

Erev Shabbos Kodesh Parshas Lech L'cha 5770

D'ei Chochmah L'nafshechah

“Let your soul know wisdom”

Parshas Lech L'cha

From the discourses of Moreinu v'Rabeinu
the Gaon and Tzaddik Shlit'a

- not for general circulation -



Published by the Yam Hachochmah Institute

Under the auspices of "Yeshivas Toras Chochochom"

for the study of the
revealed and hidden Torah

"YAM HACHOCHMAH"
PUBLISHING INSTITUTE
P.O BOX 5245 JERUSALEM
TEL: 057-3153884 FAX: 15325388242
E-MAIL: tc7@neto.bezeqint.net

***Shalosh Seudos*¹ of Parshas Lech L'Cha 5768**

”וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל-אַבְרָם לֵךְ-לְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר
אֲרָאָךְ.
וְאֶעֱשֶׂךָ לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל וְאֲבָרְכְךָ וְאֶגְדָּלְהָ שְׁמֶךָ וְהָיָה בְרָכָה.”

“Hashem said to Avram: Go away from your land, from your birthplace, and from your father’s house, to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you great. You shall become a blessing.”²

Rashi explains that *Lech L'cha* means to go for your benefit and pleasure. “There I will make you into a great nation, while here you cannot have children. In addition, I will make your nature known in the world.” On the words, “I will make you into a great nation,” Rashi elucidates that, ordinarily, traveling negatively impacts three things: procreative capacity, money, and fame. For this reason, Hashem promised Avraham that his journeys would bring him children, wealth, and renown.

¹ The lesson was delivered at the third meal of Shabbos.

² *Bereishis* 12:1-2

Lech L'cha: "Go For Yourself"

In the *Targum Yonasan* we find the well-known verse, וישאבתם-מים "בששון ממעיני הישועה"—"And you will draw water in joy from the wellsprings of salvation"³—rendered in a novel way. Yonasan ben Uziel translates it as, "And you will joyously receive new Torah from the greatest *tzaddikim*." The Vilna Gaon, Baal HaTanya, and *Likutei Moharan*⁴ all teach that before the long-awaited arrival of Moshiach a slight trickle from the vast seas of the Torah of *Atikah Sesima'ah*, which is the future Torah of thought and *yichud*, begins to flow. Through this potent Torah, we will slowly dispel the spirit of impurity from the world. Most of us fail to grasp the crucial nature of *emunah* which is symbolized by Eretz Yisrael. Even those who physically enter the land fail to access the spiritual depths of the *emunah* of Eretz Yisrael which is very hidden. On the other hand, those who dwell outside the holy land for valid reasons can infuse their everyday lives with the sanctity of Eretz Yisrael.

Yet surely Hashem's provision of clear physical boundaries to Eretz Yisrael indicates that its quality is contained? This is because the main thing is to access the spiritual counterpart of the land of Israel [which can be accessed most easily in the physical land]. It is not for nothing that the Torah describes the greatness of the land of Israel at the beginning of *sefer Bereishis* and that all the truly righteous yearned to visit the land. Many even exhibited great self-sacrifice just to merit to tread upon its holy soil for a short time. We must recognize the immense importance of the land upon which, "the eyes of Hashem are from the

³ *Yeshayah* 12:3

⁴ See *Likutei Moharan* I: 13, 32, and 49.

beginning of the year to the end of the year.”⁵ But regardless of one’s physical location he must recognize the importance of *emunah* and *yichud* and “go into Eretz Yisrael.”

It is precisely because our spiritual source is in the world of *Atzilus* which is absolutely united with Hashem that we are commanded to seek out the land of Israel. As the Baal HaTanya and the Tzemach Tzedek taught, “Go [to and] for yourself...to the land that I will show you.” Even though most souls of today are rooted in the lower three worlds of *Beriyah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*, the source of all these lower worlds is *Atzilus*. It is every Jew’s task to ascend to *Atzilus* which is embodied by Eretz Yisrael.

The entire Torah is actually the word of Hashem cloaked in a seemingly physical form but which reaches the supernal worlds. The garments that reach the three lower worlds are the *halachos*, the *pilpulim* (complex reasonings), and the *dikdukim* (detailed exegesis). It is only through these aspects that the supernal worlds and all souls are rectified. But there is an even higher level of connection, the aspect of *Atzilus*, which one can access through the vital *emunah* that is hidden within. Our *avodah* is to attain the deep pleasantness and sweetness of the Torah, which is the source of our souls. Through this pleasantness we draw down such a deep illumination that we merit to receive the entire Torah. But one who does not strive to access this higher level will not truly attain the Torah.

This is the deeper meaning of Rashi who tells us that it is specifically through traveling to Eretz Yisrael that we merit “children,” that our Torah bears

⁵ *Devarim* 11:12

fruit through feeling a deep pleasure in our learning. It is only on this level that one truly attains a complete knowledge of the Torah.

“Every Step I Take is Toward Eretz Yisrael”

When a person first tries to turn his path toward Eretz Yisrael, however, the forces of evil tell him that he will never attain true mastery of the revealed Torah if he makes *dveikus* through Torah his goal. Since the way to Eretz Yisrael “diminishes children,” this can mean that one risks losing the revealed aspects of Torah that are symbolized by children since the offspring of the righteous are their good deeds. Another way to understand this is that the evil within argues that focus on *dveikus* will cause one to do less good deeds than if he would just act without trying to maintain any special intentions.

Another potential danger of the path to Eretz Yisrael could be that through focusing on *dveikus* one's good name will suffer. [What will people think if he suddenly starts to serve Hashem with his entire heart? He might not fit in with the crowd, and this would tarnish his reputation.] Surely one who feels degraded will be unable to truly connect to Hashem anyway, since one's name represents his mission in life. In addition, the *yetzer* claims that too much focus on the spiritual could make him lose his livelihood.

Hashem counters all of these claims by promising Avraham that his journey will bring him children, wealth, and renown. It is incumbent on every Jew to do some serious self-searching. Why doesn't he feel the powerful light and vitality of focusing on the holy Names of Hashem? Why isn't he like the

holy *tzaddikim* who ascended to Eretz Yisrael? The entire day, these righteous would sojourn through the twelve *Partzufim* within the world of *Atzilus*.⁶

In the Arizal's song for Shabbos day we sing, "גלה לן טעמי דבתריסר" — "מהמי" — "May He reveal to us the reason [literally, "the taste"] within the twelve breads..." This alludes to the twelve showbreads in the *Beis Hamikdash*. The Baal HaSulam explains that Jews are in this world in order to experience the "taste of these twelve breads"—the twelve *Partzufim* in the world of *Atzilus* / Emanation—just like the *tzaddikim* who felt the light of Hashem in every word of *Torah* and prayer. This is the purpose of the Torah and through this we will merit every blessing: children which correspond to *Beriyah*, money which corresponds to *Yetzirah*, and a good name which corresponds to the world of *Asiyah*.

The Gateway of Diligence

Children correspond to *Beriyah*, the world of *Binah* / *Imma*, since, "You shall call *Binah* Mother..."⁷ [This is an alternate reading of the verse.] This alludes to deep contemplation which "gives birth" to good deeds in practice. The Arizal explains that the world of *Binah* corresponds to the study of Gemara.⁸

⁶ The *partzufim* ("Faces") are a personified representation of the *sefiros*: 1) *Arich Anpin* (the "Long Face") parallels *Kesser*; 2) *Malchus* within *Arich Anpin*; 3) *Abba* ("Father") and 4) *Imma* ("Mother") parallel the upper and lower aspects of *Chochmah*; 5) the higher aspect of *Yisrael Sabah* and 6) *Tevunah* parallel the upper and lower aspects of *Binah*; 7) the lower aspect of *Yisrael Sabah* and 8) *Tevunah*; 9) *Ze'ir Anpin* (the "Small Face") parallels the six *sefiros* from *Chessed* through *Yesod*; and 10) *Nukvah* ("Feminine") which parallels *Malchus*; 11) *Yaakov*; and 12) *Leah*. This particular configuration follows the Ramchal's *Ilan Hakadosh* 7:1.

⁷ *Mishlei* 2:3

⁸ See *Ta'amei Hamitzvos*, *Parshas Vaeschanan*

Monetary blessing corresponds to *Yetzirah*, since gold and silver symbolize love and fear which are sourced in this world. Mishnah is rooted in the world of *Yetzirah*. One's name or mission parallels *Asiyah* since our entire mission is to accept upon us the yoke of heaven through out actions. The Arizal teaches that the deeper meaning of *shem* or name corresponds to *Malchus*, since the outer manifestation of honor is in this world. This also corresponds to learning scripture.⁹ A person who truly searches for Hashem will attain these three blessings.

We all wish to serve Hashem and it is obvious to anyone sincere that the Torah is the key to attaining all levels of holiness. The clear proof of this is from Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair's famous statement, "Torah brings to alacrity, which leads to moral cleanness..." until one finally attains the highest level, which is resurrection of the dead.¹⁰ Yet people have a hard time recalling that Torah has four levels—*pshat* (literal), *remez* (allegorical), *derash* (hermeneutical), and *sod* (esoteric)—and it is forbidden to forget any of these four aspects. There is even a hidden fifth, since *sod* also must include *razei d'razin* [the meaning of the parable which is presented in *sod*]. For a person who only focuses on the first three aspects of Torah it is virtually impossible to always be learning. Because he is only connected to Torah in an aspect of the three lower worlds of *pirud*, separation, it follows that he will at times be separate from the Torah since he will fall into forgetfulness.

⁹ *Shaar Hakavanos, Drushei Krias Shema, #5*

¹⁰ *Avodah Zarah 20b*

Such forgetfulness causes a rift in one's relationship with Hashem since true love for Hashem is only found in one who is always connected to Him heart and soul, no matter what befalls him.

We learn that only such absolute devotion constitutes true love for Hashem from the Rambam on this subject. "What is fitting love for Hashem? That one love Him a very great love, which is so powerful that one's very soul is inextricably bound up in his love for Hashem. He is always thinking of his love..."¹¹ It is clear that one must attain a level where he is always thinking about Torah and *emunah*. But this level is only attainable through the inner secrets of the Torah.

The Measure of a *Tzaddik*

One should not think that the esoteric realm refers to learning the *Zohar* and Arizal alone since one can actually attain the aspect of *sod* by learning any part of the Torah. The revealed aspect of Gemara, for example, is its simple meaning, while the *sod* aspect is the *dveikus* that one feels through the letters of the holy Torah. But [*sod* usually refers to the *Zohar* and Arizal since] most often this level can only be grasped through also learning the more obviously esoteric parts of the Torah.

Although we must always yearn for the aspect of Eretz Yisrael it is important to be realistic and understand that it is virtually impossible to attain this immense level immediately. Rather, one should slowly divest oneself of the negative inside of him day by day. The first step must be to learn with diligence

¹¹ *Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Teshuvah* 10:5

according to his ability. Every day, one should make a careful calculation of whether he is truly utilizing every moment available to him to learn Torah.

One who does not recognize the central place of Torah in overcoming his *yetzer hara* is certainly very distant from Eretz Yisrael. But even one who does realize this must always monitor his learning to protect against slipping. When he eats he should always consider whether he is truly immersed in Torah or in the nonsense of the material world.

This is alluded to in the teaching of our sages that in the ultimate future, when Hashem makes a meal for the righteous, Dovid HaMelech will be asked to *bentsch*. Interestingly, he will say: "I will bless, and it is fitting for me to bless."¹² This alludes to the fact that the best time for one to determine if he is truly connected to Hashem is when he is occupied with material concerns. Does he forget about Hashem or is he still connected? This is the ultimate test.

Rejoicing in Every Letter

One must never forget to yearn for Eretz Yisrael with his entire being. He must truly believe that there is a place in the lofty levels of Eretz Yisrael even for people of his small spiritual stature. One should never feel as though he does enough by learning a couple of hours on a simple level. He must understand that the source of the souls of the Jewish people as well as of the Torah and its *mitzvos* are holy love, fear, and *dveikus*. One whose only interest is learning in a superficial manner is like a body without a soul. If one could have that alone it

¹² *Pesachim* 119b

would be some accomplishment at least, but even that is hardly likely if he does not work at attaining the *neshamah* too.

This explains why the greatest *tzaddikim* of each generation such as Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, the Arizal, the Baal Shem Tov, and their students, taught that in order to learn the entire Torah and observe all *mitzvos* one must slowly enter the land of such intense *emunah* that he will not forget Hashem for even an instant. One's most important time for *dveikus* must be when he prays, and then while he learns. Subsequently, he can sanctify himself when he eats and even when he converses with others.

Eventually he will “inherit the land”—that is, he will feel an intense pleasure in every word of Torah and prayer. Not only will he experience pleasure in the meaning of the words of the Gemara, Rashi, and *Tosafos*, but he will also feel a deep ecstasy in the light of the *Shechinah* that is imbued in every word. And in the deeper aspects of Torah one can experience a similar rapture with even greater ease.

Returning to Your Roots

Just as people naturally enjoy returning home to where they lived when they were younger, the same is true regarding reconnecting to our spiritual roots in the world of *Atzilus*. Although this is difficult at first, the more one learns Torah with this goal in mind, the easier this will get.

The more one attains this deep connection, the more darkness is dispersed from within. Although this breaks down the barriers which prevent a person from feeling the sweetness of Torah, one subsequently encounters other

barriers which must be thrown down. This is similar to Avraham's experience. After he finally reached Eretz Yisrael, he was forced to go down to Egypt. After going through the land to search out the Torah,¹³ there was a famine and he was forced to descend. This represents that one loses the sweetness he had felt before and that he must ask Hashem for a sign. "How will I know that I will inherit it?"¹⁴

Being a Faithful Emissary of Hashem

Hashem wanted a dwelling place among the lower beings and we are all responsible to provide one for Him. We must reveal His Kingship in all the worlds: the three lower of *B-Y-A* as well as that of *Atzilus*. Every one of us has a portion in Torah. Not only to learn all aspects of Torah, but to make our entire lives into a vehicle to reveal the honor of Hashem. This must be our aspiration, since we all are rooted in the word of Hashem that is contained in the Torah.

In every letter of the Torah and in every mitzvah the *tzaddikim* knew their supernal source and how to connect to Hashem through it. This is the deeper meaning of, "ךָ-ךָ" — "Go to yourself." The word ךָ has a numerical value of 50 [30+20] which corresponds to the fiftieth gate which is an aspect of *Arich Anpin*. This teaches that through the *Mochin*, the mentalities of *Arich*, one elevates and includes the three lower worlds to their source in *Atzilus*.

This is so difficult precisely because the three lower worlds each include one of the three major evil character traits of jealousy, illicit desire, and lust for

¹³ Zohar, Parshas Shelach 159b

¹⁴ Bereishis 15:8

honor. These three evil traits block one's ability to perceive the sublime light contained in the holy Torah. It is only after one lifts these three evil tendencies back up to *Atzilus* that he can unite with the light of G-dliness.

The War of the Four and Five Kings

This is the deeper meaning of the war between the four kings and the five kings. The four kings represent the four letters of the *Shem HaVaYaH* and the world of *Atzilus*, while the five symbolize the five letters of the Name *Elokim*, which parallels the three lower worlds. These two tendencies—to separate the three lower worlds by indulging in the three cardinal sins or lifting them up—is a long struggle that takes place in each person's soul. Will he live his life cut off from Hashem, or will he be connected to the deep oneness of learning Torah for its own sake and including the entire creation in the light of Hashem? The entire redemption depends on this deep struggle to imbue the words of Torah will G-dly luminescence through rejecting all evil.

Avraham stands to the right but Lot corresponds to Avraham within the realm of unholiness. As the holy *Zohar* writes, “the face of Lot resembled Avraham.”¹⁵ The very name אב-רם—“father of exalted levels”—alludes to the supreme greatness of Avraham. And Lot too appeared to be on the same level. He too attained many levels and had *ruach hakodesh*, yet in truth he was Avrahama's nemesis, since Lot is the aspect of *klippas nogah* [which clings tightly to holiness and is hard to distinguish from it]. He was just like Yoav HaEdomi and Achetofel who had levels of *ruach hakodesh* yet still fought

¹⁵ *Zohar* I:86b

against Dovid HaMelech who was the true *tzaddik* of the generation. Their only real interest was in superficially attaining level after level—not in reaching for the light of Hashem. In truth this is a very fine blemish which is easy to miss since they were scholars and had attained a demonstrably high level. Even so, the moment they found themselves in opposition to Dovid HaMelech, they should have understood that they had strayed and repented.

The same choice is presented to each of us. As the verse states: "יש דרך" —"There is a path that seems straight before a person, but it ends in the pathways of death."¹⁶ The best way to determine if we are on a good course is to see how we treat the true *tzaddikim*. If one is like Lot, G-d forbid, and shames the very *tzaddikim* who reveal how to attain the aspect of Eretz Yisrael, this is a sign that he has fallen away from true holiness. We see this clearly in Lot who appeared to be like Avraham but forgot everything, and even went so far as to relocate to Sodom and set his entire focus on worldly success. He completely forgot his true purpose.

At this low point one's only desire is for children, money, and fame. Even when one feels how low he has sunk it is still so hard to separate from the people of Sodom. The root of the trouble is that he lost sight of the crucial role that Eretz Yisrael plays in true connection to holiness. One who fails to journey toward *emunah* according to his level will fall into the false judgments of Sodom—the sophisticated manipulation of every fact toward a base purpose, without a thought for the truth. Sadly, he continues to plummet until he becomes a judge of Sodom. At this new low, one can bring a proof from the Torah that he

¹⁶ *Mishlei* 14:12

follows the path of the just. But in truth, Hashem Himself testifies regarding the people of Sodom, "The people of Sodom are evil and sinning very much against Hashem."¹⁷

Uniting with Avraham

Even one who has truly forgotten his purpose in life can transform his descent into an ascent by starting to act like he should again. He must seek to reveal the honor of Hashem in the world and understand the value of the exalted light of G-dliness. And he must start respecting the true *tzaddikim*. This deep *teshuvah* is symbolized by the birth of *Zerach*, whose descendant Boaz married Rus who was a descendant of Lot. Together, they produce the soul of Dovid HaMelech and Moshiach.

In truth every *tzaddik* falls from his exalted place in Eretz Yisrael. But he immediately picks himself up and transforms the descent to an ascent. Similarly, even one who has spent a long time in Sodom can rectify everything by uniting with Avraham. The falls too have a purpose: to form stronger vessels that will hold the light of Moshiach since we are forced to form a stronger relationship with Hashem to prevent ourselves from falling again. Through working ever harder to cleave to Hashem we remove Lot from Sodom, as symbolized by Avraham saving Lot. But it was also on account of Avraham that Og, the aspect of evil directly corresponding to Avraham, was saved from Sodom.¹⁸ The

¹⁷ *Bereshis* 13:13

¹⁸ See *Kehillas Yaakov, Erech Sichon*

tzaddik falls to elevate the part of him that is still an aspect of forgetfulness up to the level of Eretz Yisrael. It is through this that Moshiach is born.

The verses continue: תָּן-לִי הַנַּפֶּשׁ וְהַרְבֵּשׁ קַח-לְךָ. וַיֹּאמֶר מֶלֶךְ-סֹדֶם אֶל-אַבְרָם : הֲרַמְתִּי יָדִי אֶל ה' קַל עָלַיִן, קִנְיָה שְׂמִימִים וְאַרְצָךְ. אִם-מַחֲוֹט וְעַד וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָם אֶל-מֶלֶךְ סֹדֶם : וְאִם-אֶקַּח מִכָּל-אֲשֶׁר-לְךָ ; וְלֹא תֹאמַר, אֲנִי הִעֲשֵׂרְתִּי אֶת-אַבְרָם. "—שְׂרוּךְ-נֶעַל, וְאִם-אֶקַּח מִכָּל-אֲשֶׁר-לְךָ ; וְלֹא תֹאמַר, אֲנִי הִעֲשֵׂרְתִּי אֶת-אַבְרָם. "—“And the king of Sodom said to Avram: Give me the persons and take the goods for yourself. And Avraham said to the king of Sodom: I have raised my hand [in an oath] to Hashem the most High, Maker of the heavens and the earth, that I will not take a thread or a shoelace or anything that is yours, lest you say, ‘It was I who made Avram wealthy.’”¹⁹ This verse alludes to the deep-felt connection that the *tzaddik* has with Hashem. Avraham connected to Hashem from the aspect of חוט, the “thread” that is the קו אין סוף, the “strand” that extends from the *Ein Sof*, until the lowest worlds which are an aspect of שרוך נעל, the “shoelace.” This symbolizes the feet of *Adam Kadmon* which shine until the world of *Asiyah*. The deep Torah in which the *tzaddikim* are always occupied is beyond our comprehension, as is their level of *dveikus*. Yet they reveal a little bit in an aspect of a “string and a shoe lace,” to enable the rest of the world to cleave to Hashem.

The Song of the Ultimate Future

At first one feels deep connection to *Chochmah*, but it is free gift from above to inspire him to work to attain this later on. In the beginning, one is in an aspect of שרי—Sarai, whose name was only changed later to Sarah. The *yud*

¹⁹ Bereishis 14:21-23

represents the *Chcohmah*, while the word *shar* or “singing” [represents the level one can potentially reach]. If one is worthy he will transform the *yud* to a *hei* [which changed Sarai’s *mazal* so that she could bear children] and give birth to Yitzchak, which the mirth [צחוק] that will fill the world in the ultimate future. We find that *hei* represents progeny, as in the verse: “הֵאֱלֹהִים לְךָ זָרַע” — “Here [*hei*] is seed for you.”²⁰ The birth of Yitzchak represents a very deep recognition of Hashem throughout the entire fabric of creation. At this level one has fulfilled his potential and merits the single, double, triple, and quadruple song which will be revealed in the ultimate future. [This is the evolving unfolding of the *Shem HaVaYaH* in a descending expansion as follows: יוד, יוד ה"א, יו"ד ה"א וא"ו, יו"ד ה"א] This is an aspect of the verse, “אָז יִמְלֵא שְׂחוֹק פִּינוּ, וְלִשׁוֹנֵינוּ רִנָּה” — “Then our mouths will be filled with laughter and our tongues with joyous song.”²¹ This expanding song teaches us that while we begin only with the letter *yud*, eventually if we are diligent we will merit to reveal the entire Name of Hashem.

“Let Your Soul Know Wisdom”

This is the meaning of: “דעה חכמה לנפשך והיא כתר לראשך” — “Let your soul (*nefesh*) know (*d'ei*) wisdom (*Chochmah*) and it will be a crown (*Kesser*) for your head.”²² At first Hashem illuminates one’s *nefesh* with the *yud* of *Chochmah*. But if his entire power is focused on attaining Eretz Yisrael, he will merit to reach the infinite light of *Kesser* — “And it will be a crown for your

²⁰ Ibid, 27:23; *Likutei Moharan* I:53

²¹ *Tehillim* 126:2

²² From the *Shabbos zemer* “*D’ror Yikrah*,” based on *Mishlei* 24:14.

head.” This teaches that the *yud* of *Chochmah* forms the *hei* of *Atikah*, which represents that the shining light of Hashem rests in one at all times. While a person learns Torah, when he *davens*, or when he is occupied with physical endeavors, his name will not be אברם. Instead, he will acquire the added *hei* of אברהם since he is always in Eretz Yisrael, the land of true *emunah*.

Hashem should help us merit to believe in the preciousness of Eretz Yisrael. We should begin to truly learn all aspects of Torah with diligence and honor the *tzaddikim* who have revealed the greatness of Eretz Yisrael and *emunah*. We should search with our entire hearts in their written works for true counsel to attain genuine *emunah*. And may we fulfill Hashem’s command to each of us: “Go to yourself,” go to the land of supernal connection, until we see with our own eyes Hashem’s return to Tzion with the coming of our righteous redeemer, speedily in our days. Amen!

Translated and Adapted by Rav Micha Golshevsky.

Please feel free to send comments, questions, and any feedback to:

tc7@neto.bezeqint.net .