

BITACHON LESSON FROM THE PARSHA

פרשת לך לך תשפ"ז – Do We Exist?

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל אַבְרָם לֵךְ לָךְ

Hashem tells Avraham Avinu to pick himself up and leave his current situation. This command is laden with Nisyonos for Avraham to experience and overcome, namely, the natural result of such a journey would diminish his potential offspring, his wealth and his stature.

As Rashi explains:

לפי שהדרך גורמת לשלשה דברים, ממעטת פריה ורביה וממעטת את הממון וממעטת את השם, לכן הוצק לשלשה ברכות הללו, שהבטיחו על הבנים ועל הממון ועל השם

Traveling causes three things to diminish: 1) procreation, 2) money, and 3) fame. Hashem therefore blessed him concerning children, money and fame, as it says וַיֹּאמֶר לְךָ לָךְ – I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will magnify your name, and you shall be a blessing (Bereishis 12:2)

Avraham did not give it a second thought, he picked himself up – despite the Nisyonos – and followed the command of Hashem, full throttle – וַיֵּלֶךְ אַבְרָם כְּאִשֶּׁר דִּבֶּר אֵלָיו ה' –

That his wealth and stature were at risk of being diminished is very understandable. Avraham was well-established in his city, he had many possessions, many servants, many disciples, and many connections. The Nisayon was tremendous, and his willingness to leave it all behind and embark on a journey to wherever Hashem takes him was a testament to his greatness, and it fittingly earned him the Brachos of וַיִּבְרַךְ – wealth, and וַיְהַלֵּל – fame.

However, the remaining item on the list – שהדרך ממעטת פריה – ורביה, the Nisayon of diminished procreation due to the difficulty of a journey, is a bit perplexing.

At this advanced stage of his life, 75 years old, after already being married to Sarah for at least 50 years (The Midrash says he was 25 years old when he got married; in Tana D'Vei Eliyahu it states that he was 16 years old at his wedding) without meriting to have children, especially given the fact that Sarah did not have a viable womb with which to conceive and carry children (See Talmud Yevamos 64b), it would be reasonable to assume that it wasn't meant to be for them to have children. Why, then, would the thought of embarking on a journey be considered a Nisayon for him to diminish his chances of procreating?

This consideration seems so out of place; it should not have been a factor – one way or another – in his deciding to follow Hashem's command to begin traveling, and it

certainly shouldn't have been a factor in earning him the bracha of וַיִּבְרַךְ לְךָ לָךְ

The fact that it is enumerated as one of the Nisyonos gives us a glimpse into the greatness of Avraham Avinu and his unimpeachable level of Emunah and Bitachon.

Despite his advanced age, despite the doctors of the day telling him it was impossible for Sarah to bear him children, , despite a half century of barrenness, to Avraham the prospect of having a child with Sarah remained alive and totally in the realm of possibility. To him, there was one factor – and only one factor – that was relevant to Sarah's ability to have a child: The will of Hashem. If Hashem wanted them to have a child, they would have a child; end of story. So firm and clear was his Bitachon that when Hashem told him to embark on a journey, the thought of it diminishing his offspring – ממעטת – פריה ורביה – sprung into his mind, as if he was a newlywed with his entire future ahead of him. This was a real Nisayon for Avraham Avinu. Of course, he followed the command of Hashem anyway, despite the thought of diminishing his dream of offspring, and for that he was aptly rewarded with the bracha of וַיִּבְרַךְ לְךָ לָךְ.

אין מזל
לישראל

It's quite possible that the very fact that he remained firm in his Bitachon to have children, and his passing this Nisayon and getting up and going despite the thoughts of diminishing

his offspring, is the very thing that ultimately led to him meriting that child – and what gave the world a Klal Yisroel! Statistics, media punditry, societal pressure, medical estimations and public opinion are not what produce reality. Bitachon does.

The Gemara (Shabbos 156a) tells us that when Avraham Avinu gazed into the stars and did not see any offspring, Hashem told him צא מאיצטגנינות שקד, שאין מזל לישראל, Exit from your astrology, as the tidings of the stars do not apply to Klal Yisroel. The Vilna Gaon (in his commentary to Megilas Esther) explains this to mean that in the stars there is no Klal Yisroel; we simply do not exist there – אין ישראל במזלות – We don't exist in the world of nature; we only exist in the world of Bitachon.

Avraham Avinu understood this very well, and his yearning for children never diminished, which is why the thought of diminishing that offspring was a true Nisayon for him.

He passed his Nisayon, and we are here as a result. It would make a lot of sense for us to follow his lead and recognize that our existence is dependent on our living in the world of Bitachon.

Good Shabbos!