



# Tiferet

ת פ א ר ת



## TIFERET UPDATES

### *This Week in Tiferet*

**Shabbat Tzfat –**  
Tiferet spent Shabbat Parashat Noach in the holy city of Tzfat. Throughout the weekend, the ruach and spirit of our students were unparalleled. On Friday, we visited Sheva Chaya, a kabbalistic glass-blower. Over Shabbat, we heard from fantastic guest speakers – Rav Avraham Sinai and Rebbtzin Tova Mordechai. And on Motzaei Shabbat, our students were treated to a surprise concert by Simply Tzfat! It was truly and amazing experience for all involved!

## תורת תפארת

### Neutral is Not Enough

Rav Azriel Rosner ([arosner@tiferetcenter.com](mailto:arosner@tiferetcenter.com))

#### Parashat Lech Lecha

The character of Lot, Avraham's nephew, is a confusing one within Sefer Bereishit. When we first encounter Lot, he seems to be a devoted student of Avraham's. Lot follows Avraham from their homeland to ארץ כנען, leaving behind his grandfather and extended family. When Avraham travels down to מצרים, hiding the fact that he is married to Sarah, Lot participates in the deception and keeps his relatives secret. And later on in the parasha, Lot invites in guests despite considerable risk to himself and his family.

It would definitely seem that Lot learned from Avraham and Sarah's righteousness and absorbed much of it for himself as well.

But this makes the Lot's choice in our parasha even more surprising. When Avraham offers him the choice of his home, he responds with (Bereishit 14:10-11)

וַיִּשָּׂא לוֹט אֶת עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא אֶת כָּל כַּפְר הַיַּרְדֵּן כִּי כָל־כַּפְר הַיַּרְדֵּן לֹא לֹט אֶת כָּל כַּפְר הַיַּרְדֵּן  
מִצְרַיִם בְּאֶמְקֵה צֶעֶר-וַיִּבְחַר לוֹ לֹט אֶת כָּל כַּפְר הַיַּרְדֵּן

"Lot lifted his eyes and saw the plain of the Yarden which was filled with water before G-d destroyed Sdom and Amora, like the garden of G-d, like the land of Mitzrayim approaching Tzo'ar. And Lot chose the plain of the Yarden"

The psukim clearly state that the land surrounding Sdom and Amora was high quality. But as we learn just two psukim later, "the people in Sdom were evil and sinned against G-d much." Wouldn't we have expected that Lot, a student of Avraham, would avoid a home where the residents were evil, even though the land was excellent?

Perhaps the answer comes from Pirkei Avot (5:9), where it says

"שלי שלי, שלך שלך... יש אומרים זו היא מדת סדום."

"[One who says] what's mine is mine and what's yours is yours... some say that that is the attribute of Sdom."

According to this mishna, the people of Sdom were not thieves or murderers. They were just selfish. They believed that what's mine is mine and what's your is yours. "Don't ask me for a favor because it's not my responsibility." Perhaps Lot saw this and thought to himself – Okay, not good but not so bad either. They may not be doing Chesed for one another, but at least they're not doing any harm. I can move there and be an oasis of kindness within a desert of.

# MAZAL TOV!

**Mazal Tov to Rav Uri and Mrs. Dina Etigson** on the birth of a baby daughter! May they be zochim to raise her l'torah, l'chupa u'l'maasim tovim!

**Mazal Tov to Esti Schneider (Tiferet 5767)** on her engagement to Ariel Waintraub! May they be zochim to build a bayit ne'eman b'yisrael together!

**Mazal Tov to Chaya Rivka Garboos (Tiferet 5768)** on her marriage to Shmuel Zhubrak! May they be zochim to build a bayit ne'eman b'yisrael together!



## תורת תפארת (המשך)

selfishness. But Lot was wrong in that judgment. The completely self-centered attitude of the people of Sdom is called "evil and sinning" by G-d, and ultimately leads to the city's destruction.

To be "good", it is not enough to not hurt other people. The Torah demands a higher standard of us. One who is not actively engaging in acts of kindness and charity towards his fellow man, is not just "neutral." Let us learn from Lot's mistake to search for opportunities and perform acts of Chesed every day of our lives.

## Movin' On Up Blima Fein (Tiferet 5772)

"Hashem said to Avraham: Go from your land, from your birthplace, and from your father's house to the land that I will show you". Hashem's commandment to Avraham is written in a unique way. One would have thought it would go from specific to general. From your father's house, then your birthplace and then your country. Why is the text written from general to specific?

Rav Twerski answers that Hashem was easing Avraham into change. Leaving your father's home is the most challenging place to leave and leaving your country is the least challenging. If Hashem would have told Avraham to leave his father's home first it would have been too shocking for Avraham. This is why Hashem did it gradually. Change is something that should be gradual and when change is rushed it is not lasting. In order for change to last, it needs to be done slow and in stages. Change is a process. We must be patient especially in our year in Israel which is a year full of change, in order for this change to be everlasting it must be done gradually.

An additional question rises from this pasuk. What exactly was Avraham's test? Avraham was different from his countrymen and did not belong. His father also tried to kill him, so why would leaving his father's home be so challenging? On top of that, Hashem was offering Avraham blessings if he would go to Eretz Yisrael. If someone was offered a promising job and money to go to Eretz Yisrael, wouldn't they go right away?

This was exactly what Avraham's test was, to see if Avraham was leaving because of the riches or because it was Hashem's will. Avraham had so many things offered to him but the real test would be that if Avraham did not have all those offers and rewards would he still go because Hashem wants him to. In fact, as soon as he gets to Eretz Yisroel he is faced with a famine and has to move again.

Likewise, as we try to grow during our year of learning we face a similar test. Are we striving to become better people and to follow the path of Hashem or are we just following the "in" thing to do this year. True growth will enable us to become better and more compassionate Jews which will impact us the rest of our lives. Just following the crowd will stunt our reaching our full potential and when we return to America the growth will abate. Avraham was able to withstand all the following tests because his initial journey was l'sheim shamayim. Like Avraham we have the chance to change. Are we going to follow Avraham's ways and change because it is Hashem's will or because it's the in thing to do?