



תורת חיים Torat Chayim

בס"ד

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, Eitz Chayim of Dogwood Park

Lech Lecha

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This issue is dedicated by Robin and Dr. Issy Eckman in memory of Robin's father, Marvin Emmer, Moshe ben Yitzchak Aryeh z"l, for his yahrtzeit (16 Cheshvan).

Ramban on Our Parshah: The Deeds of our Ancestors

One of Ramban's best-known comments on the Torah comes at the start of our parshah, as Avraham begins to walk about the land: "I will give you a rule, and you will perceive it in all of the coming sections regarding Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. It is a great matter, mentioned briefly by our masters, saying (Tanchuma 9), 'All that happened to the ancestors, is a sign for the descendants.' Therefore, the text goes on at length in telling of journeys and digging wells and other events, and one might think that they are extra and without benefit, but all of them come to tell of the future, for when an event happens to a prophet from among the three patriarchs, he will deduce from it that which is decreed upon his children." (Commentary to Bereishit 12:6) In Hebrew, this is summed up with the words *maaseh avot siman labonim*.

Why did Hashem arrange for us to reenact the events of our ancestors' lives? Here are three ideas:

This demonstrates our bond with them

Midrashim contend that Yitzchak resembled Avraham (Bava Metzia 87a). In mitzvot like Hakhel we reenact events from our national experience. (Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Chagigah 3:6) These resemblances highlight our relationship with our ancestors, demonstrating that we are

truly their children. Similarly, Hashem arranges for us to relive events from the lives of our ancestors.

On the shoulders of giants

Perhaps we could suggest that reliving the events of our ancestors' lives is a first step toward building upon them in greater ways. For example, our mitzvah of *aliyah laregel*, to abandon our property and ascend to the Beit HaMikdash for Yom Tov, reenacts the Lech Lecha journey of Avraham and Sarah, as noted by Rabbi Menachem Genack (Gan Shoshanim 55). But it is greater than their journey, in that they were guided by Hashem's voice, and we do it entirely on faith. They came to a Canaanite land, we go to the Beit HaMikdash. We start from their experience, and develop it further.

Making it real

Ramban takes a third approach: We are not reliving what our ancestors did. Rather, our ancestors were enabling what **we** will do in our day. Hashem wanted us to receive the land, and so Hashem started it with Avraham, so that the Divine decree should already begin to come true. So too with all of the parallels between their lives and our own, our ancestors lived the first step, and then it continues with us.

Parshah Riddles for Kids: Lech Lecha (answers on the back)

Age 4-8: What was the name of Sarah's brother who lived with Avraham and Sarah? a) Leonardo b) Lot c) Lavan

Age 8-12: Malki Tzedek came to bless Avraham after he defeated four kings. Where was Malki Tzedek a king?

Age 12+: Avraham said that Sarah was his sister. How was Sarah actually related to Avraham, besides being his wife?

Journey Through Tanach: Yehoshua, Perek 2

In Chapter 1, the Jews prepared to cross the Yarden. Behind the scenes, Yehoshua sent two spies into Yericho, a major city near the crossing. This is reported in Chapter 2.

During or immediately after the month of mourning for Moshe, Yehoshua sent two men to "see the land and Yericho." (2:1, and see Rashi there) Commentators suggest that Yehoshua avoided the problems of Moshe's spies by, among other things, concealing the mission from the Jews so that their report could be squelched (Radak), sending just two spies so that they would carry less weight (Abarbanel), and sending military spies rather than diplomatic representatives from each tribe (Malbim). Further, these spies were Pinchas and Kalev, already known for great piety and loyalty. (Bamidbar Rabbah 16:1)

The spies go to Rachav, operator of a house of ill repute. She speaks of what happened when the Jews came out of Egypt; according to our Sages, she had been practicing her trade since those days. (Zevachim 116b) Malbim and other commentators assume the spies went there because she would have good information.

The king of Yericho quickly learns that the spies are there, and he deploys men to catch them. But Rachav decides to save the spies, telling the royal agents that the Jewish men already left. (2:2-7)

Rachav requests that the spies save her family. Rachav also tells the spies that the local people remember what Hashem did when the Jews crossed the Sea, they know what Hashem did to the great kings of the Emori, and their hearts have melted. Further, she acknowledges that Hashem's greatness. (2:8-14)

Rachav advises the spies to hide in the mountains for three days, until their pursuers come back from the river. The spies emphasize that she must not tell anyone about their arrangement. Rachav agrees. At the request of the spies, Rachav ties a red string on her window, to identify her house for the invaders. (2:15-21)

Kalev and Pinchas return to the Jews and report that the Canaanites are living in fear, and Hashem has given us the land. (2:22-24)

The 613 Mitzvot: #3—The Sciatic Neurovascular Bundle

The third biblical mitzvah (Bereishit 32:33) is the instruction that descendants of Yaakov may not eat the *gid hanasheh* (sciatic neurovascular bundle) of certain animals. This memorializes Yaakov's battle against his brother, Esav; a being representing Esav fought with Yaakov, and succeeded in wounding Yaakov in that part of the body.

The Rambam (Peirush haMishnayot, Chullin 7:6) noted that although this mitzvah pre-dated the presentation of the Torah at Sinai, it binds all generations of Jews only because the prohibition was reiterated in the Torah we received at Sinai. The same applies to all pre-Sinai mitzvot, such as circumcision.

As the *Sefer haChinuch* explained, this mitzvah reminds us that just as Esav's representative wounded Yaakov but could not defeat him, so our own enemies may be able to wound us, but they will never be able to destroy us.

In the eyes of Halachah, the *gid hanasheh* is not truly food, because it has no taste. (Chullin 89b; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Maachalot Asurot 4:18, 15:17). Logically, then, one who ate *gid hanasheh* from a *neveilah* (an animal which did not undergo kosher *shechitah*) should be liable for *gid hanasheh*, but not for *neveilah*. However, Rambam (Mishneh Torah *ibid.* 8:6) says that one would indeed be liable for *neveilah* as well. Some explain that this is because the Torah treats it as food (Or Sameach), or because the act of eating it puts the *gid hanasheh* into the category of food. (Minchat Chinuch 281:7)

Israel's Chief Rabbis: Hostage Exchanges, Rav Chaim Dovid HaLevi

Rabbi Chaim Dovid HaLevi was Chief Rabbi of Rishon LeTzion from 1951-1972; he concurrently served on the Rabbinical Council of the Israeli Chief Rabbinate. When Rabbi Ovadia Yosef was appointed Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel in 1973, Rabbi HaLevi took over as Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv and kept that role until 1997.

In 1985, the Israeli government weighed freeing 1150 terrorists in exchange for three Israeli prisoners of war. Rav Shlomo Goren opposed the idea, based on talmudic sources contending that paying such a high price would encourage more hostage-taking. The following is translated from Rabbi Chaim Dovid HaLevi's response, which appeared in *Aseh Lecha Rav* (7:53):

Rabbi Shlomo Goren, in his aforementioned article, said many times that this activity strengthened and elevated the murderers' numerical and qualitative strength, by freeing so many trained terrorists, etc. This is a valid argu-

ment, but let us ask: Do those involved not understand this simple fact? But as has already been clarified by the Minister of Defense, among others, before the eyes of the determining authority is an additional, important point: the morale of the soldiers of the IDF.

When a soldier knows that should he fall captive, the entire State of Israel would stand behind him to free him, he will risk his life in battle without fear. But if the law of not redeeming captives for more than their value were applied in this circumstance as well, then when soldiers would be sent on military missions for the nation, presumably each soldier would say to himself, "Better to retreat and not to fall into captivity." And who is it who could now measure which poses the greater harm to defense – the strengthening of the terrorists by freeing their associates, or the strengthening of the morale of IDF soldiers in future wars, if they should happen Gd forbid?

Upcoming Learning!

All classes are open to men and women and free of charge, unless otherwise noted

5:55-6:38 PM Shabbat October 28

Halachah and the Artificial Uterus, Part 3, with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, at Eitz Chayim

7:30-8:30 PM Monday October 30

New weekly series! Halachah in Healthcare Settings, based on Nishmat Avraham

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, at Eitz Chayim and on ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/medhal>

Please register at <https://ematai.org/medicalchabura> Note: Materials are in Hebrew

8:30 PM Tuesday October 31

Treatment of a Neutralized Terrorist

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, at the home of Levi Lazarus, *For men*

Our Sephardic Month begins next Shabbat!

The Friday night dvar torah, Shabbat morning derashah and Shiur between minchah and maariv

will all explore and celebrate Sephardic Torah

Age 4-8 b) Lot
Age 8-12 Shalem, which may be Yerushalayim
Age 12+ Sarah was Yiskah, Avraham's niece

Answers to Parshah Riddles

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