



VAYEIRA



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By Rabbi Shalom M. Paltiel

SIGNS OF A NATION

BABYLONIAN TALMUD:

“The Jewish nation has **three signs**:

Compassion: “He shall grant you mercy;”

Bashfulness: “So that His awe be upon your faces;”

Kindness: “He (Abraham) will teach his children & family to do charity;”

“Anyone possesssing these three signs is fit to join this nation.”

JERUSALEM TALMUD – THE DIFFERENCES:

“Three gifts G-d gave the Jewish people.”

Kindness: “G-d will keep for you the covenant & the kindness.”

INITIAL APPROACH

Babylonian Talmud

SIGNS of intrinsic good character
inherited from Abraham

Employs verse about Abraham

Jerusalem Talmud

GIFTS of good character
received at Sinai

Employs post-Sinai verses

Rebbe's Questions:

1. What is the significance of this difference?
2. But Babylonian Talmud also uses post-Sinai verses - for the other two?!
3. Jerusalem Talmud emphasizes: At least one trait is required.
Babylonian Talmud is unclear: Are all three required, or is one sufficient?
Sources don't discuss a dispute between the Talmuds.

REBBE'S QUESTIONS

1. What is the significance of this difference?

2. But Babylonian Talmud also uses post-Sinai verses - for the other two?!

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REBBE'S APPROACH

Babylonian Talmud

SIGNS: OUTWARD EXPRESSION

Virtuous conduct & demeanor

Kindness: ACTS of kindness

Jerusalem Talmud

GIFTS: INNER QUALITIES

Virtuous character

Kindness: EMOTIONAL virtue

Answers Questions 1 & 2

HOW IT WORKS

Babylonian Talmud:

One sequence of virtue:

Selflessness: **ESSENCE**



Bashfulness: **SOUL**



Compassion: **EMOTIONAL DISPOSITION**



Acts of Kindness: **CONDUCT**

Jerusalem Talmud:

Three separate gifts - **EMOTIONAL VIRTUES**:

1. Compassion

2. Bashfulness

3. Kindness

Answers questions 2 & 3

HOW IT WORKS

Babylonian Talmud:

One sequence of virtue:

Selflessness: **ESSENCE**



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Compassion: **EMOTIONAL DISPOSITION**



Acts of Kindness: **CONDUCT**

Jerusalem Talmud:

Three separate gifts - **EMOTIONAL VIRTUES**:

1. Compassion
2. Bashfulness
3. Kindness

Answers Question 3

OUT OF ORDER

TALMUD'S ORDER:

Compassion, bashfulness, kindness

RAMBAM'S ORDER:

Bashfulness, compassion, kindness

WHY RAMBAM'S ORDER?

- Emphasizing sequence of flow as explained.

Plus illustrating:

- Compassion based kindness - not arrogance based.
- Bashfulness based compassion, not superiority based.

WHY TALMUD'S ORDER?

- To negate arrogance compassion could produce.
- Bashfulness should follow compassion: He is ashamed his kindness results from another's misfortune.

TAKE AWAY

Babylonian Talmud

Beinuni – struggler

Curbs behavior &
“practical emotions”

Jerusalem Talmud

Tzadik – non struggler

Transforms actual emotions

BEINUNI'S Edge: Accesses essence; permeates behavior