

A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

Be a Student of Avraham



RABBI
ARYEH
PRIDONOFF

Consistency was a hallmark of our forefather Avraham's service to Hashem. It says twice in the verse that Avraham "saw" the men he would bring in as guests (18:2). The verse teaches us that Avraham did not rush into situations of giving to others because he got caught up in the moment or had a fleeting moment of excitement. The fact that he saw the men twice indicates his consistency. His original enthusiasm for the *mitzvah* did not wane. He was the quintessential *ba'al chesed* (doer of kindness). The *Toras Kohanim* calls Avraham "*pri etz hadar*" (fruit of a beautiful tree), like an *esrog*. The Gemara tells us this is referring to the *esrog's* property that it stays on the tree from year to year. It has that consistency, and that's Avraham.

Later in this week's *parasha*, the verse says, "Avraham arose early in the morning to the place where he had stood before Hashem" (19:27). Coming from this verse, the Gemara in *Brochos* teaches us the importance of *makom kavua*, a set place for prayer. A person should always daven in the same place. If he does, then the G-d of Avraham will answer him. And when he dies, they will say he's one of the humble and pious students of Avraham *Avinu*.

Rav Bergman in the work *Sharei Olam* says

a beautiful insight on this idea. The Mishna in *Avos* says "The following things indicate the presence of either a student of Avraham *Avinu* or a student of Bilaam *HaRasha*. The character traits of generosity, humbleness, and not being haughty indicate the student of Avraham *Avinu*, whereas stinginess, haughtiness, and arrogance demonstrate a student of the wicked Bilaam."

Rav Bergman takes the idea further. Interestingly, we see both Bilaam and Avraham *daven* in the Torah. Balak asked Bilaam to *daven* to curse the Jews. How did he react to failure? "Change the place." They did so, and failed again! How did he react? He insisted to change the place again! This seems to be a pattern following Bilaam.

On the contrary, what happened with Avraham? After he pleaded with Hashem over Sodom, he returned to the same place and *davened* again! What a tremendous difference! Bilaam is a *ba'al gaaveh* (a haughty person). A *ba'al gaaveh* cannot accept that failure was his fault. It must be some extraneous factor!

This is a tremendous life lesson for us. Many times in life, we feel that we deserve a better outcome. However, it is the wise person who looks inward first. He could ask

ticket for a car parked at a meter right near a synagogue. Surmising that the meter had run out, Leah looked at her watch and noticed that it was near sundown. She deduced that the car likely belonged to a Jew who was davening *Mincha*. Leah approached the officer and asked, "Could I please add a quarter to give

THE RABBI WAS ASKED

ADAPTED BY RABBI DOVID TZVI MEISSNER FROM ME'AH SHE'ARIM BY RABBI YITZCHOK ZILBERSTEIN

Daniel was just hired to work behind the counter at a bakery. He soon noticed that the baker was selling apple cakes without any apples inside, replaced instead by squash and apple concentrate!

Daniel was wondering if he was allowed to sell the cakes as apple cakes, or would that be dishonest, because there were no apples inside.

Q May Daniel continue selling the cakes?

A The Talmud in *Bava Metzia* (60b) states that one may not beautify animals or utensils, making them appear more robust or newer. Similarly, one may not soak meat in water to make it appear whiter and fatter.

Rav Moshe Feinstein (*Igros Moshe*, Y.D. 1:31) rules, though, that it is permissible to change the appearance of an item

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himself, "How could I have approached this situation differently? How could I have made a difference?" The rest of the world is too busy blaming nature or nurture for some fault or another. How great are those that embody consistency in service to Hashem! (Based on a class by Rav Yissochar Frand) 

this person more time?" The officer looked surprised but responded, "Sure, if you'd like. You're lucky I haven't filled out the ticket yet, that's very nice of you!" Lo and behold, a short while later, the prayer service finished and an unknowing congregant drove away in his car. 

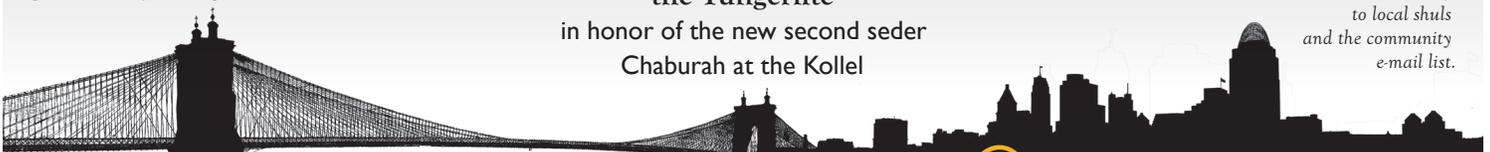
GREAT ACTS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE

LEAH WAS WALKING DOWN A BUSY STREET IN THE La Brea neighborhood of Los Angeles, when she noticed that a police officer was issuing a

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THE RABBI WAS ASKED

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somewhat, still leaving room to believe that it may be old. That action isn't dishonest since many old items appear that way; one who really cares would ask and research the item's status. Since he did not even ask, we can assume he does not care, and would be at fault for not asking had he really cared.

Nowadays, it's commonplace for items to be sold with ingredients from concentrate. For example, grape juice will commonly include water with grape juice concentrate. Therefore, if a customer really cares what's in his cake, he must ask the baker what's inside, and if he doesn't ask, he doesn't care; he just wants it to taste good.

However, the baker must be careful how he labels the cake. If he were to write "Cake made from Apples", he would be lying, and cheating his customers. If, however, he writes "Apple Cake", that wouldn't be dishonest. The best method to avoid any traces of lying would be for him to write "Apple flavored Cake." 🥧

A RIDDLE FOR YOU

What blessings would be said only once in a lifetime?

Look for the answer in two weeks!

PREVIOUS RIDDLE:

Q Which substance, if it comes from a covered place is deemed dangerous, but if it comes from an uncovered place it is not dangerous?

A Sweat (M.B. 4:21) 🥧

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(skills-building)
Rabbi Moshe D. Zeffren. 9:30–10:30 AM

👉 **Shivti** (Self-contained learning, geared toward practical halacha)
Rabbi Avrohom Weinrib.. 10 AM–noon

Monday

👉 **Torah Treasures for Seniors at the Mayerson JCC**
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis..... 10:30–11:15 AM

Tuesday

👉 **Partners in Torah at the Mayerson JCC**
Rabbi Mechael Soroka..... 8 PM

Wednesday

👉 **Downtown Lunch-n-Learn at Strauss & Troy**
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis..... 12–1 PM

Thursday

👉 **Yehoshua/Shabbos**
in the former Back Office
Rabbis Mechael Soroka and Moshe Dovid Zeffren..... 9:10–10 PM

👉 **Leil Shishi Halacha Chabura**
for boys in grades 7–8, with the occasional kumzits
Rabbi Moshe Fuchs 8:15–9 PM

🥧 *Homemade refreshments served*

KEY: 👉 Beginners 👉 Intermediate 👉 Advanced 🕒 for men and women

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TIDBITS OF CINCINNATI JEWISH HISTORY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

Simon Lazarus and family emigrated from Germany to Columbus, OH, in the year 1850. "Lazarus," the dry goods store he opened, was the root of what would become the fifth largest retailer in the United States. The Lazarus family connection to Cincinnati began in 1928, when Simon's four grandsons bought the iconic downtown Cincinnati department store Shillito's, which they expanded even further. The next year, Fred Lazarus Jr., one of the grandsons, cut a deal with the owners of Bloomingdale's, Abraham & Straus, and Filene's, all large department stores, to create a holding company called Federated Department Stores that would sell common stock while all four department stores would continue to be independently managed. Thanks to the deal, Fred Lazarus Jr. would become one of the most influential businessmen in America, even convincing President Roosevelt to make Thanksgiving a week earlier to make a longer shopping season. Fred moved the Federated Department Stores headquarters to Cincinnati in 1945 when he became CEO. When Federated was sold to Macy's in 1988, it owned 650 affiliated stores in 36 states and employed 6,300 Cincinnatians at its headquarters. 🥧

SOURCE: Mcarty, Mary & Herb Cook Jr. "The Lazarus Legacy." *Cincinnati Magazine*, September 1990.
"Retailers Owned by Federated Dept. Stores and R.H. Macy & Co." Graphic from *Cincinnati Post*, 3 Mar 1988, Newsbank.

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