

“Parshat Hashavua- One Text-- Many Voices”

פרשת וירא

בראשית יט: א-ג

וַיָּבֹא שְׁנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ סָדָה בְּעָרֶב וְלֹוט יֹשֵׁב בְּשַׁעַר-סֶךָם וַיַּרְא-לֹוט וַיַּקְרַב אֲלָמָּה אֲלֵיכֶם וְיִשְׁתַּחֲוו אֲלֵיכֶם אֶת-אָדָם אֲלֵיכֶם וְיִשְׁתַּחֲוו אֶת-אָדָם אֲלֵיכֶם וְיִאמְרֶוּ לְאָדָם כִּי בָּרוּךְ-בָּנָי וַיַּפְצַר-בָּם מַלְאָךְ וַיֹּאמֶר לְאָדָם וְיַעֲשֶׂה לְהָמָרְךָ מִשְׁתָּה וְמִצְוֹת אֲפָה וַיַּאֲכַלְוּ לְאָדָם

And the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom, and Lot saw and arose toward them, and he prostrated himself on his face to the ground. And he said, "Behold now my lords, please turn to your servant's house and stay overnight and wash your feet, and you shall arise early and go on your way."

And they said, "No, but we will stay overnight in the street." And he urged them strongly, and they turned in to him, and came into his house, and he made them a feast, and he baked unleavened cakes, and they ate.

Eyal Catran- Class of 2022: “Angels and Advice” (Rashi)

After God promised Avraham that if there were at least ten righteous men in Sodom, He would spare them, two angels entered through the gates of Sodom, where they found Lot. The elders and wise men of Sodom often met, discussed, and made decisions at the gate. Since it is stated that Lot was “sitting” in the gate, it is likely that Lot was considered one of the elders or leaders of the city, if not, it is reasonable to assume that he must have been highly respected. The angels may have looked different from the locals and so Lot immediately recognized them and offered them hospitality.

Rashi, a medieval commentary on the Talmud and Tanach, points out that anywhere else in the scripture the angels are referred to as “men” but in this pasuk they are addressed as “angels”. Rashi explains this by saying that compared to Avraham whose power was great they were men but to Lot they were angels. Rashi also explains that it took so long for the angels to go from Hebron to Sodom because the angels (who were angels of mercy) took their sweet time in case Abraham would succeed in his defense of Sodom. Rashi also says that Lot’s time with Avraham taught him how to identify foreigners (which allowed him to identify the angels as not local).

Rashi also suggests that some of the things Lot says to the angels are meant to be taken as advice. When Lot says “Please turn to your servant’s house”, Lot is really

saying “Take an indirect route to my house so that they (people of Sodom) should not recognize that you are entering there”. In my opinion, Lot is probably being cautious of his own safety than of the angel.

Perhaps the best interpretation by Rashi in this perek, for the phrase *“and stay overnight and wash your feet”* is that although it was customary for people to wash their feet when entering, Lot asked the angels not to. Rashi says that he asks of them to not wash their feet when they enter so that if the people of Sodom come to his house, they won't be able to falsely accuse Lot and say that he had guests and didn't notify the people of Sodom..

Noah Diner- Class of 2020: “Staying True to God” (Modern commentary)

Abraham and God are in the midst of some very important dialogue. It appears as if Abraham had been in full support of giving the people of Sodom the benefit of the doubt that they, in fact, may be good people. God's mindset directly contradicted with Avraham. He continued to reason with him up until the point that God was unwilling to negotiate anymore. Following this conversation, God sent two angels to the city of Sodom who were immediately greeted by Lot. He insisted that they spend the night in his house, and after deliberation, they took his offer.

Birkat Asher (Rabbi Asher Waserteil, 1921-2008) makes an interesting observation, by stating that the acts of hospitality were only performed by Lot as opposed to his wife or children. In addition, he notes an interesting parallel between Avraham and Lot. He states that as opposed to Avraham whos tent was open for anyone, Lot, on the other hand, was more closed off. The Birkat Asher provides us with reasoning which seems to claim that the reason Lot never had guests was to avoid the danger set forth by committing such an act. Although, the difference between every instance and this one, as the Birkat Asher notes, is that they appeared to him as angels and for this reason, he was willing to put himself and his family in harm's way.

I personally see this as a very noble act. Despite the danger, he remained true to God and His values and insisted they stay in his house regardless of the repercussions. This required a tremendous amount of faith in God, which was truly evident during this scene and for this reason, his life was spared. The lesson that can be learned here is that it is important to stay true to your values despite other's opinion and hopefully you shall be rewarded.

Noa Geralnik- Class of 2023- "Why did Lot invite the Angels in (original commentary)?"

When the two angels enter the city of Sodom, Lot invites them into his house to stay for the night. At first they refuse but then Lot convinces them and they had a feast. I think that the reason Lot wanted to have guests so badly was because he was a good person. He didn't want them to stay on the street because he had a better place for them to stay and to take care of them. I also think he did this because he was lonely. In Sodom you were not allowed to have guests, so I think that Lot was excited that there were new people that he didn't know. Even if it was only for one night, he wanted to meet these new people and help them. One last reason I think that Lot fought to invite the angels in was because of his fatherly instinct. He had had kids and as a father, it is your job to protect them. He would never let his own kids sleep on the street so even though these aren't his kids, as a father he wouldn't let them sleep outside.

Eye on Art (AIHatorah.org): Which one do you like more?



This illustration in the Nuremberg Chronicle (a world history written in Latin by Hartmann Schedel, 1493). is colored in soft pinks and blues, giving it a light mood that belies the

somber situation being depicted. On the left of the woodcut stands the crumbling city, its colorful towers falling amidst flames that look more like petals than fire. In the center, Lot's wife has been transformed into a pillar of salt. Her head peeps out of the cylinder, lending a comical rather than tragic character to her fate. A few steps to her right, a winged angel leads Lot and his daughters away from the destroyed city. All the figures are dressed in silken cloaks and are walking calmly, as if utterly unaware of the destruction unfolding behind them.



In contrast to the image in the Nuremberg Chronicle, Corot's painting is rendered using a dark palette, capturing the intense mood of its subjects. In the foreground, a female figure guides Lot and his daughters away from the burning city. One senses both their urgency and despondency as they run barefoot, heads bowed and dressed in black. Behind them is an unidentified structure resembling a huge tomb, while to the right stands a silhouetted figure, Lot's wife. She has turned to pay her last respects to her city. At the top of the painting, in a smoke-filled sky tinted by raging orange-red fires, an angel hovers and wreaks destruction.