

And Hashem said, “Shall I conceal from Avraham what I do, now that Avraham is surely to become a great and mighty nation?” (18:17, 18)

Hashem informed Avraham Avinu, that He was about to destroy the city of Sodom. Its community of sinners had gone too far, elevating sin to the level of cultural acceptance. It had become a way of life. The Torah teaches that Hashem’s intention in notifying Avraham of His plans was to inform Avraham about his future as Patriarch of a large nation. Is this the reason that Hashem informed Avraham of His plans? True, Hashem wanted Avraham to pray for the people of Sodom, to teach the Patriarch the significance of prayer and its ability to rescind a decree – even when it appears to be too late. In this situation, however, Hashem knew that Sodom lacked the minimum number of righteous persons to ward off the decree. So why bother to pray? Hashem could have taught Avraham the significance of prayer in any other of a number of instances – ones in which prayer seemed to have greater efficacy than it would have for Sodom.

The **Maggid**, *zl*, *m’Dubno* explains this with his inimitable *mashal*, analogy. Each of two men asked the salesman to give him a suit to fit his son. The salesman was quick to respond by asking for the boys’ sizes. The first father was clueless as to what size the boy wore. He began to describe his height and weight and body build. Being a professional, the salesman instructed the father to go home, pick up his son and return to the store for a fitting. He was not taking chances by selling him a suit for a boy, sight unseen.

The second father also sought a suit for his son. While he did not know his son’s size either, he claimed it would not present a problem. Apparently, he had a number of sons of different sizes. He would take a few suits. Whatever did not fit one son would fit another.

Likewise, Hashem sought Avraham *Avinu*’s prayer. He wanted to hear numerous supplications from the Patriarch. True, they might not “fit” the needs of Sodom, but Avraham would be the progenitor of a large nation. Somewhere, someone would need his prayer.

Horav Shlomo HaLevy Levinstein, Shlita, quotes **Horav Shimshon Pincus, zl**, who reiterated the idea that no prayer is wasted, when he eulogized his mother-in-law, *Rebbetzin* Mann. When she became ill and required emergency brain surgery, she survived the surgery, but never woke up, lying in a comatose state for a week before her holy *neshamah*, soul, ascended to its rightful place in Heaven. During her illness, prayers were recited throughout the Holy Land. *Yeshivos*, *Bais Yaakovs*, and *chadorim* recited *tehillim* in her behalf, entreating the Almighty for her recovery. Hashem listened; regrettably, the answer was, “No.”

Rav Pincus explained that, *chas v’shalom*, Heaven forbid, should anyone think for a moment that the *tefillos* were wasted. No prayer goes for naught! Hashem saves and stores them until they are needed for another Jew who is missing the necessary prayers on his behalf. When a person

harvests his crops, he certainly gathers much more than he needs at the moment. He stores the remainder in a reinforced silo to maintain the grain for a later date. Our *tefillos* are stored, put away until that time in which they can save another Jew in need.