

Parshat Lech Lecha Relativism vs. Benchmarking

Simon Wolf

Human nature is to always look for a way to understand one's personal standing. Seemingly, the best way to do this is to benchmark oneself against objective standards. Aside from the issue of how to and who should set such standards, the deficit with such a method is how do we know that the standard of measurement is fair. In order to avoid this pitfall, the person often looks at their relative ranking versus others who have undertaken a similar task. For instance, when one takes a test, they many times receive an absolute score as well as a percentile ranking of such a result. The problem with this approach is that it ignores the unique aspects of any given individual. While this does highlight the aptitude, competence or proficiency of an individual at a particular task, it still does not address whether the person is fulfilling their potential. If one is gifted in a certain realm, then comparing that person to an objective standard or relative to others may overstate their standing versus their capabilities and vice versa someone who is challenged in a particular area then their ranking against an objective level or others may very well understate their realization of their potential. To say that a prodigy in music or a talented athlete is ranked very highly relative to others or a given standard is meaningless with regards to what their ultimate capabilities are and what they could possibly eventually accomplish. In addition, the subset against which one is compared will be heavily influential in determining the relative standing of that individual. If the right subset is chosen, then the relative results will be a more meaningful representation of that individual. On the other hand, such a narrow comparison, without giving context to the greater pool of individuals out there, might stunt the growth of that particular individual who thinks they have reached the pinnacle of their environment. Namely, a student who is smug about being at the top of their class, might be shocked to find that their standing when compared to a broader selection is mediocre. What is true with regards

to knowledge and prowess in the intellectual and physical world is even more pronounced in the areas of human character and behavior and the religious realm.

Chazal encourage looking to others for inspiration and growth, but are keenly aware that such relativism can lead to negative repercussions. Rabbi Matya ben Charash, in the Mishna in Avot, advises that it is better to be a "tail to the lions than a head to the foxes."¹ Being amongst those that are wiser, greater and possessing better character than the individual will encourage and cause one to rise to greater heights. On the other hand, leading those that lack those qualities will over time engender the person to gravitate towards those that are beneath them. Many of the commentators illustrate this by the fact that the lowest ranked member of the High Court is still considered to be classified higher than the leading figures of the regional courts.² Figuratively, this is indicated by the fact that the lion is apt to move its tail towards its head whereas the fox regularly turns its head toward its tail.³ Meaning, that those that look upwards tend to rise while those that look downwards tend to fall. That is why many teachers, rabbis and community leaders have others that they look up to in order to inspire them so that they don't become complacent in their positions of leadership.

The Rambam codifies this principle in his codex of law, Mishne Torah, where he writes, "It is a natural proclivity of man to be influenced in his ideas and conduct by his friends and associates, and to follow the tendencies of the people where he resides. Therefore, it is necessary for man to be in the company of the righteous, and to sit near the wise, in order to learn from their conduct, and to distance himself from the evil-doers who follow the path of darkness, in order not to learn from their conduct..."⁴ A great illustration of this is in the number of children that couples feel comfortable raising. Even if one believes that they want to bring up more or less than the average number of children, they are still guided by the average number of children in their

¹ רבי ינאי אומר אין בדינו לא משלות הרשעים ואף לא מיסורי הצדיקים רבי מתיא בן חרש אומר הוי מקדים בשלום כל אדם והוי זנב לאריות ואל תהי ראש לשועלים: (אבות ד,טו)

² ואל תהי ראש לשועלים - לומר לך שנוח לו לאדם להיות תלמיד למי שגדול ממנו בחכמה. שנמצא בכל יום מוסף על חכמתו מהיותו רב למי שקטן ממנו בחכמה. שנמצא פוחת והולך מחכמתו כענין שאמרו מי שהיה ראש לסנהדרי קטנה עושין אותו טפלה לסנהדרי גדולה. (רבינו יונה אבות ד,טו)

³ אמרו הוי זנב לאריות ואל תהי ראש לשועלים, כי זנב ארי ארי. ועוד כי טבע זנב הארי להתעקם נגד הראש, רמז אל המשתדל ומתדבק בעפר רגלי הנכבדים יהיה נכבד ומעולה. ואל תהי ראש לשועלים כי ראש שועל שועל. ועוד כי טבע השועל לעקם ראשו תמיד אל זנבו, לרמז כי המתחבר אל השפלים ימשך לו שפלות במדותיו ובדעותיו ובהנהגותיו. (רבי מתיא היצחרי אבות ד,טו)

⁴ דרך ברייתו של אדם להיות נמשך בדעותיו ובמעשיו אחר ריעיו וחביריו ונוהג כמנהג אנשי מדינתו, לפיכך צריך אדם להתחבר לצדיקים ולישב אצל החכמים תמיד כדי שילמוד ממעשיהם, ויתרחק מן הרשעים ההולכים בחשך כדי שלא ילמוד ממעשיהם, הוא ששלמה אומר הולך את חכמים יחכם ורועה כסילים ירוע, ואומר אשרי האיש וגו', וכן אם היה במדינה שמנהגותיה רעים ואין אנשיה הולכים בדרך ישרה ילך למקום שאנשיה צדיקים ונוהגים בדרך טובים, ואם היו כל המדינות שהוא יודעם ושומע שמעותן נוהגים בדרך לא טובה כמו זמנינו, או שאינו יכול ללכת למדינה שמנהגותיה טובים מפני הגייסות או מפני החולו ישב לבדו יחידי כענין שנאמר ישב בדד ידום, ואם היו רעים וחטאים שאין מניחים אותו לישב במדינה אלא אם כן נתערב עמו ונוהג במנהגם הרע יצא למערות ולחוחים ולמדברות, ואל ינהיג עצמו בדרך חטאים כענין שנאמר מי יתנני במדבר מלון אורחים. (רמב"ם הלכות דעות ו,א)

environs. On a personal note, I will never forget when we once hosted a guest from Israel in our house for Shabbat. At the Shabbat table, he politely inquired as to how many children God had blessed us with. Our response, which we proudly considered to be a not so insignificant number, drew the following retort, "that is a nice start." Deflated and shocked, my wife and I soon found out that the average number of children in his neighborhood was twelve. At the same time, when coworkers inquired as to how many children we had, it usually resulted in the response, "are you crazy, what were you thinking, have you never heard of birth control?" Sublimely, the number of children one considers raising is heavily influenced by one's location, friends and acquaintances. That is equally, if not more so, true with regards to the priorities one sets in their lives, the behaviors one considers acceptable, the attitudes that one entertains and even the way one dresses. Where one lives and the company they keep will be highly influential in the type of person that they are and the life that they lead. While in rare cases adversity might help to define the individual and strengthen their resolve and beliefs, over the long run their success in personal and religious growth will always be tethered by the environment and company they keep. That is why those that are involved in the noble work of leading or forming communities away from traditional Jewish centers need to always have their own leaders and friends outside of such a location that can help them to set higher benchmarks and to be a reality check as to what is objectively acceptable in order not them fall prey to the contentment of their relative standing in such a community. This might be one of the reasons that the Torah demands that one ascend to Yerushalayim at least three times a year (עלייה) in order to appear before God. That experience of being before God and being amongst the great leaders of Bnei Yisrael helps to shake one out of their relative complacency. The inspiration engendered will hopefully encourage them to reestablish their objective standards and to recognize their relative standing in a much larger context.

Chazal also saw competition and relative ranking as a means to better the individual. The Gemara in Bava Batra encourages multiple teachers to set

up shop in close proximity because of the principle that "jealousy among teachers increases wisdom (קנאת סופרים תרבה חכמה)."⁵ Based on that same concept, the Gemara allows one to replace a teacher with a better teacher because the new teacher will be more fastidious in his profession knowing that the one he replaced is seeking to win back his old position.⁶ While gauging oneself relative to others can be a productive and positive force for growth and change, Chazal also recognized that jealousy could be a pernicious and destructive force. The last of the Ten Commandments decries allowing oneself to be jealous of others and their possessions. Rabbi Eliezer HaKapar, in the Mishna in Avot, sums it up succinctly, "envy, lust and the desire for honor put a man out of the world (הקנאה והתאוה והכבוד מוציאין את האדם מן העולם)."⁷ In summary, measuring oneself against others has its place when it acts as a motivating force for improvement, but one has to be aware that it also has the danger of allowing for complacency and recidivism.

In this week's Parsha, as a result of the quarrel between the shepherds of Lot and Avram, Lot takes leave of Avram and settles in the fertile Jordan River plain in proximity to the cities of S'dom, Amora, Adma, Tzvo'im and Tzo'ar. Lot's relative position improves significantly with the move, as is indicated in next week's Parsha. He goes from being the protégé of Avram to sitting in the gateway to the city of Sdom, an indication that he held a position of prominence.⁸ Lot also continues to employ the welcoming of guests that he had learned from Avram when he greets and invites in the Mal'achim who come to visit S'dom. On the other hand, we don't see that Lot maintained any active contact with Avraham and to the contrary, it seems from this and next week's Parsha that there is no real contact between them. In the end, this becomes Lot's undoing. The loss of the tether to Avraham, which would have anchored Lot, instead is replaced by his standing in relation to S'dom. In that context, Lot seems and feels like he is a decently righteous individual, but the depravity of S'dom takes its toll on Lot and unbeknownst to him, he becomes more and more like them. That all comes to a head when the members of the city surround his house demanding that he disgorge the guests that had sought shelter under his roof. At great

⁵ אמר רב יוסף: ומודי רב הונא במקרי דרדקי דלא מצי מעכב, דאמר מר: (עזרא תיקן להן לישראל שיהיו מושיבין סופר בצד סופר. וניחוש דילמא אתי לאיתרשולי. א"ל:) קנאת סופרים תרבה חכמה. (בבא בתרא כא:)

⁶ ואמר רבא: האי מקרי ינוקי דגריס, ואיכא אחרינא דגריס טפי מיניה - לא מסלקין ליה, דלמא אתי לאיתרשולי. רב דימי מנהרדעא אמר: כ"ש דגריס טפי, קנאת סופרים תרבה חכמה. (בבא בתרא כא.)

⁷ רבי אליעזר הקפר אומר הקנאה והתאוה והכבוד מוציאין את האדם מן העולם: (אבות ד,א)

⁸ ולוט יושב, ישב כתיב אותו היום מינוהו ארכי דיינים (בראשית רבה ג,ג) \\ ולוט ישב בשער סדום - ישב כתיב אותו היום מינוהו שופט עליהם: (רש"י בראשית יט,א) \\ ישב בשער סדום - אין "ישיבה בשער" להדידות; רק מלכים היו "יושבים בשער" (שמואל ב' יט, ט; ירמיה לח, ז); או כדוגמת בועז (רות ד, א) - אישים העוסקים בעניין צבורי רשמי. גם אין לומר כי לוט היה גר בשער, שאם כן היה אומר: "בחומה", כדרך שמצינו ברחב (יהושע ב, טו). ביטוי זה מציין איפוא, כדעת חז"ל (בראשית רבה ג, ו), משרה צבורית גבוהה, שלוט שימש בה בעירו: (רש"י הירש בראשית יט,א)

peril to himself, Lot, righteously, defends his guests, but he then makes the people an offer which demonstrates how much he has been influenced by his environs. He proposes granting his two unmarried daughters to the throngs outside in order to placate the gathered mob and protect his guests.⁹ His willingness to sacrifice his daughters' chastity, something people normally would not do even at the cost of their own life, the Ramban notes, is an indication of how inured Lot was to debauchery.¹⁰ That type of promiscuity and relative morality was a result of the norms that were present in S'dom and had seeped into Lot's behavior. Without his mentor Avraham, Lot is unable to withstand the influences of S'dom. In this week's Parsha, God gives a warning shot across the bow by having Lot lose everything to the conquest of the Five Kings, only to be restored to him by none other than Avram. The message is that this relativism that Lot is practicing is not a sustainable way of life and if Lot does not reconnect with Avram, the material gains and the honor that Lot achieves by associating with S'dom will be fleeting. Lot remains deaf to God's warning, and chooses to remain in S'dom and go back to the tantalizing life of relative righteousness and moral relativism. Eventually, the honor that Lot had gained from moving to S'dom is stripped from him when he becomes a laughing stock in the eyes of his sons-in-law while trying to convince them to leave the city before God destroys it. Shortly after, his position and possessions are obliterated with the destruction of the city. With the destruction of S'dom, Lot's relative standing is lost and after escaping S'dom, he is never heard from again.¹¹

The dangers and difficulties of measuring oneself relative to others is highlighted by Chazal's uncertainty with regards to Noach's standing as a righteous individual. "...Noach was a righteous man in his generation..."¹² Rav Yochana sees the qualifying statement of "in his generation" as being an indication that God's praise for Noach was solely in relation to his generation, but in other contexts Noach would have been of no significance.¹³ It is comparable to a cellar in which

a barrel of wine is found amongst other barrels of vinegar, therefore its aroma is pleasing. Whereas, if it were found amidst other barrels of wine, it would not be outstanding. On the other hand, Reish Lakish opines that Noach's success in maintaining his integrity in the face of such degeneracy is an indication of his stellar character which would have only been enhanced in a more conducive environment. It is like a flask of perfume which diffuses a pleasing fragrance despite the unpleasant ambient odors, but its fragrance would be even more notable in a pleasant environment.

As noted above, relative comparisons can be used as a tool to better oneself, but the risks run high that such thinking will result in one utilizing it as a weapon to defend one's indiscretions. The Gemara in Arachin¹⁴ quotes Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya as saying that the art of rebuke has been lost (תמיהני אם יש בדור הזה שיודע להוכיח) as people lack the nuance and finesse to admonish without causing the recipient embarrassment.¹⁵ More damning is the view of Rabbi Tarfon who suggests that the ability to receive reproach has been lost (תמה אני אם יש בדור הזה שמקבל תוכחה). That is because the one being castigated responds to the scolder, "before you remove the splinter from between my eyes, why don't you eliminate the beam that is between your eyes." In other words, who are you to render reproof to me for a minor infraction when you are guilty of much more severe transgressions? The response is interesting since the person being admonished never addresses their impropriety. They simply justify their indiscretion by pointing to the fact that they are "better" than the one reprimanding them and therefore no corrective action is required. This attitude is likely the reason Lashon HaRa is so "popular." It allows the one conveying the deprecating information about their friend to not have to make any changes in their behavior. By simply raising one's relative standing vis-à-vis others, they can justify their continued misconduct or relieve themselves of the necessity to grow or improve their ways.

⁹ הפה־נָא לִי שְׁתֵּי בָנוֹת אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדְעוּ אִישׁ אוֹצִיאֶה־נָא אֹתָהֶן אֵלַיְכֶם וְעָשׂוּ לָהֶן כְּטוֹב בְּעֵינַיְכֶם וְרָק לְאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֹהִים תַּעֲשׂוּ דְבָר כִּי־עַל־כֵּן בָּאוּ בְּצֵל קִרְתִּי: (בראשית יט, ח)
¹⁰ אוֹצִיאָה נָא אֹתָהֶן אֵלַיְכֶם - מִתּוֹךְ שִׁבְחוֹ שֶׁל הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה בָּאוּ לִידֵי גִּנוּתוֹ, שֶׁהִיא טוֹרַח מֵאֵד עַל אֲכַסְנֵי שְׁלוֹ הַלְצִיל אוֹתָם מִפְּנֵי שִׁבְאוּ בְּצֵל קוֹרְתוֹ, אֲבָל שִׁפִּיּוֹ אֲנִשֵׁי הָעִיר בִּהְפָקָר בְּנוֹתָיו אֵין זֶה כִּי אִם רֹעַ לֵב, שֶׁלֹּא הָיָה עֵינֵי הַזְמָה בְּנָשִׁים מִרוֹחֵק בְּעֵינָיו, וְלֹא הָיָה עוֹשֶׂה לְבָנוֹתָיו חֲמֵס גָּדוֹל כְּפִי דַעְתּוֹ: לִכְךָ אָמְרוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ (תַּנְחוּמָא וִירָא יֵב) בְּנוֹתָיו שִׁבְעוּלָם אָדָם מוֹסֵר עַצְמוֹ עַל בְּנוֹתָיו וְעַל אִשְׁתּוֹ וְהוֹרֵג אוֹ נִהַרְג, זֶה מוֹסֵר בְּנוֹתָיו לְהַתְעוּלָה בְּהֵן, אֲמַר לוֹ הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְעַצְמָךְ אֵתָהּ מִשְׁמַרְן. וְהִנֵּה לוֹט הִיא מִתִּירָא עֲלֵיהֶם כִּי הִיא חוֹשֵׁב שֶׁהֵם אֲנָשִׁים, אֲבָל כֹּאשֶׁר הָיוּ בְּסוֹרִים אֵת אֲנִשֵׁי הָעִיר וְאָמְרוּ לוֹ כִּי מִשְׁחִיתִים אֲנַחְנוּ אֵת הַמְּקוֹם הַזֶּה וְשִׁלְחָנוּ ה' לְשַׁחְתָּהּ, אִזְ הִכִּיר בָּהֶם וְהֵאמִין לַעֲשׂוֹת כֹּל אֲשֶׁר צִוּ: (רַמְבַּ"ן בְּרַאשִׁית יט, ח)
¹¹ לְמִרְתּוֹ שֶׁהִסְפִּיר שֶׁל לוֹט וּבְנוֹתָיו מִמְשִׁיךְ בְּתוֹרָה, הַדְּבַר הָאֲחֵרוֹן שְׁשׁוּמֵעִים מִלוֹט הוּא בָקָשְׁתוֹ לְהַצִּיל אֵת הָעִיר צוֹעֵר (בְּרַאשִׁית יט, יח-לח)

¹² אֵלֶּה תוֹלְדוֹת נֹחַ נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדִרְתּוֹ אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים הַתְּהִלָּה־לָרַחֵם: (בראשית ו, ט)
¹³ אֵלֶּה תוֹלְדוֹת נֹחַ נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדִרְתּוֹ אֲמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: בְּדוֹרוֹתָיו, וְלֹא בְּדוֹרוֹת אֲחֵרִים, וְרִישׁ לְקִישׁ אָמַר: בְּדוֹרוֹתָיו, כֹּל שֶׁכֵּן בְּדוֹרוֹת אֲחֵרִים. אֲמַר רַבִּי חֲנִינָא, מִשֶּׁל דְּרַבִּי יוֹחָנָן לְמַה הַדְּבַר דּוֹמֵה - לְחַבִּית שֶׁל יַיִן שֶׁהִיָּתָה מוֹנַחַת בְּמִרְתֵּךְ שֶׁל חוּמֵץ, בְּמִקּוּמָה - רִיחָה נּוֹדֵף, שֶׁלֹּא בְּמִקּוּמָה - אֵין רִיחָה נּוֹדֵף. אֲמַר רַבִּי אוֹשְׁעִיא: מִשֶּׁל דְּרִישׁ לְקִישׁ לְמַה הַדְּבַר דּוֹמֵה - לְצִלּוּחִית שֶׁל פְּלִיטוֹן שֶׁהִיָּתָה מוֹנַחַת בְּמִקּוּם הַטְּנוּפֹת, בְּמִקּוּמָה רִיחָה נּוֹדֵף - וְכֹל שֶׁכֵּן בְּמִקּוּם הַבוֹסֵם. (סְנֵהדְרִין ק.ח.) \\ בְּדוֹרוֹתָיו - יֵשׁ מִרְבוּתוֹ דּוֹרְשִׁים אוֹתוֹ לְשִׁבְחָה, כֹּל שֶׁכֵּן שֶׁאֵלּוֹ הָיָה בְּדוֹר צַדִּיקִים הָיָה צַדִּיק יוֹתֵר, וְיֵשׁ שְׁדוֹרְשִׁים אוֹתוֹ לְגַנְאִי, לְפִי דּוֹרוֹ הָיָה צַדִּיק, וְאֵלּוֹ הָיָה בְּדוֹרוֹ שֶׁל אֲבָרְהָם לֹא הָיָה נֹחֵשׁ לְכָלֹם: (רַשִׁ"י בְּרַאשִׁית ו, ט)
¹⁴ תַּנְיָא, אֲרַ"ר טַרְפוֹן: תְּמָה אֲנִי אִם יֵשׁ בְּדוֹר הַזֶּה שֶׁמִּקְבֵּל תוֹכְחָה, אִם אֲמַר לוֹ טוֹל קִיסִים מִבֵּין עֵינַי, אֲמַר לוֹ טוֹל קוֹרָה מִבֵּין עֵינַיךָ. אֲמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲזַרְיָה: תְּמִיָּהנִי אִם יֵשׁ בְּדוֹר הַזֶּה שִׁיּוּדַע הַלּוֹכִיחַ. (עַרְכִּין טז.)
¹⁵ שִׁיּוּדַע הַלּוֹכִיחַ - דֶּרֶךְ כְּבוֹד שֶׁלֹּא יְהוּ פְּנִי מִשְׁתַּנִּין. (רַשִׁ"י עַרְכִּין טז.)

This type of misconception is also found in this week's Parsha. When the Four Kings attack the Five Kings, Avram rushes to the rescue of the defeated Five Kings in order to save his nephew Lot. In the story, the Five Kings seem like they are the innocent victims of the powerful and bullying Four Kings. The sympathy of the reader is drawn to their plight and this is reinforced by the fact that the hero of the story, Avram, sides with the Five Kings. Their salvation might have led them to erroneously believe that in relation to the Four Kings, the cities of S'dom, Amora, Adma, Tzvo'im and Tzo'ar were not so bad. Lest you come to such a mistaken conclusion, the Torah is unequivocal in its perspective on S'dom V'Amora when they are introduced as the residential choice of Lot. "The inhabitants of Sodom were very wicked sinners against God (רָעִים וְחַטָּאִים לַיהוָה) (מִאֲדָם)." ¹⁶ The travails they underwent in being defeated and then rescued did not cause them to introspect, but rather strengthened their resolve in their ways because they looked at the Four Kings and decided that they were not so bad. That complacency born of relativism led to their ultimate demise because they never reflected on their own evil ways, but simply utilized their comparative standing to justify their continued immorality and cruelty. This is likely one of the main reasons why Avraham eschews taking any compensation from the king of S'dom. If he accepted their offer of taking the spoils, it might have given the impression that he was giving his stamp of approval to their way of life and that they deserved his help. By foregoing any compensation, he makes it clear that his intervention and the benefit that accrued to them was solely to save his nephew Lot. If they wanted to be a real partner with Avraham, they would have to change their ways and not just pat

themselves on the back for being better than the Four Kings.

At the end of Sefer Shoftim, there are two stories of a similar ilk – Pesel Micha and Pilegsh BaGiva. The Ramban in his commentary to Parshat Vayera notes some of the similarities and differences between S'dom and Pilegsh BaGiva.¹⁷ One of the key points he makes is that the civil war that erupts between Binyamin and the rest of Bnei Yisrael has no party who is in the right. They each justify their stance vis-à-vis each other, but neither side takes reckoning of their own misdeeds or improper behavior. This leads to a situation in which both sides suffer terrible losses. Both of the stories at the end of Sefer Shoftim involve parties who are problematic. The narrative steers one's sympathy to one party or the other, but in the end they are all troublesome and their better standing is only in relative terms to the evil being perpetrated against them. For that reason, they all suffer negative consequences.

Looking to others for inspiration and motivation is commendable. On the other hand, taking solace in the misdeeds of others is a losing proposition. That is because relativism can only provide a short term respite from reckoning, but it is not a long term plan. The only solution to one's own shortcomings is mending one's ways, not trying to find someone else who has more or other deficits to justify your smugness. This week's Parsha reminds us of the dangers of relying on this relative rationalization. It hurts our ability to take corrective action and makes us miss the warning signs that could have helped us to avert a much worse outcome.

Shabbat Shalom

¹⁶ וְאֵנְשֵׁי סֹדֹם רָעִים וְחַטָּאִים לַיהוָה מִאֲדָם: (בראשית יג, ג)

¹⁷ ...ודע והבן כי ענין פילגש בגבעה (שופטים ט) אף על פי שהוא נדמה לענין הזה איננו כמוהו לרוע, כי הרשעים ההם לא היה דעתם לכלות הרגל ממקומם, אבל היו שטופי זמה ורצו גם במשכב האישי האורח, וכאשר הוציאו אליהם פילגשו נתפייסו בה. והאיש הזקן שאמר להם הנה בתי הבתולה ופילגשו אוציאה נא אותם ועשו להם הטוב www.swdaf.com

בעיניכם (שם יט כד), יודע היה שלא יחפצו בבתו ולא יעשו עמה רעה, ועל כן לא אבו לשמוע לו, וכאשר הוציא את פילגשו לבדה שתקן ממנו. והאיש בעל הבית גם האורח כולם היו חפצים להציל את האישי בפילגשו, כי פילגש היתה לא אשת איש, וכבר זנתה עליו: ... (רמב"ן בראשית יט, ח)