

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON LECH LICHA - 5759

B'S'D'

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ravfrand@torah.org "RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Lech Lecha

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 166, The Childless Couple in Halacha. Good Shabbos!

The Closing Will Be With Avrohom This week's parsha contains the pasuk [verse] "And I will make you into a great nation. And I will bless you. And I will make your name great. And you will be a blessing." [Bereshis 12:2]. In the Talmud [Pesachim 117b], Resh Lakish tells us that "And I will make you into a great nation" is a reference to that which we say (in Shmoneh Esrei) "Elokai Avrohom - the G-d of Abraham". "And I will bless you" refers to that which we say "Elokai Yitzchak - the G-d of Isaac". "And I will make your name great" is a reference to that which we say "Elokai Yaakov - the G-d of Jacob". The Talmud concludes, "You might think to finish (the first blessing of Shmoneh Esrei) with all of them (Avrohom, Yitzchak and Yaakov). Therefore, the pasuk says 'And you will be a blessing' implying that the blessing (Magen Avrohom) concludes with you, Avrohom, and not with them (Yitzchak and Yaakov)." The Talmud cannot mean that Avrohom Avinu is worried about sharing the spotlight with his son and grandson. That type of thought would be unworthy for any of us to think; and certainly regarding our Patriarch, Avrohom. The Bnei Yissoschar interprets this Gemara homiletically as follows: You might think that the closing -- i.e. -- the final generation -- will be a generation that is infused with the characteristics of each of the Patriarchs. However, the verse clarifies that "with you will be the closing" (becha chosmin). The last generation will have the imprint of Avrohom, and not the imprint of Yitzchak and Yaakov. At the time when the Talmud was written, it was inconceivable that there would be a generation that did not have the imprint of Avrohom -- represented by Chessed (Kindness); the imprint of Yitzchak -- represented by Avodah (Divine Service); and the imprint of Yaakov -- represented by Torah (Jewish Learning). But they did not witness our generation. Unfortunately, in our generation, only a small portion of the Jewish nation is involved in Torah, Avodah and Gemilus Chassadim. The Jewish people as a whole today are sorely lacking Torah. There are some people who have never heard of the Talmud. There are some people who do not know what an Aleph looks like. This is a generation devoid of Torah and devoid of Service -- not only the Service of Sacrifices, but even the Service of Prayers. All too many Jews do no even know the meaning of Service of G-d through prayer. However, our Sages tell us, "with you will be the conclusion". Even in the last generation, after all the bitter Exile, there will still be one thing that the Jewish people hold on to: the attribute of Chessed. As much as the Exile has affected us and stripped us of what it means to be a Jew, there is one area where it has not been successful. We are still doers of kindness (gomlei chassodim). We still give charity way beyond our means. The charity and Chessed done by the children of Avrohom are completely disproportionate to that of the world around us. The IRS cannot believe Jewish tax returns, because "no one gives that much charity." As much as we complain that the Federations sometimes do not have their priorities straight, they still raise millions of dollars for charity. Why? Because "with you they will close" -- the end of the generations will still have the imprint of Avrohom. Chessed will never be taken away from the Jewish people.

Recently Rabbi Nosson Scherman made a very true observation. This summer (1989) Colonel Higgins, a Marine in Lebanon, was tragically killed. There was a group in Texas that started a nation-wide scholarship fund for Colonel Higgins' daughter. "The man gave his life for his country, let us do something for his daughter." Unfortunately, after four weeks, the scholarship fund had only raised \$3,000. My friends, we could raise \$3,000 here before

Ma'ariv [Evening Prayers], without batting an eyelash. Because "In you they will close" -- the last of the generations will still possess the attribute of Chessed that we learned from Avrohom.

I saw in the Shemen HaTov that this is the interpretation of the blessing "Magen Avrohom" (Shield of Abraham). G-d protects Avrohom and promises him that He will protect Avrohom's attribute of Chessed for all future Jewish generations. We may not look like Jews anymore. We may not think like Jews anymore. We may not talk like Jews anymore. But Magen Avrohom -- G-d will protect Avrohom's attribute -- we will still give charity like Jews; we will still do acts of kindness like Jews. Don't Forget Why We Are In This In The First Place Lot was captured. Avrohom gathered an army of 318 men to rescue him. The Talmud [Nedarim 32a] analyzes the Torah's expression "VaYarek es Chanichav" (and he "armed" those who he had taught Torah) [Bereshis 14:14]. Rav interprets "armed" to mean that before the battle Avrohom infused (showered) them with Torah. Shmuel interprets "armed" to mean that Avrohom showered them with money. Rav's interpretation is easy to understand. Prior to going to battle, Avrohom strengthened their commitment to G-d and Torah. However, how do we understand Shmuel's interpretation? Why did Avrohom shower them with money? Tosfos in Chullin [47b] explains Avrohom's reasoning. Avrohom showered them with money -- lest they become involved in the battle and start looking for booty and forget to rescue the souls. Avrohom wanted to tell them, "Don't worry about the booty -- I will give you money beforehand, so you need not preoccupy yourself with monetary pursuits." Who are we dealing with over here? According to one opinion the 318 men were actually one person: Eliezer. According to another opinion they were 318 individuals. But, they must have been 318 righteous people because Avrohom was gathering them to go to battle against the Allied Forces -- the Kings who were just victorious in the "world war" between the four kings and five kings. Who would put their lives on the line -- 318 men against this allied force? Obviously it could only be Tzadikim, only people solely motivated by saving lives. So, if they were motivated by saving lives, why does Avrohom Avinu have to worry about giving them money so that they won't become involved in collecting booty and forget about rescuing souls?

I saw a very true insight on this from Rav Henoch Leibowitz. Rav Henoch Leibowitz explains that often times when people get involved in something, they forget what they are in it for. One can start an endeavor motivated by a noble cause, but become so preoccupied in the means of it, that one forgets what he is doing there in the first place. It would be quite a common phenomenon that they could start the war ultimately to rescue souls and save lives. But, once they become involved in war and start killing and shooting and going through all that war entails, they might forget the whole purpose (tachlis) of their involvement. This happens to us so often. We get so involved in the means that the ultimate purpose is forgotten. We unfortunately see a classic example of this all too often with 'chiyuvim' who daven before the amid in shul. When a 'chiyuv' leads the prayers, he wants to make a Kiddush HaShem for the merit of the deceased. It is a Kiddush HaShem when he says the words of Kaddish or he says a Brocho and people answer "Amen". So the goal of davening before the amid is Kiddush HaShem. However, how many of us have witnessed the following type of scenario? There are two 'chiyuvim' on the same day. The first fellow says, "I have precedence". The second man says "No way. It is my turn to daven." Before you know it they are almost ready to strike each other. Why? Because each one wants to make a Kiddush HaShem. Here they are in shul yelling at each other, almost fighting. They are making a Chillul HaShem! What happened here? The whole purpose of leading the prayers was to have a Kiddush HaShem. Instead, they are making a Chillul HaShem. People become so involved in the means that they forget the goal. One can become so involved in war that he forgets what the war is all about. The war is about saving lives, but, instead, they are grabbing money. That is human nature. People are so involved in getting there, that they forget where they are going in the first place. Our Sages tell us that many of the Children of Kehas died while serving in the Wilderness as the transporters of the Ark. How did this happen? They had arguments: "I want to carry the Ark" "No,

you go carry the Menorah. I'll carry the Ark!" They became so agitated in the details of who would get to carry it, that when the time came to actually transport it, they did not have the proper spiritual level of awe and reverence necessary to carry the Ark. Again, what is happening here? Are they interested in Service of G-d or are they not interested in Service of G-d? They get so involved in who should do this and who should do that, that the whole goal is forgotten. The purpose is supposed to be Divine Service and Sanctification of G-d's name, not arguments over who should carry what. This is what Avrohom Avinu understood. He knew that people can easily forget the main goal. So he paid them the money up front, so that the booty and spoils would not distract them. When we engage ourselves in a noble cause, we must always remember not to forget why we are engaged in the cause in the first place.

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yated-usa@mailserver.ttec.com Peninim Ahl HaTorah; Parshas Lech Lecha by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum Hebrew Academy of Cleveland

Go forth from your land, and from your birthplace, and from your father's house, to the land that I will show you. (12:1) Logic dictates that upon leaving his environment, an individual begins by contemplating that which is closest to him, his father's home. He then proceeds to separate himself from his birthplace, and, lastly, from his land. Why does the pasuk list a sequence that seems unnatural? First, Hashem tells Avraham to leave the land, then his birthplace, and finally his father's home. A number of commentators respond to this question. The Maor Vashemesh cites the Rambam in Hilchos De'os who posits that a person's character is influenced by his surroundings. Obviously, the closer and more intense one's relationship is to his surroundings, the greater and more dominating is the influence. Consequently, one's parents exert the greatest influence. The impressions one holds of his childhood, growing up in his parent's home, leave a lasting effect upon his personality. The filial bond a child develops with his parents makes him susceptible to their influence. The second level of influence is one's immediate surroundings, his family, friends, neighbors and those acquaintances with whom he comes in contact on a daily basis. True, they are not as close as one's parents, but they do play an integral role in shaping one's personality and perspective. Last, is the environment and culture one lives in. The people in one's country, their spiritual/moral outlook, their character traits, and the entire communal atmosphere create a predisposition towards a certain way of life. Bearing the above in mind, the sequence of the pesukim is understandable. They indicate the ascending power of the various negative influences from which Avraham Avinu had to divorce himself. What does one do if he is surrounded by family and friends, an entire community whose way of life is antithetical to Torah dictate? The response is to break away slowly, first to remove oneself from those influences from which it is easiest to separate. It is much easier to ignore one's community than it is to isolate oneself from his family and close friends. Furthermore, one's inner circle of friends and family do not exert as imposing an influence as one's parents. Only through a systematic, step-by-step weaning of one's relationship from negative influences will one emerge successful. One question regarding Avraham Avinu's behavior should be addressed. If the environment was so evil, if idolatry was so rampant, why did Avraham permit himself to remain there? Why was it necessary for Hashem to command him to leave? He should have realized on his own that in order to maintain his beliefs he must abandon his home. We may suggest that Avraham, as devoted as he was to his fellow man, was concerned for the spiritual welfare of his community. He felt that he must do everything possible to reach out to them. Hashem told him that there is a time and place for everything. Being all alone in a decadent society was detrimental to his own spiritual growth. We are regrettably not always aware that while we are trying to save the world, we might be damaging ourselves in the process.

"From there he relocated to the mountain and pitched his tent and he built there an altar to Hashem and invoked Hashem by Name." (12:8) The commentators interpret Avraham's invocation of Hashem's Name to mean that he was proclaiming Hashem's Name to the world by teaching monotheism. His goal reached fruition, numbering converts in the thousands. The Ramban questions the fact that only Avraham and Yitzchak have been cited as "invoking Hashem's Name." Why is this mission not mentioned in regard to Yaakov? He explains that Yaakov's "outreach" to the world was accomplished via his "Adas Yisrael," twelve sons. They were each great tzaddikim, the forebears of an entire congregation submissive to Hashem. Through the establishment of this kehillah, congregation, Hashem's Name spread throughout the world. Horav Simcha Zissel Broide, Shlita, observes that although Avraham reached out to thousands of people, his mission was shortlived. On the other hand, through his small kehillah, Yaakov Avinu was able to build a belief in the Almighty that has endured until this day. We derive from here that the most successful method for lasting outreach is to establish a solid core of students. This milieu will develop into an effective instrument for reaching out to others. Such a Torah community encompasses every aspect of existence as it governs our daily life's endeavor. Above all, the student-rebbe relationship remains as a stable vehicle for promulgating the Torah ethic. Indeed, if we were to take a survey of every Jewish community in the country which has survived as a viable and vibrant Torah center, we would discover that all have one thing in common: the establishment of either a strong Jewish Day School or a Yeshivah Gedolah. Without a strong focus for teaching Torah, the community will not endure. Yaakov Avinu did more than teach Torah; he established a Torah community whose nucleus was the Yeshivah constituting his twelve sons.

drasha@torah.org Parshas Lech-Lecha WAKE-UP CALL
Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Hashem has different ways in which He reveals Himself to mortal men. The Torah tells us that Moshe was special. Moshe's revelation was termed face-to-face. Others, however saw Hashem in a vision. This week the Torah tells us of Avram's vision. It is more than a vision. In fact, it is very animated. "And the word of Hashem came to Avram in a vision, 'Fear not, Avram' and He took Avram outside and said, 'Count the stars, if you are able to count them... This shall be your offspring'" (Genesis 15:1-5). Avram goes outside and tries to count the stars. Then he goes back inside, and the Torah tells us that Avram has another vision. This one, however, takes on another type of medium. "at the sun set and a deep sleep fell upon Avram and behold a dark fear descended upon him" (Genesis 15:12). It is interesting to note the contrast between the two visions. The first seems dynamic and upbeat. The second begins with a sense of doom. Commentaries explain that the first vision engendered the good news about the growth and future prosperity of Avram's descendants. The second vision predicted the doom and exile of the Jewish people in Egypt. That is why Avram trembled. But it seems Avram trembled as a "dark fear descended upon him," even before hearing the news about the Egyptian bondage. In fact, the fear set in as soon as the deep slumber fell upon him. Could the sleep alone have precipitated the premonition of fear? Perhaps the deep slumber set off some impending feeling of despair that caused the great fear. How?

Rabbi Shimshon Zelig Fortman was the Rav of Congregation Knesseth Israel in Far Rockaway during the 1940s. During that period, the naysayers had all but discounted any chance of a rebirth of Orthodox Jewry. They had hardly a voice in Washington, they were disorganized and fragmented, and the destruction of European Jewry was almost the last nail in the alleged coffin of traditional Torah Yiddishkeit. Rabbi Fortman had a young son-in-law, Moshe, who had studied in Yeshiva Ner Israel in Baltimore. He would tell his father in-law how he saw a future for Orthodox Jewry that was filled with honor and power. Their representatives would have direct access to Congress, the Senate, and even the President of the United States. They would influence legislation with their values and fill stadiums and coliseums with Torah assemblies and prayer gatherings! Rabbi Fortman was very

concerned about his young son-in-law's ivory-towered dreams. He felt that he the dreams distracted him and he would never accomplish anything. Rabbi Yosef Kahanamen, the Ponovezer Rav had recently come to America to raise funds for his Yeshiva in Israel and was staying by Rabbi Fortman in Far Rockaway. Surely, Rabbi Fortman thought, Rabbi Kahanamen would terminate Moshe's fantasies and teach him about the realities of accomplishment. Moshe and Rabbi Kahanamen met for nearly an hour. The Rav listened intently and then told young Moshe, "Dream my son. Continue to dream. In fact you can continue to dream as long as you live. But remember one thing. Never fall asleep." Young Moshe was eventually known to hundreds of thousands of Jews world-over as the man who may have been one of the most influential personalities in the emergence of Torah Jewry today Rabbi Moshe Sherer, the President of Agudath Israel of America until his passing this past year.

Perhaps, homiletically, Avram began to tremble the moment that sleep set in. He understood that great visions of grandeur might occur in a dream. But nothing good could appear if he fell asleep! Because if the visionary falls asleep then all the dreams are lost in slumber!

Good Shabbos

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky Dedicated in memory of Joseph Gross & Bluma Honigsfeld by Mark and Dee Honigsfeld Drasha, (c) 1998 by Rabbi M. Kamenetzky and Project Genesis, Inc. Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky is the Rosh Mesivta at Mesivta Ateres Yaakov, the High School Division of Yeshiva of South Shore, <http://www.yoss.org/> Project Genesis: 6810 Park Heights Ave. Baltimore, MD 21215

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"Fear not Avram, I am your shield, your compensation is exceedingly great." (15:1) R' Samson Raphael Hirsch z'l (19th century) explains G-d's words as follows: I remain your shield, and the happiness which blossoms from your devotion and self-sacrifice has no bounds. R' Hirsch observes further: In Tanach, there is very little said about reward. The good that G-d wants us to practice is itself the truest reward. Compensation is only demanded by one who believes he has sacrificed something, but to a true Jew, fulfilling a duty, doing a mitzvah, is no sacrifice but is itself a gain. "The compensation for a mitzvah is a mitzvah" [we are taught in Pirkei Avot]. (Commentary on the Torah, p.268-269) In his commentary to the quoted mishnah in Pirkei Avot, R' Hirsch writes: "The good that you do will lead to more good, and every act of duty bears its own reward. The knowledge that you have done the will of your Father in Heaven will bring you closer to Him; it will enrich your spirit with the happy awareness of having done the right thing. (The Hirsch Siddur p.474) R' Natan Zvi Brisk z'l (Cseke, Hungary; 20th century) explains the above mishnah as follows: Hashem wants to reward man for his good deeds. Therefore, it is a mitzvah to enable Hashem to compensate you for an earlier mitzvah. One performs this mitzvah by performing other mitzvot. Similarly, the mishnah states: "The compensation for a sin is a sin." When one causes Hashem to punish him, he saddens Hashem. This is itself a sin. (Nachalat Zvi)

"She called the Name of Hashem Who spoke to her, 'You are the G-d of Vision,' for she said, 'Even here I saw after having seen.' (16:13) R' Chaim of Volozhin z'l (early 19th century) explains: The gemara (Mo'ed Kattan 25a) says that a certain sage was worthy of being a prophet, but one cannot become a prophet outside of Eretz Yisrael. If so, the gemara asks, how did the prophet Yechezkel receive prophecy outside of Eretz Yisrael? The gemara explains that if someone previously experienced prophecy in the Holy Land, his prophecy can continue outside of the Land. Similarly, says R' Chaim, Hagar was now outside of Eretz Yisrael (see Targum Onkelos and the beginning of Tractate Gittin). In our verse, she recognized that she saw an angel now only because she was used to seeing angels in Avraham's house. (Quoted in Be'urei Rabbenu Chaim Mi'Volozhin)

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weekly@virtual.co.il * TORAH WEEKLY * Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion Parshas Lech Lecha <http://www.ohr.org.il/tw/5759/Bereishi/lech.htm>

Insights **Being A Blessing** "And I will make of you a great nation; I will bless you, and make your name great, and you will be a blessing." (12:2) The above sentence is part of the first recorded communication between G-d and Avraham -- the beginning of the relationship. As the beginning, these words must contain the essence of that relationship. For all beginning contains the essence. A seed is not just the beginning of an oak. It is also its essence. When G-d spoke to Avraham, He promised him many things: That he would be a great nation; that he would be blessed; that his name would be made great. However, all of this was predicated on a single condition -- that Avraham would be a reason for people to bless G-d. This was to be the essence of the relationship between G-d and Man: That through his every action, Man would sanctify G-d's name; he would bring a blessing to the lips of the world. Every Jew is an ambassador. Our actions are scrutinized by the world. If we are held to a higher -- and sometimes double -- standard, whether as individuals or as a nation, it is because the world recognizes subconsciously that our job in this world is "to be a blessing," to sanctify G-d's name.

Eyes To See "I will set My covenant between Me and you." (17:2) When we look at the world, most of us see trees, sky, buildings. The Avos, the Patriarchs of the Jewish People, looked into the world and they saw that one may not wear a garment in which linen and wool were sewn together. They looked into the world and they saw that you may not cook milk and meat together. They even saw that you should wait several hours after eating meat before eating milk. Maybe I need to change my eyeglass prescription, but I never see such things. I also can't remember seeing in Nature that you can't eat animals which don't have cloven hooves and chew the cud. All I see is trees, sky, buildings. The Torah is the blueprint of Reality: If one had eyes to see, shatnez, tefillin and keeping kosher would be as visible as trees, the sky and houses. Avraham had those eyes. He kept the entire Torah -- even the Rabbinic decrees -- before the Torah was given. The entire Torah...with one exception: The mitzvah of bris mila. What was the difference between bris mila and all the other mitzvos? The word bris means "covenant." The essence of a covenant is that it requires two parties to enter into it together. Until G-d actually made a covenant with Avraham, no covenant existed. Therefore, no mitzvah to perform bris mila existed. When Hashem made the covenant, the bris, with Avraham, He made that covenant on the part of the body which expresses the essence of a person; the place from which flows the life-force and progeny. Avraham took that essential part of himself which expressed his very continuation; he took the symbol of everything he would ever be through his children's children, and he gave it to Hashem. A bris has to have two sides. There is no pact in the world which consists of only one side. What was it, then, that Hashem gave to Avraham? What was the gift of His essence which was to bind Him and the Jewish People to an everlasting pact? Hashem gave Avraham His Will, His desire that it would be only the seed of Avraham that would be the agency through which He would conduct and direct the events of the world. The entire future of the world would be orchestrated through the progeny of Avraham. Sources: * Being A Blessing - Sforno, Da'as Z'keinim miBalei HaTosefos, Rabbi Menachem Nissel

LOVE OF THE LAND Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael **THE PROMISED LAND** This week's Torah portion, Lech Lecha, will introduce a new dimension of this column -- a focus on individual cities in the Promised Land. As an appropriate introduction we offer this perspective of the promise itself. Four Divine promises to Avraham are mentioned in Parshas Lech Lecha regarding the "Promised Land," and they form a fascinating pattern. As Avraham reaches a higher level in his relationship with Hashem, there is a corresponding increase in the level of the promised prize. "I shall give the land to your posterity" (Bereishis 12:7) is a limited promise which could mean only a small part of the land which Avraham had traveled until that point -- the site of Shechem. As Avraham's merits increase, he is told to lift his eyes and look in all directions. All those lands would be his, the gift would be an eternal one

and his posterity would be as numerous as the dust of the earth. (Bereishis 13:14-16) In the historic covenant which previewed the special relationship of Avraham and his posterity with Hashem through the sacrificial service in the Sanctuary, the promise is expanded to include the "Greater Land of Israel," and a guarantee that the sins of posterity will not forfeit this promise. (Bereishis 15:18-21) In the covenant of circumcision, Avraham's bonding with his Creator is rewarded with a promise that his posterity will return to their promised land even after they are exiled from it, and they will have a special, intimate relationship with Hashem. (Bereishis 17:8) * Based on the Commentary of Nachmanides

Written and Compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman Production Design: Eli Ballon Prepared by the Jewish Learning Exchange of Ohr Somayach 22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103 Jerusalem 91180, Israel <http://www.ohr.org.il>

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I Did Not Know That! "And you will call his name Yitzchak.(17:19)"

Why was Avraham's name changed (from Avram - Bereishis 17:5) and Yaakov's name changed (to Yisrael - Bereishis 32:29), whereas Yitzchak's name remained unchanged? Avraham and Yaakov received their names from their parents, while Yitzchak received his name from Hashem. * Jerusalem Talmud - Berachos 1:6

Recommended Reading List Ramban 12:6 A Sign for the Children 12:8

Proclaiming the Name of Hashem 12:10 The Sin of Avram 13:7 The Quarrel of the Shepherds 14:1 The Four Kings 15:12 The Dreadful Vision 16:12 Yishmael Sforno 12:17 Pharaoh's Plague 16:12 Yishmael 17:1 Attaining Perfection

1. What benefits did Hashem promise Avraham if he would leave his home? 12:1 - He would become a great nation, and his excellence would become known to the world, and he would be blessed with wealth. 2. "And all the families of the earth will be blessed through you." What does this mean? 12:3 - A person will say to his child, "You should be like Avraham."

3. Who were the souls that Avraham and Sarah "made?" 12:5 - People they converted to the worship of Hashem. 4. What were the Canaanites doing in the Land of Canaan when Avraham arrived? 12:6 - They were in the process of conquering the land from the descendants of Shem. 5. Why did Avraham build an altar at Ai? 12:8 - He foresaw the Jewish People's defeat there in the days of Yehoshua due to the sin of Achan. He built an altar there to pray for them. 6. What two results did Avraham hope to achieve by saying that Sarah was his sister? 12:13 - That the Egyptians would let him live and give him presents. 7. Why did Avraham's shepherds rebuke Lot's shepherds? 13:7 - Lot's shepherds grazed their flocks in privately owned fields. 8. Who was Amrafel and why was he called that? 14:1 - Amrafel was Nimrod. He said (amar) to Avraham to fall (fel) into the fiery furnace. 9. Verse 14:7 states that the four kings "smote all the country of the Amalekites." How is this possible since Amalek had not yet been born? 14:7 - The Torah is using the name that the place would bear in the future.

10. Why did the "palit" tell Avraham that Lot had been captured? 14:13 - He hoped Avraham would die trying to save Lot, so that he himself might be able to marry Sarah. 11. Who accompanied Avraham into battle against the four kings? 14:14 - His servant, Eliezer. 12. Why was Avraham unable to pursue the four kings past Dan? 14:14 - He saw prophetically that his descendants would erect a golden calf there. As a result his strength failed.

13. Why did Avraham give "ma'aser" to Malki-Tzedek specifically? 14:20 - Because Malki-Tzedek was a kohen. 14. Why didn't Avraham accept any money from the king of Sodom? 14:23 - Hashem had promised Avraham wealth, and Avraham didn't want the King of Sodom to be the one to take credit for it. 15. When did the decree of four hundred years of exile begin? 15:13 - With the birth of Yitzchak. 16. What did Hashem indicate with His promise to Avraham that he would "come to his ancestors in peace?" 15:15 - That his father, Terach, repented and became righteous. 17. How did Hashem fulfill His promise to Avraham that he would be buried in "a good old age?" 15:15 - Avraham lived to see his son, Yishmael, repent and become righteous, and he died before his grandson, Esav, became wicked. 18. Why did the Jewish People need to wait until the fourth generation until

they returned to Eretz Canaan? 15:16 - They needed to wait until the Amorites had sinned sufficiently to deserve expulsion. 19. Who was Hagar's father? 16:1 - Pharaoh. 20. Why did Avraham fall on his face when Hashem appeared to him? 17:3 - Because he was as yet uncircumcised. Written and Compiled by Rabbi Reuven Subar Prepared by the Jewish Learning Exchange of Ohr Somayach International

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SHABBAT SHALOM: Isaac's test By RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

(October 29) "And He said: 'Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, even Isaac, and go into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will designate to you.' " (Gen. 22:2) One of the most difficult stories of the Bible - in which Abraham is commanded to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice - raises a critical question: Who had the more difficult challenge, Abraham or Isaac?

The traditional response is that as a father, Abraham's experience was the more problematic. After all, is there anything a father wouldn't do for his child, including giving up his life to spare that of his offspring? The command to sacrifice his son should have been so repugnant that had he refused to comply we would have understood him completely. But there is another factor. Who heard the command from whom? Abraham heard the instruction from God. Indeed, as Maimonides points out in his Guide to the Perplexed, Abraham would never have gone ahead with the Binding if he hadn't been totally convinced that the command had come directly from God; only a prophet carrying out the Divine Will could permit himself to sacrifice his own son. But Isaac didn't hear a word from God. For him, the commanding voice was merely that of his father. Yet when the text twice reminds us that "the two of them went together," it is apparent that the son, Isaac, is in total agreement with what is to follow.

Perhaps the reason the Sages even pose this question in terms of whose is the greater test is to alert us to a fascinating truth. Of course Abraham is the father of the Jewish people; but the first Jew with whom we can identify - the real carrier of the tradition and model for all of us - is not the man who heard his commandments directly from God, but rather Isaac, who heard what he heard from his father. We, too, have not received our commandments directly from God, but rather from our fathers and mothers.

Indeed, the seminal commandment of the Shema, watchword of our faith, is "and you shall teach the Torah diligently to your children." The fact that the Jewish people were willing to give up their lives at different points in history reflects the success of parents in conveying the crucial significance of Judaism to their children. In this sense, we are all Isaacs. Indeed, without this ability to pass on the teachings of religion to our children - not just the external structure, but also the internal significance, the fire - we would never have survived the generations of persecution and pogrom, acculturation and assimilation.

This week's portion of Vayera opens with an event that illuminates one of the crucial elements of Abraham's character, and provides a crucial message for every parent. It's the third day since the patriarch's circumcision, when the pain is the greatest - especially for an elderly man. Suddenly he sees travelers, and springs into action. Hospitality to strangers is the attribute that most characterizes the loving kindness of Abraham and Sarah. He forgets about his own pain, he even excuses himself to the Almighty, who had been visiting with him (according to some of the biblical interpretations), and diverts all of his attention to making the three wanderers feel at home in his tent. The Midrash sees this hospitality reverberating through the generations and providing special merit to Abraham's descendants when they wandered in the desert. "I will get a morsel of bread," declares Abraham, as he begins to set out a plentiful repast. Because of this act, the Israelites were rewarded with manna in the desert. "And he [Abraham] stood over them under the tree, and they did eat." (Gen. 18:9), and this "standing over them," this act of service, teaches the Midrash, merited the Divine Presence standing over the Israelites, as it were, in the desert via the Clouds of Glory which protected them. Furthermore, the water which Moses brings forth in the desert by

hitting a rock parallels the early part of the encounter between Abraham and the strangers, when the Patriarch says to his servant: "Let a little water, I pray, be brought, and wash your feet..." (Gen. 18:4). However, Rashi points out that since the phrase "'let it be brought' implies that it was done by a messenger, rather than by Abraham himself, the water from the rock was brought forth by a messenger of God rather than by God Himself - when Moses had to strike the rock (Num. 20:11).

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, in his Commentary to the Torah, points out that the midrash seems to express a subtle chastisement of Abraham's behavior. His first two acts of hospitality he carried out personally, with the results being God's personal intervention; the third he did through a messenger, so God also acted through a messenger. Moreover, the result of the agency of Moses was tragedy: the great liberator of the Israelites was forbidden from entering the land of Israel; in other words, had Abraham only brought the water himself, God Himself would have provided the water from the rock, Moses would not have sinned, and our entire history would have been different! However, asks Reb Moshe, the Midrash further teaches that the agent sent by Abraham to bring water was none other than his son Ishmael! Abraham was educating his son in the commandment of hospitality. Why chastise the patriarch for using an agent when the entire purpose was to educate his child?! The answer, says Reb Moshe, is that a parent doesn't educate by telling his child to perform a commandment; the parent only educates when he does the commandment himself in the presence of his child.

Our children will not learn from what we tell them; our children learn from seeing what it is that we, the parents, do - what our priorities and commitments are. We teach them how to behave by first teaching ourselves. Shabbat Shalom

From: Jonathan Schwartz jschwrtz@ymail.yu.edu Internet
Chaburah---Parshas Lech Lecha

Prologue: Only twice in the Torah do we have the same lashon of Lech Lecha. The first appears at the opening of this week's sedra, the second as the command for Avraham to prepare for the akeida. Is there a reason for the same language twice? Additionally, the commands of Lech lecha parallel Ruth's statements of "asher Talchi ailech". Is there a parallel? Hagaon Harav Menachem Genack shlita (Beis Yitzchak 5757) notes that there is an important parallel to Ruth. As Ruth was declaring her desire to join the Jewish nation by her statements, so too, Avraham was forming the Jewish nation with the adherence to the word of God. (Perhaps this is the explanation for the Yom Kippur paytan's parallel Anu Amecha V'ata elokeinu instead of manhigainu) Thus, notes Rabbi Genack, Avraham was really the first Ger and was renamed accordingly. Similarly, Rabbi Genack notes that there is a strong connection between the two lech lecha statements. During the first one, Avraham was asked by God to give up his past, to follow God. In the second request, Avraham was asked to give up his future by sacrificing it for the name of Hashem. Both tests were opened with "lech lecha" going for one's own good, realizing that when his existence, both his destiny and his past, is l'shem shomayim, then it is l'tov. Recognizing all that goes into kiddush Hashem, we take the opportunity to examine a parallel concept in names, this week's involves the Jewish ones entitled:

What's in a Name? The Sefer Chassidim (459) notes that there are some who feel they must take all the precautions they can to avoid the snakes in the road. Rav Yehuda Hachosid continues to note that an example of the above is the Jews whose goyim who are not worried about calling their children by the child's father's name while the Jews are particular about it. The Pirush Azulai notes that there was a situation where a fellow Mordechai named his son by the same name and it was considered strange. The Sdei chemed (Ma'arechet chet, note 5) notes that in his town it was common practice to name a child after an older, wiser parent (child for grandparent) implying that there was no hakpada in his town about this. The Chida records many situations where he was called to sandek at a bris and the young man was named Chaim Yosef Dovid (the Chida's name). The

Sephardim seem to hold that it is a segula for arichus yamim of the individual who is named for, to have a child named in his honor. They note that at times, there are those who will name a child after a grandparent in order to insure arichus yamim. Problem is that the Chida, a Sephardi Chacham, thought it was strange to name a child with the father's name and he chided the practice. The possuk in Divrei Hayamim (1:2:18) notes an instance where an individual changed his daughter's name to Azuva Isha in order to preserve her name as Azuva,. Rashi there notes that the reason this was done was that Caleb (the man naming his daughter) had a wife whose name was Azuva. By adding the name isha, He was able to call his daughter Azuva, with a whole new name. Thus, one can use the same name for a child if there is an added name in the process. (See Redak, to Sam. I 9:1 and Divrei Hayamim I 8:32 who offer similar points.) Why then are the Ashkenazim so upset about naming children after living parents?? The first answer appears in the Rambam (Mamrim Chap. 10 and Talmud Torah 5) who notes that if a child were to have the same name as his father, he could not be called by that name by his brothers. The use of a father's first name in his home is a sign of disrespect to that father. (See Shach to Yoreh Deah 240). Now, from the Lashon of the sefer Chassidim, it does not seem to be as big a deal as the Rambam and the Shach seem to make of naming children with their parents names? What's peshat? The Mahari Assad (Brought in Sefer Habris 265:15) notes that the answer is simply that the correct way of getting out of calling the child by the father's name is to develop a nickname for the child which is the proper halachic way around the problem. Thus, you can benefit from the segula without worrying about other children showing disrespect to their father. Yam Shel Shlomo (Gitten perek 4 sheimos 1) also recommends that one change his son's name if his father is still alive to prevent an impression of disrespect in calling the individual. (The Maharshal allowed one to call his son Avram which could be a bittul aseh <see Internet Chaburah Vayeira 5758> to prevent having 2 Avrahams in the same home.)

Until now, we have discussed the aspects of naming a child for a living parent. What about naming a child with the name of another living relative? The Sefer Habris notes that there is no difficulty with that, neither for men nor women. Sefer Zechira (Vol. 2) disagrees noting that for 2 men it is ok, however, 2 women with the same name living under the same roof invites licentiousness. Hence, one should be careful with female names, not naming two women with the same name in the same home. .

weekly-halacha@torah.org WEEKLY-HALACHA FOR 5759 SELECTED HALACHOS RELATING TO PARSHAS LECH LECHA

By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

"DAVENING WAS INSTITUTED BY OUR FATHERS" (Berachos 26b)
CHAZARAA HA-SHATZ - WHAT FOR?

Until modern times, the accepted norm was for all Jewish men to daven in shul three times a day. Even the amei ha-aretz, the people who were not able to daven on their own, were careful to meet their twice-a-day obligation to recite Krias Shema and its blessings, and to daven Shemoneh Esrei at Shacharis and Minchah in shul(1). To assist the amei ha-aretz with their davening, the sheliah tzibbur was instructed to recite the parts of davening which were not commonly known by heart(2) in a loud and clear voice, so that everyone would be able to hear every single word. Indeed, even those who were able to daven on their own, did not bother to do so, since they were able to satisfy their obligation by listening to the sheliah tzibbur and concentrating on his words(3). When it came to Shemoneh Esrei, however, this system proved inadequate. The Rabbis did not want the people who were able to daven on their own to fulfill their obligation of Shemoneh Esrei by merely listening to the sheliah tzibbur; Shemoneh Esrei is an intensely personal encounter with Hashem where one throws himself at His mercy and entreats Him according to his unique situation and desires. Consequently, the Rabbis ruled that anyone who can recite Shemoneh Esrei on his own cannot get by on the sheliah tzibbur's coat-tails, so to speak. But

what to do with the amei ha-aretz who were unable to daven on their own? The solution was a new Rabbinical takanah (ordinance) which stated that whenever a tefillah b'tzibur takes place, the Shemoneh Esrei must be repeated out loud for the benefit of those who cannot daven on their own(4).

It must be stressed, however, that even before this widely-accepted takanah was instituted, the Shemoneh Esrei was often repeated, sometimes completely and sometimes partially. Surely, whenever an am ha-aretz was spotted, the sheliach tzibbur repeated the Shemoneh Esrei for his benefit. Even when there was no am ha-aretz present the first three blessings of the Shemoneh Esrei were recited out loud(5) in order for the congregation to be able to say Kedushah. In other communities the last part of the Shemoneh Esrei, too, was repeated, so that Bircas Kohanim could be recited(6). But it was not until this takanah was established and implemented that it became mandatory for Shemoneh Esrei to be repeated in its entirety, regardless of the circumstances(7). It is for this reason that the Rambam(8) rules that even nowadays when amei ha-aretz no longer frequent shuls and there is hardly anyone to repeat the Shemoneh Esrei for, we must still observe the takanah. The Rambam explains that when the takanah was enacted initially, it specifically included all situations - whether amei ha-aretz were present or not. The Rambam compares this takanah to another one - the recitation of Magen avos on Friday night after Shemoneh Esrei for the benefit of those who come late to shul. Once established, Magen avos is recited said as a matter of course - whether or not there are late comers. So, too, with the takanah of chazaras ha-shatz; it is always recited regardless of the circumstances(9).

THE ROLE OF THE SHELIACH TZIBBUR An obvious question arises: Why did the Rabbis require the sheliach tzibbur to daven twice - could he not stand by in silence while the congregation recites their silent Shemoneh Esrei? Does it not seem that his silent tefillah is extraneous? The Talmud answers that before the sheliach tzibbur recites the Shemoneh Esrei in order to exempt the congregation, he should prepare exactly how he is going to say it(10). Thus his silent Shemoneh Esrei serves as a trial run for his "real" Shemoneh Esrei - the one that he will recite aloud for the benefit of the congregation. It follows, therefore, that the nusach of the trial prayer be the same nusach as the "real" one; otherwise it is not much of a practice. For example, one who normally davens nusach Sefard but is serving as a sheliach tzibbur for an Ashkenaz congregation must daven nusach Ashkenaz for his silent Shemoneh Esrei as well, since his silent prayer is actually only a practice run for his "real" Shemoneh Esrei(11). A sheliach tzibbur who made a mistake during his silent Shemoneh Esrei (e.g., he forgot Ya'aleh v'Yavo on Chol ha-Moed) does not need to repeat it; rather, he may rely on the chazaras ha-shatz which is his "real" Shemoneh Esrei anyway(12). [If this happened in Ma'ariv, however, he must repeat the Shemoneh Esrei after Aleinu, except on Friday night, when he can rely on Magen avos.] A sheliach tzibbur who missed an earlier tefillah and needs to make it up may do so through his present chazaras ha-shatz. He must have in mind that his chazaras ha-shatz is serving a dual purpose(13).

THE ROLE OF THE CONGREGATION Shulchan Aruch rules that at least nine people must listen intently to the entire chazaras ha-shatz. If not, the blessings that the sheliach tzibbur repeats are "akin to" a berachah l'avatalah(14). The reason for this is based on our earlier explanation of chazaras ha-shatz. Nowadays, the main objective of chazaras ha-shatz is to fulfill the Rabbinical takanah. But it is clear that the takanah can be fulfilled only when a minyan is present and listening to the repetition of Shemoneh Esrei(15). If a quorum is not paying attention, then the sheliach tzibbur is not meeting the terms of the takanah and his berachos are being recited for no purpose. Because of the severity of this potential problem, Shulchan Aruch rules that every person should view himself as if he is one of only nine people paying attention to the repetition and that his undivided attention is essential for the sheliach tzibbur to avoid reciting a berachah l'avatalah. Thus it is highly improper for anyone to learn, recite Tehillim or make up parts of davening during chazaras ha-shatz, even if he attempts to pay attention and answer amen in the correct spots(16). If it is improper to engage in other spiritual endeavors during chazaras ha-shatz, it is strictly forbidden to engage

in sichas chulin, mundane conversation, during chazaras ha-shatz. Shulchan Aruch reserves uncharacteristically strong language for a person who does so. He is referred to as "a sinner" and as "one whose sin is too great to be forgiven." The poskim report that "several shuls were destroyed on account of this sin"(17). In addition, conversing during chazaras ha-shatz causes chillul Hashem, since it unfortunately lends support to the widely-held perception that non-Jews are more careful than Jews to maintain proper decorum in a house of worship(18).

FOOTNOTES: 1 Shemoneh Esrei of Ma'ariv was initially established as a voluntary prayer, and was not obligatory until a much later period in history. 2 Pesukei d'Zimrah, which consists of Tehillim which everyone knew by heart, and Kerias Shema itself, which was taught to every child, were not recited out loud by the sheliach tzibbur but rather by each worshipper individually; see Tur O.C. 49, Shenos Eliyahu (Berachos 1:1) and Emes l'Ya'akov (Berachos 2a). 3 It seems that until the days of the Rosh, who lived in the thirteenth century, this was the prevalent custom in many areas. The congregation listened quietly as Yishtabach and Birchos Kerias Shema were recited out loud by the sheliach tzibbur. [The only exception was when a pasuk from the Written Torah was recited; then the entire congregation recited those pesukim out loud in unison; see Tur and Darkei Moshe O.C. 49] Only in later times, when it became difficult to hear every word and to concentrate solely through listening, did the congregation chant along with the sheliach tzibbur. At first they chanted along in an undertone, so as not to disturb those who were listening to the words. After a while the original custom fell into disuse and everyone recited everything out loud; see O.C. 59:4 and Beur ha-Gra, Mishnah Berurah and Beur Halachah, ibid. 4 As is true for all mitzvos, there are mystical, Kabbalistic reasons for chazaras ha-shatz as well. Indeed, according to the Arizal, chazaras ha-shatz is a higher level of tefillah than the silent Shemoneh Esrei; see Kaf ha-Chayim 124:2. 5 Sometimes before the silent Shemoneh Esrei and sometimes after; see Beur Halachah 124:2. 6 Aruch ha-Shulchan 124:3. See Har Tzvi 1:61. 7 Bach O.C. 124 and Aruch ha-Shulchan, ibid. 8 Responsum quoted in Beis Yosef O.C. 124. 9 Despite the Rambam's unequivocal ruling to this effect, it is an historical fact that when the Rambam and his son R' Avraham resided in Egypt, they canceled chazaras ha-shatz during Minchah for the entire country because they could not get the congregants to quiet down and answer amen to the sheliach tzibbur's repetition. 10 Similar to a ba'al Koreh who is required to practice the Torah reading before he reads it publicly - whether he is familiar with it or not; Machatzis ha-Shekel 124:3. 11 Igros Moshe O.C. 2:29 based on Magen Avraham 124:3. 12 O.C. 126:4. 13 Mishnah Berurah 108:4. 14 O.C. 124:4. 15 An individual cannot exempt another individual from Shemoneh Esrei, even if the second individual is unable to daven. 16 Mishnah Berurah 124:17. If there aren't at least nine people paying attention to the sheliach tzibbur, then it is strictly forbidden to learn, etc. during chazaras ha-shatz, since doing so causes berachos l'avatalah to be recited - Igros Moshe O.C. 4:19. See also Tzitz Eliezer 11:10. 17 Mishnah Berurah 124:27. 18 Aruch ha-Shulchan 124:12. [It is permitted, though, for a rav who is asked an halachical question during chazaras ha-shatz to answer it - ibid.]

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Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash (Vbm) Parashat Hashavua Parashat Lekh Lekha

"Get up and go": Parashat Lekh Lekha is dedicated, with appreciation for all he does, to Akiva Werber, Midwest Director of the Israel Aliyah Center. This shiur is dedicated by Rabbi Michael (80) and Elisheva Berger in honor of the birth of their son, Yehoshua Binjamin, on Yom Kippur. This shiur is dedicated in loving memory of Mr. Harry (Yonah Zvi) Zeiger z'l, on the occasion of his first yahrzeit, by his children and grandchildren. His devotion to his family and his shul remain an inspiration to us. Yehi zikhro barukh. Dedicated in memory of Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin z'l, whose yahrzeit falls on Sunday.

Sarai and Hagar By Rav Ezra Bick

Last year, Rav Yonatan Grossman discussed the section dealing with Sarai and Hagar in our parasha, pointing out the Torah's implicit criticism of Sarai. This year I would like to return to this same section, but from another angle. What was the cause of Sarai's behavior to Hagar, especially in light of the fact that the entire situation was her initiative? There are two cases of a barren wife offering her maidservant to her husband in order to have children, Sarai and Rachel. The first case turned out badly, at least in terms of the declared goal, whereas the second appears to have been successful. Let us compare the two and try and understand the differences. "Now Sarai, the wife of Avram, had not born him children, and she had an Egyptian slave whose name was Hagar. Sarai said to Avram: Behold now, God has restrained me from bearing; come, please unto my slave; perhaps I shall have children (lit. - I shall be built) from her. And Avram listened to the voice of Sarai" (Bereishit 16:1-2). The arrangement described here seems to indicate that if Hagar would bear a child to Avram, the child would in some sense be considered Sarai's. This same procedure is proposed by the childless Rachel to Yaakov. "Rachel saw that she had not born children to Yaakov, and Rachel was jealous of her sister ... And she said: Here is my maid Bilha, come unto her and she shall bear on my knees, that I also shall

have children ("be built") from her (30:1-3).

1. Attitude The most obvious difference between the words of Sarai and those of Rachel is in one word - Sarai says, "PERHAPS (ula) I shall have children from her." Now I do not believe that this indicates that Sarai had less faith than Rachel, or that Rachel was possessed of an irrational confidence in the success of her plan. On the contrary, Rachel's words should be understood as a proposition. This is the plan: "You Yaakov shall marry Bilha and then she shall children and I shall have a measure of fulfillment through them." Will this plan work? God alone knows. Rachel's words do not indicate a greater degree of confidence. What then is the difference, and what is the significance of the "ula" of Sarai. I think that the difference is not in the intellectual evaluation of the chances of success but in the psychological acceptance and eagerness with which each woman views her own proposal. The word "perhaps" indicates Sarai's ambiguous feelings towards the very plan she is convincing Avram to embrace. This is HER plan: "You Avram shall marry my slave (no "perhaps" here) and perhaps she shall have a child ... but maybe, on the other hand, she will not." More specifically, "maybe I shall be built, shall be fulfilled by this child, but maybe I shall not." And "maybe," our ears detect her thinking, "I do not even want this child to be born or this marriage to take place."

2. Motivation Why is Sarai uncertain and hesitant? Perhaps this results from a different motivation between the two foremothers. Rachel's desire is primarily for personal fulfillment. Her barrenness leaves her empty, feeling worthless. We find this explicit in her first address to Yaakov (which I conveniently left out of the quote above): "Rachel saw that she had not born children to Yaakov, and Rachel was jealous of her sister, and she said to Yaakov: Give me children or else I die" (30:1). This is the source of the statement of Chazal that a barren woman is like one who is dead. Rachel feels that her life is worthless without children. For her then, the success of her plan will mean that she will have a child - Bilha's, to be exact - who will give meaning and life to her.

Sarai, I would like to suggest, is not PRIMARILY motivated by feelings of inner worthlessness and emptiness. Whatever her pain over her barrenness, she has been married to Avraham for many years and is no longer young. We see later that, at least on the conscious level, she views the possibility of her having children as being almost droll, if not fantastic. As opposed to the introduction to the Rachel episode - "Rachel was jealous of her sister" - we find here the introduction, "Sarai, the wife of Avram, had not born him children." Notice the identification of Sarai as the wife of Avram. Sarai's motivation was to provide a child for Avram. Because she is the wife of Avram, she proposes to him that he take another wife in order that he should have children. On the other hand, this is obviously not a concern of Rachel, since Yaakov already has five sons, from Leah, Rachel's sister. This explains another difference between the proposals of the two women. Rachel says, "come unto her and she shall bear on my knees, that I also shall have children from her." Sarai proposes, "come please unto my slave; perhaps I shall have children from her." In her mind, Sarai does not actually see herself as raising the child (this is the meaning of the phrase "bear on my knees"). She will fulfill her duties towards her husband by providing, indirectly, a heir, but the joys of motherhood are not her aim or her dream. This is the explanation of Sarai's hesitation. If Bilha will bear a child for Yaakov, this will in no way undermine Rachel's position in the house of Yaakov. In any event, Bilha is not Rachel's rival; if anyone is, it is her sister Leah. Rachel's position as Yaakov's love has survived the five births of Leah, and the birth of a child to Bilha will not change anything. But if Hagar gives a child to the childless Avram, she will become, it would seem, the instrument of the fulfillment of the divine promise to Avram, she will be the mother of the nation. Legally, in some sense, it would appear that Sarai would be counted as the mother of the child. But Sarai suspects that this legal fiction (which, it should be noted, is not reflected in Torah law) will not really be true. Rachel, on the contrary, knows that she can only gain from being the mother, in any sense, of Bilha's child. here there is no tension between the legal status implicit in this arrangement and her true goal - to have a child, at least in some sense. Yaakov's gain is her gain; Avram's gain may be Sarai's loss.

3. The status There is a subtle difference expressed in the "marriage" itself, between Bilha and Hagar. Compare: "She gave him her slave Bilha as a wife" (30:4) "Sarai, the wife of Avram, took Hagar the Egyptian her slave, ten years after Avram had settled in the land of Canaan, and gave her to Avram her husband, to him as a wife" (16:3). Notice: 1. Sarai, THE WIFE OF AVRAHAM, took Hagar HER SLAVE. 2. After ten years. 3. Gave her to Avram HER HUSBAND. 4. to him, as a wife. This verse, which I think should be viewed as a formal legal declaration of what Sarai is doing (after all, the previous verse already states that Avram followed Sarai's proposal), stresses the difference that Sarai insists exists, and should continue to exist, between herself, the wife of Avram, and Hagar, the slave. For although the verse states that Hagar is given to Avram as a wife, Stresses that she, the "real" wife, is the one who is arranging it all. Since the word for wife - "isha" - means no more than "woman," it is not really clear if Hagar is meant to have the status of wife or concubine. Sarai is very concerned that the success of her proposal will undermine her position and therefore attempts to guarantee her status. This attempt does not really succeed, and therefore we find that shortly afterwards the relationship between Sarai and Hagar boils over into outright enmity. The Netziv makes an interesting point here concerning the repetitive phrase "to Avram her husband to him as a wife." He claims that the emphasis on "to him for a wife" means that Sarai stipulated that she would have the status of "wife" only in relation to Avram, but would remain a slave in relation to Sarai. This explains the continued reference to Hagar as "the slave of Sarai" in the following verses, both in Sarai's and Avram's words (16:5-6), and, somewhat more surprisingly, in the address of the angel to Hagar: "And he said, Hagar, the slave of Sarai, from where are you coming and where are you going?" (16:8). On the contrary, both Bilha and Zilpa are not called servants subsequent to their marriage, except in the presence of Lavan when he is searching through the tents (31:32). The term used by Rachel to introduce Bilha to Yaakov - my maid (amma) - is also less derogatory than that used exclusively by Sarai - my slave (shifcha). Only later, after bearing Yishmael, is Hagar called an "amma." This fits in perfectly with my point.

4. The consequences Sarai's ambiguous attitude towards her own plan and her fears of its success are immediately tested when Hagar becomes pregnant and shows, in some undefined way, that she senses that her status in the family is changing. The commentators disagree in evaluating Sarai's conduct towards Hagar. The Ramban states starkly, "Our mother sinned."

Others have attempted to defend or explain Sarai's oppression of Hagar. What I have tried to show is the background to this conduct. Sarai fears that she will have no place in the future of Avram's house, and by extension, in the Jewish people. Hagar becomes, by virtue of her pregnancy, her potential replacement. I think that however we evaluate her conduct (assuming that it is necessary or worthwhile to do so), we should realize that it is, to some extent, a result of the idealism which has motivated her until now. Rachel, by contrast, is motivated by personal needs. Her initial expression of those needs appears to be childish - "Give me children or else I die" - and Yaakov rebukes her strongly. (The midrash takes Yaakov to task for this response, accusing him of not being sufficiently sensitive to Rachel's personal anguish, but this does not change the objective correctness of his response). Sarai is motivated by considerations of the future of Avram and the promise of God; in other words, the Jewish people. Paradoxically - and perhaps this is precisely part of the lesson to be learned - it is her concern for the building of Am Yisrael that leads to her cruel reaction to the subsequent developments, whereas Rachel's more personal desires can be met with less conflict. That is why Sarai takes out her anger Avram, who, to us, appears to be totally innocent here. Sarai's attack on Avram is very fierce - "My wrong is upon you ... let God judge between me and you." What, after all, has Avram done, other than, as the Torah testifies, to have "listened to the voice of Sarai." The answer is that Sarai's problem is not really her honor in the eyes of Hagar, but her status in the house of Avram. Avram is not really guilty of anything, but Sarai is expressing her frustration, born of her own spiritual aspirations and her partnership in Avram's mission, and this frustration finds its immediate target in Avram. It is worth noting that the Sages make a concerted effort to portray Sarai as an equal partner in Avram's public mission of spreading God's name, rather than as a pious homemaker. For ten years, if not more, they have worked together (see Rashi 12:5) as a team. This is expressed powerfully in a midrash which states that Avram's "monitn" (the word means "publicity" in modern Hebrew but refers to the commemorative coin issued by kings and emperors) was "an old man and an old woman on one side, a young man and a young woman on the other." Now, when God's promise is to reach fruition and the foundations of the permanent entity which will carry on God's name are being laid, she finds herself left aside. Her next step is afflict Hagar, and finally drive her away. Of course, from the historical, national point of view, Sarai is correct. Yishmael is not the heir of Avraham, and Hagar not the mother of Am Yisrael. Bilha's children, raised on the knees of Rachel, are part of the Jewish people. The question that the Rambam and others faced, however, was the justification for Sarai's conduct from her point of view, as a individual actor facing a moral problem. If Sarai offered to have Yishmael be considered as her own son, how is it that later, when Yishmael is born, she still refers to him as "this son of the maid" (21:10). The answer can only be that Sarai is acting and thinking on the national level, considering questions of the future destiny of Am Yisrael. Rachel is acting on the personal level. Both are "mothers," though in a different sense. It is not surprising that the mother who cries on the path of exile for her lost children is Rachel, while the national mother of the nation is Sara. Sara, fiercely protective of her own child, protects the exclusivity of the people, reminding Avraham ("father of many nations") that only Yitzchak is his heir. Rachel gathers together the lost remnants, no matter from which tribe they stem, waiting for the fulfillment of the promise "ve-shavu banim li-gevulam." There are two ways to analyze many of the sections of Sefer Bereishit. In the parasha series three years ago, R. Menachem Leibtag read the Sefer as describing primarily the story of bechirat Yisrael, the separation and choice of the Chosen People. Last year, R. Yonatan Grossman used individual incidents from the lives of the avot to illustrate moral lessons. (These are basically two different meanings of the dictum "ma'asei avot siman le-vanim" - historical or personal.) At times, I think, the two approaches intersect. Yitzchak's personal attachment to Eisav will affect his approach to the historical mission of giving a berakha. Yaakov, who perhaps more than any av consciously embraced the historical role of building the Jewish People, nonetheless was heavily affected by his personal feelings for Yosef and Rachel. In our parasha I have tried to show that Sarai's understanding of the historical element is intertwined with her personal feelings, with unfortunate results, in contradistinction to Rachel who is acting only on the personal level. Perhaps this is the moral lesson of this story - that one must carefully insulate the two realms when making decisions.

Last year's shiurim in Parashat HaShavua are now posted on our website! see <http://www.vbm-torah.org/thisweek.htm> (c) 1998 Yeshivat Har Etzion.

daf-insights@shemayisrael.com INSIGHTS INTO THE DAILY DAF
brought to you by Kollel Iyun Hadaf of Yerushalayim Rosh Kollel: Rabbi Mordechai Kornfeld daf@shemayisrael.co.il

Pesachim 71 THE "KORBAN SIMCHAH" OF YOM TOV OPINIONS: On each Yom Tov, every person is obligated to bring three types of Korbanos -- the Olas Re'iyah, the Shalmei Chagigah, and the Shalmei Simchah. The former two are brought once during the Yom Tov, while the Shalmei Simchah is eaten every day of the Yom Tov to fulfill the Mitzvah of Simchas Yom Tov, experiencing the joy of eating meat from Korbanos throughout the Yom Tov. Does the obligation of offering Shalmei Simchah require that one *sacrifice* a Korban Simchah, or does it require that one *eat* from the meat of a Shalmei Simchah? If the only obligation is to eat from the Korban but not necessarily to sacrifice it, one could fulfill his obligation by eating the meat of someone else's Korban Simchah; if not, he must bring his own. (a) The Gemara says that the Chiyuv of Shalmei Simchah applies even to the last night of Sukkos, the night of Shemini Atzeres (and not the following day, according to Rashi). The DEVAR SHMUEL cites those who prove from here that it must be a Chiyuv to *eat* the Korban and not to sacrifice it, because one cannot *bring* a Korban at night. TOSFOS (96b, end of DH Ta'un) indeed says that a person fulfills his obligation of Simchah by eating his friend's Korban, as the ARUCH LA'NER points out (Sukkah 48a). (b) RASHI (70a, DH Yotzei) is bothered by the question of how a person can fulfill his obligation of Shalmei Simchah with an animal that is not Chulin. The rule is that any obligatory Korban -- such as the Shalmei Simchah -- must come from Chulin and not from an animal which is already Kadosh to be brought as a Korban (such as Ma'aser Behemah). Rashi answers by citing a verse from which it is learned that the Shalmei Simchah is an exception, and it may be brought from Chulin. If the Chiyuv is to *eat* the Shalmei Simchah, then there is no obligation per se to bring the Korban, and if so, it should not have to come from Chulin! Something which must be eaten does not have to come from

Chulin -- only something which must be *sacrificed* does. From Rashi it therefore seems that there is a Chiyuv to *sacrifice* a Korban for Shalmei Simchah, and one may not satisfy his obligation by eating from another's Korban. (M. Kornfeld) What about our Gemara which says that there is a Chiyuv of Simchah even at night? How can there be a Chiyuv of Simchah at night, if the Chiyuv of Simchah is to bring a Korban, and it is not possible to bring a Korban at night? It must be that Rashi understood that the Shalmei Simchah is similar to the Korban Pesach in that the entire purpose of the Chiyuv to sacrifice the Korban is in order to eat it. However, there is both an obligation to sacrifice the Shalmei Simchah and to eat it. (Rav Shach, shlit'a, in AVI EZRI, Hilchos Chagigah 2:3, proposes a similar reasoning; see also DEVAR SHMUEL on Pesachim 109a.) Mordecai Kornfeld Email: kornfeld@netmedia.co.il Tel:(02)6522633 P.O.B. 43087 kornfeld@virtual.co.il Fax:9722-6536017 Har Nof,

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Shiur HaRav Soloveichik ZT"ל on Parshas Lech Lecha (Shiur date: 10/21/75)

The Torah introduces Avraham to us in Parshas Noach, however the main story of Avraham begins in Parshas Lech Lecha. In three different places in the Parsha, Hashem tells Avraham that he will give him the land of Canaan. The first time is after Avraham entered the land and reached Shechem, the second is after Lot separated from Avraham and the third is at the Bris Bayn Habesarim. Chazal say that the first mention of the land was the Havitacha, promise, from Hashem to Avraham that he would receive the land. The second mention was the Kinyan, the formal transaction that gave Avraham ownership of the land. Through this transaction, Avraham actually acquired ownership of the land, as the Gemara refers to the land as Muchzakes, belonging, to us from the days of our forefathers, through the actions of Avraham. The promise of the land needed to be backed up with a concrete action, the Kinyan. However a Kinyan can be nullified, similar to the concept of Kedusha Rishona Kidsha Lshaata Vlo Kidhsa Leasid Lavo, the original sanctity of the land based on Joshua's conquest was nullified by the subsequent conquest of the land by others. It was the Bris Bayn Habesarim that established the land forever as belonging to Avraham and his descendants. This Bris is also bound with the commandment of circumcision at the end of the Parsha.

Between the Kinyan and the Bris Bayn Habesarim, the Torah tells in great detail the story of the rebellion of the 4 kings against the group of 5 kings. Why was it necessary to tell us the story in such detail? Also, why did Hashem wait till after this episode to make the Bris Bayn Habesarim and to give Avraham the commandment of Bris Milah? What happened during the war period that caused it to be a pre-condition to the subsequent events of the Parsha?

The domination of the kings by Kdarlaomer and their refusal to pay tribute to Kdarlaomer sparked the battle. At first glance their battle had no relevance to Avraham. Yet we see here a precedent that has followed the Jewish people throughout the ages: the Jew always finds himself thrust in the middle of international conflict. Even in modern times, the Jewish state finds itself in the middle of the conflict between East and West, atheism and religion.

Avraham got involved in the conflict because his nephew Lot was captured in the war. He went to protect his own. Jews have been accused of clannish behavior, this is a compliment. No one else will come to the aid of the Jew, we must take matters into our own hands when it comes to the survival of our brethren, Kol Yisrael Chaveirim. Avraham did all this for Lot even though earlier, Lot rejected him saying that he wanted no part of Avraham or his God. When the time came to help his brother, Avraham was ready to go. Their previous disagreements faded away and Avraham focused on the need to help his brother.

The involvement of the Jew in the middle of international conflict can be seen in the role that the Jews played during the destruction of both Temples. They were caught between the empires of Babylon and Egypt during the first Churban and were caught up by Rome and its world conquest in the second. In the time of the Gaonim, the Jews were embroiled in the Moslem conquests. They were involved in subsequent wars on the European continent throughout this millennium. This is the theme of the promise that Hashem gave Avraham in Parshas Lech Lecha as well as the theme of the

Haftorah that we read on Sukkot of Gog and Magog. Even though neither Gog or Magog has any real affection for the Jew, their final conflict will take place on (or about) the land of Israel, again involving the Jew. The Jew must always be on the lookout for conflicts that will embroil him until the coming of Moshiach.

The Jew will always find himself isolated and singled out. For example, the nations of the world voted to equate Zionism and racism, yet many of these same nations that voted to condemn Israel were run by communists or despotic feudal lords who oppressed their own people and committed gross violations of human rights. Their blatant hypocrisy did not prevent them from voting to condemn Israel. This is a manifestation of Vayavo Hapalit Vayaged L'Avraham Haivri, and the refugee came and spoke to Avraham Haivri, to Avraham who was on one side of the moral and ethical divide while the rest of the world was on the opposite side. This divide will exist till the coming of Moshiach.

During the war of the kings Avraham realized that the Jew will always be involved in international conflict throughout the many years of exile until the coming of Moshiach; that he is divided from the world in moral and ethical behavior; that a Jew must stand up to help his brother, even when it entails conflict with a much stronger foe. [This same trait carried through to modern times, when Jews were not afraid to oppose the American government and take on the Soviet government in order to win freedom for our Soviet brethren.]

Avraham was unafraid to pursue mighty armies with only a small force of 318 men. The Ramban characterizes the conflict as a huge international one, that stretched from Chevron to Damascus (some say that Avraham acquired his servant Eliezer, described as Damesek Eliezer, during this campaign). This war was a long drawn out battle of attrition that began, according to Kaballah sources, on the night of Pesach and extended for a long time. Yet Avraham was not afraid to do battle when it came to saving the life of his brother, Lot.

When a small group opposes a numerically overwhelming force, each member of the small group is precious and significant. A large army does not fret much over the loss of an individual. However, the loss of a single soldier in a small group during a protracted campaign is demoralizing and depressing. Avraham realized that his historical destiny would be different. He would have a long battle not only with this set of kings, but with the 7 nations for ultimate control of the land of Canaan, Eretz Yisrael. Avraham needed Chizuk, morale strengthening, to wage a protracted campaign. Hashem gave him a Bris, covenant, for this, which went beyond the original promise that He gave Avraham regarding the inheritance of the land.

What security did the Bris provide Avraham beyond the original promise to give him the land? The covenant went beyond the original promise in that it identified Hashem with the problems of Klal Yisrael. There are 2 forms of the Bracha of Vlamlashinim that we recite in Shmoneh Esray: "all of Your enemies shall be destroyed" and "all of the enemies of Your chosen people shall be destroyed". Both are the same in that they express the identification of Hashem with the problems of Klal Yisrael. Rashi comments on the verse Vayehi Binsoa Ha'aron... Kuma Hashem Vyafutzu Oyvecha, arise Hashem and scatter Your enemies, that the enemies referred to are the enemies of Israel. If they hate the Jewish people, by definition they hate Hashem. In fact, it is the initial hatred of Hashem that motivates them to hate the Jewish nation. The covenant with Avraham identified Hashem with Klal Yisrael, Imo Anochi Btzarah, I am with him in time of need. We say in the Hoshanos prayers, Vhotzaysi Eschem Nakuv Vhutzaysi Itchem, the term "and I shall take you out of Egypt" can be punctuated to read "and I will be released together with you", indicating that Hashem Himself, Kvayachol, was detained in Egypt together with His people throughout their exile and bondage there.

When Jews are successful, it elevates the Kavod of Hashem, and when they act poorly, it reflects poorly on Hashem. The Holocaust period, was a time of terrible Chillul Hashem, desecration of the honor of God. Medinas Yisrael is a most important factor in Kavod Hashem. Even if one is critical of the leadership of Medinas Yisrael, we must acknowledge the respect of

Hashem, Toras Hashem and Klal Yisrael that it can foster among the nations of the world. After the war of 1967, the nations of the world began to view the prophecy of Isaiah in a different light, that perhaps the time had come to fulfill the prophecy and recognize that Bnay Yisrael are a great nation and thus to recognize the greatness of Hashem, the guardian of Israel.

Avraham's battle with the kings and the covenant with Hashem showed him that he and his descendants will always be embroiled in conflict, yet they will ultimately be victorious because Hashem will always be with them. Hashem promised Avraham that his children would be as uncountable as the stars in the heaven and the sand of the oceans. On the other hand we are called the smallest (in terms of population) of all nations. This contradiction can be resolved by recognizing that in qualitative terms we are the greatest, and uncountable like the stars above and the sand below. We have lost battles, yet have won the war. Non-Jews today, like those of previous generations find it difficult to accept the insistence of the Jew to cling to Hashem and His Torah. We still exist and maintain our unique identity, even after so many attempts to destroy us. Our existence has been guaranteed not only through the promise of Hashem, but through a covenant between Hashem and the children of Avraham that will never be annulled.

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