

Parsha Q&A



Parshas Vayera

For the week ending 15 Cheshvan 5758
14 & 15 November 1997

Parsha Questions

1. Why did Hashem appear to Avraham after the *bris mila*?
2. Why was Avraham sitting at the entrance to his tent?
3. What were the missions of the three angels?
4. Why did Avraham enjoin the guests to wash the dust off their feet?
5. Why did Avraham ask Yishmael to prepare the food for the guests?
6. The angels asked Avraham where Sarah was. Why?
7. When Hashem related Sarah's thoughts to Avraham, He did not relate them precisely. Why?
8. What "cry" from Sodom came before Hashem?
9. How many angels went to Sodom?
10. Why was Lot sitting at the gate of Sodom?
11. Lot served the angels *matzos*. Why?
12. Why did Lot delay when he left Sodom?
13. Why were Lot and his family not permitted to look back at Sodom?
14. Lot's wife looked back and became a pillar of salt. Why was she punished in this particular way?
15. In what merit did Hashem save Lot?
16. Why did Avraham relocate after the destruction of Sodom?
17. Why did Avimelech give gifts to Avraham?
18. Why was Avraham told to listen to Sarah?
19. Why did Hashem listen to the prayer of Yishmael and not to that of Hagar?
20. Who accompanied Avraham and Yitzchak to the *Akeidah* (binding)?

Rashi never just comments; something in the text always impels him to do so. Rashi's comments are answers to unspoken questions and difficulties arising from a thoughtful reading of the Torah. Therefore, anyone who wants a true understanding of Rashi's classic Torah commentary must always ask

"What's Bothering Rashi?"

The verse [18:1] says:

"And [Hashem] appeared to him [Avraham]..."

Rashi comments: To visit the sick. Rabbi Hama, son of Chanina, said: It was the third day after his circumcision and the Holy One, Blessed be He, came and inquired after his health.

What's bothering Rashi? What prompted Rashi to cite the Midrash of Rabbi Hama?

Answer: The verse tells us that Hashem appeared to Avraham, but it doesn't tell us what Hashem said to him. This is unusual! Usually, every case of the appearance of G-d is followed by a Divine utterance. Therefore, Rashi needs to explain the purpose of this visitation.

(Adapted from Dr. Avigdor Bonchek's new book "What's Bothering Rashi?" Feldheim Publishers)

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I Did Not Know That!

Eliezar, Avraham's servant, was once in Sodom when some local people attacked and wounded him. The case came before a Sodomite judge who said, "You must pay the people who attacked you. They performed 'blood-letting' upon you, a valuable medical service, and therefore you owe them money." Hearing that, Eliezar attacked the judge and wounded him. "Now" said Eliezar to the judge, "you owe me money for the medical service I've performed for you. So the money you owe me for wounding you, why don't you pay to the people who wounded me!"

Sanhedrin 109b

Recommended Reading List

Ramban

18:7	The Love of Kindness
18:13	For the Sake of Peace
18:15	Sarah's Laughter
19:8	Lot's Disgrace
22:1	The Meaning of a Trial
22:16	The Promise of Eternity

Sforno

18:2	The Love of Kindness
18:22	Persistence
19:8	Lot's Reasoning
19:11	The Nature of the Wicked
19:37-8	Meaning Well

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the Parsha in a format that
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Answers to

this Week's Questions

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated

1. 18:1 - Avraham was sick, so Hashem came to "visit" him.
2. 18:1 - He was looking for guests.
3. 18:2 - To announce to Sarah that she would give birth, to heal Avraham and to destroy Sodom.
4. 18:4 - He thought they were Arabians who worship the dust, and he didn't want any object of idolatry in his home.
5. 18:7 - To train him in the performance of *mitzvos*.
6. 18:9 - To call attention to Sarah's modesty, so as to endear her to her husband.
7. 18:13 - For the sake of peace.
8. 18:21 - The cry of a girl who was put to death because she gave food to a poor man.
9. 19:1 - Two; one to destroy the city and one to save Lot.
10. 19:1 - He was a judge.
11. 19:3 - It was Passover.
12. 19:16 - He wanted to save his property.
13. 19:17 - Since they too really should have been punished, it wasn't fitting for them to witness the destruction of Sodom.
14. 19:26 - She was stingy, not wanting to give the guests salt.
15. 19:29 - Lot had protected Avraham by concealing from the Egyptians the fact that Sarah was his wife.
16. 20:1 - Because travel in the region ceased and Avraham could no longer find guests.
17. 20:14 - So that Avraham would pray for him.
18. 21:12 - Because she was greater in prophecy.
19. 21:17 - Because the prayer of a sick person is more readily accepted than the prayer of others on his behalf.
20. 22:3 - Yishmael and Eliezer.