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שבת קודש פרשת לך לך - Shabbos Parshas Lech Lecha November 8, 2011 - י"מ מרחשון תשע"ב

הגה"צ רבי גמליאל הכהן רבינוביץ שליט"א
ראש ישיבת שער השמים בירושלים ע"ה
ויאמר אלקים אל אברהם שרי את שמה שרי ... וברכתי אתה וגם נתתי ממנה לך בן וכו' (ח-טו, טז)

ולפי זה מובן כל הקושיות שהקשינו, דבאמת בבשורה שהש"ת הבטיח לו לאברהם אבינו בנים, כתוב רק שם "אלקים" - זאת אומרת בלי מדת הרחמים, כיון שזה היה מגיע לאברהם על פי דין בורוע. וזה אפ"ל, שזה היתה הטענה של אברהם אבינו, שכאמר לו הש"ת "אל תירא אברהם אנכי מגן לך שכרך הרבה מאד" (ט"ו, א), כתוב שם "ויאמר אברם אד"ני ה' ה' וי"ה מה תתן לי" דשם ה' וי"ה בניקוד אלקים, וידוע מספרי הקבלה שהשם אד"נ"י ושם אלקים שניהם מרמזו על הדין (תיקוני זוהר השמטות דף קל"א ע"א). וזאת שאל אע"ה "מה תתן לי" - כלומר, כיון שמידת הדין לא נותנת לי בנים, זה סימן שלא תיקנתי את עצמי כראוי, ולכן ביקש בנים דאז יידע שאם נותנים לו בנים בורוע, זהו סימן שתתקן את עצמו, ומש"ה רצה בנים, וטען "ואנכי הולך ערירי" דהיינו בלי מצות, כיון שאין לו בנים בדין. ולכן היה צריך לחכות הרבה זמן על זה, כדי שיספיק לתקן עצמו כראוי לפי מדרגתו הגדולה, כיון שלא רצה מתנת חנם, שאם היה רוצה אברהם מתנת חנם, היה הש"ת נותן לו מיד. הש"ת יעזור לכל ישראל ולכל חשוכי בנים במהרה, בורע של קיימא בנים ובני בנים אמן ואמן, כן יהי רצון.

מאת הרב שלום פערל שליט"א מגיד מישרים בק"ק בית שמש
מאוצרותיו של המגיד
ויאמר ה' אל אברם לך מן הארץ וממולדתך ומבית אביך וכו' (המחזן) – בעניין השגחתו יתברך על העולם השפל
עובתי אות, אלא שבכוונה מאתי היא בוערת, כיון שנתתי לאנשוי את האפשרות לבחור את דרכם בחיים, כדי שמי שיתמודד עם הקשיים ויבחר בדרך הטוב יזכה לשכר שמגיע לו ואינו 'נחמא דכיסופא', והם בחרו בדרך הרע ועבדו ע"י, ועתה אני מחכה לך לגלות את שמי בעולם". והיינו, שאברהם אבינו הבין, שלא יתכן לומר שעזב ה' את העולם, ואינו מכוון אל תכליתו, וכנתבאר, ולא כמו עובדי ע"י שאמרו, שאין זה לפי כבודו של הבורא המרומם, להשגיח בעולם התחתון ואנשוי השפלים, ולכן הם 'מכחישים בהשגחה, ויעשו בני אדם כדגי הים, שלא ישגיח ה' בהם, ואין עמהם עונש או שכר, ויאמרו, עזב ה' את הארץ' (נע' רמב"ן, שמות י"ג ט"ז). אבל אברהם אבינו הבין, שאף שזה נכון לגבי אדם חומרי, התופס רק מקום מסוים, וכאשר הוא נמצא במקום מרומם, אינו מתפשט אל המקומות השפלים, ואינו משגיח עליהם, אין זה נכון לגבי ה' הרוחני, ואינו תופס רק מקום מסוים, וגם כאשר הוא נמצא במקום מרומם, הוא מתפשט אל כל מקום, גם אל המקומות השפלים ביותר, ומשגיח עליהם.

גמסל: She caused him such anguish but at the same time, she recognized his greatness! This amazing inconsistency, says **R' Schach ZT"l**, is found here by *Hashem's* promise to *Avraham* that all the families of the earth will be blessed because of him. The nations clearly recognized Avraham's greatness. Yet, *Hashem* still told him, *"Those who curse you I will curse."* Despite the world recognizing his greatness, there would still be people who would curse him! A person must recognize and cure his capacity for inconsistency lest he find himself fighting against the very thing he values most.

הלכה למעשה
מאת מנ"ה ברוך הירשפלך שליט"א רב דקהל אהבת ישראל, קליבלנד הייטס
someone else, such as residents, customers, patients and employees, or **even** to just park in a place that blocks rightful users from entering or exiting (8).
Exceptions: When one is allowed to use without permission.
1) Items that no one would object to, such as a pen to sign a check, are permitted. Borrowing a washing cup to wash hands or sitting on another's chair (9) are also. Even in these cases if the owner is readily available to ask, he should be asked (10).
2) If many times in the past, he has asked and always received permission (11), and there is no reason why now should be any different, he can use an object if the owner is not there to ask.
3) *Mitzvah* items such as *talis*, *tefillin*, *gartel*, *lulav*, and *esrog* (only once *Chol Hamoed* starts and a borrowed set is sufficient) are permitted. This is based on the assumption that people are pleased when another uses their possessions for a *mitzvah* (12). However, if there is a reason to believe that he might object, such as, the borrower has a cold, fever, or he sweats, then he cannot use it (13). Even when he can use it, it must be used as nearby as possible (14) and promptly returned, folded and as neat as it was before. Even then it can only be used occasionally, and not on an ongoing basis (15) and here as well, if the owner is available he should be asked (16).

הוא היה אומר
R' Yitzchok of Vorka ZT"l would say:
"An innkeeper who is solicitous of his guest's every need and goes out of his way to make him happy and comfortable is one who fulfills the *mitzvah* of *Hachnosas Orchim* correctly. The fact that he gets paid for this service does not detract from his accomplishment for in truth he treats every guest this way. The only reason why he takes money is so that he will be able to invite and attract other guests to come to his inn in the future."

R' Moshe Sherer Z"l (President of Agudath Israel) would say:
"Those that bless you, I will bless and those that curse you, I will curse." With respect to those who bless Avraham, *Hashem* uses the same verb (אברכה) to describe the blessing that He will provide them. But with respect to those who curse Avraham (ומקללך), the verb form does not remain constant. Instead of 'אקלל', which would have been the parallel verb, the *Torah* chooses another verb for cursing: 'אאר'. This word is based on the same Hebrew root as light (אור), and can be read, 'I will enlighten them: I will illuminate their eyes to see the real you.' Orthodox Jews must fulfill the role of enlightening their fellow Jews who are 'uninformed.' Let them see our *ahavas Yisroel*, our *Daf Yomi Torah* learning and good *middos*; let them see our *yeshivos* and chassidic courts. Let them see what we are really like."

A Wise Man would say:
"Don't just keep the faith. Spread it around!"
תעבד לעי"נ האשה פייגא בת מרים ע"ה (נלבית ד' אייר), וברוך נחום בן פייבל ז"ל (נלבית ט' תשרי) תנצ"ה
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מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

והאמין בה' ויחשבה לו צדקה וגו' (סו-)

In the years preceding the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, many Russian citizens were exiled to Siberia for supporting the Bolshevik cause. After the revolution, the Siberian labor camps were briefly closed down. However, when Josef Stalin came to power, he reopened and expanded them. The network of labor camps was named GULAG (an acronym in Russian meaning Glavnoe Upravlenie **L**agerei, or Main Camp Administration.) It is estimated that about 1.2 million prisoners were exiled to Siberia under the Czars. Another 18-20 million people were imprisoned in Soviet Gulags during the thirty years that the prison system was in existence, and it is estimated that about 1.6 million people perished there.

During the Communist era, openly practicing the Jewish religion became a crime, and a Jew could be arrested for owning *tefillin* or teaching *Torah*. In 1928, **R' Yechezkel Abramsky ZT"l** was surprisingly granted permission by the Soviet authorities to publish a *Torah* journal entitled “*Yagdil Torah*.” However, in typical Soviet fashion, in 1930 the authorities suddenly did an about face and convicted him of being a “counter-revolutionary,” who slandered the communist government. He was sentenced to five years of hard labor in a Siberian prison camp.

What was the Gulag like for R' Yechezkel? Well, the typical winter morning in Siberia saw temperatures reaching 40 degrees centigrade below zero. His compulsory morning exercise routine was brutal: a brisk run, while barefoot, over the frost-covered ground. Like the others, he had no choice but to run across the frozen field. Unlike some of the others, though, he never allowed himself to drop to the earth, too cold, sick, and exhausted to go on. Day after day, he put his head down and just began to run, somehow surviving the ordeal. This is how he started his day in the Soviet labor camp.

The camp commanders did not like the fact that they couldn't “break” him and decided to make an example out of this Jewish rabbi. His daily work assignment was to enter the thick forest and chop tree trunks into smaller logs of wood. The problem was that R' Chatzkel was no lumberjack and he could not work fast enough. The commanders knew what to do with such “lazy” workers. As a punishment, they sent R' Chatzkel to string frozen fish on a metal wire. This work is more delicate. In fact, it's so delicate that one cannot wear gloves while handling the metal wire. Yet, how can a human being grasp frozen fish with his bare hands in sub-zero temperatures, for hour after hour after hour? Welcome to the world of the Gulag.

Eventually, R' Yechezkel was switched to another job. Now he was required to slice loaves of bread for all the prisoners. His hands were no longer bleeding and frozen; sounds like an easy job. Yet, he faced another danger. Gulag prisoners are tough. They have to be in order to survive. If they see that the man slicing the bread gives them a slightly smaller piece of bread than another prisoner, even if it's unintentional, the bread-cutter better watch out for his own life!

Faced with such cruel conditions and companions and unable to perform *mitzvos* of any kind, R' Yechezkel admittedly reached his wits end. His mind and body threatened to succumb to despair. What is the point of going on, he wondered, as he contemplated the words of the “*Modeh Ani*” on yet another bitter morning. Should he thank *Hashem* for another day of painful work in the freezing cold? Should he be grateful that yet another day will pass where he will be unable to learn *Torah* or do *mitzvos*? What reason does he have to thank *Hashem* for returning his *neshamah* to him for one more day?

Then he remembered the final words of the prayer: “*Raba Emunasecha*” - “Great is Your faith.” *Emunah*! That was something that the Gulag commanders hadn't been able to take away from him. He still had his faith in *Hashem*.

“As long as I am able to hold on to my *Emunah*,” he resolutely told himself, “I have something to be thankful for. My *Emunah* will sustain me. I will be able to bear all the pain and the suffering. And my life will have meaning, because every moment that I live with *Emunah* in *Hashem* is a moment that is worth living.” Strengthened by these thoughts, R' Yechezkel stood up and reported for his morning barefoot run across the frozen field. Thanks to his *Emunah*, and with *Hashem's* help, he bore the pain and suffering. Eventually he was granted permission to leave the Soviet “paradise” and begin a new life in England.

משל למא הדבר דומא

ואברכה מברכין ומקלדן אאר ונברכו בך כל משפחת האדמה ובזרעך וגו' (יב-א)

משל: The care and concern of **R' Akiva Eiger ZT"l** for the well being of his close friend, **R' Yaakov Loberbaum ZT"l (Nesivos)** once compelled him to make a special journey to Lissa to help his friend in a time of personal need.

Trapped in a marriage with a cantankerous woman and suffering untold anguish at her hands, R' Yaakov finally reached the point where he could not bear it anymore and requested a divorce from her. To his great surprise and dismay, his wife unequivocally refused to consider the idea.

R' Akiva Eiger rushed to Lissa in an attempt to persuade

his friend's wife to agree to accept a *get*. But she understood quite well the purpose of R' Akiva Eiger's visit, and shut herself in her room, assuming that the renowned and distinguished rabbi would certainly not enter her bedroom.

R' Akiva Eiger, however, completely disregarding any air of distinction or self-importance, went into the room to speak to her. He took a chair and sat at her bedside, and began to plead with her to accept a *get* from her husband.

But she adamantly refused. “You want me to accept a *get* from such a holy person? I could never do such a thing!”

והי אזהלה בית ק-ל מים והעני מקדם ויכן
שם מזבח לה' ויקרא בשם ה' וגו' (יב-ח)

The *chessed* of Avraham Avinu was evident early on in his life. The moment he recognized the One True G-d in Heaven at the young age of three, he immediately began to espouse these views to everyone around him. When he was older, he did this by inviting people into his tent - a tent with openings on all sides to facilitate weary travelers - and he “*created new souls*” by bringing them under the canopy of Monotheism. It didn't matter to Avraham who these people were; when they were ready to believe, he made them believe!

One fine day, the *Vaad Hachnosas Orchim* in the city of Slonim held a meeting and came to the conclusion that all their work and effort in the area of *Hachnosas Orchim* (caring for guests and the indigent) was primarily aimed at the lowly class of homeless and hopeless derelicts. A true “guest” always managed to find a place to stay, a kind family would always take him in and see to his needs. So who was left for them to care for? The drunkards, the dispossessed, the “rough and tumble” destitutes who never thanked them, and never had any intention of ever leaving. For these insolvents, they should expend so much time, effort and especially money? What was the purpose?

Immediately, **R' Shabsi Yogel ZT"l**, the *Slonimer Rosh Yeshivah*, stood up and announced, “No, this is wrong! *Chazal* teach us: על שלשה דברים העולם עומד: על התורה, על חסדים, ועל גמילות חסדים' (The world stands on three things: *Torah*, *Avodah* and *Chessed*.) The first two - *Torah* and *Avodah* - are listed with the letter ה'ה' before it. This is the ה'ה' הידועה - the special letter which signifies that *Torah* is unique for it comes from Heaven, and *Avodah* is unique for it serves *Hashem*. However,” continued R' Shabsi passionately, “*Gemilas Chessed* has no ה'ה' before it. You know why? Because *chessed* is not unique; *chessed* is done for every single person regardless of his stature or prominence!”

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS
ON THE WEEKLY MIDDAH OF ...

תמימות

Hashem tells Avraham, “*Walk before me and be perfect.*” This seems to be an awesome and absolutely impossible task. We know that nobody is perfect. Even the greatest man who ever lived, *Moshe Rabbeinu*, made mistakes. The definition of being human is being imperfect. So what did *Hashem* want from Avraham by telling him, “*walk before Me and be perfect*”?

The answer may be found in the *Gemara Berachos* (:) where it states: “*If a person wants to do a mitzvah but because of circumstances beyond his control he is stopped, Hashem considers it as if he did it.*” The reason for this is because *Hashem* looks inside a person's heart and judges him for who he really is. If, due to outside factors, a person cannot fulfill what he truly wants to fulfill, *Hashem* says, “I don't hold that against you. I'm the one who stopped you and I'm the one who gives you the credit as if you actually did the deed because I know that's what you really wanted to do.” An amazing proof to this point is the fact that we refer to the ashes of Yitzchok (אפר של יצחק) in our *Yom Kippur* davening. *Hashem* told Avraham to sacrifice Yitzchok, and at the last moment Avraham went and sacrificed a ram that was caught in the bushes instead. There were no ashes of Yitzchok. However, since Avraham's will was entirely to perform the will of *Hashem*, his inner desire actually attained the status of reality and thus the “Ashes of Yitzchok” really do exist and are beloved and precious to *Hashem*.

This is what *Hashem* meant when he told Avraham, “*Walk before me.*” What He meant was, “Place my will before you always.” By making *Hashem's* will your will, despite all of your physical human limitations, you can still achieve perfection!

TORAH GEMS

וידא ה' אל אברם ואמר אליו
והתהלך לפני הדיה תמים וגו' (יז-א)

Rashi explains the posuk “*והיה תמים*” - “*Be Whole,*” as follows: “*Be whole in all the tests (נסיונות) that I bring upon you.*” **R' Yaakov Meir Shechter Shlit'a** elucidates these words: Since most of *Avraham Avinu's* trials came about during moments of darkness and lack of direction, *Hashem's* commandment was really a piece of advice: “*והיה תמים*”- be wholehearted and simple in all the tests that I bring upon you. Don't force yourself to perform high levels of *avodah* which you are not prepared for at this specific moment.

When a Jew is at a low point in his life, he needs to know how to behave during these trying times, so as to get past them peacefully and derive from them full benefit. The best advice, writes R' Yaakov Meir, is to perform simple acts of goodness with honesty and sincerity; recite one or two chapters of *Tehillim*; study *Torah* on a simpler level than usual, according to one's ability at the moment; do basic acts of kindness as one encounters them. The basic principle is this: If you cannot do all that is required of you, do as much as you can. Often, that little bit of good a person does will immediately lift him back to his proper place, and he can again serve *Hashem* with his full strength. Even in the worst of times, one can still refrain from committing improper actions and this alone will yield great benefits.

R' Menachem Mendel ZT"l of Vitebsk (Pri Ha'aretz) writes: “(One must) pursue simple truths as one pursues life itself. Because *Hashem* delights in this (simplicity) more than in one who “*delves into matters too lofty for him*” (תהלים קלא-א) and levels beyond his understanding.”

What are simple things? Acting with thoughtfulness and consideration. Performing *mitzvos* by avoiding evil and doing good. A person who can hold onto these things and not lose hope in moments of difficulty has found eternal value. He will be able to turn descent into ascent and sin into merit.

דרגה יתירה

FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF
R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO

והתהלך לפני הדיה תמים וגו' (יז-א)

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