

נֶאֱסָה נֶאֱסָה Naos Deshe

An Adaptation of Rabbi Shmuel Dov Asher Leiner's Naos Deshe by Rabbi Reuven Boshnack
Questions? Comments? Dedications? Email ReuvenBoshnack@gmail.com

Vayera

The men rose from there...(Bereshis 18:16)

Why does the Midrash write such glowing things about Avraham Avinu standing up for S'dom? He failed in the end! Why does the Malach who is coming to destroy S'dom stop at Avraham's tent? There's no reason for him to go there!

The Midrash says that everything Avraham did for the Malachim will be paid back in the Midbar and in the future times. Was it really such a great feat that he fed a bunch of travelers?

Avraham invited them to sit under the tree. The Zohar says that he brought the Malachim to sit under the influence of the tree of life. The Malachim couldn't grasp what Avraham could. Therefore, they were brought under his influence. Therefore, Naos Deshe explains, that the seating during this story is important. When the Malachim arrived, they stood and Avraham sat. By the end of the episode, Avraham stood over them, indicating his dominance.

What was this secret? Despite the fact that he knew that S'dom and all that it stood for was a threat to his legacy and Yitzchak's existence, he davened for them! An angel is a mere agent! This act of self sacrifice and kindness was above their understanding. It elicited a similar response from Hashem.

When Hashem responded to Avraham's tefillos, He didn't say, "No, there are no righteous people there." Hashem said, "Maybe I'll find them there." How is it possible that Hashem is in doubt?

The usage of the word "maybe I'll find" coincides with the statement, "I found my servant David", (Tehillim 89:21) the midrash ends in S'dom. This teaches us that Avraham's tefilla, and hope in people created hope for future generations in a better future. Even though his prayers seem to have failed to save S'dom, they succeeded in creating hope for future repair.

The Zohar teaches that the tree of life is ability to do teshuva. (See our adaptation of Naos Deshe on Bereshis) When Avraham drew them under the tree of life, it means to bring them into world of hope and possibility that teshuva entails.

One example of this is found in the book of Shoftim. The moral depravity in S'dom was matched once by a tragic incident in the book of Shoftim, the story of the Pilegish Bagivaa. (Shoftim 19-20) The entire incident parallels the behaviors and attitudes of the residents of S'dom. It would seem the perpetrators in the tribe of Binyamin were no better than S'dom. So why wasn't the town wiped out in the same way S'dom was? It was Avraham's tefillos and hope of a better future, that people could change, which allowed the tribe of Binyamin to survive.

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A Malach could not understand stand such a concept. They are static beings which only follow orders. People are in flux, and therefore can change. The third malach was sent to Avraham, to alert him to the fact of S'dom's imminent destruction. This in turn was the cause for Avraham's tefillos and hope in humanity to be awakened.

Avraham Avinu drew us under the tree of life, hope and Teshuva. That one meal, when he brought the Malachim under the tree, reminds us and the world, that there is always hope for a better future.