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TOURO TORAH

• Lander College for Women • Divrei Torah Newsletter • Parshas Lech-Lecha •

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Ben 'Adam Le-Chavero: Prerequisite for being a Good Jew

By Hinda Friedman

This week's parshah, Parshas Lech-Lecha, begins with Hashem telling Avraham to leave his homeland. The most climactic portion of this week's parshah is found at the end, when the Bris Bein Ha-Besarim takes place. In between these two interactions with Hashem, Avraham Aveinu has many human interactions. Beginning with his travel down to Mitzrayim, he makes sure to bring gifts for Par'oh. On his way back, the Torah writes, "Va-Yelech Le-Masa'av," and Rashi explains that Avraham returns to the same inns he stayed at on the way to Mitzrayim in order to repay his debts to the innkeepers. This is a clear example of basic middos tovos. Also, we see that Avraham is exceedingly careful about gezel, stealing, and does not want his sheep grazing on others' property. He even risks his life and fights against mighty kings in order to save his nephew Lot. When the king of Sedom offers Avraham gifts, he refuses to take anything by way of compensation.

Rav Beinish Ginsburg, quoting his rebbe, Rav Gedaliah Anemer ztz"l, brings a beautiful explanation for this seemingly build-up of ben 'adam le-chavero encounters that conclude with the epitome of a ben 'adam la-Makom experience at the Bris Bein Ha-Besarim. He explains that Avraham was already exemplary in the area of ben 'adam la-Makom. He had recognized Hashem, rejected the entire concept of 'avodah zarah, and followed Hashem wholeheartedly when he was told 'Lech-lecha.' He had passed those tests with "flying colors." What was left for him to fulfill now was to excel in ben 'adam le-chavero as well. He had to demonstrate that to be the father of Klal Yisrael, it is not enough to have a superb connection to Hashem. Rather, one must be exemplary in his interactions with others as well. Once he had proven himself to be a ben 'adam le-chavero master, he is able to be a part of an everlasting bris with Hashem.

One learns from this that to be a good Jew, it is not enough for one to excel in his/her relationship with Hashem, in *davening*, in learning, or in *berachos*. A prerequisite to any such relationship is to be a *mentsch*. One needs to make sure that he/she is careful in his/her treatment of others. To be a true 'oved Hashem, one needs to be an outstanding person first.

Have a beautiful Shabbos!

it is not enough to have a superb connection to Hashem. Rather, one must be exemplary in his interactions with others as well.

Hinda Friedman

Eretz Yisrael: Our Present and Hope for the Future

By Elana Fisher

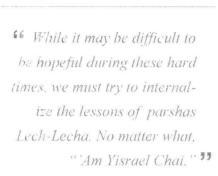
In this week's parshah, Lech-Lecha, Hashem promises the gift of Eretz Yisrael to Avraham many times. The Ramban (on Bereshis 15:18) explains that each one of these times is for a unique purpose. The first time is when Avraham enters the land, Hashem says, "To your descendants, I will give this land" (Bereshis 56:1). Here, Hashem does not elaborate on the extent of what this gift of the land entails. Therefore, based on His words, the implication is that Hashem is referring to only the land in which Avraham had already crossed which was "as far as Shechem, up until the plain of Moreh" (Bereshis 12:6).

Once Avraham's merits increase in Eretz Yisrael, Hashem adds, "Raise now your eyes and look out North, South, East, and West. For all the land that you see, to you I will give" (Bereshis 13:14-15). Ramban explains here that the seeing with his eyes is not literal in the sense that the gift of the land was limited to what Avraham saw. Rather, it is meant in a general sense; Hashem will give all the lands of the Cana'anim that Avraham could in theory see, in all directions.

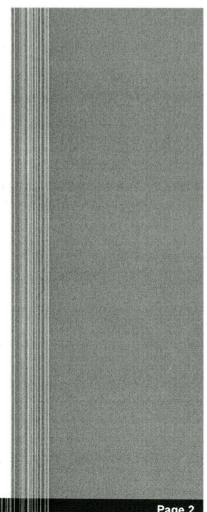
Next, in Bereshis 15:18, Hashem elaborates even further, by adding the borders of the land and mentioning the names of the peoples whose lands are included in the promise. In addition, Hashem seals a covenant with Avraham over those lands, in order to ensure that no sin of the lewish people would ever lead to His revoking this promise.

Lastly, when Hashem commands Avraham to give himself a bris milah, He says, "I will give to you and your offspring after you... the whole of the land of Cana'an for an everlasting possession" (Bereshis 51:2). Here, Hashem is emphasizing that even if Avraham's offspring were to be exiled from their land, they will eventually return and re-inherit it. No matter what, Eretz Yisrael belongs to Avraham's offspring.

In short, each time that Hashem mentions the land as a gift for Avraham, He adds more details. So at first, Avraham is just promised the land that he physically passes through. Then, he is promised the idea of the land. Following that, he is promised the entire land with its boundaries, and a covenant that seals the gift from Hashem. Finally, Hashem (continued on page 3...)



-Elana Fisher



66 The mal'achim knew how important it is to seize the opportunity to increase shalom. 33 -Faire Weinfeld

Increasing the Shalom

By Faige Weinfeld

Bereshis 12:11 states:

and saintliness, Avraham never knew the riage. The mal'achim knew how important son Sarah really was.

Reb Chaim Shmuelevitz derives a very vital message from this seemingly small interaction. Avraham and Sarah represent a quintessential Jewish marriage, and it appears to us that nothing could have (continued on page 4...)

possibly enhanced this marriage. Yet, "הנה נא ידעתי כי אשה יפת מראה את" "...Now I when the mal'achim (angels) come to bless know that you are a beautiful woman." Avraham, they ask about Sarah in order to Rashi raises the obvious question, "How is endear her to her husband (Bava it possible that Avraham, who had been Metzia 87a). Sarah, again, is endeared to married to Sarah for decades already, did Avraham as he is made to realize Sarah's not know that she was beautiful?" Rashi extreme modesty. This increased the shacomments that due to Sarah's modesty lom bayis (peace of home) in their marextent of her beauty. This caused Av- it is to seize the opportunity to increase raham to realize what an exceptional per- shalom. Any shalom, even an amount that is seemingly small, that is added to a relationship is extremely valuable! Moreover, even if there is already shalom within a relationship, creating more shalom is of great importance.



(...continued from page 2) promises that this gift will be eternal; even if Avraham's offspring are kicked out of the land, they will eventually return, because it will always be theirs.

Immediately after Hashem commands Avraham to have a bris milah, which is the culmination of Hashem's covenant with Avraham, Hashem tells Avraham that He will bless Sarah with a child (Bereshis 51:50). Not only does Hashem promise Eretz Yisrael to Bnei Yisrael forever, but also He ensures that Klal Yisrael will continue, even when the prospects of that occurring seems most unlikely.

From these promises to Avraham, we can gain some comfort regarding the tragic and difficult events in Eretz Yisrael today. Given the recent stabbings and shootings in Eretz Yisrael, one could erroneously believe that we are losing our hold on the Land and our future as a nation. If one adds to this the relative silence of the world and media misrepresentation of the violence against the Jews in Eretz Yisrael, it is easy to understand how one can be discouraged and despair.

The events of this parshah should strengthen us. Hashem promises the land to Avraham and his descendants in four different ways, making it very clear that Eretz Yisrael belongs to Avraham and his offspring eternally. Then, Hashem takes it one step further and blesses Sarah with her child, as if to say that Klal Yisrael does not need to worry about being wiped out. Even though the terrorists persist, Hashem is watching over us, ensuring that the Jewish people and its Land forever endure. While it may be difficult to be hopeful during these hard times, we must try to internalize the lessons of parshas lech-lecha. No matter what, "Am Yisrael Chai,"

Lech Lecha: Fulfilling the Ratzon Hashem

By Sarah Lederer

According to the Rambam, Avraham Avinu was given ten nisyonos from Hashem, beginning with "Lech Lecha Me-'Artzecha". The Ramban in Bereshis 12:1, says that the nissayon for Avraham was leaving a land in which he had lived for so long, his birthplace, and where all of his family remained. In the Sefer 'Asara Nisyonos (page ND), the author asks a few questions about how this possibly could have been a nissayon for Avraham. Didn't Avraham want to leave the idolatrous place in which he was raised? Since he was the only one to believe in Hashem, wouldn't he be happy to leave and start anew somewhere else? The answer is that it is very difficult for a person to leave his house, to leave a place in which he is settled, as challenging as it is to live there. Leaving one's house is difficult, because it goes against the nature of man. Despite the difficulty of this nissayon, Avraham took his wife, servants, and household and traveled a great distance to an unknown place without asking any questions. Avraham overcame this nissayon by understanding that this was the ratzon Hashem, and if it is ratzon Hashem, how can he not fulfill it to the best of his abilities!

Another reason that *Lech Lecha* was a *nissayon* for *Avraham* is because *Avraham* had worked so hard in his 'avodas Hashem in Charan. This is the place in which he found the Creator! He and Sarah dedicated their lives to publicizing Hashem's name, and now he is being told to leave all of it to journey to a place where no one will even know who he is. The *nissayon* for *Avraham* here was to realize that even though it may seem that it might be *ratzon Hashem* to continue calling out in the name of Hashem, it was truly the *ratzon Hashem* to leave and listen to His commandment. *Hashem* is saying *Lech Lecha* is my *ratzon*!

Many times we may think that a certain way/action is *ratzon Hashem* or vice versa; *Hashem* may send something our way that does not seem like the right thing for our growth and 'avodas Hashem. In order to overcome this *nissayon*, we must be able to realize and recognize what the true *ratzon Hashem* is and to accept anything that *Hashem* sends our way. Rather than being frustrated, we must fulfill the Will of Hashem out of love and joy, in whatever form He may send it. Let us all merit to act with the same courage and willingness that *Avraham* displayed in his *nissayon* of *Lech Lecha Me-'Artzecha* - to be submissive to His *ratzon* and to serve *Hashem* in the truest of ways.

Leaving one's house is difficult, because it goes against the nature of man. 57

(...continued from page 3)

This concept can be applied to all relationships. If we can increase the *shalom* between ourselves and our fellow Jews, then we have achieved something of great significance. *Eretz Yisroel* is currently in a situation in which there is much terror and cha-

os, and we yearn for there to be peace there. May we take the message of this week's parshah and increase the shalom we have between us and our fellow Jews. Then, with Hashem's help, our efforts at shalom can serve as a zechus (merit) for shalom on a grander scale.

Touro Torah Faculty Advisor Dr. S. Weissman Staff Sarah Lederer Leah Meth Hinda Friedman Contributors Elana Fisher Faíge Weinfeld

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