

תורה תבלין

שבת קודש פרשת לך לך
 Shabbos Parshas Lech Lecha
 י" חשוון תשס"ב - October 27, 2001

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ואעשך לגוי גדול ואברכך ואגדלה שמך והיה ברכה וגו' (יב-ב)

ולכן, אנו כורעים בתפילת שמונה עשרה, בתחילת ברכת אבות שאומרים, "אלקי אברהם אלקי יצחק ואלקי יעקב" - להודות להקב"ה ולהכניע את עצמינו לעבודתו ית' בבחינת מסורת האבות. ונוסף לזה כורעים בחתימת "מגן אברהם" - שהיה תחילה לגרים כדאיתא בגמ' (תחינה ג), והיה אברהם "העברי", שכל העולם כולו מעבר אחד והוא מעבר אחר (ב"ר מב-ח). ועל ידי כריעתנו, אנו מורים על קבלת עבודת ה' באופן פרטי של כל יחיד ויחיד בישראל. וזהו "בד' חותמין" - כלומר, שיש ענין מיוחד בעבודת כל אחד מישראל, בבחינת אברהם אבינו כאילו הוא המתחיל בקדושה.

ויפל אברהם על פניו ויצחק ויאמר בלבו הלבן מאה שנה יולד וכו' (יז-יז)
פרש"י זה ת"א לי שמחה וחדו עכ"ל וצ"ע למה לא היה אברהם שמח מקודם

The *gemara* teaches that in the merit of Avrom's refusal to receive any gifts from the king of Sodom, not even a string nor a leather shoe strap, his descendants merited the strings of *tzitzis*, and the leather straps of *tefillin*. This, however, seems to contradict another *chazal* from last week's *parsha*. Noach, after coming out of the ark, drank wine and became drunk. As he was lying uncovered in his tent, two of his sons, Shem and Yefes came to cover him. Each received reward, with Shem's being the covering of *tzitzis* that his children would wear. Did we merit the *tzitzis* because of the act of Shem or because of the act of Avrom?

R' Chaim Shmulevitz ZT"l explains that in truth, the seed was planted by the act of Shem but it only reached fruition due to the act of Avrom. Shem's act created the potential that was actualized through Avrom. Each of us are comprised of these seeds planted by the *אבות ואמהות* - *Patriarchs and Matriarchs*, our parents, our teachers and our friends. If we're feeling frustrated by our trying to help others and not seeing immediate results, we must realize that none of our efforts go to waste. We are planting seeds, some may sprout quickly, others may lay dormant for a while, but all have their influence. We must recognize and actualize the abilities that we have, and help others to realize what they can accomplish.

R' Yitzchok Meir Alter ZT"l (Chiddushei Hari"m) would say:

"When Avrohom reached a high level of faith and belief in *Hashem*, he considered it to be *Tzedakah* from *Hashem*. Even faith which one works so diligently to cultivate, is ultimately a gift from the Creator!"

A Scholar once said:

"Never underestimate the power of stupid people in large groups!"

R' Moshe Alshich ZT"l would say:

"We say in *Shemona Esrai*, 'Elokei Avrohom, Elokei Yitzchok, Elokei Yaakov.' If one's children and grandchildren merit greatness, it must have resulted from the greatness of the grandfather, and this is indeed a blessing."

MAZEL TOV TO RABBI AND MRS ALEXANDER HOFFMAN
UPON MAKING AN UPSHERIN FOR THEIR SON, ELI MEIR "1.
MAY THEY SEE MUCH NACHAS FROM HIM IN THE FUTURE

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addressed it only as: **Alex Lurye, Duluth, Minnesota.**

Alex had become a wealthy businessman living in Duluth, a town of over a hundred thousand people. When Alex received the letter, after a lapse of twenty one years, he quickly sent a return letter acknowledging his receipt and pledging to help bring the family to Duluth. Alex kept his promise. The entire Rosennau family was rescued and arrived in 1938.

In Duluth, Minnesota, as in Seldes, Germany, the family made sure that *Shabbos* would be joyously honored. Unfortunately, the rest of German Jewry was destroyed. Yet, the kindness that Herr Rosenau had given to a stranger twenty one years earlier had come full circle. By emulating their forefather, Avrohom Avinu, in the *middah* of חסד - *kindness*, without any thought of personal gain, Herr Rosenau and his family were spared from the horrible fate of their fellow German Jews.

TORAH GEMS

ויאמר ה' אל אברם לך לך מארצך ממולדך ומבית אביך וכו' (יב-א)

Hashem appears to Avrohom and tells him to leave Charan and enter the land of Israel. *Hashem* promises him that he will have children and he will be able to spread the word of *Hashem* to the pagans there. *Chazal* count this move as one of the ten trials with which *Hashem* tested Avrohom. However, this is questionable. Imagine someone who is childless, and you promise him a child if he travels far to a certain doctor. Wouldn't he go right away? What is the test?

R' Ovadiah Yosef Shlit"l explains. We know that Avrohom's greatest desire was to teach the world about *Hashem*. While Avrohom lived in Charan, he was famous. Everyone knew about the miracle of Ur Kasdim and the furnace. All the people followed him, but now he would be leaving. He would be going to a new place where nobody heard of him or of the miracle. This is the test. *Hashem* teaches Avrohom a fundamental lesson of our religion. A person who believes in *Hashem* as a result of logical reasoning and learning will remain in that conviction far more than one who comes to believe as a result of a miracle. Avrohom was to go to the land of Israel in order to teach monotheism. No miracles, no wonders. Just teaching and caring, and he would succeed. Indeed, we find today, those who return as a result of artificial inspiration or exposure do not last as long as those who come to the realization of the facts together with *emunah* - true belief.

כשאמר לו הקב"ה, "והפרתי אותך במאד מאד." ואין ליישב שהשמחה היתה על מה שנתבשר ששרה תלד לו בן, שהרי כלל בשמחתו אף מה שהוא בעצמו ילד, כדכתי', "הלבן מאה שנה יולד". א"כ, הרי כבר נתבשר מקודם שילד עוד? אלא ביאר הגמ"ר שמעון משה דיסקין זצ"ל, בס' אהל יהושע, עפ"י המבואר ברמב"ם הל' יסוה"ת, דמנבואה טובה אין הקב"ה חוזר. ועיין בלחם משנה, שהוא דוקא נבואה טובה לאחרים אבל מה שדיבר הקב"ה לנביא נבואה טובה לעצמו, מצינו שע"י שיגרום החטא, יתכן שיחזור הקב"ה מהבטחתו, כי הבטחה היא רק אם הוא זכאי כמו בשעת ההבטחה ממש. וא"כ, הרי מובן דכשאמר לו הקב"ה, "והפרתי אותך במאד מאד", הרי אין זו הבטחה אלא לאברהם בעצמו, ולכן עדיין חשש אברהם אבינו שיגרום החטא ואינו בטוח שאמנם יתקיים הדבר. אבל עתה שאמר לו הקב"ה, "וברכתי אותה וגם נתתי ממנה לך בן וברכתיה והיתה לגוים", ומבואר שיש כאן כבר נבואה טובה לאחרים - דהיינו שרה אשתו - הרי בטוח הוא כבר שלא יחזור הקב"ה מהבטחתו, ולכן שמח בנבואה זו.

מעשה אבות....סימן לבנים

In 1917, during World War I, a Jewish American soldier from Duluth, Minnesota, Alex Lurye, found himself in a small German town called Seldes, on Friday night. The lone soldier felt out of place as America was at war with Germany. However, he was greeted by a kind German Jew by the name of Herr Rosenau who brought him to the synagogue. After *davening*, Herr Rosenau invited the serviceman to his house for the Friday night meal and served him a delicious, kosher, home-cooked meal, complete with wine and the traditional *Shabbos* songs. The soldier was unable to come back again to see this kind family, but the impression that he had received, the experience of the *Shabbos* in a warm and caring Jewish home did not leave him. It meant so much to this young soldier that when he finally returned to Duluth, he took time out to sit down and write a letter to the German Jew who had touched his life with such kindness.

In 1938, as the situation became unbearable for the German Jews and anti-Jewish proclamations were being contrived and enforced on a continually regular basis, Herr Rosenau's grandson, rummaging through his grandfather's desk, found an envelope with a foreign postage stamp from America. The letter was still inside. He removed the letter and read it. It was the thank you letter from the American serviceman, from twenty one years ago. His mother remembered the young man. "Let's write to him! Maybe he will remember and sponsor us, enabling us to immigrate to America." Not having a proper address, they simply wrote the letter, and