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A Beacon in the Night

We are proud to announce the publication of "A Beacon in the Night", HaRav Lipman Podolsky zt"l's insights into Chanukah. There is no doubt that this book, written in Rav Podolsky's inimitable style, will greatly enhance your understanding and appreciation of Chanukah. You may pick up the book for free at the Yeshiva. For a minimum donation of \$18 to the Podolsky Family Fund it will be mailed to your home or business.



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A Ray of Light - A Student's Perspective of his First Two Months in Yeshiva by Gabe Felder, Shana Alef - RAMAZ

Why did Hashem choose a rainbow to remind us of the destruction of mankind? How could one of the purest of images, found on anything from a childhood art project to a carton of natural fruit juice, be Hashem's symbol of His ability to completely decimate the entire creation? What is a rainbow?



Wikipedia defines a rainbow as:

An optical and meteorological phenomenon that causes a spectrum of light to appear in the sky when the sun shines onto droplets of moisture in the earth's atmosphere. They take the form of a multicolored arc, with red on

the outer part of the arch and violet on the inner section of the arch.

To put it in layman's terms: a rainbow is a visible tapestry of light piercing through a humid atmosphere. Noah, living in a world filled with evil peeked through Hashem's light bringing about a new world. I believe that the rainbow also symbolizes my first two months of Shanah Aleph at Netiv Aryeh:

There we were at 2 AM sitting at Kennedy Airport eagerly waiting to board our flight, only to be told that we would be delayed for an additional 45 minutes. The atmosphere changed from anxiety and excitement, to what I would term: Over-Exaggerated Adolescent Despair Syndrome. Many probably thought: "Why am I doing this, do I really want to spend an entire year in Israel?" When we finally boarded the plane, our excitement returned - old friends compared notes on their summer experiences while new friendships were created. As for me personally, I struck up a friendship with a fatigued Daniel Bentley who described for me the arduous first leg of his journey from Indiana. The optimism with which he spoke of this coming year shined through the fog.

Many of us quickly returned to the state of Over-Exaggerated Adolescent Despair Syndrome as it finally hit us that we had left the comfort of our homes to live in a ... dormitory. Every fault, every problem, took on exaggerated proportions. The light that pierced through the clouds, however, was much stronger. Roommates suddenly became close friends as they helped each other get acclimated to their new surroundings, trying to make their new home as comfortable as possible. We immediately felt that we were all part of the greater Netiv Aryeh community, the helpful Shana Bet boys enlightened the new Shana Aleph arrivals with secrets to happy and successful dorm life.

This aptly describes the first two months at Netiv. We felt the light shining through every new experience. We were assigned to shiurim, we began by doubting our ability to decipher a Gemara and suddenly, but with the counsel of our Rebbeim and fellow students, we suddenly found ourselves wading through the fog.

Much more light shined through the clouds on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur as we experienced Rav Katz' crying from the *amud*. I was surprised and equally inspired at how it brought me to self-introspection in a way I had never experienced. Many davened with more fervor than they ever had before. The intensity was thick, bringing those of us in Porat Yoseph to strive for the relationship with G-d we had so desperately tried to form in our childhood.

The *tiyulim* to the Arbel Mountain, *Ma'arat Hamachpalah* and the Kotel tunnels shined the light of the physical beauty and historical significance as myself and my fellow students attempted to grasp just what it meant to live in a land with such a rich history.

Little gestures, moments, and happenings fill our days changing our very outlook on our own lives. To chart every story is near impossible, for each student at Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh's experience is unique. However, there is a common thread and that is that these experiences help us to understand life, each other, and ourselves.

As the opening two months come to a close, I find myself falling into a routine - that which was new has now become commonplace. However, new light is continuously shining through daily, as we explore the tapestry of possibilities of how to lead our lives, as we think about our moving on to the outside world.

HaRav Nebenzahl on Parshat Lech Lecha

HaRav Nebenzahl asks that his Divrei Torah are not read during Tefillah or the Rabbi's sermon

THE TRIALS OF AVRAHAM

AVRAHAM AVINU - PERSONIFICATION OF *CHESED*

Regarding Avraham Avinu, Chazal teach us: "The Attribute of *Chesed* said: 'so long as Avraham was in this world, I did not have to perform my job, for Avraham stood there in my place'" (Sefer HaBahir page 86, note 191). Avraham was the personification of *chesed* in the world and there was therefore less work for Hashem's *Attribute of Chesed*.



Avraham Avinu was then challenged with ten tests of faith, tests aimed at proving the extent of his devotion to Hashem. These trials went contrary to his nature of *chesed*. The first of these was the war against Amrafel which we read about in our *parsha*. Lot was taken captive and the only way Avraham Avinu would be able to save him was to wage war against Amrafel and his comrades. In the midst of this war Scripture relates: "then there came the fugitive and told Avram, the Ivri" (Bereishit 14:13). What is the meaning of the description "Ivri"? The simple explanation is that he was a descendant of Ever. The Midrash has another viewpoint: "the entire world is *me-ever echad* (on one side) and he is on the other side" (Bereishit Rabba 42:8) - Avraham Avinu had to wage war on his own against an entire world. Nimrod tried to force people to worship *avoda zara* just as Terach had - Avraham however was not influenced by them, for his only desire was to serve Hashem. This is the simple understanding of the *midrash*.

GOING AGAINST HIS VERY NATURE

I would like to suggest that Avraham's battle was not only against the outside world - in this case Amrafel, but there was an internal struggle as well. As we mentioned, Avraham, by nature, was a man of *chesed*. In order to save Lot he would have to go against his very nature. He would now be obligated to spill blood, to kill Nimrod and his cohorts (see Rashi Bereishit 14:1) - to act in a way that is the antithesis of *chesed*. He had to put himself "on the other side" of himself, so to speak. This was a great *nisayon* for him. Avraham realized that saving Lot from these evil people would bring about a great Kiddush Hashem and he concluded that if sanctifying Hashem's Name meant acting contrary to his trait of *chesed*, then that was what had to be done.

THE EXPULSION OF HAGAR AND YISHMAEL

Some of the later *nisyonot* teach us that Avraham Avinu's acts were not motivated solely by his natural instinct of *chesed*, but by his commitment to comprehend and to do whatever it is that Hashem wants from him. In one of the trials Hashem then commanded Avraham to expel Hagar and Yishmael, his own wife and child, from his home. Avraham Avinu, that pillar of *chesed* had to evict his own flesh and blood. This presented a great challenge to him. He was aware however that if Hashem commanded him to heed Sarah's request that they be evicted "since through Yitzchak will offspring be considered yours" (Bereishit 21:12) then this is what he must do.

What about the potential *chillul Hashem*? What would people now say? Here is a man who travels near and far preaching *chesed* and *hachnassat orchim* and is about to expel his own wife and son. Yet Avraham does not even entertain the thought of acting otherwise - it is Hashem's wish that he drive out Hagar and Yishmael so this is what he must do. He's afraid of a *chillul Hashem*? Hashem will take care of that! In fact not only was there no *chillul Hashem* but there was a *Kiddush Hashem*. Following Yishmael's expulsion from the house, the Plishtim said to Avraham:

"G-d is with you in all that you do" (Bereishit 21:22). How often are we convinced that we know what is best for us? Hashem knows better - if this is what Hashem wants then this is what must be done.

We then read of Avraham and Lot parting ways. Lot had been very devoted to Avraham, he faithfully accompanied him from Haran to *Eretz Yisrael* and to Egypt. Lot did not reveal to Pharaoh that Avraham was not Sarah's brother. Avraham, however, decided that it was time to part: "Please let there be no strife between me and you and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are kinsmen. Is not all the land before you? Please separate from me: if you go left then I will go right, and if you go right then I will go left." (Bereishit 12:8-9). It is not good for us to remain together. Chazal add that the angels asked Hashem: "what sort of man are we dealing with? He preaches belief and *chesed* and then goes and drives away his own devoted nephew?" Regardless, this is what must be done. Avraham was not acting according to his nature but was following the will of Hashem. Although Avraham was not explicitly commanded to part from Lot, he realized that it would not be a good idea for them to remain together.

AKEIDAT YITZCHAK - ULTIMATE PROOF OF YIRAT SHAMAYIM

The ultimate act which showed that he was not driven by natural instincts but rather solely by the will of Hashem was the final trial, that of *Akeidat Yitzchak*. Avraham is commanded to slaughter Yitzchak without any clear reason for doing so. The mere idea goes completely against everything Avraham stood for. Regarding the evil Amrafel and his cohorts, while it went contrary to his nature, he easily understood the need to kill them. As painful as it was to evict Yishmael, it was understandable, after all Yishmael did not behave the way a son of Avraham Avinu should and there was the danger that he would have a negative influence on Yitzchak. In fact to this day we are constantly reminded of just who Yishmael is. But why should he kill Yitzchak? Is Yitzchak not the model child and disciple? Did Hashem not promise Avraham that Yitzchak would be the one to continue his legacy? How can he even think of sacrificing him? What will the other nations say? Here is the man who spent his entire life portraying Hashem as a G-d of *chesed* and trying to convince the world to emulate His ways, and now he is about to offer his own son upon the altar! Avraham succeeds in passing this tremendous *nisayon* and proceeds to Har HaMoriah to fulfill Hashem's wish. Avraham was the total servant of Hashem. We may not be anywhere near the level of Avraham Avinu but we must also strive to totally devote our lives to Hashem.

Only later does he realize that Hashem never intended for Yitzchak to be sacrificed and that he was only commanded to "place him upon the altar" (see Bereishit 22:2). At the time he understood that Hashem had commanded him to kill Yitzchak and he obediently proceeded to do as he thought he was commanded. Hashem praised Avraham for this: "for now I know that you are a G-d fearing man" (ibid. 12). Up until this point, Avraham may have given the impression that

his acts of *chesed* were part of his nature and not a fulfillment of Hashem's will. People enjoy all sorts of hobbies, perhaps Avraham simply enjoyed practicing *chesed*. The binding of Yitzchak, however, proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that Avraham's *chesed* was purely out of belief in Hashem and a desire to fulfill His commands.

AVRAHAM AVINU'S INNATE UNDERSTANDING OF MITZVOTH

Chazal teach us that Avraham knew the entire Torah without being taught: "Avraham Avinu fulfilled the entire Torah before it was given" (Kiddushin 82a). From where did he know the Torah prior to *Matan Torah*? Chazal teach us: "Avraham's two kidneys became as two pitchers of water and were flowing with Torah" (Bereishit Rabba 95:3).

The Rambam distinguishes between mitzvot *sichliyot* (from the root *sechel*) - logical mitzvot which our minds (*sechel*) can grasp, and *mitzvot shimiyot* (from the root *shema* - to hear) - mitzvot which we fulfill because we heard them from Hashem without necessarily understanding them. Regarding the latter category we should not feel "I really abhor the idea of eating pig", rather we should say "I would love to try it, non-Jews eat it and say it tastes wonderful, but what can I do Hashem forbade me to eat it!" This does not apply to mitzvot *sichliyot*. We are never allowed to say: "I would really enjoy murdering and stealing, but unfortunately our holy Torah forbids it." We must abhor murder and thievery even had the Torah not forbidden it.

Avraham Avinu had an innate understanding of all mitzvot. He was able to comprehend on his own the reason for mitzvot, even those mitzvot whose reasons were only revealed many generations later. Avraham ate matzah on the fifteenth of Nisan long before there was an exodus from Egypt. His inner soul understood that on this day he must eat matzah. For Avraham, all mitzvot were *sichliyot*. Hashem therefore gave Avraham his own *mitzvot shimiyot* by commanding him to act in a way which even he did not understand, in a way which was contrary to his nature.

ARE MITZVOTH INTRINSICALLY GOOD OR DOES THEIR GOODNESS STEM FROM HASHEM'S COMMAND?

Some of the commentaries debate whether acts are intrinsically good or bad and Hashem commands that which is good and forbids that which is negative, or whether mitzvot considered good only because Hashem commanded them, but had Hashem not commanded such they would not be considered positive. I would like to suggest that there are acts which are intrinsically positive or negative and Hashem wishes for us to be good. Hashem does not want us to kill, steal, or perform any other act which we instinctively abhor. However, this is only because Hashem created a world in which these acts are considered negative. Hashem is above all nature and He could have created a world in which stealing and murder would be considered positive acts. Hashem is the source of all good in this world.

As we mentioned above, regarding logical mitzvot a person on the one hand should not proclaim that he would love to be a thief but Hashem commanded otherwise, but on the other hand regarding mitzvot which we do not understand we must refrain, for example, from wearing *shaatnez* simply because Hashem forbade it. We are not like Avraham Avinu who understood the entire Torah on his own - there are things we do not understand yet we observe them because Hashem commanded us to.

FOLLOWING THE WILL OF HASHEM

Striving to follow the will of Hashem should be our guide in life: "you shall be wholehearted with Hashem, your G-d" (*Devarim* 10:10). Chazal greatly praise the Jewish nation's declaration of *naase venishma* - "At the time Israel preceded '*naase*' (we will do) to '*nishma*' (we will hear), sixty myriads of ministering angels came to each and every Jew. They tied two crowns on each Jew - one corresponding to '*naase*' and one corresponding to '*nishma*' (Shabbat 88a). Furthermore, Chazal write: "at the time Israel preceded '*naase*' to '*nishma*', a Heavenly voice emanated and said to them: 'who revealed to My children this secret which the ministering angels use?'" (ibid.). We find many other such praises for this statement in the works of Chazal. Perhaps we can now explain that when the Jewish nation declared '*naase*' they were expressing a desire to be like Avraham Avinu. However, given that we are unable to attain a comprehension of the mitzvot from our kidneys, then we have no choice but '*nishma*' - to be taught the Torah by Moshe Rabenu. May we all merit fulfilling the Torah and serving Hashem with all our hearts.

Staff Dvar Torah by Rav Dani Bader

From a distance seeing Avraham and Lot, would have been like seeing a father and son strolling down the street together hand in hand. After Haran (Avraham's brother) dies, it is Avraham who tries to guide Lot and teach him what it means to be a man, that is a man with Jewish values.



It is our Rabbis who reveal to us the inside story of Lot's educational process really progresses. They see lurking behind the scenes someone who looks religious and is even keeping mitzvot however in reality is just wearing a Purim costume with someone totally different hiding beneath the surface.

Lot chose to travel with Avraham because Avraham was 75 years old and had lots of cash and no children, although he gives the appearance of wishing to be with Avraham. His shepherds find rationalizations for allowing their sheep to graze in other's fields and even steal from them. The Midrash states: Lot said (in his heart), "I want neither Avraham nor his G-d."

Lot continues to keep Pesach, eat matzot, and invite guests; however he is just going through the motions, following mindlessly what he saw in his home growing up. His sole goal in life is self-advancement and physical pleasures. It is true he thought he could help the legal system of Sodom by becoming its judge or at least make it more moral. However there was no excuse for leaving the environment of Avraham and becoming a judge in Sodom. There may have been a vacancy in that position, but a person cannot leave G-d out of his career and regulate G-d only to prayer times.

Rashi says all the while the wicked one (Lot) was with him (Avraham) the Name of G-d was not on his lips [13(14)]. Lot was a double agent. He gave the appearance of working for our team, however under it all he was keeping a dark secret. In fact the word Lot means to cover up or make secret, this is who he really was,

however we needed Chazal to reveal this to us.

The truth is that it isn't easy living in the shadow of Avraham, always being compared to him and being measured by his moral yardstick. We don't choose the script that is given to us as we start life, we can choose though how to act out that script. Lot had everything handed to him on a silver platter and lost it all. Avraham on the other hand starts with nothing and built himself into our first forefather, building a legacy for eternity. How would we like the script to look like at the end of our lives? Whose end game would we rather have?

One will notice that just as Lot's values got him into some interesting predicaments, Torah values do the same in a positive way and improve the quality of one's life. The Torah gives you the tools to deal with life with an eternal yardstick. Each and every one of us has a little Lot, some impurity of motive hiding within us. May we be able to find these impurities and purge them from our essence before they cause damage to ourselves and all those around us. Just as Avraham was there to guide Lot, the Torah is there to guide us, to show us the way to attain these values. There are role models within our communities that we should look to, who have chosen to take to higher ground and really live with Torah values at its core. It is with these role models and the Torah that we may finally become a light onto the nations and finally bring about the completion of the world. It is up to us **selfishness** or **selflessness**, which will we choose?

Student Dvar Torah by Mordechai Gilbert, Shana Bet

Our parsha records Hashem commanding Avraham Avinu: "Arise and walk about the Land through its length and breadth for to you I will give it" (Bereishit 13:17). Avraham traveled through the vast majority of modern day Israel, through the Golan and down to Be'er Sheva. The Gemara in Baba Basra (100a) discusses Avraham's purpose in physically walking through the land. R' Eliezer views walking through the land as a legal acquisition, while the *Chachamim* are of the opinion that walking is not sufficient, but an act of *chazaka* indicating ownership is required (e.g. plowing - see Rashi). According to the *Chachamim* what then was Avraham's purpose in traversing the entire land? In order to make it easier for his descendants to conquer it. Rashi explains that it would now be impossible for the other nations to accuse his descendants of usurping land which did not belong to them. We see that at the very least, Avraham's walking about the land is viewed as a stronghold the Jewish nation has over the land.



The Ritva cites a Gemara in Kiddushin (27a) which states that if a man purchased ten fields in ten different locations, he need only perform an act of *chazaka* on one of them in order to take possession of all of them. The Torah writes that Avraham pitched his tent between Beit E-l and the Ay. If pitching a tent is an act of *chazaka* (like plowing mentioned above) then Avraham has now taken possession of the entire *Eretz Yisrael*, even according to the *Chachamim* who rule that the walking itself was not a form of acquisition.

This is in spite of the fact that the Torah states that the Canaanites were then in the land (see Bereishit 12:6). Surely, Avraham would not have been able to make a *chazaka* on land that was not his. Clearly he had legal rights to the land.

In modern day Israel, the vast majority of the Jewish people's holy sites are inhabited by an Arab majority. In the majority of cases the Arabs even kept the original Biblical Name - e.g. Yericho, Aza, and Beit Lechem. There are three instances in which names of cities have been altered: Hebron, Shechem, and Jerusalem. Interestingly these are three cities in which there is no doubt regarding the Jewish people's legal claim.

We will soon read in Parshat Chaye Sarah of Ephron's offer to give Avraham the Ma'arat HaMachpela and the surrounding areas as a burial place for Sarah, free of charge. Avraham insisted on purchasing the land. There was no doubt as to Avraham's acquiring possession of Ma'aret HaMachpela and Hebron.

Regarding Shechem, the Torah (Bereishit 33:19) records Yaakov's passing through Shechem and purchasing a piece of land there.

In Bereishit 14 we read of Avraham taking possession of Jerusalem following the war in which he saved Lot. Avraham refused to take anything else for himself.

These three cities which the Jewish nation have the strongest hold over have been renamed by the Arabs as al-Quds, al-Khalil, and Nablus.

The land is Hashem's gift to us, and we should not be so quick to relinquish our hold over it. However, we need to be worthy of living in this special Land. The Torah writes that Avraham's acquisition of the Land was conditional on fulfillment of the mitzvot of Brit Milah and other mitzvot. We are living history in the making, the Jewish people are returning to its Land - something which we have prayed for thousands of year. May Hashem grant us the strength to properly serve Him and be worthy of possessing that which is rightfully ours.

Visitor Log, Mazal Tov's, Tehillim List

Announcements from the Yeshiva



Photo Gallery:
[Learning in the Yeshiva](#)

Mazal Tov

Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh wishes a Mazal Tov to:

- Shmueli (5753) and Randi Kerstein on the birth of a baby boy, Chaim Menachem.
- Yossi Cohen (5764-65) on his [engagement](#) to Simcha Amster.
- Noah (5761-62) and Shoshana Bender on the birth of twin boys.

- David (5743) and Marcia Kreinberg on the marriage of their daughter.
- Jeffrey (Gavriel) Klayman (5766) on his [engagement](#) to Leba Rosenthal.
- Natanel (Madrach 5766) and Sara Munk on the birth of a baby boy.
- Yishai (5763-64) and Adina Natan on the birth of a baby boy.
- Rafi (5764) and Russi Edelman on the birth of a baby boy.
- Yisrael (5763-64) and Lisa Lowenstein on the birth of a [baby boy](#).

Baruch Dayan Emet:

Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh regrets to inform you on the passing of:

- Judy Leff, the grandmother of Elliot Kreinberg (5769-70) and mother-in-law of David Kreinberg (5743).

Tehillim List

The following members of our extended YNA family need our tefilot:

- Taube Yehudit bat Temma Gasia
- Yitzchak ben Shayna Ita
- Zev Eliezer ben Chaya Shayndel
- Rueven ben Tova Chaya
- Fruma bat Eeta
- Moshe Zanvel ben Breindel
- Sima Rivkah bat Eidel
- Leah bat Eidel
- Chaim Shmuel Moshe ben Golda
- Aryeh Rephael ben Sarah
- Chaya Sarah bat Fanya Luna
- Yitzchak ben Tova
- Fraida Rachel bat Sarah Milcha
- Lea bat Bracha
- Miriam Rivka bat Adina Leah
- Dina Sarah bat Shaindel Mira
- Tali bat D'vorah Bina
- Tobah Pessal bat Esther
- Lottie Adina bat Claudia
- Orly bat Yaerah
- Miriam Naomi bat Sarah
- Yehudis Sara bas Esther
- Dov Eliyahu ben Mindel Hudis
- Rahamim ben Miriam
- Hinda bat Sara Leah
- Rivka Zelda bat Bracha
- Dovid Ben Miriam
- Yaackov Chaim Meir ben Miriam
- Avraham ben Leah
- Chaim Naftali Yaakov ben Shifra Shaulah
- Michael Yosef ben Tzipora
- Gidon Shlomo ben Esther
- Haya Rebecca Rivka bat Jeanne Yaffa
- Temima Adina bat Keren Ronit
- Avraham ben Meela
- Bracha Sara bat Rivka Zelda
- Ita Blima bat Malka Fraidel
- Eliyahu ben Victoria
- Chaya Malka bat Rachel Braindel

- Elnatan Meir ben Devorah Ze'eva
- Yahel Liam Gittel bat Rachel
- Shifra Sheulah bat Chana Sarah
- Dovid Chaim ben Brina
- Natan Zelig ben Leah

[Send Us Your Announcements](#)

Please, if you have any smachot or chas v'shalom, less happy occasions, [let our office know](#) so we can keep everybody updated. Are you visiting Israel? - [let us know!](#) We'd love to host you for a shabbat meal, davening, a shiur and would love for you to stop by.

Shabbat Shalom,

HaRav Aharon Bina, Netiv Aryeh
Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh

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