

November 15, 2008

Mark: *We would like to thank Rabbi Grater, Hazzan Sofer, and Mr. Davidson for helping us learn this whole service.*

David: *We would also like to thank our father for inspiring us to have this Bar Mitzvah and our older brother for giving us a few laughs along the way.*

Mark: *Thank you to Sondra and the 8th grade Tihon class for giving us all the support we needed.*

David: *And lastly, we would especially want to thank our mom for driving us to the practices, planning everything for us beforehand by getting everything organized and set for the following days.*

Mark: *Rachel Wrobel. This name brings back memories and stories from when we were young, to a year ago, when she passed. Whenever we went to our great grandmother's house she always provided us with delicious meals, told us many stories and entertained us with making jewelry or playing Free Cell on the computer which brought up complaints about how the computer was cheating or "reading her mind". She was an eccentric yet amazing woman with many memories following her.*

David: *In our eyes, hospitality seemed to be her specialty. Her hospitality never disappointed any guests. But what surprised us was that there are many different ways hospitality can be pulled off and we have experienced and read about many of these ways. But today, we would like to share how hospitality in the torah is presented and what the difference is between two characters like Abraham and Lot in Parasha Vayera. We agree that hospitality, or hachnasot orchim is the king of all mitzvahs. We have discussed that hospitality seems to be split into the different mitzvahs like feeding the poor, not standing idly by (which is the greatest comparison) because hospitality is letting someone in your home, giving them food and water, comfort.*

Mark: *Rabbi Yosi ben Yochanan said to let your house be "wide open" and let the poor be treated well like a part of your family. Don't let a homeless person suffer when you aren't. Stand by them. The Talmud says that hospitality is the greatest mitzvah. Tzedakah is usually donating for charity a.k.a the middle man, but hospitality is to the source of the suffering. You don't have to call the press to get attention for giving food, drinks or money to the needy. That's the most important part of this mitzvah and that is the most important part of this Parasha: hospitality.*

David: *To get into greater detail of the Parasha, we'll get into a small, peaceful conversation about the different methods of hospitality shown in the Parasha.*

Mark: *I'll be explaining the amazing methods of a great man named Lot.*

David: *Oh yeah...the powerful, the awesome, the righteous, loveable*

Mark: *Okay, Okay I got it.*

David: *Yours truly will be explaining Abraham's methods.*

Mark: They both had different views about hospitality. My personal opinion about Lot is that he risked his life to save 2 men.

David: And for what? *Lame service; no food, no water, no comfort?*

Mark: Wait ...what's more important here, life or a comfy chair, some grapes and a teaspoon of water?

David: He had them but he was too lazy to get it. Or you can bring his wife in play. What did she do exactly?

David: Let me answer that before you hurt yourself. Nothing!

Mark: She was upset; she lost her daughter. That's a good excuse.

David: Oh woe is me woe is me I lost my daughter and I can't pour a glass of water.

Mark: ANYWAY. Basically what happened is that good ole Lot was waiting by the gate ready to protect anyone from the people of Sodom. Once he found these two men walking through the gates, he stopped them and begged them to go to his house while avoiding suspicion from the authorities. Of course once they were inside Lot's wife didn't assuage their needs; she was too worried about the strict law of Sodom that Rabbi Yehudah explains that "The leaders of Sodom made a proclamation in which he declared anyone who even gives a loaf of bread to the poor or the needy should be put to death by fire". So eventually an angry mob marched to Lot's house and accused him of showing hospitality toward strangers.

David: Now let me tell you a better story. Abraham was recovering from his recent circumcision when he saw three strangers. He ran to them and brought them to his house to give them food, water, a bath, and some shade. His wife also helped, unlike Lot's, by getting the freshest calf prepared and preparing specific care instructed by the guest. He also made sure that they were safe when they started walking again.

Mark: Obviously the two stories are different, and each can relate to hospitality a different way. The visitors are very similar because they bear somewhat bad news.

David: Abraham's visitors bore the news of another son for Sarah which could be translated to bad news, because of their old age.

Mark: And Lot's visitors come bearing the news of the town of Sodom exploding off the face of the Earth.

David: Right...at least Abraham's wife survived in the end. Lot's wife was too ignorant to defy God's words exactly saying "DO NOT TURN AROUND" Wow...so hard to follow...so many words...how could it all fit in the torah it's like...

Mark: YES SHE DIED okay. She just didn't fear God like Lot did.

David: How could you not be afraid of someone who can blow your face off in a blink of an eye?

Mark: Well back then the teachings of God was not spread out as it is today

David: That doesn't make any sense!

Mark: What do you not understand? I said it simply "TEACHINGS OF GOD WAS NOT SPREAD OUT TO EVERYONE". Wow so many words, how could it all fit out of my mouth?

David: Well...how could Abraham's wife understand God but Lot's wife doesn't. Wouldn't they know the same thing?

Mark: Can we forget about the women for right now please...thank you.

David: Lot is the evil one here. He gave his daughter to the mob to save the two men which is against Jewish tradition.

Mark: Well Lot did make his mistakes but this is not a problem as stated by a 21 century thinker slash songwriter Hannah Montana stating "Nobody's perfect I gotta work it." *sung*

David: First, whoa! Second, whoa! Third, way to get your sources, Hannah Montana! That's pretty low even for you.

Mark: I have no other commentators to turn to they all hate Lot, so I am all alone on this.

David: Well...Nobody is perfect...

Mark: Go on...

David: And Lot risked his life to save the visitors not like Abraham who just was going through a healing process.

Mark: Finally you admit I'm right.

David: Wait what, I never said that!

Mark: Thank you all for joining us in this chit chat. I hope you leave today with the message that hospitality is important and that Lot rules. Have a great day and as Rachel Wrobel said, and many, many more!