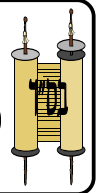




Kinder Torah®

Parashas Lech Lecha



It Starts from the Heart

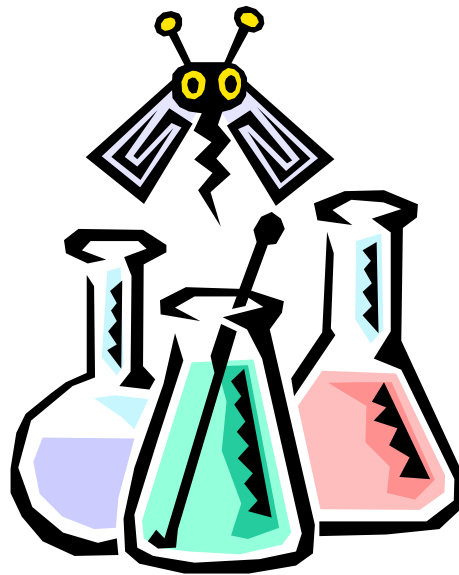
Things have a way of snowballing. We see this from an episode in this week's parasha. Avram had just returned from Mitzrayim to Eretz Yisrael. Lot was with him. Both Lot and Avram were very wealthy, owning many flocks of sheep, cattle and other riches. The verse then relates an interesting fact to us.

"And the land could not support them dwelling together; for their possessions were great, and they were unable to dwell together. And there was quarreling between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle." (Bereshis 13:6,7). A fight began between Avram's shepherds and Lot's shepherds. The Malbim explains that this fight had two roots - physical and spiritual. The first half of the verse reveals the physical reason, "For their possessions were great." They had so many flocks that the land itself was not big enough to support both of them. That alone was enough of a reason to cause them to split up. However, would this cause a dispute? Perhaps not. The second half of the verse hints to the reason for the dispute. "And they were unable to dwell together." The Malbim reveals a chain of events that led to this state of affairs. Lot began to change his religious views and customs. He no longer saw eye to eye with Avram Avinu and his *derech* (path) in Avodas Hashem. This caused a hatred to develop between them. Their hearts were no longer warm toward each other. As long as good feelings exist between people, they can overlook their differences. They can work out issues without coming to a conflict. Each side is willing to give in and compromise. After all, he is dealing with someone whom he cares for. How could he think of fighting with him? However, once hatred arises in the heart, quarreling and arguments are soon to follow. That is exactly what happened here. A little resentment entered their hearts. Then they had a problem about grazing land. This problem would have ordinarily been solved. However, the hatred turned it into an argument.

The fight then escalated to the shepherds. Lot's servants grazed their flocks in the fields of others, and Avram's shepherds reproved them. They could not see eye to eye and were unable to get along. And so, Avram and Lot, uncle and nephew, had to part and go their own separate ways. That is the result of hatred in the heart. It causes arguments, fighting, and ultimately separation between people. This is one of the most dangerous weapons of the Yetzer Hara. Hatred caused the destruction of the second Beis HaMikdash, and it is preventing its rebuilding to this very day.

Kinderlach . . .

Let us all learn a lesson from this. Stop an argument before it starts. Where does it start? In the heart. When there is love between people, they can work out their differences. They have good intentions and want to get along. However, when hatred enters the picture, then things begin to go sour. Sometimes even the simplest problems cannot be worked out because of the resentment between the two people. Don't let this happen to you, kinderlach. Love your fellow Jews. Think of how good they are. Keep your heart warm towards them. When you do this, your differences will always remain small and solvable. Attack disputes at the source. Remember, it starts from the heart.



Create Life

"May we please have absolute quiet? The experiment is about to begin."

The huge auditorium was filled with hundreds of scientists, each one an expert in his field. In the center of the hall stood the latest super-hi-technology equipment. It was specially designed and constructed by these scientists for this experiment. All stood quietly, waiting for the head professor.

"Here we have a live mosquito. We will now place it in this chamber filled with poison. The mosquito will die, but its body will not be damaged. We will then take its body, hook it up to the equipment, and turn on the electrical current. We hope to see the mosquito come back to life."

Everyone watched intently on the giant video screen, as the little mosquito breathed its last breath. The delicate forceps then took its tiny legs and placed them on the electrodes. Its head was supported in semiconductor gel. Slowly the current began to flow through the electrodes.

"This is the big moment. We have worked for thirteen years and invested billions of dollars in this experiment. The mosquito must come back to life."

The current was increased to the maximum flow. All eyes were focused on the tiny mosquito. He lay there motionless. Everyone held their breath. Everyone, except the mosquito. He was dead and he would stay dead. Scientists can dream on, but only Hashem can create life.

"If you will gather everyone in the world together to create even one mosquito, they will not be able to give him a living soul" (Medrash Rabba 39:14). Man cannot create life. That is the sole province of Hashem. Yet the verse states, "And (Avram took with him) the souls which he made in Charan (Bereshis 12:5). How did Avram create souls? These souls were the people whom he brought close to Hashem. When you *mekarev* someone (bring him close) to Hashem, you give him life. He was previously living for his body, which is finite and will die. He is now living for his soul, which will exist for an eternity in the World to Come.

Kinderlach . . .

Bring people close to Hashem. Help those who are distant from Torah and Mitzvos. Be nice to them. Show them the beauty of Torah. Be a good example of its teachings. Help them in any way you can. You are giving them life. True life. Eternal life. A Torah life.

Parasha Questions:

- What are two meanings of the name Yitzchak? (Rashi 17:19)
- Who underwent Bris Milah in addition to Avraham Avinu? (17:26,27)
- What is the meaning of the name Avraham? (17:5 and Rashi)
- The Bris Milah is a Bris of what? (Rashi 17:2)

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