

YOU'RE A JEW. I'M A JEW. WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP YOU?

Background

Avraham Avinu is now recovering from his *bris millah*. He is 99 years old, sitting in the desert heat, when three individuals approach his tent. From the fact that Avraham asks them to wash their feet, we see that he assumes that they are Arabs who worship the sand that they walk on. At this stage in his life, Avraham is famous, wealthy, and obviously an old man. Every moment of his life up till this point has been measured and weighed for the utmost efficiency and directed towards great accomplishments. He has many, many students, many servants, and many people who would be only too willing to help him.

Questions

Doesn't Avrohom Avinu have better things to do with his time?

ספר בראשית פרק יח

(א) וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו יְדוּד בְּאֵלֵי מַמְרֵא וְהוּא יֹשֵׁב פֶּתַח הָאֵהָל בְּחֹם הַיּוֹם
 (ב) וַיֵּשֶׂא עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה שְׁלֹשָׁה אַנְשִׁים נֹצְבִים עָלָיו וַיֵּרָא וַיֵּרֶץ לְקִרְאתָם
 מִפֶּתַח הָאֵהָל וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַרְצָה
 (ג) וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי אִם נָא מְצֹאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֵל נָא תַעֲבֹר מֵעַל עַבְדְּךָ
 (ד) יִקַּח נָא מֵעֵט מַיִם וְרַחֲצוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם וְהִשְׁעֵנוּ תַּחַת הָעֵץ
 (ה) וְאִקְחָה פֶתַח לֶחֶם וְסַעֲדוּ לְבַבְכֶם אַחֵר תַּעֲבֹרוּ כִּי עַל כֵּן עִבְרַתֶּם עַל עַבְדְּכֶם
 וַיֹּאמְרוּ כֵּן תַּעֲשֶׂה בְּאִשְׁרֵי דְבַרְתָּ
 (ו) וַיִּמְהַר אַבְרָהָם הָאֵהָלָה אֶל שָׂרָה וַיֹּאמֶר מִהְרֵי שְׁלֹשׁ סָאִים קָמַח סִלְתָּ
 לוֹשֵׁי וְעָשִׂי עֲגוֹת
 (ז) וְאֵל הַבָּקָר רָץ אַבְרָהָם וַיִּקַּח בֶּן בָּקָר רֶדֶד וְטוֹב וַיִּתֵּן אֶל הַנַּעַר וַיִּמְהַר
 לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתוֹ
 (ח) וַיִּקַּח חֲמָאָה וְחָלַב וּבֶן הַבָּקָר אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּתֵּן לַפְּנִיָּהם וְהוּא עֹמֵד עֲלֵיהֶם
 תַּחַת הָעֵץ וַיֹּאכְלוּ

- 1) *And HASHEM appeared to Avraham in the orchards of Mamreh, and he was sitting at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day.*
- 2) *And he lifted his eyes and saw: behold three men waiting for him, and he saw, and he ran to greet them from the entrance of the tent, and he bowed down to the ground.*
- 3) *And he said, "My masters, if I have found favour in your eyes, do not pass from your servant.
Please take a little water, wash your feet and rest under the tree.*
- 4) *"And take some bread and satisfy yourselves; after that you will pass, and then you will pass from your servant." And they said, "We will do as you have spoken."*
- 5) *And Avraham hurried to the tent of Sarah, and he said, "Quickly! Prepare three measures of fine flour; knead them and make bread."*
- 6) *And to the cattle ran Avraham, and he took a young cow, soft and good, and he gave it to the lad, and he hurried to prepare it.*
- 7) *And he took butter, and milk, and the young calf that he had prepared, and he placed it before them, and he was standing over them under the tree, and they ate.*

רש"י על בראשית פרק יח פסוק ז

(ז) בן בקר רך וטוב - ג' פרים היו כדי להאכילן ג' לשונות בחרדל (ב"מ פז)

Three cows, in order to feed them three tongues dipped in mustard.