



PARSHA NATION

Grades K-2

Published by the National Council of Young Israel

Parsha Overview

Imagine how excited you would be if an important visitor came to visit you. In the beginning of this week's parsha, Abraham was visited by three angels, however, he didn't know that they were angels. Still, Abraham treated them with the utmost respect and prepared fresh meals for them. The angels had some very exciting news for Abraham and Sarah. They told them that in exactly one year, Sarah would give birth to a baby.

The angels then went on to their next mission: to destroy the evil city of Sodom and to save Abraham's nephew, Lot, who, if you remember from last week, had been living there. When the angels arrive in Sodom, they were greeted by Lot. He remembered what he had learned in Abraham's house, and therefore invited the angels into his house for a meal and a place to rest. The other members of the city, who hated acts of kindness, heard about this and came to Lot's house to force him to hand over his guests. Lot, in a show of great courage, refused to let them harm his guests. The people attempted to break down his door, but the angels performed a miracle and the attackers suddenly became blind. The angels informed Lot of their mission, and encouraged him to flee. Lot, his wife, and two of his daughters were escorted out of the city to safety, and were warned not to look back as the city was being destroyed. Lot's wife did not listen to the angel's warning and was turned into a pillar of salt.

Abraham moved to the city of Grar. Like he had done when he went to Egypt, he told Sarah to say that she was Abraham's sister, so they would not harm Abraham. Again, Sarah was taken by the king, and again God brought a plague to save Sarah. The king, Abimelech returned Sarah to Abraham and showered them with gifts and money. Finally, as God had promised, Sarah, at the age of 90, gave birth to a son. They named him Isaac and circumcised him when he was eight days old. Isaac grew older and Sarah began to realize that Ishmael was being mean to Isaac. She demanded that Abraham send him away, and after confirmation from God, Abraham sent away Hagar and Ishmael.

God then commanded Abraham to take Isaac and offer him as a sacrifice. Abraham, showing unwavering faith and devotion to God, happily listens. At the last minute God appeared to Abraham and told him not to sacrifice his son, and to sacrifice a ram instead. God promised Abraham great reward for listening to Him.

After these events, Abraham was notified about the birth of Rebecca, who would later become the wife of Isaac.

Parsha Questions

- 1) What did Sarah do when the angel said she would have a baby, and why? [She laughed because she was so old.]
- 2) Why did God destroy the city of Sodom? [They were wicked]
- 3) Who greeted the angels when they came to the city of Sodom? [Lot]
- 4) Why did Lot do when he saw the angels? [He invited them into his house]
- 5) What did the people of Sodom do when they heard Lot had guest in his house? [Tried to take the guests away from Lot to be mean to them]
- 6) What happened to the people who were attacking Lot's house? [They became blind]
- 7) What happened to Lot's wife and why? [She turned into a pillar of salt because she looked back at the city being destroyed even though the angels told her not to]
- 8) What did Abraham and Sarah tell the people of Grar about how they were related? [They told them they were brother and sister]
- 9) How old was Sarah when she gave birth to Isaac? [90]
- 10) Why did Sarah want Abraham to send Ishmael away? [He was being mean to Isaac]
- 11) What did God ask Abraham to do to Isaac? [Bring him as a sacrifice]
- 12) What did Abraham sacrifice instead of Isaac? [A ram]

Focus of the Month: Kindness

Week 4

Scenario: One day you are sitting on the side of the school playground eating a bag of chips. Out of the corner of your eye you notice Joey walk over to Avi and grab his cookie. Joey starts to run away but Avi grabs him. The two of them begin to fight over the cookie which creates a huge commotion. Your teacher, Mrs. Weiss come over to see what is going on. Immediately both boys begin yelling, "He stole my snack!" The teacher then turns to you and asks, "Did you see what happened?"

Suddenly your mind races. On the one hand you know that it was definitely Avi's cookie. On the other hand, you really feel bad for Joey. He comes from a poor family and you have noticed that often he comes to school with little or no lunch and snack. Avi, on the other hand, comes from a wealthy family. Every day he arrives at school with a nutritious lunch and a variety of yummy snacks. Haven't we been learning about being kind? Haven't we been learning that we have to look t for those who are less fortunate and help them get what they need? Maybe it's better to just tell the teacher that it really was Joey's cookie. Avi probably won't miss it anyway. It seems like a win-win.

What would you do?????????????

Note to leaders: Discuss with the children how although it is important to be kind, a person cannot lie or cheat to help someone. Although at first glance it might seem like the right thing to do is to help Joey get what he so desperately needs, it is not okay to lie about what happened and help Joey steal from Avi. Instead try thinking of a different way to help Joey.

Games

Going to a Party

Let two people come to the front of the room. One of them will say: "I'm going to have a party, do you wanna come? Well, you can only come if you bring me a present..."

The other person will say 'Can I come to your party if I bring a....' The person then fills in any word that comes to mind. The first person has chosen specific criteria of what would be an approved item.

The first person will say yes or no based on a criteria he/she has made up. That criteria can be a letter, color, or anything else. (Example: word must start with the letter "r", must rhyme with "fly". Must be a food etc)

The game continues until everyone has figured out the criteria.

Slow motion tag

This game works best in a big space

Ask each player in the group to find their own personal space within the boundary area. Make sure there is enough room so no one is able to take one step towards someone and tag them. Adjust the boundaries out a bit if needed. After everyone has their space call out "Step". At this time, each player can move one of their feet in any direction they want. The objective here is to tag other players. If a player is tagged, he/she will sit down right where they are. Every time the leader, says, "Step" each player can take ONE step. If anyone moves both feet during a step, they must sit down. The players who are sitting cannot take any steps but can also tag other players. The "sitters can only tag players below the knee. When there is only one player standing, he/she is the winner. Have everyone stand up and play again.

Story

There was once a pious man with a righteous wife. When the couple lost all their money, the man found work plowing a field, where he met Elijah the Prophet disguised as an Arab. Elijah said to him, "You have six years of wealth coming to you. Do you want them now or at the end of your life?"

The man said to him, "You are just a conjurer. You have nothing to give me. Please go away and leave me in peace."

Elijah came back to him again and again. The third time, the pious man said, “Let me consult with my wife.”

He went to his wife and said, “This man has come to me three times to say that I have six years of wealth coming to me. He wants to know when I want them—now or at the end of my life.”

She said, “Tell him to give you the money now.”

He went to tell this to Elijah, who said to him, “Go home. Even before you get to the gate of your front garden, you will see that you have been blessed.”

The couple’s children had been playing in the dirt of their yard, where they found enough money to support their family for six years, so they called their mother. She ran out to tell her husband the good news even before he got to the gate of their house. He immediately thanked God.

What did his wife do? She said to him, “God has been extremely kind to us, giving us all this money. Let’s spend these six years helping others. Maybe then God will give us more.” So they did.

At the end of the six years, Elijah came and said, “The time has come for me to take back what I gave you.”

The pious man said, “When I accepted the money, I consulted with my wife. Now that it’s time to give it back, let me consult with her again.” So he went to her and said, “The man has come to take back what he gave us.”

She told him, “If he can find people who will use the money better than we did, he should take it.”

God knew about all the good things they had done for others while they had wealth and decided to give them even more, as it says in Isaiah (32:17), “The fruit of righteousness will be peace.”

This story is found in YALKUT SHIMONI, RUTH 607

Translated by Esther Rabi, reprinted with permission from Chabad.org

Halacha of the week

Last week we discussed making brachot (blessings) on foods. There are many other brachot we say. Another time when we say a bracha is before we do a mitzvah. For example, before we sit in the sukkah, eat matzah, or blow the shofar, we say a bracha. If a person forgot to make a bracha, he/she still gets credit for the mitzvah, but misses out the credit for the bracha.

Riddle of the Week

What did Lot serve the angels when they came to Sodom and why?

Send your answer to youth@youngisrael.org for a chance to win a great prize.



Parsha Overview

The parsha begins with three very important visitors coming to Abraham. Although Abraham didn't realize who they were, he was visited by three angels, disguised as Arabs. Still, Abraham treated them with the utmost respect and prepared fresh meals for them. The angels had some very exciting news for Abraham and Sarah. They told them that in exactly one year, Sarah would give birth to a baby. Sarah found the news hard to believe, considering she was already an old woman and she laughed at the news. God became angry at Sarah for not believing that God could perform a miracle for her.

The angels then went on to their next mission: to destroy the evil city of Sodom, and save Abraham's nephew, Lot, who, if you remember from last week had been living there. God told Abraham what the angels were planning to do and Abraham prayed for the city to be saved in the merit of the righteous people of the city. When God informed that there were not even 10 righteous people, Abraham had no argument to save the city.

When the angels arrive in Sodom, they were greeted by Lot. He remembered what he had learned in Abraham's house, and therefore invited the angels into his house for a meal and a place to rest. The other members of the city, who hated acts of kindness, heard about this and came to Lot's house to force him to hand over his guests. Lot, in a show of great courage, refused to let them harm his guest. The people attempted to break down his door, but the angels performed a miracle and the attackers suddenly became blind. The angels informed Lot of their mission, and encouraged him to flee. Lot, his wife, and two of his daughters were escorted out of the city to safety, and were warned not to look back as the city was being destroyed. Lot's wife did not listen to the angel's warning and was turned into a pillar of salt.

Abraham moved to the city of Grar. Like he had done when he went to Egypt, he told Sarah to say that she was Abraham's sister so they would not harm Abraham. Again, Sarah was taken by the king, and again, God brought a plague to save Sarah. The king, Abimelech returned Sarah to Abraham and showered them with gifts and money. Finally, as God had promised, Sarah, at the age of 90, gave birth to a son. They named him Isaac and circumcised him when he was eight days old. Isaac grew older and Sarah began to realize that Ishmael was being mean to Isaac. She demanded that Abraham send him away, but Abraham was hesitant to listen to her. God informs Abraham that Sarah was right and he should listen to her request. Abraham then supplied Hagar and Ishmael with food for the road and sent them away.

God the commanded Abraham to take Isaac and offer him as a sacrifice. Abraham, showing unwavering faith and devotion to God happily listens. At the last minute God appeared to Abraham and told him not to sacrifice his son, and to sacrifice a ram instead. God promised Abraham great reward for listening to Him. After these events, Abraham was notified about the birth of Rebecca, who would later become the wife of Isaac.

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- 1) What did Sarah do when the angel said she would have a baby, and why? [She laughed because she was so old.]
- 2) What was Abraham's response when he heard that God was going to destroy Sodom? [He prayed for the city to be saved]
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Suddenly your mind races. On the one hand you know that it was definitely Avi's cookie. On the other hand, you really feel bad for Joey. He comes from a poor family and you have noticed that often he comes to school with little or no lunch and snack. Avi, on the other hand, comes from a wealthy family. Every day he arrives at school with a nutritious lunch and a variety of yummy snacks. Haven't we been learning about being kind? Haven't we been learning that we have to look t for those who are less fortunate and help them get what they need? Maybe it's better to just tell the teacher that it really was Joey's cookie. Avi probably won't miss it anyway. It seems like a win-win.

What would you do?????????????

Note to Leaders: Discuss with the children how although it is important to be kind, a person cannot lie or cheat to help someone. Being kind is one of the greatest ways of connecting to both fellow man and God. It brings peace and unity to the world. When a person harms one person to help another, even if the second person needs it more, he/she is not creating peace in the world, he/she is only creating more fighting and ultimately distances him/herself from God as well.

Games

Going to a Party

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The other person will say 'Can I come to your party if I bring a....' The person then fills in any word that comes to mind. The first person has chosen specific criteria of what would be an approved item.

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At the end of the six years, Elijah came and said, “The time has come for me to take back what I gave you.”

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When the angels arrive in Sodom, they were greeted by Lot. He remembered what he had learned in Abraham's house, and therefore invited the angels into his house for a meal and a place to rest. The other members of the city, who hated acts of kindness, heard about this and came to Lot's house to force him to hand over his guests. Lot, in a show of great courage, refused to let them harm his guest. The people attempted to break down his door, but the angels performed a miracle and the attackers suddenly became blind. The angels informed Lot of their mission, and encouraged him to flee. Lot, his wife, and two of his daughters were escorted out of the city to safety, and were warned not to look back as the city was being destroyed. Lot's wife did not listen to the angel's warning and was turned into a pillar of salt. Lot and his daughters took shelter in a cave. Assuming that the entire world was destroyed, Lot's daughter's chose to marry their father, in order to make sure there would be more people in the world and that they wouldn't just die out. They each gave birth to a son who became fathers of the nations of Ammon and Moab.

After the city of Sodom was destroyed, Abraham was no longer able to invite guests from the travelers who had frequented the roads leading to and from the city. As a result, he chose to move to the city of Garar. Like he had done when he went to Egypt, he told Sarah to say that she was Abraham's sister so they would not harm Abraham. Again, Sarah was taken by the king, and again God brought a plague to save Sarah. The king, Abimelech returned Sarah to Abraham and showered them with gifts and money.

Finally, as God had promised, Sarah, at the age of 90, gave birth to a son. They named him Isaac and circumcised him when he was eight days old. Isaac grew older and Sarah began to realize that Ishmael was being mean to Isaac. She demanded that Abraham send him away, but Abraham was hesitant to listen to her. God informs Abraham that Sarah was right and he should listen to her request. Abraham then supplied Hagar and Ishmael with food for the road and sent them away.

God commanded Abraham to take Isaac and to offer him as a sacrifice on a mountain top. Abraham, showing unwavering faith and devotion to God, happily listens. Even when Isaac realized what his father was doing, he continued happily as well. Just as Abraham was lifting the knife to slaughter Isaac, God appeared to Abraham and told him to sacrifice a ram instead. God promised Abraham great reward for listening to Him. After these events, Abraham was notified about the birth of Rebecca, who would later become the wife of Isaac.

Parsha Questions

- 1) What did Sarah do when the angel said she would have a baby, and why? [She laughed because she was so old.]
- 2) What was Abraham's response when he heard that God was going to destroy Sodom? [He prayed for the city to be saved]
- 3) Why reason did Abraham give God why He shouldn't destroy Sodom? [In the merit of the righteous people who live there]
- 4) Why did Lot do when he saw the angels entering the city of Sodom? [He invited them into his house]
- 5) From whom did he learn to invite guests? [Abraham]
- 6) Why did the people of Sodom do when they heard Lot had a guest in his house? [Tried to take the guests away from Lot to be mean to them]
- 7) What happened to the people who were attacking Lot's house? [They became blind]
- 8) What happened to Lot's wife and why? [She turned into a pillar of salt because she looked back at the city being destroyed even though the angels told her not to]
- 9) What were the names of the children that the Lot's daughters gave birth to? [Amon and Moab]
- 10) What did Abraham and Sarah tell the people of Gerar about how they were related? [They told them they were brother and sister]
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What would you do?????????????

Note to Leaders: Discuss with the children how although it is important to be kind, a person cannot lie or cheat to help someone. In fact the Torah specifically states that a judge can not falsely rule in favor of a pauper to help him get the sustenance that he needs. One important thing to keep in mind is that although God wants us to be kind, it is not because God needs our help to feed the poor. God wants us to become better people by "aiding" Him. If we ever have to sin or break a law to help someone, God wants us to do the right thing and refrain, and He will take care of the needy person in a different way.

Games

The Hand Game

Everyone must either lie on their stomachs with their hands in front of them or sit at table with their hands in front of them, in a circle. Either way, have your hands ready to slap a flat surface.

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double slap. A single slap keeps the slap going in the correct direction, a double slap sends the slap in the opposite direction.

If someone slaps out of turn, they must remove that hand from the circle. All other hands stay where they are. When both hands are out, that person is out of the game.

The game is over when there are two people left.

One to Ten

Have the group spread out in a large area. The leader gives one instructions (ie shake hands with someone) on "GO" everyone performs the task and then sits down.

The leader then gives another instruction. The players remember and must perform the first instruction and add the new instruction. If a player forgets one of the instructions he/she is out. See how many players make it all the way to ten.

Sample

- Shake hands with someone
- Lie down on your back and put your feet in the air
- Run around the leader
- hop to the wall
- Clap your hands five times
- Yawn once
- Play leap frog over four other people
- blink 7 times
- Jump up and down 10 times
- Shout hurray!

Story

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What did his wife do? She said to him, "G d has been extremely kind to us, giving us all this money. Let's spend these six years helping others. Maybe then G d will give us more." So they did.

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Riddle of the Week

When is a question in *halacha*, Jewish law only able to be answered by a child?

Send your answer to youth@youngisrael.org for a chance to win a great prize.

November 19, 2016/Cheshvan 5777

Volume 3, Issue 8- Parshat Veyeira

BS"D



PARSHA NATION

Teen Minyan Kol Haniarim

Published by the National Council of Young Israel



Note to Leaders:

This program is made to enhance your teen minyan. Let your teens take turns give the Drasha and Dvar Halacha. Try to get them the texts as early as possible so then can practice it before they say it on Shabbat. You can also invite parents to watch their child live in action.

Drasha

In this week's Parsha, Parshat Vayera, there is detailed description of Abraham's prayer to God on behalf of the city of Sodom. He begged, reasoned and pleaded with God not to destroy Sodom, but his prayers were not headed and the city was destroyed. This is the first time the Torah openly describes the concept of prayer, and this story raises many questions. Perhaps looking at this story with greater detail can help one gain insight into what prayer is all about.

God comes to Abraham in order to inform him of His plans to destroy Sodom due to the wicked ways of its inhabitants. Abraham pleads with God to save the city because of the righteous men who lived there. God responds that if there are any righteous men he would not destroy the city, but there were in fact no righteous men in the whole city. This conversation is very strange. Did Abraham think that God did not realize that there may be righteous people in the city and was therefore reminding him to check?

Abraham knew that God is all-knowing. Did he think God did not realize it was unjust to kill the righteous because of the sins of the wicked? Abraham knew that God is all-understanding. Or maybe he thought that God knew that it was just but he was going to "change God's mind." Why would God change his mind? Is there a factor he did not know about or take into account? Is a God an emotional being who could be swayed by the pleading of his child? Furthermore, why did God come to Abraham about his plans in the first place? Was Abraham someone who God was required to consult with prior to making decisions? All these questions really point to one very essential question, which is, what is the purpose of prayer? In other words, why pray? God knows every situation and can determine the best outcome for each of them. What then, is the purpose of prayer?

Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler, a Talmudic scholar of the 20th century, gives an insightful explanation of what prayer is all about. He explains that prayer is not merely a list of requests to God. Our Rabbis explain that the reason God put us on this world is to serve him, so we can get reward in the world to come. Prayer is one of the ways we serve God. When one prays he or she is showing that he or she believes in God's presence, and that he or she recognizes God's power to do anything. When our prayers are answered, God's name is sanctified by showing that He responds to those who put their trust in Him. Sometimes, God's not answering our prayers will lead to a desecration of His name. Punishing the wicked is another way of sanctifying God's name, and not punishing could lead to a desecration of His name.

This understanding of prayer helps explain a puzzling statement in the Talmud. Rabbi Yochanan says in the name of Rabbi Yossi, How do we know that God Himself prays? The verse in Isaiah states "I will bring them to My holy mountain, and I will gladden them in My house of prayer." It does not say their house of prayer, rather My house of prayer. We can deduce from here that God prays. What does He pray? Rabbi Zutrah, the son of Tuvia, says that God's prayer consists of "It shall be My will that My mercy conquers my anger and that My mercy overcomes My other more stern attributes, and that I deal with My children with mercy and go beyond the letter of the law for them." When working with the assumption that prayer is merely informing God of our needs, this passage is very confusing. Who is God praying to? He is the one who is in total control of everything, so why does he need to make requests of himself? However, with the realization that the purpose of prayer is much deeper, and that it is in fact an opportunity to proclaim belief that everything comes from God, then this statement in the Talmud is much more easily understood. God can proclaim that he is a merciful God, thus modelling for us how to pray. When we pray, we too must ask God to use his attribute of mercy, as did Abraham. When we show our belief that God is merciful and he uses this attribute of mercy towards us His name is sanctified. Similarly, God taught Moses the thirteen attributes of mercy, because understanding them and taking them to heart is the key to God answering our prayers.

After the sin of the golden calf, God requests of Moses to leave him so he can destroy the Jews. Rashi explains that this was God's way of telling Moses that if he leaves God's presence and stops praying, that would allow God to destroy his people. This was a message to Moses to pray immediately on their behalf so that God would save them. This, too, indicates that prayer is much more than merely passing on our wish lists to God. He already knows it all. Rather, prayer is a statement of one's total belief in God. After Moses made this declaration, God was able to respond and rescind his decree against the Jewish people.

This conclusion brings with it serious ramifications. First of all, when one prays, one should know what he or she is saying, otherwise the prayer is not able to fully achieve its purpose. How can one make a declaration of his belief in God, if he does not have a basic understanding of what he is saying? Additionally, a person must remember the purpose of prayer. He must also keep in mind that God created everything, God controls everything, and the more one can accept this, the closer one becomes to God, and the more God will answer his prayers.

Dvar Halacha

(To be said right after Davening)

Last week we discussed making brachot (blessings) on foods. There are many other brachot we say. Another time when we say a bracha is before we do a mitzvah. Unlike brachot on foods, which ideally should be made by the person eating the food, a bracha on a mitzvah can be recited by someone else. Any person who hears the bracha and says "amen," and has in mind to fulfill his/her obligation to say the bracha, gets credit as if they themselves said the brachah. One common example of this is kiddush and havdalah. However, since drinking the wine is a part of these blessings it is important that everyone who is listening to the bracha does not talk until the one who is making the blessing drinks the wine.

There are times when a person does not recite a bracha before doing a mitzvah. One example of this is when he/she is unsure if they performed the mitzvah. For example, if a person forgot if they shook the lulav, or are afraid that the lulav they shook is invalid, they must perform the mitzvah again. However, since saying a blessing when not obligated to is a violation of saying God's name in vain, the bracha is not recited. If one is unsure if they should say a bracha, they should contact their local Rabbi Orthodox for clarification.

Kiddush Activity

Directions: Before Shabbat tape plastic spoons to a 3 foot metal or wooden pole (1 for each teen).

Place a bowl of Jelly beans (any other food that is easily available to you will work also) in the middle of the table. Tell the teens that they should try to eat as much as they could but they are only allowed to eat directly off a spoon.

The goal is for them to realise that although they can't eat off their own spoons, if they help each other, they can all eat. If they can't figure it out you can share with them a story told by the Hasidic teacher, Rabbi Chaim of Romshishok.

Rabbi Chaim of Romshishok, of Lithuania once told the following story:

"I wanted to know the difference between Heaven and Hell so I decided to visit them both.

I first went to Hell. There I found people sitting at long tables filled with sumptuous food, but they were all emaciated and starving. They had spoons that were 6 feet long and could not bend their arms in such a way to feed themselves.

I then went to Heaven and saw a slightly different situation. The people there were also sitting around long tables piled with food. They too had 6 feet long spoons, but they were all well nourished and happy because they were feeding each other across the table.

I then understood. Heaven and Hell offer the same circumstances and conditions. The critical difference is in the way people treat each other."

Riddle of the Week

When is a question in *halacha*, Jewish law only able to be answered by a child?

Send you answer to youth@youngisrael.org for a chance to win a great prize.

