

## Parshat Lech Lecha

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# Weekly Dvar Torah A project of the NATIONAL COUNCIL OF YOUNG ISRAEL

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### **Sefer HaYashar**

## Rabbi Chanaya Berman Graduate, NCYI Rabbinic Training Program

Many of us know that, in addition to the classical names of the Chamisha Chumshei Torah, there are other names that Chazal use to refer to these seforim. We are most familiar with Devarim which is referred to as Mishneh Torah, and Vayikra as Toras Kohanim. These names reflect the essence of the respective seforim; Mishneh Torah since its theme is a review of the entire Torah, and Toras Kohanim since it primarily deals with laws pertaining to the Beit Hamikdash and Kohanim. The Gemara, however, tells us that Sefer Bereishit also has a second name – Sefer Hayashar. The Gemara goes on to explain that, since this sefer deals with the Avot (our forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov) who are called Yesharim, it is fitting to call the sefer by that title as well.

The Netziv, in his introduction to Sefer Bereishit, questions why the Avot are called Yesharim and not chassidim or tzaddikim? He goes on to explain that the way they dealt with people (even ones that did not agree with their way of thinking) was in a manner that can only be described as Yashar – straight. The Netziv goes on to say that we have to learn from the Avot and emulate their actions according to our abilities and our understanding.

With this focus, we can replace our simple understanding of these stories regarding our Avoy with a more nuanced appreciation of who these people were and what we can learn from them. This will make the Parshiyot of Sefer Bereishit relevant to our own lives.

To illustrate this point further, let us examine a famous comment of Rashi in this week's parsha. When Avraham Avenu left Charan at the command of HaShem, he took with him the "Nefesh asher assu B'Charan" – the people he made in Charan. Rashi tells us that since Avraham and Sarah brought these people close to HaShem, it is as if Avraham and Sarah created them. Rabbenu Yonah explains how Avraham was able to be mekarev these people – it was his middah of Niddevos Lev (good heartedness – wanting to help and do for others).

This means that Avraham had a love for people and wanted to help them reach their own innate potential to come close to HaShem. For this reason, Avraham was so focused on helping them grow close to HaShem.

It is clear from the Rabbenu Yonah that, if Avraham did not really love these people and be motivated exclusively for their benefit, then even with his talent and wisdom he would have been incapable of affecting change in their beliefs and behaviors. At times, each one of us is in a position that allows us to affect change in others for the positive. Whether we are parents dealing with children, spouses interacting with each other, teachers interacting with students, or coworkers in a workplace setting — if we learn to truly love the other person and work for their benefit, we can affect positive change in them.

Look at how powerful a message we can learn from one pasuk in Chumash when viewed through the eyes of Chazal! Let us continue to learn the rest of these Parshiyot with this mindset, and may we continue to grow in our understanding of HaShem's Torah. Good Shabbos.

## The Weekly Sidra "A Human Fault"

Rabbi Moshe Greebel Z"L

In this week's Sidra we see how the Torah always adheres to the truth of everything, especially when it comes to the faults of individuals, regardless of who those individuals happen to be. In the repository of Torah there is never any 'white washing' of anyone, and thus, according to the Ramban (Rav Moshe Ben Nachman 1194-c- 1270) of blessed memory, when Avram (his name at the time) perjured himself by stating that Sarai (her name at the time) was his sister, he did in fact sin.

Yet, one is compelled to ask, why does the Torah reveal to us the flaws of our forefathers? What need is there to make known such human foibles? The answer to this question can be found in the brilliant words of Rav Shamshon R'fa'el Hirsch (1808- 1888) of blessed memory.

The answer to this is quite obvious. It is not the literary style of the Torah to cover up any of the faults of those in Mikra (Scripture). It is rather just the opposite, for, the Torah deliberately wants to make known that even the 'giants' among us had to struggle with their Yetzer Hara (evil impulse) and prevail, as we must also do.

This is why, continued Rav Shamshon, the Torah HaK'dosha did not cover up the human fault of Moshe Rabbeinu (for having struck the rock), the most prominent of individuals in the Torah. It displays to us how even someone of Moshe's incomparable status could be convinced by the Yetzer Hara (evil impulse) to sin on this occasion.

Had Moshe never sinned however, we would never have learned how to correct errors from him, for we would have attested that he was a Malach (heavenly emissary). And, we are well aware from the Gemarah in *Chulin* 139b that Moshe was quite human:

"Where is Moshe foretold in the Torah? In the verse, 'For that he also is flesh."" (B'raishis 6:3)

Prior to the Mabul (deluge) HaKadosh Baruch Hu made the following statement upon a sinful humanity:

"And HaShem said, 'My spirit shall not always strive with man, for he also is flesh (B'Shagam); yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years." (B'raishis 6:3)

As Rashi explains, the Gemarah in *Chulin* claims that this term 'B'Shagam' (For he is also flesh) foretells Moshe due to its Gymatriya (alphanumeric). B'Shagam is spelled Bais (2), Shin (300), Gimmel (3), Final Mem (40), which equals 345. Moshe is spelled Mem (40), Shin (300), Hay (5), which also equals 345. It is also interesting to note that the end of the Passuk (verse) speaks of "Yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years," which are the exact years of Moshe's life. One way or the other, instructed Rav Shamshon, Moshe was totally human and not a Malach, and was called out for his errors in judgment, which afterwards, he went about correcting. This of course, is the lesson for us to do likewise with oversights we have personally committed.

The Ramban, as per Rav Shamshon, holds the same when it comes to Avraham Avinu, whereby the Torah points out his flaws, and his ultimate corrections of these flaws. And, in this week's Sidra, the Torah openly avows that Avram perjured himself when saying that Sarai was his sister.

Now, in reality posed Rav Shamshon, there is a very basic rule in the Gemarah of *P'sachim* 8a-b, *Yoma* 11a, *Kiddushin* 39b, and *Chulin* 142a of which we are very aware:

"Those sent (to perform) a religious duty do not suffer harm."

That is, HaKadosh Baruch Hu protects the Tzadik (righteous person) via miraculous machinations. Why did Avram then, not rely on HaKadosh Baruch Hu to miraculously save Sarai instead of saying something false?

"Say, I beg you, that you are my sister; that it may be well with me for your sake; and my soul shall live because of you." (B'raishis 12:13)

The answer to this says Rav Shamshon, is that in truth, only after all three Avos

(Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov) had lived, did it then become an established fact that HaKadosh Baruch Hu intercedes miraculously for the true Tzadik. Not knowing yet that it was permissible to depend upon miracles, Avram attempted to save Sarai through human endeavors.

His logic, expounded Rav Shamshon, was that while the Egyptians made offers and haggled for his 'sister' Sarai, HaKadosh Baruch Hu would use the principle of cause and effect in a non miraculous manner, to set into course circumstances which would allow Sarai to escape from the Egyptians and the Pharaoh. Had Avram told the truth however, that she was in fact, his wife, the Egyptians would have killed him on the spot, with no time for HaKadosh Baruch Hu to intervene.

And, concluded Rav Shamshon, we see that since it was a matter of literally saving his own life, Avram's perjury of Sarai being his sister cannot be held entirely against him. Rather, even though Avram was yet unaware that one could be Mispallel (pray) for miracles, he thought logically and rationally that stalling the Egyptians would give HaKadosh Baruch Hu a chance to intercede in a non miraculous way.

So conclude the words of Rav Hirsch. Of course, one must wonder what is considered miraculous and what is not? Additionally, cannot the non miraculous also be miraculous in its timing and placement? While such questions do pose a certain fascination with the subject, they are probably best left with greater Talmidei Chachamim (Torah scholars) than us.

It is always most fascinating to be granted a glimpse via our Rabbanim of blessed memory, into the thinking of our Avos and other great men and women of the Torah. May we always use such luminaries as our role models and guides through life.

May we soon see the G'ulah Sh'laimah in its complete resplendence- speedily, and in our times. Good Shabbos.

#### **Divine Plans**

## Rabbi Dov Shapiro

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The old adage, "Proper Planning Prevents Poor Performance" originally used by the military, has since become utilized by leaders and professional trainers in the fields of business, education, and athletics. It underscores the importance of identifying one's goal and the steps necessary to achieve it, before taking action.

In this week's parsha, the Torah seems to take the opposite approach, dispensing with basic planning. With the words "Lech Lecha Mei'artzecha...", Hashem instructs Avrohom to leave his homeland and embark on a journey without disclosing the final destination. Not knowing where one is headed makes it difficult to plan properly and Rashi wonders about the mysterious nature of Hashem's instructions. Rashi (12:3) quotes the famous (yet cryptic) midrash and explains that Hashem did not reveal Avrohom's destination immediately in order "I'chav'vah b'einav v'lases lo schar al kal dibur v'dibur - to enhance its value in his eyes and to give him reward for every

instruction". Rashi brings several similar examples of similarly cryptic instructions. When Hashem commanded Avrohom to bring Yitzchok to the *akeida*, Hashem described Yitzchok as "Your son, the single one, whom you love, Yitzchak" rather than simply specifying Yitzchak by name, and he also did not identify the location where the *akeida* would take place. When Hashem instructed the Navi Yonah to travel to Ninveh and prophesize to the people of the city, the message was described simply as the "prophecy that I will inform you". Through these varied references Rashi seems to conclude that this ambiguity is Hashem's way of enhancing the reward of the individual performing the mitzvah.

After analysis this explanation of the midrash raises a few questions.

Rashi words imply two separate goals: Firstly, to make the land more precious in Avrohom's eyes and secondly to give him reward for each instruction that he was following. How do these two factors work together? How is an unidentified goal more cherished, and how does making the destination more precious yield a greater reward? Furthermore how does this concept of "*Ichav'va b'einav''* apply to the other examples quoted? Was there an attempt to make the *har hamoriah* more beloved to Avorohom? Or to make Yona cherish the prophecy he would eventually proclaim to the people of Ninveh? In those parallel situations how do we understand the ambiguity generating more *chavivus* and greater reward?

In light of these questions the Mizrachi explains that the Midrash and Rashi are actually asking two separate questions on Hashem's choice of words, and offering separate answers for each question.

The first question bothering Rashi is why Hashem prolonged the description of the land Avrohom was *departing from*, [describing it as "*Mei'artzecha, mimoladitcha*, *umibeis avicha* – your land, your birthplace, and your father's home"]. Hashem could have just said to Avrohom: "go to *Eretz Cna'an*", the meaning of which would be clear. The second question is why Hashem was vague when identifying Avrohom's *destination* [saying "*el ha'aretz asher ar'echa* – to the land that I will show you] rather than telling Avrohom that he was headed to *Eretz Cna'an*?

Rashi answers both of these questions as follows:

L'fum tzara agra – the more difficult a mitzvah is, the greater its reward. Underscoring the challenges involved in this trip, how Avrohom would need to leave his homeland, his birthplace, and his father's home, would increase its difficulty to Avrohom and consequently, the reward. Similarly focusing on Avrohom's love for Yitzchok, "es bincha, es y'cidcha, asher ahavta - Your son, the single one, who you love" would increase the difficulty of the challenge, and the resulting reward.

In a similar vein, leaving the destination vague (Avrohom's destination, the final location of the *akeida*, and the content of the prophecy that Yona was to deliver) increases the difficulty of that particular challenge. People like to know what lies ahead of them so that we can anticipate and plan for the future. Being left openended, not knowing what will be expected of you, not knowing what and when your next move will be is an unsettling feeling. Hashem created this additional element in Avrohom's *nisayon* in order to further challenge him and see how he would react. The midrash describes this idea as: "Hashem creates puzzlement and uncertainty for tzadikim and afterwards reveals to them His true plan". In this way they are further

challenged how they will react to this uncomfortable situation and their reward for their emunah is enhanced.

What emerges from this discussion is that Hashem's wording to Avrohom was very carefully planned and scripted; it was an elaborate presentation designed to generate reactions and feelings that would maximize Avrohom Avinu's reward.

We all have challenging events and difficult situations in our lives. We often wonder how things will play out, and we wish we knew the end game. We don't know the future and it can be excruciating to wonder: how will my child turn out, will the sick person recover, will I get the job I am seeking etc... Our challenge is to ride that wave of uncertainty with *emunah*, realizing that although *we* don't know what lies around the next corner, the future is being controlled by a loving, caring God who wants only what is best for us in the large picture. From this Midrash we see that living with that uncertainty is not an accident; it is a specific type of challenge designed to help us grow in our emunah while finding and accepting comfort that Hashem has our lives and our futures under complete control. To the extent that we embrace that recognition, we turn the challenge into an opportunity for growth. Because sometimes living without knowing the plan is part of Hashem's plan.

## Parshas Lech Lecha: Abraham Cedes His Desires For The Will of Hashem

Parshas Лех Леха: Авраам уступает свои желания к воле Всевышнего

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Первые слова Торы записи, что было сказано от Аль-могучий Аврааму было "Лех Леха", игра слов фразы, что означает "вы должны пойти". Казалось бы, что первая встреча между Аль-могучий и первый еврей, еврей, которая признала, что есть творец в молодом возрасте до трех лет, будет более значительным. Аль-могучий мог подтвердил Аврааму, что он действительно является автором, как он сделал, когда он говорил с Моисеем на горящем кусте на их первой встрече.

В этой главе мы подбирать величие Авраама и его истинный характер от многих эпизодов, которые упоминает Тора. Мы все выгравированы в нашем сознании образ Авраама как великого человека Chessed и благотворительности. Действительно хорошая часть жизни Авраама была посвящена помогать другим. Тем не менее, рассказ о недельной главе раскрывает нам, что сущность Авраама не было основано на гуманитарной желание помочь другим. Тело Авраама и душа были проникнуты любовью к его создателя и вся его жизнь была посвящена исполнить волю своего создателя. Как сын, который любит своих родителей и хочет, чтобы принести радость своим родителям.

Первый противостояние, что Авраам имеет с его племянником Лотом, Авраам сразу предположить, что два из них отдельно. Эта точка зрения кажется странным для гуманитарной выступать за разделения вместо того, чтобы

работать конфликт, и повлиять на его племянника, чтобы быть лучше индивидуально. Тем не менее, Авраам стремится разделение, как его единственном самая важная цель в жизни, чтобы исполнить волю своего создателя. Все, что стоит как препятствие для этой директивы дистанцировался и избегать. Как много, как Авраам любил своего племянника и пожелал, чтобы воздержится его пастуха от кражи, он решительно решил, что он не мог позволить себе останавливаться с Лотом, как его семья, возможно, под влиянием от случайного толерантности Лота кражи.

Когда Авраам позже узнает, что его племянник находится в опасности, он не тратит времени, чтобы урегулировать конфликт дипломатическим путем. Он быстро вытаскивает меч и восстанавливает его племянника из плена. Гуманитарная сначала исчерпать все варианты, прежде чем мирно поспешно выполняя один человек спасательной миссии. Единственным движущей силой Авраама, что диктовал свои действия были действовать в соответствии с волей своего создателя. Авраам не имел личных гуманитарных желания, которые он посмотрел выполнить. Если просуммировать бы до жизни Авраама в одной фразе было бы: "Все для босса".

Кроме того, недоверчиво, Авраам позволяет его жена Сара, чтобы изгнать Агарь служанка, в, казалось бы, uncompassionate акта. Гуманитарная наверняка отвергают причинения такого страдания другого человека. Тем не менее, уход Авраама для других вытекает из выполнения не свои личные потребности, чтобы помочь другим, но от его искренней воли, чтобы сделать то, что правильно в глазах творца. Как трудно, как это должно было отослать Агарь, Авраам, не колеблясь, чтобы Сара Агарь, чтобы наказать ее неуважение своей благочестивой женой.

В конце недельной главе, Авраам приказал выполнить мицву из обрезании. Авраам в нежном возрасте девяносто девять не спорит со своим создателем, что эта акция будет отделить его от остальной части населения. Он выполняет заповедь о себе и своей семье с готовностью и бодрости. Авраам не был заинтересованы в том, понравился и похож на остальных цивилизации. Он не стремился быть гуманистом. Он признал, что сообщение о обрезании, что мы не все созданы равными, и мы не все имеют одинаковые цели в нашей жизни. Как евреи Авраам признал, что он должен быть отделен от других, которые не признают своего создателя и цель в жизни.

Это было послание Аль-могучий привил Авраама в их первой встрече. Аврааму было велено идти! Аль-могучий хотел Авраама, чтобы оставить свое окружение и жить отдельно от тех, кто может повлиять на Авраама против он цели в жизни. Даже если Авраам был настолько сильным, и отверг языческие пути отца, Аль-могучий не был доволен Авраам пребывания с семьей и их отношениях. Первое сообщение и философия, которая вела жизнь Авраама и перспективы действительно пойти, и быть отдельным от девяноста девяти процентов в мире. И это, как заключает паршу с тем же сообщением о обрезании. Авраам был добрым и давая человек, но его движущей силой было быть евреем, и еврей должен иметь разделение и границы.

Может мы все стремимся, чтобы следовать по стопам Авраама выполнения воли нашего Творца и помогать другим не из наших личных нужд, но

исполнить желание Аль-могучий годов. Давайте не будем забывать, что, будучи отдельным не дискриминационные, но это наша обязанность, чтобы быть избирательным и исключительно в наших жизненных выборов. Хорошие Шаббат!

### **Meafar Kumi**

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ויאמר אדני ה' במה אדע כי אירשנה. ויאמר לאברם ידע תדע כי גר יהיה ", כתוב בפרשתנו בראשית טו). איתא בגמרא (נדרים) "זרעך בארץ לא להם ועבדום וענו אתם ארבע מאות שנה לב.) מפני מה נענש אברהם אבינו ונשתעבדו בניו למצרים מאתים ועשר שנים? שמואל אמר, רבי יוחנן אמר, ."במה אדע כי אירשנה", ה, שנאמר"מפני שהפריז על מדותיו של הקב "תן לי הנפש והרכוש קח לך"שהפריש בני אדם מלהכנס תחת כנפי השכינה, שנאמר תן לי "בראשית יב, כא). כלומר, כשחזר אברהם מהמלחמה והשלל בידו, אמר לו מלך סדום) ואברהם נתן לו את הכל. בכך שהחזיר את השבויים שהציל, ולא לקחם ."הנפש והרכוש קח לך לעצמו, ויתר על ההזדמנות לגיירם ולהכניסם תחת כנפי השכינה, ועל זה נענש

י (בראשית טו, ו) מביא שני פירושים. א. "רש ,"במה אדע כי אירשנה"לשאלת אברהם אבינו אברהם ביקש אות על ירושת הארץ. ב. אברהם שאל באיזו זכות יתקיימו בניו בארץ. וכתב ה מפני מה נענש אברהם), שמואל, סובר כפירוש הראשון שאברהם "א (נדרים לב. ד"המהרש ביקש אות על ירושת הארץ, וממילא שאלתו לחטא נחשבת, ונענש עליה שירדו בניו למצרים. ורבי יוחנן סובר כפירוש השני, שאברהם שאל באיזו זכות, וממילא שאלתו אינה חטא ולא נענש כלל עליה. אלא נענש על שלא גייר את אנשי סדום

שהרי כאילו בראו ויצרו. ,"בן"המכניס בריה תחת כנפי השכינה לגיירו, הרי הוא נחשב כ שלא הכניס את אנשי סדום תחת כפני השכינה ,"בניו"נמצא, אברהם אבינו חטא בבחינת והשאירם שקועים בטומאה. ומידה כנגד מידה ראוי אברהם להענש, שזרעו ,"בניו"להיות כ ישתקעו בנ' שערי טומאה במצרים ולא להכנס תחת כנפי השכינה לקבל את התורה ולרשת את ה הוציאנו "ארץ ישראל, מקום השראת השכינה בעולם. אבל למעשה, זה לא קרה, אלא הקב ?ממצרים ברגע האחרוו טרם שניפול לשער הנ'. ומדוע זכינו לצאת

נראה לומר, שזו גופא שאלת אברהם אבינו. ה' מודיע לאברהם שבניו ירשו את הארץ. אך כתב הפנים יפות (בראשית טו, א), שאברהם הרגיש בחטאו שלא הכניס את אנשי סדום תחת כנפי במה אדע כי "ש. וממילא הרגיש שעליו להענש שבניו לא יכנסו לארץ. ולכן שאל "השכינה, ע בהיינו באיזה זכות יכנסו בני לארץ, הלא חטאתי ולא מגיע לי שבני יכנסו לארץ ,"אירשנה ...

אך למעשה, כתב הפנים יפות שאברהם אבינו שב בתשובה על זה שלא הכניס את אנשי סדום

ידע תדע כי גר יהיה זרעך בארץ לא להם " :ה"תחת כנפי השכינה. ועל זה באה תשובת הקב ה אומר לאברהם, אתה צודק, חטאת לאותם "דהיינו, הקב ."ועבדום וענו אתם ארבע מאות שנה נפשות ומגיע לבניך לרדת למצרים ל400 שנה וליפול לנ' שערי טומאה. אך מכיון שאברהם עשה תשובה, זכה להציל את בניו. ובמקום שבני ישראל ישארו במצרים 400 שנה ויפלו לשער ועבדום ועינו אתם "הנ' כמו שנגזר, נשארו שם רק 210 שנה ויצאו. אך קשה, במה הושלם גר יהיה "ה לאברהם "על זה נראה לומר דבר חדש, שבעבור זאת גופא הודיע הקב ?"400 שנה ידיעה זו שבניו יגלו למצרים ."זרעך בארץ לא להם ועבדום וענו אתם ארבע מאות שנה הטמאה, הביאה צער איום ונורא לאברהם אבינו. ואפשר שצערו של אברהם הוא זה שהשלים ...לישראל את ה400 שנה

ידע תדע כי גר יהיה זרעך בארץ לא להם "ד, שה' רמז זאת לאברהם באומרו לו "ונראה לי בס דהיינו ."אַתֶם"כתיב חסר ואו', וכאילו נאמר "אֹתם"."ועבדום ועינו <u>אֹתם</u> ארבע מאות שנה דהיינו ."אַתם"כתיב מאוד מאוד. וממילא ,"ידוע תדע כי גר יהיה זרעך בארץ לא להם" "אתם"והמילה ."ארבע מאות שנה"ואז יושלם <u>בניך ואתה</u> "ועבדום ועינו אַתֶם"יתקיים "אברהם משלים הוא ראשי תיבות "אתם" :גופא מרמזת זאת (400).

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