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Parshat Lech Lecha

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Important Announcement:

Next week we will be resetting the tehillim list. Please submit the names of people who are still in need of a refuah shlema, even if they are currently on the list.

[Submit Names](#)

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On Tuesday of last week, the Yeshiva Rabbanim, students, and office staff participated in a Hachnassat Sefer Torah donated to the Ramban shul in the Old City by our dear friends the Rennerts. The Sefer Torah was donated in memory of HaRav Yaakov Bar-Or z"l, husband of Gilia, Rav Bina's loyal secretary for many years. HaRav Yaakov was very active in the shul serving as chazan, gabbai, treasurer, and assisting in any other way possible.

The dancing procession was as uplifting as the dancing on Simchat Torah. Those who joined the Bar-Or extended family and members of the Ramban shul described the atmosphere as filled with kedusha.

Yehi zichro baruch.

Read more about HaRav Yaakov in the newsletter archives from [Vayakhel-Pekuei 5769](#).

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On Sunday, the entire Yeshiva continued their touring of

the land of Israel with a trip to Ein Gedi and the Dead Sea.



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HaRav Nebenzahl on Parshat Lech Lecha

HaRav Nebenzahl asks that his Divrei Torah are not read during Tefillah or the Rabbi's sermon.



Printer Friendly Sicha

**THE HERITAGE OF ERETZ YISRAEL
GIFTS WITH STRINGS ATTACHED**

Picture this scenario: a friend comes along and gives you a gift. You're grateful and happy. But then he comes back and says, "By the way, the gift has strings attached. I want you to do such and such in return." A while later he comes back with still more demands. By now you're not looking so happy ...

At first glance, this is how Hashem appears to be acting with Avraham Avinu in our parsha. Hashem promises Avraham, "I have given this land to your descendants." (Bereishis 15:18) Later on, He seems to make acquiring the Land contingent on the mitzvah of bris milah. "And as for you, you shall keep My covenant - you and your offspring after you throughout the generations." Bereishis 7:19). As we read on, we notice that even bris milah is not sufficient. Receiving Eretz Yisrael depends on observance of all six hundred and thirteen mitzvos!

Our analysis that Hashem is making this gift conditional is clearly incorrect. We need to find another way to explain the sequence of events. A better comparison would be if the friend offered us a plot of land to tend. The following day he informs us that the land is unsuitable for growing wheat, but would be more productive if we were to plant an orchard. The friend then teaches us how to plant and maintain an orchard - we need to fertilize the soil, then plant the seedlings, give them lots of water, and take good care of them. The giver in this case is not setting conditions, but is teaching us how to make best use of the gift he has given us. Not only would we not have any complaints against him; we would even feel grateful to the friend for his advice as well as for the gift.

Similarly, Hashem promised Eretz Yisrael to Avraham Avinu and then taught him how to keep the Land, warning him that without bris milah, he would not be able to take possession of it. Receiving the Land and remaining in it are conditional on fulfillment of bris milah, as well as the rest of the six hundred and thirteen mitzvos. The Land spat out the Canaanites. It could, Hashem yerachem, spit you out too, if you do not keep the mitzvos. In Birkas HaMazon we describe this precious Land as "a desirable, good, and spacious land." In that same paragraph we thank Hashem for the "Your covenant which You sealed with our flesh," as well as "Your Torah which You taught us." The "desirable, good, and spacious land" cannot be ours unless we keep "the covenant which You sealed with our flesh," and the "Torah which You taught us." Any attempt to settle the Land without fulfilling these conditions will be unsuccessful.

During the reign of the wicked king Achaz over Yehuda, Hoshea ben Elah ruled as the last king of Israel. Am Yisrael sinned terribly, worshipping idols and doing wicked things to anger Hashem. Hashem sent them into exile to Assyria. Sancheriv, king of Assyria, brought in foreigners from Bavel, Kutta and elsewhere to occupy the now desolate cities of Samaria. These nations continued worshipping their idols as they had in their countries of origin. As punishment, Hashem afflicted them with a plague of lions until they learned "the laws of the G-d of the land"(Melachim II 17:27) - that the Land cannot tolerate avoda zara. Settling the Land successfully requires observance of Torah and mitzvos. There are many countries throughout the world, many far vaster than

Eretz Yisrael. What makes this Land so special is that it is the "Land that Hashem, your G-d, seeks out; the eyes of Hashem, your G-d, are always upon it." (Devarim 11:12) Hashem did not give us the gift of Eretz Yisrael and then demand something in exchange for it, G-d forbid. We can only retain possession of a Land so saturated with spirituality by observing the covenant of bris milah and all the other mitzvos. A person can reside in Canada or Switzerland without fulfilling mitzvos, but he cannot live in Eretz Yisrael under those conditions. This is what Hashem taught Avraham Avinu and later the rest of the nation at Har Sinai and then at Har Grizim and Har Eival.

ONLY ONE TREATY

Today we are witness to the Land's being taken from us, Hashem yerachem. Many good Jews are fighting against the so-called "peace treaties" and trying to save the Holy Land. At the same time, however, some of these same people are part of a movement calling for a new 'social contract' which would involve compromising observance of mitzvos in Eretz Yisrael. The only treaty we know is the one we made with Hashem at Har Sinai and reiterated at Har Grizim and on Arvos Moav. This is the only contract which gives us any right to the Land! The only alternative would be a Palestinian treaty, which we certainly do not desire. There can be no other treaty! What right do we have to enter into an agreement permitting secular Jews to travel on Shabbos?

The Chafetz Chaim once tried to persuade storeowners to close their businesses on Shabbos. As always, the Chafetz Chaim spoke with the utmost sincerity. "Words that emanate from the heart enter the heart." The businessmen listened and agreed to keep their stores closed on Shabbos. However, a number of the storeowners claimed that they needed a few more weeks to organize their businesses, after which they would close on Shabbos. The Chafetz Chaim gently responded, "Kinderlach, if the Shabbos were mine, I would allow you to keep your stores open with pleasure. However the Shabbos is not mine. It belongs to Hashem; He gave it to us. Do I have any right to permit you to desecrate it?" Does anyone think for a moment that the Mishna Brura is a series of chumros which the Chafetz Chaim fabricated? His rulings are based on the Gemara and the later authorities; he did not make his own decisions to permit that which is forbidden. Certainly we too have no right to permit Shabbos desecration. Many places of entertainment in Tel Aviv may already be open on Shabbos, but for religious Jews to give their stamp of approval? That is a disgrace! Even if all the religious parties decided to vote in favor of this social contract, it would still have no meaning.

The only treaty we know is the one between us and the A-mighty. Our job is to help each other to fulfill our end of the bargain. "All Jews are responsible for one another." (Shevuos 39a). It is forbidden for any religious or non-religious Jew to desecrate the Shabbos. If we are unable to persuade our secular brethren to keep Shabbos, if we are unable to put enough effort into bringing them closer to Shabbos and Torah - and in my opinion more time should be spent on this - we should at least not give our stamp of

approval to Shabbos desecration. Our task is to demonstrate to the secular Jews what Shabbos is - to teach them about the sanctity of Shabbos. No treaty can ever permit chillul Shabbos. We cannot burn the candle at both ends - on the one hand to oppose a treaty with the Palestinians calling for giving them parts of Eretz Yisrael, such as the treaty signed at Wye during Netanyahu's previous term as prime minister, (what an appropriate name - "oy vye!") while at the same time to support a treaty violating the very purpose of our being in this Land!

WHO WAS AVRAM?

I have difficulty with another section of the parsha - the opening pasuk. The parsha begins: "Hashem said to Avram, 'Go for yourself from your land, from your relatives and from your father's house to the land that I will show you.'" (Bereishis 12:1) Who was Avram and why was he chosen? Until this point, the Torah has provided us with little background information on the future father of the Jewish nation.

It is only from our Oral Tradition that we know that Avraham Avinu recognized his Creator at age three and broke his father's idols, that he sanctified Hashem's Name in Ur Kasdim, and tried to convince others to serve Hashem. The incident in Ur Kasdim is alluded to later when Hashem said: "I am Hashem Who brought you out of Ur Kasdim," (Bereishis 15:7) yet we find no reference at all to the other incidents.

A simple reading of the end of Parshas Noach and the beginning of Parshas Lech Lecha implies that it was through Terach's merit that Avraham was chosen to make the journey to Eretz Yisrael. Although a week separates the readings of Parshas Noach and Parshas Lech Lecha, in the Torah itself the words are contiguous. At the end of Parshas Noach we read: "Terach took his son Avram ... to go to the land of Canaan." (Bereishis 11:13). Terach was unable to complete the journey and then Parshas Lech Lecha begins, "Hashem said to Avram, 'Go for yourself from your land, from your relatives and from your father's house to the land that I will show you.'" (Bereishis 12:1). It seems that Terach and Avraham set out together on a journey, but Terach died on the way and Avraham completed the journey without his father. We are not told anything about Avraham prior to the Divine Revelation he received. At this point the Torah begins to relate some of Avraham's great deeds and the immense trials of faith he underwent, but from the way the parsha begins, it appears as if Hashem had no special reason for choosing Avraham - He could just as well have revealed Himself to someone else.

HASHEM CHOOSES AVRAHAM

Clearly the Torah is trying to teach us a lesson. The Torah is emphasizing that indeed Hashem could have chosen someone else. As we recite in the Pesach Haggadah, "Yehoshua said to the entire nation, 'Thus said Hashem the G-d of Israel: your forefathers, Terach, the father of Avraham and the father of Nahor, always dwelt beyond the river, and they served other gods, but I took your forefather Avraham from beyond the river and led him throughout all the land of Canaan.'" (Yehoshua 24:2-3) Is this all

Yehoshua can say about Avraham Avinu? Why does he ignore the fact that Avraham recognized his Creator at a tender age? It appears as if Avraham was an idol-worshipper, and suddenly, for no apparent reason, Hashem whisked him away, "beyond the river and led him throughout all the land of Canaan." Apparently the relationship between Hashem and Avraham did not begin with Avraham's recognizing the existence of a Creator, but rather with Hashem having chosen Avraham.

In fact, we recite every morning: "You are Hashem the G-d, Who selected Avram and brought him out of Ur Kasdim." (Nehemiah 9:7) There, however, the pasuk concludes: - "You found his heart faithful before You." (Ibid. 8) Nevertheless, it does appear as if Hashem chose Avram and brought him out of Ur Kasdim before He found his heart faithful. It is well-known that Avraham recognized the existence of the Creator on his own, that he allowed himself to be thrown into the furnace rather than renounce his beliefs and that he spread the message of emunah and chesed. Why are these not mentioned? Why are we given the impression that these reasons were not factors in Hashem's decision to choose Avraham?

The Torah is teaching us that although Avraham had many merits, which it goes on to relate, such as the Akeida, the Creator's choice preceded all this. Avraham was created with qualities such as a great heart and mind, but it was left up to him which path he would choose. Perhaps Nimrod and others had similar qualities, yet they chose a different path. It was because Avraham chose to follow Hashem that "You found his heart faithful before You". Hashem, however, had chosen Avraham even before Avraham chose to follow the ways of Hashem. Out of all the idol worshippers of the generation, he was chosen to make the journey to the land of Canaan. The pasuk states: "Who can produce purity from impurity? No one!" (Iyov 14:4) One example that Chazal bring to elucidate this pasuk is that of Avraham being taken from the idol-worshipping home of Terach and brought to Eretz Yisrael to serve Hashem. (See Bamidbar Rabba, Parsha 19)

What point am I trying to make? Man has Free Choice and if he chooses the good path, he will be duly rewarded. The Rambam teaches us, in Hilchos Teshuva, that the idea of Free Choice is one of the foundations of our faith. Every person has the ability to become as great a tzaddik as Moshe Rabenu (though not as great a prophet) or as evil as Pharaoh. There is, however, a higher world where things are preordained.

A WORLD OF ILLUSION

Our physical world is one of choices, and every move we make is based on our decision about which path to follow. In relation to the upper worlds of absolute Truth, we are living in a world of illusion. If a child dreams that he lost his toy car, it is only a dream and not reality. He might have cried himself to sleep over the loss of his car, only to awaken in the morning to find it safely tucked under his pillow. What is the dream? That the car was lost. What is reality? That the car was not lost. Can we call this reality? Is the car really a car? Is it not just a piece of plastic with rubber wheels that

can be rolled back and forth! What the child perceives as reality is only an illusion. In the adult world, it appears to us that the adult is driving the car. The truth is that neither the car nor the driver is in control. Hashem runs the world and in a sense even the adult's car is imaginary.

From the perspective of the world we live in, our decisions are based on free choice. However, from the perspective of the higher worlds, it is all imaginary. Hashem decreed that Avraham will be Avraham, Yitzchak will be Yitzchak, and Yaakov will be Yaakov. In our world it appears to us as if we have free choice to decide how to live our lives, and we must live according to this illusion. It is forbidden for us to act upon what we think has been decided.

Likewise, we are all well aware that: "Whatever the Merciful One does, He does for the best." (Brachos 60b) Chazal tell us: "The World to Come is unlike this world; in this world, on good news one says 'Blessed Who is good and does good,' and on bad news one says 'Blessed is the True Judge.' In the World to Come, there will be only one blessing, 'Who is good and does good.'" (Pesachim 50a) In the upper worlds, everything is viewed as being for the good. In this world, however, when a tragedy occurs, G-d forbid, we must recite Baruch Dayan HaEmes. We are forbidden to rationalize that since we know everything Hashem does is for the good, we should recite the bracha of Baruch HaTov veHameitiv. We live in an illusory world and we must act accordingly.

The Gemara (Chagiga 14b) quotes a curious statement: "As they were about to enter the pardes, R' Akiva told his colleagues, "'When you arrive at the stones of pure marble do not say 'Water, water!' Calling marble 'water' would be a lie and 'One who tells lies shall not be established before my eyes.'" (Tehillim 101:7)

JUDGMENT AND CHESD

What does this mean? Is it not obvious that marble should not be mistaken for water? Must R' Akiva quote a pasuk to justify why his colleagues should not speak such nonsense when they enter the pardes? There are obviously deeper meanings behind this Gemara. As far as we are able to comprehend something so profound, the intention is that marble refers to strength, to the harsh Attribute of Judgment. The Attribute of Judgment, however, stems from the Attribute of Chesed. Water represents chesed. Judgment is really all chesed and even when we experience some of the harsh judgment of this world, we realize that it is all for the good: "Whatever the Merciful One does, He does for the best." (Berachos 60b) Perhaps, R' Akiva thought, they may only see the good in whatever happens to them. R' Akiva therefore tells them that in this world we cannot refer to judgment as chesed. When we arrive in the Next World we will recite hatov vehameitiv for what appears to be a harsh judgment, but in this world we may not, because we are unable truly to perceive it as such.

The above Gemara refers to the same R' Akiva who laughed when he witnessed foxes

emerging from Har HaBayis, because he knew that this fulfillment of the first half of Zecharia's prophecy assured the ultimate fulfillment of the second half: "Old men and women will once again sit in the streets of Yerushalayim!" (Zecharia 8:4) At the same time, however, R' Akiva tore his clothing together with the other sages in mourning for the Har HaBayis which now lay desolate. We are not permitted to rejoice at the site of the destruction and say "I know the Beis HaMikdash will soon be rebuilt." We have to tear our clothes when we approach the site of the desolation. We know that Zecharia's prophecy will be fulfilled eventually, but in the meantime, there is destruction! When one receives bad news, he must express what he feels and that is Baruch Dayan HaEmet! We know that there is a World above this World of Choice, but we must act according to the illusory world we live in.

In halacha we find many areas in which appearances are significant even when they contradict reality. Let me cite one example: there is a discussion in the Gemara about the direction in which one must pray. We follow the opinion that we must always face Yerushalayim whether we are standing to the east, west, north, or south. Another opinion states: "the Divine Presence is in the west." (Baba Basra 25a) Were we to follow this view, no matter where one is in the world, he would be obliged to pray facing west. Just as at Har Sinai and in the Mishkan, the Shechina was in the west, it always remains in the west. If so, what would we be facing when we face west? Someone in Yerushalayim would be facing more or less towards Beit Shemesh or Ramle, yet if a Jew in the United States were to pray towards Ramle, he would be facing east, not west! For him the Divine Presence cannot be in Ramle because that is towards the east. Where is the Shechina? Is it west of Tel Aviv? Is it in the Mediterranean? This also cannot be, because for a Jew in America, the Mediterranean is to his east!

The answer is that it all depends on a person's perspective. Beit Shemesh is to my west, while west of Tel Aviv is Greece, and west for most Americans refers to Los Angeles. West changes with a person's perspective. Each person can say that to him, the Shechina resides to his west even though this may be to someone else's east. According to this opinion (which we do not follow) the halacha is that you must pray to your west while another person must pray to his west even if this means that you are each facing towards a different place.

EARNING OUR SHARE IN THE WORLD TO COME

We do not live in a world of absolute knowledge of Hashem. We live in our illusory world of choice. We must make the best choices based on the information we have, even if we know that another world exists. That is the world of Absolute Truth, in which Hashem took Avraham out of the house of idol-worship for reasons we do not know, the world which "all of Israel have a share of." (Sanhedrin perek 10, Mishna 1) We may be aware of the other world's existence, but we are not permitted to act on this knowledge. We must strive to reserve for ourselves a place in the Next World by making the correct choices. We mention the merit of our forefathers, at every opportunity, but we must earn our share of the Next World on our own merit, not on

the merit of our fathers and not because we rely on the promise that "Every Jew has a share in the World to Come." (Sanhedrin 90a)

A Jew may ask, "Why should I bother to learn Torah and fulfill mitzvos, if in any event every Jew has a share in the World to Come? So, I might not be given a front-row seat along with the other tzaddikim in Gan Eden and I probably will not eat from the head of the Liviasan; perhaps I will get the tail. It is sufficient to know that I have a share in the Next World!" The Chafetz Chaim explained the answer to this with an analogy. There was once a rich factory-owner who gave very generously to charity. He instructed his treasurer that every Rosh Chodesh, when he gave out the salaries, he should set aside money for the poor - each portion based on what the owner determined. One Rosh Chodesh, the owner came to see how his business was operating and to observe the allocation of the monies. When the workers came to receive their salaries, they appeared before him and introduced themselves according to their occupations - one was an engineer, one an electrician, one a handyman, and so on. One man was left standing there. The owner went over to him, shook his hand, and asked him what work he did. He answered that his function is to receive a salary. The nearby crowd burst out laughing, but the poor fellow was acutely embarrassed.

The Chafetz Chaim explained that this is how a Jew will feel if he enters the Next World bare of mitzvos, relying solely on the fact that every Jew has a share in the World to Come. He will be embarrassed and everyone will laugh at him. Worse than that is the fact that in this world, someone who receives a paycheck without working for it suffers some embarrassment, goes home, and the embarrassment passes. In the Next World, the embarrassment is eternal. We must arrive in the Next World, not only because every Jew has a share in the World to Come, in the same way as Hashem chose Avraham even before Avraham demonstrated his righteousness, but through making the right choices in life. This applies to every Jew.

BECOME AN EXECUTIVE!

I can think of another potential cause for laughter. What would happen if the factory employed a person as a janitor, when he had all the necessary skills and qualifications to become a manager? When his turn comes and the owner asks him what he does, he will be very embarrassed to answer that he sweeps floors. You could have been a high ranking executive! Why are you sweeping floors? In this case, he earned his salary, but he had the qualifications to earn much more. If we are blessed with the ability to become managers, it is forbidden for us to sweep floors! Every one of us here in the Yeshiva has the ability to become a high ranking "executive". Tosafos (Kesubos 63a) write that it is only natural for someone who sets out to learn Torah to become great. Obviously it requires hard work on his part, but the potential exists within anyone who sets out to learn.

Many years ago I was sitting with my Rebbe, HaRav Nachum Pertzovitz zt"l in Yeshivas Mir, when a student approached him to seek his counsel. This young man was troubled

by the fact that he had already spent five years in the Yeshiva and did not feel that he had seen positive results from his learning. The student asked, "Do Chazal not teach us that a person who has learned for five years and has not seen siman bracha will probably never see it?" (See Chullin 24a) He wondered if perhaps the time had come to leave the Yeshiva. R' Nachum answered that the Gemara refers to a person who has spent his time learning; a person who has not learned cannot hope to see any siman bracha!

When the Tosafos state that a person who sets out to learn generally does see a siman bracha, the condition is that he must expend great effort and not rely on the merit of his forefathers. The fact that he is descended from Avraham Avinu and that his grandfather was the Rav of the community is not enough. One must strive to achieve his own greatness irrespective of who his grandfather may have been.

This requirement is incumbent on every Yeshiva student, but we in Yerushalayim have an even greater obligation. Interestingly, the first Talmud Torah as we know it was founded in the time of the Talmud. The Gemara (Baba Basra 21a) states, "The sages enacted that teachers of children (this enactment was abolished when it became clear that only older children were being sent, while the younger the child was, the greater benefit there was to his learning be appointed in Yerushalayim). Which verse were they expounding? 'For Torah shall go forth from Zion and the word of G-d from Jerusalem.'" (Yeshayahu 2:3)

We can learn from here that Yerushalayim is the place best suited for anyone to learn Torah. Baruch Hashem, we merited receiving an education in our youth and are not beginning now with Aleph Beis. The location of our Yeshiva, overlooking the Kosel HaMaarovi, is more suited for growth than any other Yeshiva on earth - it is our choice whether to become executives or to sweep floors. Hashem knows what will become of us, but we must make our own decisions and choices.

Many feel that we need religious doctors and engineers. Certainly that would be great, but we must keep in mind that doctors and engineers can come from the secular public while only a religious Jew can become a Torah giant! Only Yeshiva students can become gedolei Torah.

GROWING IN TORAH

Our obligation is, to toil, to spend many hours in Torah study and to become great. There are two types of bitul Torah. There is quantitative bitul Torah, where a person does not utilize his time properly in order to learn as much as he can, and what the Acharonim refer to as qualitative bitul Torah; if one had the opportunity to study the Gemara, Rishonim, and Acharonim but he instead elected to study Ein Yaakov. A person who could have learned much more deeply but satisfied himself with Gemara and Rashi is guilty of qualitative bitul Torah. Obviously, one is not expected to do more than he is capable of, but a Jew who could do more is guilty of bitul Torah if he spends

his time studying only simpler texts.

We must all strive to be great, to grow in Torah in all the forty-eight ways in which the Torah is acquired, but first and foremost by learning. We must concentrate hard when we daven. "Enlighten our eyes with Your Torah and let our hearts cleave to Your mitzvos." and "Endow us graciously from Yourself with wisdom, insight, and discernment." We must pray that Hashem grant us the wisdom of the Torah.

The Chafetz Chaim used to wonder how a Jew can beseech Hashem for "endow us graciously from Yourself with wisdom, insight and discernment" and ask "enlighten your eyes with Your Torah and let our hearts cleave to Your mitzvos" and yet not open a sefer after davening to check if his prayers were answered!

We must daven, learn, and follow in the footsteps of Avraham Avinu by performing many acts of chesed. A bachur need not look outside the Yeshiva for chesed opportunities, for there are many opportunities inside as well. A veteran talmid can help a new talmid get settled. If you understand the Gemara, you can help someone who is having difficulty. In the same way that Avraham Avinu merited receiving the Land of Israel through Torah, avodah, and gemilus chasadim, we too can merit receiving the Torah and Eretz Yisrael. The pasuk states "And He gave them the lands of nations, and they inherited the toil of regimes, so that they might safeguard His statutes and observe His teachings." (Tehillim 105:44-45) If we strengthen our Torah, avodah, and gemilus chasadim, then we will merit receiving the gift Hashem promised to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov.

Perhaps one area which warrants special emphasis is "Oneg Shabbos" - "delighting in the Shabbos." Why do I single out this mitzvah? The Gemara states, "Whoever delights in the Shabbos is granted a nachala, a heritage - without troubles." (Shabbos 118a) If today all we see is "troubles without the nachala - the land," then perhaps the way to remedy the situation is to delight in the Shabbos, which promises us "heritage - without troubles." Then we will truly deserve to receive "the heritage of your forefather Yaakov," (Yeshayahu 58:14) and merit seeing the total redemption speedily in our days, Amen.

Staff Dvar Torah by HaRav Chizkiyahu Nebenzahl, Morah D'Atra of the Old City

"You Too Can Become a Ben Torah"

To the Talmidim of Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh, disciples of Morenu HaGaon HaRav Aharon Bina Shlit"a. You may be physically very distant from us, but your hearts are always here as you eagerly long for and await your return to the holy Zion. It is an honor and a privilege to share with you a few points from Parshat Lech Lecha which can perhaps give us some chizuk and inspiration.



The first point I would like to share with you I heard from my father Shlit"a. He pointed

out that our parsha teaches us the importance of weighing our actions carefully not only making sure that they are truly leShem Shamayim but taking into account all the subsequent ramifications for which we will also be held accountable.

The Gemara provides us with a few reasons why Avraham Avinu was punished with his descendants becoming slaves in Egypt (see Nedarim 32a). One of the reasons provided is that he did not convert the people of Sodom when he saved the king of Sodom.

Clearly Avraham Avinu had reason for acting the way he did, either because he did not wish for the king of Sodom to take credit for having added to Avraham's wealth, perhaps the people of Sodom were of such bad character that he felt they were unworthy of being members of the Jewish nation (as we find with Amon and Moav). Avraham's actions were well calculated and purely leShem Shamayim yet he was still taken to task for this (only someone on the level of Avraham Avinu would be judged so harshly for this).

My father added that this was why Hashem showed Avraham Avinu the downfall of Sodom. Avraham had to see that by not converting them they descended to such a level that they had to be destroyed. Perhaps had they been educated in the Beit Midrash of Avraham Avinu and learned what it means to live a life of chesed they would not have descended to such a level. Avraham reacted by praying on their behalf, he felt somewhat responsible for the depravity to which Sodom had sunk.

When we act we must weigh any and all the ramifications of our actions.

There is an additional point we can derive from our parsha which I heard from my father Shlit"a. When we find a mitzvah which is not being observed by the community at large the way it should be then if we strengthen ourselves in observance of the mitzvah, we will receive the reward of all the people combined. This my father derived from the Mishna in Pirke Avos which states:

"there were ten generations from Noach to Avraham - to show the degree of His patience; for all those generations angered Him increasingly, until our forefather Avraham came and received the reward of them all" (Avos 5:2).

What reward did the previous generations deserve that Avraham Avinu was given their reward? My father explained that each of them began the journey towards Eretz Yisrael but gave up along the way. Avraham was the only one who completed the journey and was thus received the reward which would have been coming to the previous generations. We too must strengthen ourselves in mitzvot which are not always the most popular.

Perhaps today we need to emphasize learning Torah amongst those who work for their livelihood. Firstly, learning Torah is greater than all other mitzvot and its reward is "keneged kulam" "equivalent to them all." Learning Torah also protects us from destruction.

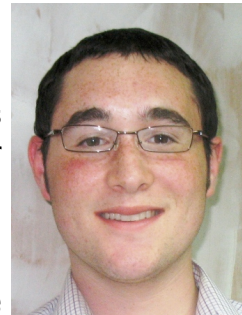
My father Shlit"a says that a Jew who works yet takes advantage of every spare moment and uses it for learning, he too is considered a ben Torah. Let us take stock of our time, how many minutes, hours, days, and months could be put to better us. Why not take advantage of our time, grab these moments, and reap the reward for all those who are not utilizing their time in the best way possible. Why not set up shiurim, set aside side for learning Torah.

At the beginning of our parsha Hashem tells Avraham Avinu "vaavarcha mevarachecha" "I will bless those who bless you" (Bereishis 12:3). If one wishes to be blessed by Hashem, says my father, then he should try blessing his fellow Jews. The pasuk "I will bless those who bless you" is not limited to blessing Avraham Avinu, but applies to blessing his descendants as well (see Rambam Hilchos Tefillin 5:1)

Student Dvar Torah by Dov Stokar

Following Hashem's Will

The Sefas Emes raises a question found in Rashi and the midrash. Why did Hashem not inform Avraham immediately where He was taking him to? Why was it left a mystery: "go for yourself from your land, from your relatives, and from your father's house to the land that I will show you"? Couldn't Hashem have informed Avraham immediately that he was being taken to Canaan? The midrash explains that Hashem spoke to Avraham in this manner to make the mitzvah more dear to him and to reward him for every step he takes.



The Sefas Emes adds that Eretz Yisrael is the centerpiece of Hashem's will. (In the words of Rav Bina: "G-d's main office").

A person must nullify his own wants and desires and focus only on what Hashem wants from him. Only when a person is able to negate his own desires does Hashem reveal His desire. Our Rebbeim teach us that a person must always listen to and accept that which he is unable to understand, acknowledging that Hashem is infinite and beyond our understanding. His ratzon therefore takes precedence over ours, do we believe for a moment that we know better? A basic foundation of Judaism is to negate our wants and desires for fulfilling those of Hashem.

Not only was Avraham not immediately informed where he was going, but was told to leave his "land, relatives, and father's house". Why in such detail? First he must leave his past with all its distractions and influences which prevented him from clearly identifying the ratzon Hashem. Living in the house of Terach with his avoda zara and growing up in the immoral society of Charan were all barriers to Avraham's seeing the ratzon Hashem. He therefore must leave his family and father's home as well. Only after leaving his past behind was he able to follow Hashem's will and proceed to unidentified land simply because that was Hashem's will.

Visitor Log, Mazal Tov's, Tehillim List

Mazal Tov

Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh wishes a mazal tov to:

- [Neal](#) (5761-62) and Malky Frohlich on the birth of a baby boy.

Baruch Dayan Emet

Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh regrets to inform you of the passing of:

- Taly Cohen, the sister to [Adir](#) Greenfeld (5762).
- Leah Mathews, the maternal grandmother of [Kalman](#) Honig (5763).

The following members of our extended YNA family need our tefilot:

Printer Friendly Tehillim List

- Ditzza bat Vardit
- Zev Eliezer ben Chaya Shaindel
- Chaya bat Grunia
- Yitzchok ben Shayna Ita
- Moshe Zanvel ben Brindel
- Gershon Yitzchok ben Mottel Tzerel
- Reuven ben Tova Chaya
- Rivka Margalit bat Etta
- Chaya Meira Mindel bat Chava Golda
- Sarah Nechama bat Russ Malka
- Chaya Sarah bat Fanya Luna
- Elazar ben Nouber
- Na'ava bat Ami bat Sara Leah
- Gilad ben Aviva
- Edmund ben Nazir
- Devorah Leah bat Hindel
- Avram Gershon ben Tzippah
- Sarah Nechama bat Russ Malka
- Dovid ben Miriam
- Evelyn bat Dina
- Avraham David ben Miriam Goldeh
- Ephraim Yitzchak ben Golda
- Margalit bat Rachel
- Yaacov ben Baila
- Chaya Tziporah Sheva bat Faiga
- Ester bat Leah
- Miriam Rivka bat Adina Leah
- Chaya Esther bat Golda Rachel
- Shayna bat Chava
- Eliezer ben Sorah
- Fruma bat Rochel
- Yonatan Moshe ben Devorah Tova
- Naomi Sara bat Henna Miriam
- Fruma bat Ita
- Tinok ben Esther Sharon
- Leah bat Rivkah
- Zacharia Kalman ben Yael Margolit
- Eliezer ben Sorah
- Shmuel Chai ben Hadassa
- David Yosef ben Faige Perel

- Rafael Pinchas ben Esther
- Avraham Pinchas ben Sarah Etel
- Lev ben Esther
- Akiva ben Gittel
- Rachel bat Chana
- Tsilah Blimah bat Tsipporah
- Tuvia ben Yachad
- Lev ben Reuven
- Dovid ben Leah
- Temima Adina bat Keren Ronit



And of course we are always davening for the safe return of Gilad Shalit (Gilad ben Aviva)

Next week we will be resetting the tehillim list. Please submit the names of people who are still in need of a refuah shlema, even if they are currently on the list.

[Submit Names](#) to the list.

[Send Us Your Announcements](#)

Please, if you have any smachot or chas v'shalom, less happy occasions, [let our office know](#) so we can keep everybody updated. **Are you visiting Israel?- [let us know!](#)** We'd love to host you for a shabbat meal, davening, a shiur and would love for you to stop by.

Shabbat Shalom,
Rav Bina, Netiv Aryeh
Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh

Use this area to provide your subscribers information about your organization.

Sincerely,

HaRav Aharon Bina, Netiv Aryeh
Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh

