

The men stretched out their hand and brought Lot into the house with them, and closed the door. And the men who were at the entrance of the house, they were struck with blindness...and they tried vainly to find the entrance. (19:10, 11)

The angels pulled Lot into the house making sure to close the door behind them. Immediately afterward, the angels struck the men at the door, blinding them. They no longer could locate the doorway to Lot's house. One can only find what he can see. We wonder why the door had to be closed once the men had been blinded. They could no longer find the entrance. Lot was essentially protected. He could sit right in front of them, and they would not be aware of it.

Horav Shalom Schwadron, zl, explains that the door was not closed in order to save Lot. The door was closed so that Lot not observe the Sodomites being punished. Lot merited being spared from death. He did not merit to watch the deaths of the evil citizens of Sodom. Lot was far from a saint. He was saved because he had remained silent when Avraham *Avinu* told the *Plishtim* that Sarah *Imeinu* was his sister. Lot could easily have refuted Avraham, but he kept his peace, thereby earning incredible reward for himself. While the reward was worth his life, it did not mitigate his evil streak. He was as wicked as the rest. Thus, he was allowed to live, but he could not watch the others die. The door was closed so that he could not watch his compatriots receiving their due.

Hashem's punishment is exacting, as is His reward. Lot was not allowed to watch; thus, the Sodomites died without having to experience the indignity of seeing one of their own spared. Lot's reward was life – nothing more, nothing less.