

Save the good at all costs!

written by Ozer Bergman
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Let me ask you a question? If you had a big fight—I mean a fight so big that the town wasn't big enough for the both of you—with your nephew, or your brother-in-law, would you care what happened to him? Probably not. But Avraham Avinu (our patriarch) was so humble, that even after their split up (Genesis 13:7–9) he considered Lot his brother (ibid. 14:14, *Midrash Tanchuma, Lech Lecha* 13). (Lot was both Avraham Avinu's brother-in-law and nephew. See Genesis 11:27 and 29.) So when Lot was taken captive, Avraham cared a lot.

It's one thing to care, but to go to war for him (ibid. 14:14)? Why did Avraham Avinu think the risks were worthwhile? In telling us about the importance of waking in the middle of the night to lament the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash (Holy Temple), Reb Noson writes that the impetus and ability to do so stems from the trait of kindness that Avraham Avinu

so personified.

Avraham Avinu's kindness was not limited to feeding the body of those who found their way to his tent. He sought to feed their souls and to unleash the good within them (*Midrash Tanchuma, Lekh Lekha* 12). In the case of Lot, this extended to unleashing the good that wouldn't come for over 900 years.

Although Lot made a spiritually fatal mistake by choosing Sodom over Avraham (Genesis 13:10–11), he still had a *nekudah tovah*, an irrevocable good point. This *nekudah tovah*, though deeply buried, would eventually be born as Ruth, the great-grandmother of King David (and ultimately, Mashiach).

So, though our own personal biases may seem reason enough to justify staying home and letting others suffer the results of their stupidity or desires, we need to be kinder in our outlook and not dismiss their goodness. And though mighty kings and armies may try to capture and destroy the *nekudah tovah* within us or others, we have to trust enough in God to battle to save that good. A right place to start, per Rebbe Nachman's suggestion, would be with conquering ourselves by waking before dawn to plead with God to save us soon from this miserable exile. Amen!

agutn Shabbos!

Shabbat Shalom!

(Based on *Likutey Halakhot, Hashkamat HaBoker* 1:13)