

# PARSHAS LECH LECHA

תשפ"ד

We have a series of parshiyos which connect deeply to each-other.

Avrohom Ovinu is told to pick up and leave his family and his country of origin in a very abrupt and dramatic way. There is a radical difference between the way Avrohom Ovinu carried out this command to leave his past behind, and the way Hogor carried it out – as we will see. Avrohom is told to sever all his connections to his past life. If Avrohom is to be successful in starting a new nation and bring out his own personal greatness, he needs to make a clean break from his upbringing and the life he knew before. While it is true that Avrohom made a big impact within the environment he grew up in – he was mekarev a lot of people before he left Ur Kasdim and Choron – but now he has to move on and he has to cut.

He is no longer a part of that familiar environment.

He will be a foreigner, wandering around without any roots. He has to ask the Bnei Ches for a place to bury his wife. Soon after he arrives, there is a famine and he has to pick up and leave! This is a big nisayon. Avrohom goes to Egypt, and Pharaoh immediately takes his wife away. Pharaoh then realizes she is Avrohom's wife and returns her along with many gifts. He makes Avrohom exceedingly wealthy and on the way back to Cana'an, Avrohom pays back all his debts. That means on his way down to Egypt, Avrohom was so poor that he had to put all his expenses on credit!

But in addition to wealth, Pharaoh gave Avrohom something else – his daughter as a maidservant. Why? Because he was so impressed with what he saw with Avrohom and Soroh – he realized a connection with them would be more valuable to his daughter than marrying her off to another royal family. Similarly with Orpoh and Rus. Orpoh ultimately took the easy way back to her family, Rus decided leave her royal palace in Moav to live with unbelievable poverty as long as she could stay with Nomi. She had no clue that in the end she would marry Boaz and become the grandmother of Dovid Hamelech.

Don't think Hogor was such a simple person. Later, after Soroh dies, Avrohom married a woman calls Keturoh. This was really Hogor, and she is called Keturoh because her deeds were as pleasant as ketores. Out of all the people he could pick, Yitzchok chooses Hogor for Avrohom to marry because of her amazing tzidkus.

Soroh wanted a child through Hogor, but when Hogor gets pregnant, she is derisive of Soroh. As a result, Soroh punished Hogor and Hogor runs away. A maloch comes to Hogor and tells her to accept Soroh's treatment and eventually she will give birth to Yishmoel, who will be a 'pereh odom'. The Chofetz Chaim once remarked that in Hebrew, the second word of a title is an adjective for the first word, which is the main description. So here in pereh odom, 'pereh' – the wild animal – is the main description of Yishmoel. The second word 'odom' means he has the form of a human being.

It is strange that a maloch is predicting that this child of Hogor will grow up to be a wild animal. Why? Isn't she a tzadekes raising a child in Avrohom Ovinu's house?

The answer is that after Yitzchok is born, Soroh Imeinu tells Avrohom to kick out the Egyptian maid servant and her son. Why? Because Yishmoel is being metzachek – retzichoh and gilui arayos. They often go together.

The music festival that was raided by Hamas on Shabbos Simchas Torah was an all-night preparation for a Hindu ceremony with an Indian deity

after a night of psychedelic drugs and znus. And Hamas came in right before dawn.

Soroh said we can't have this kind of influence on Yitzchok. We severed ourselves from all that Yishmoel is doing in order to raise Yitzchok in a pure environment. So Avrohom throws them out into the desert with a pitcher of water. Yishmoel gets sick and is about to die, but Hashem sees where he is now at the moment and saves him.

After this, Hogor takes Yishmoel back to Egypt to find a wife. This is the critical move which answers all these questions. Although she physically left her father's royal palace to be Soroh's maidservant and was a big tzadekes, she remained connected to her homeland and her family's culture. This ongoing connection to her Egyptian roots filtered its way to Yishmoel and her other six children with Avrohom. This is why Avrohom's main legacy is carried through Yitzchok alone and not through any of the children he had with Hogor. There is a very deep lesson here.

Next week, when Hashem saves Lot from S'dom, He tells him that you chose to live in S'dom knowing full well that these were evil people. You wanted the wealth and prosperity that S'dom had to offer, but you turned a blind eye to the fact that these were people you should have nothing to do with. True, you personally remained a tzaddik, but you chose to be part of an evil society, and that filters down to your descendants.

People don't want to be confronted by obvious, uncomfortable truths, but Hashem has been blasting His message to people in ways they simply can't ignore.

About six months ago, archaeologists came to an unbelievable conclusion. They determined that 3,500 years ago, the most fertile land in the entire region was the area that is now the Dead Sea, which we know was S'dom. They explained that the area was destroyed by a meteor which exploded with fire and sulfur and wiped out the area – exactly as the Chumash describes! This alone should have woken some people up. But if people don't want to change, nothing Hashem sends us will have any impact.

The maloch told Lot that while he and his family are fleeing the destruction, they cannot look back at S'dom. They have to disconnect entirely. The moment you look back and feel in any way connected, either financially or emotionally, you will share the din of S'dom and be destroyed with them. Lot's wife apparently had made friends with her neighbors in S'dom throughout her 20 years living there. She understandably still felt connected to them. She turned back to look and she also turned into salt along with her friends in S'dom.

The ability to figure out who you are, who you belong to, and which society you choose to identify with, is what made Avrohom and Soroh different than Hogor and Lot. For Hogor, her connection to her past filtered through, and the result was that Yishmoel is an animal in the form of a human being.

If you are following what is going on today, you see clearly that Western civilization – as epitomized by the university campus – is unbelievably pro-Hamas! Despite everything Hamas has done to show how vicious and inhumanely barbaric they are, these liberal leaders of the West make all kinds of ridiculous excuses to actually justify and support Hamas' behavior! The university has shown itself to be completely, morally bankrupt. Yet so many Jews are still running to



these universities to feel accepted and respected by the intellectual world. Western culture died once with the Nazis, and it is dying now with this open support for Hamas.

The Torah is an entire approach to the world and a different understanding of everything. To the degree we disconnect ourselves to the corrupt Western way of thinking, this contributes to achieving security. If we don't belong to it, we will not share its fate. So while there is unity in the country now to fight a common mortal enemy, we should not let ourselves join mentally in any way with the Israeli Left.

There is a Leftist kibbutz right next to the border which planned a kite festival on Shabbos Simchas Torah, to show their sympathy and solidarity with the plight of the Palestinians in Gaza. They never had that festival because those same Palestinians came in Shabbos morning and killed them all.

Theirs is a twisted way of thinking.

Torah has mitzvos, but the Rambam tells us that Torah also orients you and gives you the proper way of looking at the world. So mentally, we should have nothing to do with the entire culture of the Western world. This is why a yeshiva isn't just a place to sit down with a chavrusa or listen to a shiur. It is an atmosphere where Torah ideas and Torah values are being conveyed and lived. It is a sub-society that is not under the influence of the wider society of corrupt Western values and ideals.

Rav Moshe Twersky zt"l, hy"d, once made a beautiful point. When Klal Yisroel accepted the Torah, the posuk says **ויחן שם ישראל נגד ההר**. They were unified, facing the mountain. When you are facing Har Sinai, it means your back is facing the rest of the world. When we try to be influenced by the Torah, it means we have to turn our backs to the rest of the world. Among the multitude of reasons why certain devices have no place in yeshiva, is that it violates the essence of what a yeshiva is supposed to be – facing Har Sinai with our back to the rest of the world.