into a kitchen of a congregant and saw the hired cook preparing food for dinner with little regard for the Laws of Kashrus. The Rabbi immediately summoned the congregant.

“Why are you so lax in Mitzvos?” he demanded.

“On what grounds are you basing your accusation Rabbi?”

“I was in your kitchen,” said the Rabbi, “and I saw your cook using eggs without checking them for blood spots.”

“But I never go into the kitchen. It’s not my fault” the congregant insisted.

“It certainly is,” said the Rabbi. “Your wife probably sees that you are not very strict in your observance of Mitzvos so she allows herself to be lax. Then the cook sees her mistress being lax so she allows herself to be even more lax. It all begins with you.”

When Sarah laughed, Rabbi Yisroel concludes, it was undoubtedly because of a small flaw in Avrohom’s own conduct, and the rebuke was properly directed towards him.