

And Hashem remembered Avraham; so He sent Lot from amidst the upheaval. (19:29)

The *Ran* infers from this *pasuk* that Lot was spared only because of Avraham. *Chazal* question what did Lot do that granted him such merit that he was saved from the destruction that befell Sodom. They respond that when Avraham referred to Sarah as his "sister" in order to protect himself from the Egyptians, Lot did not utter a word in dispute. Since he was compassionate with Avraham, Hashem took pity and spared him. The various commentators ask if this was the only merit that Lot possessed. Surely, he must have performed acts of *chesed* and good deeds that would distinguish him from the wicked people of Sodom. In his *sefer* "*L'maan Achai V'reiai*" *Horav Elchanan Sorotzkin*,^{zl} derives from here a remarkable lesson as to how much Hashem recognizes every good action and every good thought that one has. Hashem does not overlook even a momentary triumph over the subconscious *yetzer hora*, evil inclination, to harm someone. Indeed, Lot certainly had other merits, more profound and more significant, but the lesson of this merit is that nothing good is wasted. Lot was rewarded for his meritorious deed regardless of its simplicity. We must remember that everything counts; we never know when that seemingly insignificant good deed will benefit us.

The *Ramban* claims that it was truly because of Avraham that Lot was saved. He left his quiet, relaxed lifestyle in Charan in order to accompany Avraham. He ended up moving to Sodom indirectly because of Avraham. Had Avraham not moved initially, Lot would still be living in Charan, content and relaxed. "It does not make sense," says the *Ramban*, "that something should happen to Lot, since Lot had done Avraham a favor by accompanying him." This was actually the reason that Avraham fought with the kings who had taken Lot captive.

Horav Sorotzkin emphasizes the profundity of the *Ramban's* statement and its pertinence to us. Lot left Avraham on his own; he decided to go to Sodom in response to its material benefits and because the city's laws and philosophy coincided with his own perspective. In other words, Lot chose his "lot" in life. Thus, he deserved whatever happened to him. Yet, Avraham still felt pangs of responsibility for Lot. Perhaps, if not for Avraham, Lot "might" still be in Charan. We also do things "willingly" that are not necessarily appropriate, but result from years of exposure to a society that is not conducive to *Torah*. If we would not be here, if we were still in *Eretz Yisrael* with a *Bais Hamikdash*, we would be different. This should be a *limud zechus*, serve as a source of merit, for *Klal Yisrael*. After all, it worked in this manner for Lot.