



TIFERET HASHABBAT

This Week in Tiferet

Last Thursday, our students took part in the world-wide "Shabbos Project" by participating in a city-wide Hafrashat Chala event which drew hundreds of women from all corners and sectors of our city. We were proud to be part of this massive undertaking! For Shabbat, we traveled to the holy city of Tzfat, for a very special Shabbat. Our students were treated to private exhibitions by artists **Avraham Lowenthal** and **Sheva Chaya**, as well as tours of the historical sites of Tzfat and the ancient Beit hakvarot.

Rebbetzin Tova Mordechai spoke to our students on Shabbat afternoon, and on Motzaei Shabbat, our students enjoyed the ruach of a concert by **Simply Tzfat!** Much thanks to Rabbi and Mrs Etigson for all of their work on an amazing Shababton!

תורת תפארת

Second-Guessing Rav Azriel Rosner Parashat Lech Lecha

In פרק י"ד of Parashat Lech Lecha, Avram fought a successful battle against four great kings, and freed his nephew, Lot, and the rest of the people of S'dom back from captivity. Right afterwards, Hakadosh Baruch Hu appears to Avram in a vision and says,

"אל תירא אברם אנכי מגן לך שכרך הרבה מאד" (פרק ט"ו פסוק א)

"Do not be afraid Avram, I will protect you; Your reward is very great." (15:1)

What exactly was Avram afraid of that caused G-d to come to him in a vision and reassure him? Many answers are given by the mefarshim to this question. The Ramban gives a practical suggestion, explaining that Avram was afraid of the kings that he had just defeated, "lest they raise their armies against, them or those who inherit them, and in the war, he (Avraham) will be defeated and destroyed."

Rashi famously gives a more spiritual explanation, based on the concept of reward and punishment. "After this miracle was done, that he killed the kings, he was worried and said: perhaps I have received the reward for all of my righteousness. Therefore, G-d said to him, "Do not be afraid... your reward is very great."

A third, very interesting suggestion is made by the Mesech Chochma, who focuses on the fact that Avram had saved the residents of S'dom, who were "very evil and sinners against G-d." (פרק י"ג פסוק י"ג) Avram had hoped that after their salvation, the people of S'dom would repent of their evil ways, out of appreciation for this great miracle.

Unfortunately though, the opposite happened. The evil of the people of S'dom intensified further, as it says in next week's parasha, "וחטאתם כי כבדה מאד", "Because their sin is very heavy." (פרק י"ח פסוק כ)

According to the Meshech Chochma, Avram worried that he had made an educational mistake with the people of S'dom. Perhaps if they had been exiled, thought Avram, הלא "their sin would have been removed because they would

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have been refined in the smelting-pot of poverty.

If we think about it, this doubt must have cut to the heart of Avram's religious personality. Avram is the paradigm of the "איש חסד", the man of kindness who was world-renowned for spreading G-d's name through his הכנסת אורחים. Suddenly, Avram must have wondered: Perhaps I have been incorrect all of these years. Perhaps I would have been more successful in my kiruv efforts if I had been tougher with others, and not as kind and giving to them.

But Hakadosh Baruch Hu reassures Avram, "Do not be afraid ... Your reward is very great." Do not regret the chesed that you have done because it delayed other people's teshuva. As long as you have acted righteously, your reward is very great.

We often don't know the consequences of our actions, and it's very common to look back on the past and wonder if things would have worked out better, if we had chosen differently. Hakadosh Baruch Hu is telling Avram that those worries are futile, especially since the consequences are really in G-d's hands all along. Our job, like Avram, is to act with "righteousness and justice," to let G-d's mitzvot guide us in our decisions. If we follow the path of Avram, then we too have nothing to look back and regret.

Moving With Purpose Goldie Wolfson (5775)

I had two suitcases and a small carry-on when I boarded the plane for Israel in September. I was overwhelmed with emotions, but overall I was shaking with excitement. For nine months I had been planning and researching for the year I spend in Israel, which seminary to study in, where my friends were going to be, what family I had living in Israel, etc. Among all the craziness surrounding me in the airport my mind was focused on one thought: How happy I was to soon spend the next year in my life in Israel. Everything that I had worked so hard to plan was actually happening.

Hashem appears to Avraham in this week's parsha, Lech Lecha, and tells him to go to a land that G-d will show him.

Forget nine months of planning, details, addresses, maps, names and numbers, Avraham had maybe a few days to pack up and leave, and to an unknown land at that. How is that he didn't ask any questions or voice a single complaint or doubt in his mind? Because for Avraham, the choice to get up and move was something he was excited to do.

Avraham was a man with an open tent. He was always doing chessed and helping other people. He looked at the chance to move as the chance to make a difference and help new people. He wasn't focused on himself and his needs and whether the place would be good for him, but rather on how he could affect the new community positively.

From this we can all learn that moving does not have to be stressful. It is our choice what kind of attitude and outlook we are going to have when we move, and the healthiest way is to look at it the way Avraham did.