

Zera Shimshon

Profound Divrei Torah culled from the writings of the Gaon and Mekubal Rav Shimshon Chaim ben Rav Nachman Michael Nachmeni zy"l, author of Sefer Zera Shimshon on Chumash and Toldos Shimshon on Pirkei Avos, who promised that all who study his words will be blessed with an abundance of good, wealth and honor, and will merit to see children and grandchildren thriving around their table.



תשפ"ה Vayaira

• Zera Shimshon - the Limud that brings Yeshuos •

316 ז'אין

אמרות שמשון

Why Lot's Wife Was Specifically Punished by Turning into Salt

ותבט אשתו מאחריו ותהי נציב מלח (יט כו):

And his wife peered from behind him and she became a pillar of salt.

Rashi is bothered by an obvious question; why was Lot's wife punished by becoming, of all things, a pillar of salt. He explains it as follows, במלח חטאה ובמלח, a pillar of salt. She sinned with salt and she was thus stricken with salt, and quotes a Midrash which gives us details regarding her sin with the salt.

The Torah (י"ט ג') recounts an incident where two angels came to Sodom and Lot invited them over to his home. The Passuk goes on to describe how Lot took care of his guests, ומצות, ומצות - *He prepared a feast for them and he baked matzos, and they ate.* The Midrash presents an interpretation on the word 'מצות' which means 'leavened bread', as if it were vowelized 'מצות', which means a 'quarrel', and says as follows. אמר רבי יצחק, מצות עמדה על המלח. והנה אמר לה, הב לאילן אכסניא קליל מלח, והנה אמרה ליה, אף הָדָא סוּנִיתָא בִּישָׁא אַתְּ בְּעִי מוֹלְפָא. *R' Yitzchak said: a great quarrel arose at that time between Lot and his wife over salt. For during the meal, Lot would say to her, "Give a bit of salt to these guests", and she would angrily reply to him, "Do you wish to introduce this evil custom to this place"?! Rashi thus explains that it was as a punishment for this sin with the*

salt that Lot's wife became a pillar of salt.

We need to understand what it was that caused Lot's wife to get angry. If it was the fact that Lot invited the guests over and served them a meal, why was she concerned about the salt that he gave them more than anything else that he prepared and served them?



The Gemara in Sanhedrin (קט"ז ע"א) describes the arrogance of the people of Sodom during their time of tranquility, which was engendered by their feelings of complacency and security. *The people of Sodom became arrogant only because of the bounty that Hashem lavished upon them. What is written in the Torah concerning them? A land from which bread comes forth, has in its stead turned into scorched earth. Its very stones yielded sapphires, its very dust was gold. It was a path unknown to any robber, unobserved by any spy. Mighty beasts had not trod it, no lion ever traversed it.*



We can explain that Lot's wife wasn't upset about the guests that he invited nor was she upset about the food that he served them; she was upset about his bringing salt to the table. This was because of the motive that she knew was behind his bringing salt to the table, as the Rema in Shulchan Aruch (א"ר"ח סי' קס"ז) indeed explains. מצוה להביא על כל שלחן.

מלח קדם שיבצע, כי השלחן דומה למזבח והאכילה כקרבן, ונאמר על *It is a Mitzvah to bring salt onto the table before one breaks the bread, for the table is likened to the Altar while the eating is likened to a Sacrifice, and it's stated, 'With all your sacrifices you should offer salt'. Furthermore, the salt is a protection against all calamities and misfortunes.*



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When Lot's wife saw him bringing salt to their meals and understood the reason behind this practice, she got angry and arrogantly told him, "There is no need to bring salt to the table in order to protect us from any harm befalling us, for we, the people of Sedom, are protected in any case from any and all mishaps and misfortunes. We are perfectly safe without your salt".

Furthermore, in her haughtiness, she was so certain of Sedom being safe from any tragedy, that she angrily told him, "Why do you wish to introduce this evil custom to this place"?! She was telling him that when he brought salt to the table even though they

had no need for its' protection, he was essentially bringing upon them calamity, as the Gemara in Brachos (יט ע"א) says, לעולם אל יפתח אדם פה לשטן - *One should never open his mouth to the Satan*, i.e. one should never give the Satan an opening, for by talking or acting in a way which shows that there is a place for misfortune to occur, one essentially opens himself up to misfortune. Therefore, when Lot brought salt to the table in order to bring upon them protection, it was as if he admitted that they were indeed prone to tragedy and therefore needed the salt's protection; thereby inviting the Satan to bring upon them misfortune.

(ורע שמשון פרשתנו אות טז)

גבורת שמשון סיפורי ילופה

The job proposal that came by itself

The following is the anecdote that came to us from Mrs. L. T., from Hadera, Israel:

Since I was young, I was very skilled in the art of cooking and pastry. At each family event, I was entrusted with the responsibility of preparing the food. Whatever I did in the food field, the resulting dishes were very special. I liked cooking so much that after I got married, the first job I looked for to work was that of a cook. One day, I found a small ad placed in a restaurant that had opened in the area where I lived by which they were looking for cooks for full-day work. I contacted the owner, and, after a short job interview, I was accepted into the position. I was very happy; the working hours were comfortable for me, and the workplace was close to where I lived. But my joy did not last long. The restaurant owner was not recovering the money he had invested, he got into debt and difficulties and was forced to close the business. In this way, I found myself at home again, without a job.

Since I knew I had a good hand in the kitchen, I continued looking for a job in the field of cooking. This time, the search was more difficult. Over the course of long months, I looked for work by all possible means, asking family members and acquaintances, looking at the newspaper's classified section, and even placing advertisements on the street. After a few months of search, I found out that an institution was looking for a cook; I proposed myself as a candidate for the position and after a short time I was accepted.

This job did not last long either. After a short period, a new

manager came to administer the institution, who, among the various resolutions he made, decided to close the kitchen of the place, opting to resort to the services of an external catering agency that offered them a better price.

At this point, I was in crisis. My anguish had no limits. I felt that bad luck was haunting me, and this feeling was very difficult and terrible for me.

By this time, the **Zera Shimshon** bulletins were starting to be distributed around the area where I lived, and my husband brought home the bulletins from the synagogue. I read in one of them about the promise of the author of the **Zera Shimshon**, and I thought that perhaps I too could have the merit of receiving the blessing of the **Tzaddik**. Thus, every week I began to read the Torah words from the bulletin that my husband brought.

After just a few weeks, my brother, who runs a yeshiva, made me a job offer. The cook of the yeshiva that he administered went into retirement and he was looking for a good cook to take her place, so he offered me the position. Obviously, I took the job. The yeshiva that he administers has been established for decades, and, in addition to obtaining a livelihood, cooking for the young people studying in the yeshiva was a spiritual mission for me. I couldn't hope for a better job than this! I had the merit of seeing with my own eyes that the blessing of the **Tzaddik** was fulfilled in the best way.

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