



GILAD CHAIM

RA'ANANA CHAPTER DIRECTOR

WHY "ZERIZIM MAKDIMIN" IS SO ANNOYING (AND WHY IT MATTERS)

"Zerizim makdimin le-mitzvot"—those who are eager to do things early. Honestly, what an annoying phrase. Why make me feel bad? But it's not only about rushing to do mitzvot. It's about the power of getting things done without falling into comfort.

When Avraham got up for the Akeidah, the Torah says, "Abraham rose early in the morning." Rashi explains that he hurried to do the mitzvah. Avraham knew this was the hardest thing he'd ever do, and he still got up quickly and went. So, what does that teach us?

Many things in life are hard, and we have zero energy for them, even when we know they'll help us. "Ugh, I don't feel like cleaning my room," even though we know we'd be more comfortable in a clean one.

That's how the human brain works. It

likes comfort, so it hates moving. But when we break out of that comfort, we force it to work overtime and build self-discipline. It starts with cleaning your room when you don't want to and grows into studying for the career that will help you become your best self.

Personally, I use the "five-second rule." The moment I think of something I need to do, I count to five and go do it. That way, my brain can't talk me into resting "just for a minute," and three hours later, I'm still lying on my bed.

The Torah gives us lessons for everyday life, and that's a great way to connect to the parsha: see how it relates to your own life.

From Avraham, we learn what helps us grow most: get up, act, and hurry, even when it's hard.



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HOW MUCH IS THE GOOD WORTH COMPARED TO THE BAD?

When God tells Avraham He's about to destroy Sodom and Gomorah, Avraham doesn't stay silent. He asks, "Will You sweep away the righteous along with the wicked?" (Genesis 18:23). What if there are 50 righteous people in the city? Then 45, 40, 30, 20, and just 10.

In the end, Sodom is destroyed anyway, but not before Lot and his family are saved. So how much is the life of one good person worth compared to a crowd of bad ones?

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The answer: a lot. When there's good hiding inside the bad, it's hard to give up on it. Abraham fights to bring out whatever good Sodom might have before everything is lost.

The Gemara tells a similar story about Resh Lakish, who was a bandit and a brawler. After one meeting, Rabbi Yochanan saw a small spark of good in him and convinced him to use his strength for Torah. Resh Lakish went on to become one of the great Sages and Rabbi Yochanan's chavruta.

So what do we learn? If you have a friend who does bad things, but you can see good in him, try to bring it out before you give up on him. We're responsible for helping every Jew bring out the good inside.

Look closely at the wording: Avraham says "tzaddik im rasha," putting the

righteous first. That's what he sees in everyone. He believes people can always change, and that everyone has a good spot that can shine and make them better. ■



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