



# A New Day

Adapted from a Shmuess by Rabbi Stulberger

**Parshas Lech Lecha**

By *Elan Perchik*

While we are all well aware of the importance of mitzvos, one of the great challenges we face as Torah Jews is how we carry them out in our day to day lives. Inasmuch as the consistency and daily commitments we have are one of the beauties and gifts of Yiddishkeit for there is no moment in which we are left unaware of our obligations, the struggle to day after day go through the same motions becomes overwhelming at times. The inclination to fall into a rut and view our responsibilities as routine and mundane is never too far from evolving into a reality. But, notwithstanding all these factors, there is hope to rise to the occasion as seen from Parshas Lech Lecha.

The Baalei Mussar note that Avraham Avinu in fact was uniquely aware and concerned about this struggle. When Avraham was ready to leave Charan to begin his sojourn to Eretz Canaan, he gathered together his wife, Lot and everyone he had brought close to belief in G-d, and as the Torah testifies, "*Vayeitzu la'leches artza Canaan vayavo'u artza Canaan*" – "And they left to go to Eretz Canaan and they came to Eretz Canaan." The Baalei Mussar explain that this Pasuk underlies the key to surmounting the settling in of uninspired, jaded emotion when it comes to serving Hashem. The trek from Charan to Eretz Canaan is a lengthy one. And while certainly when one departs on a journey the outset is filled with much anticipation, it may not be long before such excitement wanes. How can one retain those same enthusiastic feelings throughout the arduous journey as he did at the onset?

The same question can be asked when it comes to avodas Hashem. True, when we are young and are just becoming introduced to the Aleph-Beis, there is much to be excited about; but as we move on in life and grow as Torah adults, from where are we to derive the impetus to happily carry along? What is the secret to keeping aflame the exuberance in davening, learning and mitzvah observance we felt at the beginning of our Torah journey?

The answer, say the Baalei Mussar, lies in this Pasuk. The Torah correlates the beginning of Avraham's journey from Charan to the arrival in Eretz Canaan. What is the purpose in doing so? Why can't the Torah simply say, "And they arrived in Eretz Canaan"? But that is the very point. The Pasuk is conveying that the same excitement Avraham had at the beginning of his traveling, he had at the conclusion. Every step of the way was infused with an appreciation that he was dedicating his efforts to carrying out Hakadosh Baruch Hu's will. And that feeling stayed with Avraham and his entourage from the very first moment throughout the last moment.

This is an idea particularly crucial to reinforce within ourselves on a daily basis. While we may be uttering the same words of davening and performing similar mitzvos day in and day out, we are to seek avenues which will inspire us to continue growing and avoid falling into a tiresome routine. Likewise, when it comes to the education of our children, this idea is to be kept in mind. While, on the one hand, we must be

focused and attentive to protecting our children and guiding them down the right path; simultaneously, we must give them room to make their own independent choices and feel accomplished unto themselves. It is important for them to be given the opportunity to make decisions and take their own strides in Yiddishkeit. If we wish them to feel excitement in their own personal avodas Hashem, they must feel that they have their own achievements and have grown themselves.

It is related that Rav Chatzkel Levenstein was once saying goodbye to one of his close students who had visited him. As the student departed, Rav Chatzkel told him, "Remember that the mitzvah of '*U'bacharta ba'chaim*' – 'And you shall choose life' applies every moment of your life." These words of Rav Chatzkel are important to ring in our ears: "Choose life." We are not to feel that by default we are doing what we have always done. We have to make a conscious choice to live each day to its fullest as a Torah Jew.

Rav Simcha Bunim of Peshischa once took a wagon to Warsaw along with a number of his students. On the way, he asked the driver if they could stop off at one of the local inns, to which he complied. Descending from the wagon, Rav Simcha Bunim entered inside and took a seat across the table from two wine merchants who were conversing.

It was not long before one of the men said, "Have you read this week's Parsha yet (*Parshas Vayeira*)?" "Yes," the other man replied. "Well," he continued, "let me ask you a question. The Pasuk says that Avraham Avinu and Avimelech, king of the Philistim, made a pact together. In recording so, the Torah states, "*Vayichresu shneihem bris*" – "And the two of them made a covenant." I don't understand why the Pasuk says, "And the *two* of them"? Of course the agreement was made between them; no one else was involved. Why can't the Pasuk simply say, "And they made a covenant"?"

Turning back to his friend, the other Jew replied, "You're asking a good question. I think it is to teach us that even though they made a covenant with each other, they remained separate. They stayed apart as two entities and did not form one unit. They remained 'two' and did not become 'one.'

Hearing such an insightful explanation from what seemed to be a simple yet righteous Jew, Rav Simcha Bunim was taken aback. "We can head back home now," he said to the wagon driver, "our trip has been well worth it just coming to hear this."

The same is true of our relationship with Hashem. The way to excitedly anticipate each day is by building a close bond with our Father. We are to become one with His Torah and mitzvos and not remain separate as a secondary, outside observer. With such an attitude, we will truly relish every moment of our beautiful life and approach each day with fresh exuberance and excitement.