

## Parsha Shiur by Rabbi Mayer Friedman

### פרשת לך לך

**ויאמר ה' אל אברהם לך לך מארצך ומולדתך ו מבית אביך אל הארץ אשר ארזך**  
“Hashem said to Avram: Go for yourself from your land, from your relatives and from your father's house to the land that I will show you” (12:1)

The Malbim comments that the purpose of Avraham's departure from the land of his father was in order to distance himself from people who had corrupt middos. He should not be influenced to learn from their ways. Hashem instructed him to leave the ideology and mindset of the place where he lived. A person has to know where he is and whether his surroundings are good for him. One of the most important decisions that a person has to make is what community to live in. He should place himself in a location where he can grow and be surrounded by good influences. If he is in a place that is not good, he has to leave there and go away from those ideas, just like Avraham did.

Why did Hashem describe Avraham's destination as "the land that I will show you" and did not tell him where he was going? Rashi explains that Hashem did so in order that Avraham should love the place, Eretz Yisrael. Why would this lack of knowledge make him love the land? The Steipler Gaon says that the love that a person feels for his work is commensurate to the effort that he invested in order to accomplish it. Something that comes easy without hard work does not generate much pride, but a person is proud of something that he worked hard for. Not revealing the destination made it more difficult for Avraham to leave his comfortable surroundings for an unknown destination. The challenge took an extra effort since Avraham did not really know where he was headed. Avraham would therefore love Eretz Yisrael even more because going there required that extra effort. Hashem wanted this love to be strong in Avraham so that he could instill a love for Eretz Yisrael in his children.

The Steipler continues by explaining that this principle applies to the study of Torah as well. When a person works and toils in Torah, he will enjoy it more, love it more and remember it longer. It will make a greater impression on him. Working hard on our learning will create a joy in life and in our spiritual growth. Learning superficially without working hard makes it more difficult to create that love. How do people remember things they learned from long ago? Because they worked on it and it was important to them. This breeds a love for it and the result of this toil is never forgotten.

**וילך אברהם כאשר דבר אליו ה' וילך אותו לוט ואברהם בן חמיש שנים ושבעים שנה ביצאתו מחרן**

**“Avram went as Hashem had commanded him and Lot went with him; Avram was seventy-five years old when he left Charan” (12:4)**

Why did Lot merit to travel with Avraham and that Moshiach should come from among his descendants? The Sfas Emes answers that all this was in the merit of Haran his father who was willing to sacrifice himself for Hashem and Avraham and to sanctify the name of Hashem. After Avraham came out of the fire unharmed, he declared his belief in

the God of Avraham. Upon hearing this, he was thrown into the fire and died. We see how much power there is in Kiddush Hashem. We should strive to sanctify Hashem's name among the people around us, both Jew and non-Jew alike, through our actions.

**ולאברם היטיב בעבורה ויהי לו צאן ובקר וחמורים ועבדים ושפחתי ואתנתן וಗמלים**  
“And he treated Avram well for her sake, and he acquired sheep, cattle, donkeys, slaves and maidservants, she-donkeys and camels” (12:16)

The gemara in Bava Metzia 59a states: "R' Chelbo said: One should always be careful to respect his wife because blessing only comes to a man's house because of his wife. We see this from Avraham, of whom it is written, 'And he treated Avram well for her sake.' Similary, Rava said to the people of Mechuza: Honor your wives so that you shall become wealthy."

The Maharsha writes that, even though the posuk seems to be saying that Pharaoh was good to Avraham, it actually means that Hashem was good to Avraham on Sarah's behalf, as it is Hashem who is the source of all blessing in this world. The Torah Temimah says that we could interpret the posuk to be referring to Pharaoh. The people of the world are merely messengers of Hashem. Hashem has his master plan in this world and He has many different ways of making that plan happen and uses many types of messengers. Hashem sent Pharaoh to reward Avraham for the honor that he accorded his wife. Even though it was from Pharaoh, it originated from Hashem, the origin of all blessing.

People are always looking for segulos and other ways of improving their financial success. This gemara clearly describes a proven method to accomplish this goal. One must realize that his wife is the source of blessing in his house and honor her accordingly. Aside from the importance of shalom bayis, one who honors his wife can reap great rewards.

**בלעדך רק אשר אכלו הנערים וחלק האנשים אשר הלכו עניך אשכל וממרא  
הם יקחו חלקם**

“Far from me! Only what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who accompanied me: Aner, Eshkol and Mamre - they will take their portion” (14:24)

The Chofetz Chaim points out that while Avraham was strict upon himself not to benefit from the King of Sdom, he did not require others to abide by this stringency. A person needs to be able to differentiate between what is halacha, what is accepted chumra and what is individual chumra. Not everyone is on the same level and we must be sensitive to others. Just because we act in a certain way does not mean that we always have the right to expect that behavior of others. Avraham did not obligate others to do something that he chose to do for himself and neither should we.

**ויקח אברהם את ישמעאל בנו ואת כל ילדיו ביתו ואת כל מקנות כספו כל זכר  
באנשי בית אברהם וימל את בשר ערლתכם בעצם היום הזה כאשר דבר אותו  
אלקיהם**

“Then Avraham took his son Yishmael and all those servants born in his household and all those he had purchased for money - all the male members of Avraham's

**house - and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskin on that very day as Hashem had spoken with him” (17:23)**

R' Nissan Alpert asks: Why did Avraham wait until Hashem commanded him to do a Bris Milah? If he kept the entire Torah before it was given, as Chazal say, why did he not circumcise himself before Hashem told him to do so? He answers that up until this point, Avraham was concerned that people would go away from him and not be interested in listening to him if he were physically different from them. Avraham's job was to tell the world about Hashem. If he would make himself different, he was afraid that people would shy away from him. Hashem agreed with this logic until he reached the age of 99. However, when it was time for Yitzchak to be born and for the Jewish nation to begin, Avraham needed a bris milah in order to make himself whole and complete. This is why the midrash teaches that Avraham asked advice from his friends Aner, Eshkol and Mamre as to whether he should do the mitzvah of milah. Why would he consult his non-Jewish friends about listening to the word of Hashem and why only regarding this mitzvah? Rather, R' Alpert explains, Avraham's question was whether or not to publicize the fact that he had circumcised himself and whether they felt that it would have a detrimental effect on his efforts to win over the hearts of other heathens to belief in Hashem. He consulted his friends because they could relate to the mindset of the world around them and their reaction better than Avraham could. This is why the Torah uses the expression "on that very day," which usually connotes something done in public for all to see.

Kesharim Baruch College/NYU Parsha Shiur

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