

## Weekly Shiur

7 Cheshvan 5773

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(Notes taken during the shiur by Moshe Genuth. Not reviewed by Harav Ginsburgh)

The nigun Geshem nedavot (Tehilim 68).

We have now begun asking for rain, and you shall give water and rain on the earth. So we'll begin with this given the special date today, the seventh of Marcheshvan. It says that the dew is the concealed dimension of the Torah and rain is the revealed dimension. When we now begin the zman choref in the yeshivot, we need to have stronger intent on asking Hashem to give both the rain and the dew, the revealed and the concealed together. Rain plus dew equals 288, the 288 sparks, the average value is 144, קדם. In the word מטר, rain, the tet (ט) is the tet of טל and the reish (ר) exchanges with lamed (ל), so the rain goes inside the dew and this is the rectification of the 288 sparks. It says that Lot, Abraham's nephew is walking with Avram. Together אברם (Avram) and Lot—all that Lot had was because he was subservient to Avraham—together they also equal 288. So if we take the vav of Lot and put it with Avram, we'll get "rain" (מטר) and what is left over is dew (טל), so the dew is in Lot, which is a little strange. How is this unification between Avram—who is entirely holy—and Lot who is not holy, how is this unification and all the more so Avraham's self sacrifice to save Lot, explained in Chassidut. It says that Lot is equal to מה, the Name of Mah, which is both in holiness and in the kelipah of nogah. So Avraham is holy, and Lot is in kelipat nogah which is mixed with good and evil together. In his vision of the Chariot, Ezekiel sees how it enclothes the higher half of the image of supernal man, this is the holy part of Nogah and the lower half is the profane part of Nogah. So the whole unification between Avraham and Lot is meant to rectify the profane part of Nogah, so that it doesn't fall into the hands of evil. As bad as Sodom was, it was just Nogah, the negative and evil part of Nogah that gives sustenance to the completely evil 3 kelipot, represented by the 4 kings who came to conquer them. As long as Lot was not taken by these kings, Abraham wanted him to separate from him and go to Sodom. But, once Lot falls into the hands of the 4 kings, he sacrifices himself to save Lot, all in order to save the מה דנוגה, the Mah of Nogah.

Avram when he has a hei added to his name becomes אברהם and then becomes אבר מה, the organ of Mah. So there is a connection between them. The Mah of holiness in Abraham is like the soul which comes down into the body in order to rectify the body, the Mah of Nogah, to rectify Lot. We are all children of Abraham, the first Jew, so every Jew has a Lot that sometimes looks very evil, yet still we are obligated to sacrifice ourselves to save him, and to bring him back into holiness. This is the beginning, the connection between Abraham and Lot is connected with rain and water that we have begun to ask for this evening and connected with the 288 sparks.

Sometimes it's explained that the Mah of the kelipah is called Reu'mah, showing my selflessness. True Mah is like Moshe Rabbeinu who is completely null before God. But, a person who is self-conscious of his bitul, of his selflessness has the kelipah called

Reu'mah. Lot here is something else. This is also Mah of Nogah, so we have to explain what this Lot is.

We'll start with a verse in the parshah, just before the covenant of the shards. Abraham says, for you have not given me seed. Then Hashem says to Abraham, this one (Eliezer) will not inherit you, but rather the one who comes out of you will inherit you. Then God takes Abraham out and shows him the stars and says to him that So will your seed be so numerous. And then it says, ויאמן בה' ויחשבה לו צדקה. Abraham believed in God and it was considered a charity. In the ktiv it says, והאמן, "he believed" without a yud. Where is the yud? First of all without the yud, these letters permute to spell "faith" (אמונה). Still, where did the yud go? The students of the BST, for instance in the Bnei Yissachar and in others books, that there are two levels of faith. There is faith that is still based on reason, on wisdom. But, there is faith that is far above reason. So the yud here is the wisdom, the point of reason. So if there is no yud, it shows that Abraham the first believer, the head of all believers, his faith was entirely above reason. Avram is the mocha stima'ah, the wisdom of Atik, he has a lot of wisdom, but when it comes to faith he pushes his wisdom away, pushes the yud out. What then does it mean that God considered it a charity? That if a person believes with the help of his mind, his mind helps his faith in God, then his faith is called giving back something that was in safe-keeping. Because using the mind that God gave me, and everything is from God, in order to have faith in God, that is giving the mind back to God after I had it for safe-keeping (פקדון). But, if I push my reason away and believe in God without any reason, then I am not giving back something that was given to me, but rather it is actual charity. That is the vort. It's very powerful: the difference between giving back something that was in safe-keeping and giving something as charity.

Based on this point, the holy books explain that Mashiach will come with this type of faith, for great is tzedakah (charity) as it brings the redemption closer. Such faith is manifest as self-sacrifice, as the mind would never force us to sacrifice ourselves, but faith alone without the mind can reach this level. This is the higher level of faith. Thanks to this type of faith, the Mashiach will come. Redemption is also connected with the name Mah. In this way, the redemption of Abraham (the Mah of Abraham) is faith. But, Lot's Mah, is faith with reason together. Lot equals "redemption" (גאולה), and it is redemption based on reason, based on what makes sense, in the same way that he Lot chose the land of Israel because of the pleasure inherent in it, not because of the essence of the land of Israel—parashat Lech Lecha is about the union between the Jew and the land of Israel, this is its central theme. As Abraham went from the north of the country to the south and only when there was a dispute between Abraham's shepherds and Lot's that the verse says, "And the Canaanite were then in the land." What did God want when He sent Abraham to the land of Israel? Why did he send Lot with Abraham? Every Jew who comes to the land wants redemption, but there are two different redemptions and the chidush now is that Abraham has the responsibility of bringing Lot's redemption to be included within his own. By Lot, his faith does not coerce him to sacrifice himself (בטירת נפש).

We'll say something more. If the tzadikim explain that the "faith" without yud, and yud is a very holy letter, the first letter of Havayah, and the yud here is pushed out. Until now, we have explained that the yud is the beginning of the mind, wisdom (חכמה). But, we know that the inner experience of wisdom is selflessness, bitul before God. So this vort is saying that just as we have to push away reason from faith, we also seemingly have to push selflessness out. How can this be? Faith should surely have selflessness in it. We know that in the inner experience of the soul there are 13 levels, the 3 levels of the crown and then bitul, simchah, etc. all the inner experiences of the sefirot. Faith is the inner experience of the Radla, the unknowable head. So if both faith and selflessness exist in the soul, where faith is the beginning of the super-conscious, the crown of the super-conscious and the selflessness is the beginning of the conscious powers of the soul, what is the difference between them? So this vort is telling me that only by pushing out the mind do we come to the pure faith that is above reason, then this is telling us that every type of selflessness, certainly בטול היש, the nullification of reality, but even בטול במציאות ממש and בטול במציאות, the two higher levels of selflessness, there is something that is being nullified. I am being nullified. And if I am being nullified, that is still not "there is nothing but Him." So it's not yet pure faith. To nullify is to be nothing. But, faith is not to be nothing. It's not to be something. What is faith then? We like to give short aphorisms: Faith relative to the "I" is that "I am neither being nor non-being." Everything in the world either exists or not. But, it says that Hashem, for instance, is neither being nor is He non-being. Whatever word we say about Hashem, God is neither being nor non-Being. And to have faith in God is to grasp this, that God is neither being nor non-being, just as I must be. Such a state is not bitul, this is not selflessness or nullification. I must take on the same state as Hashem, being neither something nor nothing. I cannot be nullified nor not-nullified. This is what it means that the yud is pushed out entirely.

Let's look at this phrase, אני לא יש ולא אין, I am neither being nor non-being. All these enjoyable meditations are like ושעשע יונק על חור פתן. This phrase we're using to explain the lack of yud in "he believed" (והאמן). In both being (יש) and non-being (אין) there is a yud. First, there are 13 letters in this phrase, so we can shape it as an interface number. The phrase equals 500, the value of the letters of אין multiplied by one another. The 500<sup>th</sup> word in the Torah is אין. 500 is also the value of "be fruitful and multiply." This is apparently the secret of the power to be fruitful, that I am neither being nor non-being. Of course the main part of the inner meditation here is that faith is not bitul, nullification, as much as bitul is something holy. But, to be a simple Jew, like the BST's simple yiden, that is not being null nor being something. We are believers thanks to Abraham, thanks to this verse. Because of Abraham's faith he received a covenant for the land of Israel (in the following verses).

The next introduction this evening is from Pirkei Avot chapter 5. With 10 utterances... 10 generations from Adam to Noach... 10 generations from Noach to Abraham... Abraham was tested 10 times, and he withstood them all, all to show God's love for him. There are many explanations as to what the 10 trials were. Most of the commentaries include the trial in Ur Kasdim, when Nimrod threw Abraham into the

fiery furnace. This was a test of Abraham's faith that happened because Abraham broke his father's idols. At that time, Terach, Abraham's father was not yet rectified, he was a moiser (מוסר), a squealer. Eventually he did teshuvah. He turned his father in. What would a father do? Ok. So his son destroyed his business. For this he turns him in? But, this was Terach. Not only did Abraham ruin Terach's business, he also ruined his faith in the idols. Apparently Terach's faith was so strong in these idols that because of this he turned his son in. From this the Jewish people come out, from עבר הנדר. From such a defiled source, from a father who is willing to turn his son in and have him burnt, this is where we come from. The sages and many of the Rishonim say this was the first trial. But, there is an opinion that when Abraham was born he was hidden for 13 years, because upon his birth people wanted to kill him, and this was the first trial. Then Nimrod wanted to kill him. Then the sages say that the reason that the 4 kings captured Lot was just a stage on the way to capturing Abraham and killing him. According to this, it makes some sense why Abraham fought these 4 kings, in order to eventually save himself. Abraham is a spiritual revolutionary whom the entire establishment wants to kill, from the very first moment. This gives us a lot of understanding into the nature of the first Jew: he wants to change the world and from the moment of his birth everyone feels threatened by him and wants him dead. So these 13 initial years of his life and the fiery furnace are 2 trials not recounted in the Torah. The 2<sup>nd</sup> (or 3<sup>rd</sup>) trial is then following God's command to go to the land he will show him. The 3<sup>rd</sup> trial is that when he arrives in this land, the land of Israel, there is a famine and Abraham has to go to Egypt. By Lot, Egypt was something very valuable, because he chose the place in the land of Israel which is the most similar to Egypt. Lot is searching for the pleasure, the ערות הארץ, in the land of Israel. This is to understand who Lot is, and what a chiddush it is that Abraham wanted to save him. There is only one opinion that begins the trials not with Ur Kasdim—the following verse after Abraham's faith, says "I am Havayah your God who took you out of Ur Kasdim to give you this land to inherit it" exactly the same form as the First of the Ten Commandments. The word "who took you out" (הוצאתיך) appears only three times in the Tanach. So there is only one opinion—who himself is related to the rectification of Egypt—so he begins the 10 trials from the command to go to the land of Israel. This is of course the Rambam, who doesn't want to begin with something that is not written explicitly in the Torah. What about the final trial? There are many different opinions, perhaps you could make 10 different lists of what the ten trials were. Seemingly, everyone agrees on the final trial, which is the Binding of Isaac (עקדת יצחק). But, still there is one important Rishon, Rabbeinu Yonah who has a commentary on Pirkei Avot who says that this was the ninth and then the tenth was that God a few times promised Abraham the land of Israel, yet when the time comes to bury Sarah, he has to beg Efron the Hittite for a plot of land to bury her. Abraham's ability to withstand these trials was because of his faith in God, without reason and even without bitul, self-nullification. So according to Rabbeinu Yonah the beginning of parshat Chayei Sarah is the 10<sup>th</sup> trial. According to the Rambam, all 10 are in parashot Lech Lecha and Va'yeyira, which together equal אברהם (= לך לך וירא), the two parashot that tell the main story of Abraham.

Given that the sages count Ur Kasdim as either the first or second trial, we need to ask, why is it not mentioned explicitly in the Torah. Seemingly this is the most important trial, for he is willing to die for his faith. It is like the Binding of Isaac, where he is commanded to bring his son as a sacrifice. Indeed, it is explained that for some it is more difficult to sacrifice their son, then to sacrifice themselves, otherwise, how is the last trial harder than the first. The Rambam's opinion that it begins with the command to go to the land of Israel, that is based on the idea that it should begin with an explicit command from God, and then all the trials follow from that first command. To understand this, we need to understand the structure of the mishnah in Pirkei Avot that we mentioned, and then understand Abraham's history and then come to an understanding of why the Torah doesn't mention the first trial. We can say another idea: that the Torah doesn't mention trials that are not connected with the land of Israel. The first one occurred in Ur Kasdim, outside the land of Israel.

Looking at the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of Pirkei Avot, it all deals with numbers. It begins with the sanctified number, 10—the 10<sup>th</sup> will be holy to God. From 10 it goes to 7, then to 4. How many sets of 10 things does the mishnah mention? It would have been nice if there were 10 sets, but there are actually 11. The first is in the title: With 10 utterances the world was created. This is certainly the crown, the keter. The commentaries say that thanks to Abraham withstanding his 10 trials, the 10 utterances were set in place, so Abraham sustained the world with his actions. The next is the 10 generations from Adam to Noach who only angered God and did the opposite from Abraham.

So 10 utterances, then two sets of 10 generations and then the 10 trials of Abraham. Then 10 miracles that occurred in Egypt and 10 plagues on the Red Sea. The 10 tests that the Jewish people tried the Almighty with in the desert. So just here there are 5 sets. 10 in Egypt, 10 on the Red Sea. 10 plagues in Egypt and 10 on the Red Sea and the 10 tests the Jewish people tried the Almighty with.

Then there are 2 mishanyot that include two more sets: 10 miracles that occurred in the Temple. Then the final set, which enumerates the 10 things that were created on Friday, just before Shabbat.

Altogether 11 sets of 10 things. There are a number of sets that have to do with trials: Abraham's trials, the 10 tests that the Jewish people tried the Almighty with, which is the opposite. There are 3 sets of 10 miracles. 10 in Egypt, 10 on the sea, and 10 in the Temple. 30 miracles, 20 trials, 20 generations, 20 plagues, and 10 utterances, and 10 things that were created Friday night. It begins with utterances (מאמרים) and ends with things (דברים). So it begins with creation and ends with creation, the end is enwedged in the beginning. 11 times 10 equals the word, נס, which means either miracle, or the root of "trial" (נסיין). Obviously this is implying that all of nature is a miracle. To see the miracle you have to withstand a trial, and elevate (also the meaning of נס) above nature. How do these sets correspond to the sefirot. When we include keter (crown) and da'at (knowledge) we have 11 sefirot. This is a class in itself about the beginning of chapter 5 of Pirkei Avot. According to the order given by the Bartenura there, there were 7 trials in Lech Lecha, and in Vayeira there are 3 more. This division is like the division of the 10 plagues between the parashot of Va'eira and Bo, 7 and 3. This is according to the

Bartenura. According to his reckoning, circumcision was the 7<sup>th</sup> trial, and the next 3 in Vayeira.

Building the correspondence: the 10 utterances are the keter, the crown. The mishnah says the world could have been created with one utterance, this phrase "one utterance" is traditionally explained to refer to the keter, the "מאמר סתום".

The 20 generations, 10 from Adam to Noach who all angered God and the 10 from Noach to Abraham, all to show how much ארך אפים there is before God. Usually ארך אפים refers to keter, but here it is the mazal that is giving to both wisdom and understanding (receiving specifically from נוצר and נקה). So this corresponds to wisdom and understanding.

The next, which is what we are interested in are the 10 trials of Abraham, which therefore correspond to da'at, knowledge. This is the main chiddush, because by including da'at we have 11 sefirot and not 10. Indeed, trials are connected with da'at as it says, "For God is testing you to know" (כי מנסה ה' אלקיכם אתכם לדעת). On the one hand the yud is being pushed out and there is no mind (wisdom and understanding), but the reward of withstanding these trials is da'at, which is not mind, but unification, connection. The words "to show why God loves Abraham" also refer to da'at. Rashi explains that God begs Abraham to withstand this final trial of Binding Isaac so that God has something to tell the angels and the nations of the world, a reason to give them for why He chose Abraham. In the next parashah it says, כי ידעתיו, "for I know him [Abraham]."

So these are the first 4 sets. The Zohar says that a false God is sterile, it has no da'at, no consciousness. We the Jewish people have da'at thanks to Abraham's 10 trials.

The next are the 10 miracles in Egypt and on the Sea. These are a pair. They should be chesed and gevurah. The next two sets are 10 plagues in Egypt and 10 plagues on the Sea, they correspond to netzach and hod.

The 10 tests that we tried God with, the fact that we weren't destroyed when we tested God, that is thanks to the 10 trials that Abraham withstood. So this is the blemish in the yesod. וינסו אותי זה עשר פעמים ולא שמעו בקולי. The word זה also alludes to yesod. Da'at in the mochin is like yesod in the midot. What are the ten miracles in Egypt? The commentaries explain that this is how in the 10 plagues God separated us wondrously from the Egyptians. They had blood we didn't. They had frogs, we didn't. In each plague it says explicitly that it was for the Egyptians but not the Jewish people, except for the lice, the 3<sup>rd</sup> plague. Why is it not mentioned there, the commentaries do not explain. So this separation is the 10 miracles. The lice correspond to the hod, and hod is the weakest, so of all the plagues this one had the most proclivity to also plaguing the Jewish people, but of course it didn't. For us the miracles correspond with the plagues. So if the plagues were in the body, then the miracles were the same, like netzach and hod, which is why we corresponded these miracles with these two sefirot, which are called "out of the body" (לבר מגופא).

The 10 creations that were created Friday night before Shabbat, that is certainly malchut, kingdom. Shabbat is certainly malchut, as the first six days correspond to the 6 midot. It might be that this is the crown of yesod. The 10 miracles in the Temple, they

correspond to tiferet. Of all the sets, there are the most regarding miracles (30). The three sets of miracles should go together. Since the first two were chesed and gevurah, this last set of miracles in the Temple should be tiferet. Why is it not written right after the first two sets of 10 miracles? Because the order of the mishnah is chronological (except for the final set). In addition, all 3 sets of miracles begin with the phrase, "The 10 miracles that our fathers experienced...." The fathers of course tells us to correspond this with the chagat (חסד גבורה תפארת). Another reason for corresponding the miracles of the Temple with tiferet is that the Beit Hamikdash coming from heaven comes from the firmament known as Zevul (זבול), just as the Temple itself is called the house of Zevul (בית זבול). The firmament of Zevul corresponds to tiferet, this is explicit in Kabbalah. The final to mishnayot taking about the 10 miracles in the Temple and the 10 creations Friday night, they are the unification of tiferet and malchut, the Almighty and His Divine Presence.

We said that 20 generations receive from the 2 mazalot. Seemingly they should be connected with the 10 things created Friday night. Indeed the source of malchut, the final set of 10, is in the tikun called וחסאה, the twelfth of the 13 tikunim, which is also called פומא קדישא, the holy mouth. This is also why the first 3 things created Friday night are "the mouth of...." Da'at is inside the mouth (דעת גניז בפומא). So this was a class unto itself, just in order to analyze the beginning of chapter 5 in Pirkei Avot, with the point of teaching us that all of Abraham's trials were to grant him and us da'at, knowledge. Just as the Rambam writes at the beginning of his Mishneh Torah that the whole point is to draw faith down into knowledge, into our consciousness.

Before we return to the question of why Abraham's trial in Ur Kasdim is not mentioned explicitly in the Torah, we will hear more music.

The principle is well known that we have to look for the first instance of a word or concept in the Torah to understand its essence. There is a very important concept in our parashah that appears for the first time in our parashah, which is "beauty" (יפי). There is a secret regarding the first 3 parashot of the Torah that in Bereisheet there is no root, יפי, but rather a synonym, טוב, is used: for instance "God saw that the light was good (beautiful). It appears 7 times. At the end of the parashah, instead of describing women as beautiful, it says, that the Bnei Elokim saw that the daughters of man were "good" טובות, instead of beauty. So all the beauty in Bereisheet, and the beauty of the women (related in this case to the blemish of the covenant—for טוב is also the value of אהיה, the good Name). In Noach we find the word "grace" (חן), And Noach found favor (or grace) in the eyes of God. Noach himself is the reverse of this word, נח. All of Noach is thus related to grace, or beauty. Either the true beauty or the false beauty, just as we saw that "good" can be positive, or it can be negative (as in the blemish of the covenant). The novelty in Lech Lecha is the explicit synonym for beauty, יפי. Behold I have seen that you are a beautiful woman. And then it says, "The Egyptians saw the woman for she was very beautiful," all referring to Sarah. Before this there is no mention of beautiful in the Torah. So there is some process here. First it is good, then it becomes graceful, and only when we reach the first Jews, Abraham and Sarah, it becomes beautiful. The sages say that woman is for beauty and beauty is for women. Just as this word יפי, beauty is an

acronym for 10 times 10, which equals 100, so this phrase, “woman is for beauty and beauty is for woman” (אין אשה אלא ליפי) is equal to 23 squared, 529, where 23 is the 10<sup>th</sup> prime number.

If we make a quadratic series from these three words, טוב חן יפי, 17, 58, and 100, we see that it is almost linear. This series is a parallel series to that of the triangular numbers, which tells us that the function generating it is  $n^3 - 803$ .

We have a whole topic regarding the 8 candles of Chanukah that correspond to the 8 synonyms of beauty in the Tanach. Beauty is chesed, loving-kindness. Good is gevurah, as it says, its good is hidden in it (טוביה גניז בגויה), this was said about Rivkah, the woman corresponding to gevurah, so good is concealed, introverted beauty—likewise the beauty of the light created on the first day is introverted. Grace is in malchut, kingdom. According to this the Torah begins with gevurah (good), introverted beauty, the beauty of nature. Then comes Noach who brings us beauty as grace, the beauty of malchut, kingdom. After there is beauty in nature there is beauty in malchut. Finally, in Lech Lecha we come to the final goal, which is a woman who is very beautiful, יפת מראה, after her all the Matriarchs are beautiful, but with other words. It says that by a bride, if her eyes are beautiful, her entire body is beautiful (like by Leah, whose eyes were beautiful). So what is going on here? What is the chiddush (novelty) of beauty in parashat Lech Lecha? Whenever there is a couple, a holy couple, each has a role. Together there is the Divine Presence and offspring—you need both for that. What does the man want? What is his role? His role, sometimes it's described as bringing Torah home, the revealed and the concealed dimensions of the Torah. Torah is truth, and in the Zohar it says that the male brings truth, איהו אמת. And she brings faith, איהי אמונה. But, now we're saying that the purpose of a woman is to bring beauty. The word “Israel” (ישראל) is equal to 541, but it is also the sum of 10 squared (beauty, יפי) and 21 squared (truth, אמת). The letters of Yisrael are the initials of all the Patriarchs and Matriarchs. But, between the beauty and the truth, which is male and which is female. The male, the father in the house, brings truth. The woman is the one who elevates all the holy sparks in reality, and all these sparks are called beauty—sparks of beauty. Just like Sholomo the King wanted to rectify the entire world, so he married 1000 wives, not properly, and each such woman represented another form of beauty, another good thing in reality, but this was against the truth, this was not the path of truth. So a groom is someone who descends and the bride is ascending. The man descends, the woman ascends, just as it says that Moshe is the groom's companion who descends and brings the Torah down, while Aharon is the bride's companion who elevates the Menorah and the beauty of its candles upwards. That is why Aharon must be dressed beautifully, לכבוד ולתפארת. Aharon's purpose is to elevate all the beauty in reality, all the pleasure (תענוג) in reality. Who is Sarah? In Chasidut it says she is the inner dimension of keter of malchut, the instrument among all the sefirot that receives the שעשועים עצמיים form Atik and for this she needs her husband's help, and by receiving this she elevates all the pleasure in reality. There is no other sefirah that receives this שעשועים עצמיים. Only she, not Abraham, can elevate all the pleasure (תענוגות בני אדם), the mundane pleasures, the lower waters, transforming it into Divine pleasure. What then is Abraham? He is like every man, his purpose is to draw

down truth. Usually we think of Abraham as a chariot for Divine loving-kindness (of Atzilut), but this doesn't preclude his being a man of truth. We might think that someone who is a man of loving-kindness, he is not a man of truth, since these two dispute. One said to create man the other said not to create him. But, this is not the case with the Patriarchs and Matriarchs. Anyone falling under the title of Yisra'el has a unification between beauty and truth. So Abraham too has truth in him.

Returning now to Abraham's first trial, destroying his father's idols. We know Abraham as a man of loving-kindness, he loves everyone, why doesn't he bring his father close to the truth? First of all, this is a sign that it is very difficult to be mekarev your father, especially if he has an idolatry store. That Moshe Rabbeinu's first act is one of gevurah, that makes sense. But, this doesn't fit that the first act of Abraham's that we know about is one of such gevurah. Where did he get this? It didn't come from chesed, it came from emet, truth. Every Jew has to start from a point of truth. This world is a world of deceit, and the lie itself is idolatry. Truth is zealous. It burns over. Abraham had not yet matured. This is not the Abraham that the Torah tells us about. It is some root of Abraham, where there is no chesed yet, just truth and truth has gevurah, might in it, dinim (harsh judgments). As a result he was cast into the fiery furnace. His brother Haran was also thrown in, but he burnt. Lot was his son, another reason that Abraham identifies with Lot, the son of his deceased brother. Like Lot, Haran was kelipat Nogah, which has a tendency to identify with the victor. The victor between Abraham and Nimrod was Abraham, that is why Haran identified with him and allowed himself to be cast into the furnace too. There are a number of men that are described as beautiful. One of them is Absalom. This is vain beauty. He was that most beautiful man in his generation. All the beauty in the Song of Songs (except for one) appears in respect to the bride. There are two levels of beauty discussed therein. יפה את רעיתי בתרצה. The second verse says, כולך יפה רעיתי ומום אין בך. These two levels of beauty are an important topic in Chassidut. What does "like Tirzah" mean? Tirzah was one of Tzlofchad's daughters. Is this the meaning, that she was the most beautiful of his 5 daughters? According to the sages this is not the meaning. It means "when you are רצויה לי, wanted by me." The root of Tirzah is will. The continuation is נאוה כירושלים איומה כנגדלות, as beautiful as Jerusalem, as terrible as towers. Jerusalem is to be the most beautiful city in the world. Even though Jerusalem is partially built today, we still mourn its lost beauty. What is relevant to people in this world is beauty. All the pleasure in reality is in beauty. What then does as beautiful as Tirzah mean? The Ibn Ezra says that this is the name of another city in the land of Israel. It is in the north of Israel. Just as Jerusalem was the capitol of Judah, Tirzah was the capitol of the northern kingdom. At first the capitol was in Shechem then in Bet El, and finally it moved to Tirzah, until the time of Omri the king of Israel. There's a reason why the state of Israel does not identify with its capitol as Jerusalem, because its capitol was Tirzah. Only the King Omri built a new capitol in a city called Shomron. When Joshua brought us into the land of Israel and vanquished 31 kings, the Tanach lists them and the last one, the 31<sup>st</sup> is the king of Tirzah, מלך תרצה אחד, כל מלכים שלשים ואחד. All follows the conclusion. The song of Joshua is this enumeration which ends with the king of Tirzah. Who then is the "one" כל מלכים שלשים ואחד. About each king it says "one,"

but who is the very special one, who is the one in the “thirty one?” that is the king of Tirzah. So says the Ibn Ezra, that the beauty of a bride is like the beauty of a city. Beauty belongs to Tirzah, and נאווה, which corresponds to netzach (ניי) that is Jerusalem. Finally, the נגדלות are the banners are terrible, איומה כנגדלות, the terrible beauty of an army. All that we have mentioned so far is the lower type of beauty, which is likened to Tirzah, to a city. This also includes some type of will, רצון, just as the earth is so-named, ארץ, stemming from the root “to want.” So Jerusalem is about יראה, awe, and Tirzah is about will, רצון. Since Tirzah comes before Jerusalem here, this is a sign that Mashiach first has to rectify Tirzah and then Jerusalem.

What is the higher beauty? That is in the verse, You are all beautiful my bride, there is no blemish in you (כולך יפה רעיתי ומום אין בך). The difference is explained in this way in Chassidut. There is beauty based on passion, that the bride is passionate for her husband. This is called כליות הנפש. But, there is the higher beauty of the supernal Shechinah, which earlier we mentioned as faith that is even without self-nullification. About this type of beauty it says, you are all beautiful, there is no blemish in you. If there is still any will to nullify oneself, that is the lower beauty. That has to be the order, first beauty the way that you understand it, אליבא דנפשיה. Each state brings out a different type of beauty. The mashal, the parable in Chassidut, is that there are two types of students. There is one type who wants to understand his Rebbe’s wisdom. He listens to every word, he also tries after he hears, he tries to take all that he learnt until now (all the reality he knows), and include it within what his Rebbe taught him. If he knows anything he wants to find it included in his Rebbe’s great wisdom. When there is such a student who devoted all his strength—to unify everything, and in the meaning of the parable this means to include everything within Divine unification (יחד ד). With all the devotion involved, this creates beauty. You see this very strongly in young children in a cheider. If there is a child there that is really devoting himself, earnestly to understand what his Rebbe is teaching him, and believes that everything his Rebbe is teaching him, and that everything in the world is included in what the Rebbe is teaching him, then looking at his face, you see beauty. It’s a beautiful phenomenon. Every revelation of beauty is feminine, but here this beauty is coming from the devotion and investment of energy in understanding. This is all You are as beautiful as Tirzah, beauty of passion, the passion to learn Torah. There is only one thing more beautiful.

The higher beauty is like the difference between a mitnaged and a Chassid. The truly passionate student who has true love of Torah, the friedeger Rebbe says that this is the nature of the simple Litvak Jew. Love of Torah, passion to learn Torah, a will that everything be included in the Torah. The friedeger Rebbe said this when he visited Lithuania and was impressed by what he saw. This is the beauty of a small child in cheider. It’s very beautiful. But, You are all beautiful my bride, that is the beautiful of a chassid. He learns from his Rebbe but that is not he is passionate for. That’s not the point of his passion. A chassid is devoted and committed. If you see one who is just nothing. He is not something he is not nothing, he is just his Rebbe. Again, there is a student who is passionate for the wisdom, he believes everything is contained therein. But there is one who has gone beyond this. You have to go beyond this. If someone didn’t go

through the first stage in his life, it is explained that he had this in a previous incarnation. If someone has not yet had this in a previous life, he has to be a mitnaged in this one. But, a chassid is Rebbe. That's all he is. That is what is described as "You are all beautiful my bride, there is no blemish in you." Now it says that until Abraham went down to Egypt he didn't know that Sarah was beautiful. Rashi gives three explanations for this. The first is that until that time, Abraham didn't recognize that her beauty was the higher beauty. This is what Rashi writes that beauty is usually lost because of a long journey, but here it wasn't because the supernal beauty is constant. Because of this, he suddenly recognized that Sarah's beauty had all along been the supernal beauty. He now understands why there was a famine, he sees that she will be taken to Pharaoh's house, but doesn't want it to be his demise, so he asks her to say she is his sister. Why was there a famine? There had never been a famine before? In Chassidut it says that in merit of Abraham reaching the land of Israel, the famine came. Why? Because the land of Israel is the place that is ready to receive the light that God is all, that God is whole. For this, the entire land has to be settled, with a lot of cooperation between the men and women in each couple, between truth and beauty. This is like the unification of the soul and the body. The land of Israel is the body and the revelation of God's wholeness is the soul. How is this unification brought about? Through enjoyment, pleasure from something else. From something like eating or drinking—something that is neither the body nor the soul. This thing exists and acts as an intermediate to join the two opposites, the body and the soul together. The revelation of this pleasure is dependent mainly on Sarah. She is the beauty and the pleasure, and she elevates all the mundane pleasure. Yet, it says, that Abraham travelled from the north of the land all the way to Shechem and the Canaanites were in the land. So Abraham could not yet reveal this intermediate, because he couldn't settle the entire land. So not all of God's unity and wholeness could be revealed. But, he was able to do this partially, and reveal it in passing (בדרך מעבר), this is alluded to in the word, ויעבור אברהם בארץ, he passed in the land. The complete revelation is when God is revealed as being both chesed and gevurah. If the body is so weak, then a person is like a dead person, like a person who is so ill that he doesn't feel any hunger. But, if there is any health, any strength in the body there is a feeling of hunger. When Abraham reaches the land of Israel, the body, which is ready to reveal God's unity, since he can't feed the entire land, and bring it to a complete state of health, because of the Canaanites in the land, then hunger is felt. In Abraham's merit, because he began to reveal the land of Israel's special ability to contain God's wholeness, the land began to be hungry, the famine was revealed. This is a great thing then. But still all the pleasure has to come to the land of Israel. Where did pleasure fall to in the shattering of the vessels? The main portion of pleasure fell into the ערית הארץ, which is Egypt. Only the land of Israel is hungry for the revelation of God's unity. But, the land of Israel can't contain this revelation if it doesn't contain all the pleasure. So Abraham had to descend to Egypt to bring it out. But, only Sarah can elevate this pleasure, but she has to descend all the way down, into the depths of the kelipot to bring it all out. So she is taken to Pharaoh's house. Then Pharaoh is afflicted with afflictions, נגע, which is the permutation of ענג, pleasure. All in order to bring these pleasures out of Egypt. There is another simple

word that we need to pay attention to, א. Please. Behold, if you will, I have seen that you are a beautiful woman, If you will, say that your are my sister. There was no such recitification of speech until this verse. Abraham is asking, א is a request, a very rectified one, Sarah to do something for him. But, why does he use the word א at the beginning of the verse (the first instance of this word in the Torah—two times א equals “faith,” אמונה)? The first two words are הנה א, “behold if you will” which together equal “wonder” (פלא). There is some wonder in this verse.

Abraham has just now realized that Sarah his wife is at the higher level of beauty, which does not change, and therefore even when she will be taken to Pharaohs house, he says that, because of your special beauty, this warrants me requesting something from you. So this first instance of “if you will” (א), is an introduction to the request. In our book Shechinah Beineihem, there is a chapter titled, Words of love and peace. There it says that whenever a husband talks to his wife it should be with an air of request, this rectifies the sefirah of netzach in our speech. There are actual words of love (chesed), there are words of criticism (gevurah), there are words of beauty (tiferet), there are words of command (netzach), which should be said as a request, gently, almost like asking for compassion, etc. Have we in the entire Torah yet heard Abraham say anything to Sarah before these words? No. This is the very first. The first words he speaks are “Behold, if you will...” even before he has asked her for anything. He is very careful to use this word א. This is the rectification of speech between a husband and wife.

After all this, this deep explanation about what is going on in this story, let’s return to the beginning. Why does the Torah not want to tell us about Abraham’s truth, his measure of truth, his commitment to it? It’s known that the Rambam debates about who is the greatest Jew, Moshe Rabbeinu or Abraham. Each had his beginning as we said. Returning to the verse, Abraham passed through the land until he reached Shechem. What did he do there? Rashi says he prayed for his grandchildren Shimon and Levi. The first thing a Jew does when he comes into the land is conquer it. He sees in his prophecy that he will have offspring who will conquer this place, so he goes to pray for them. That’s a nice explanation, but there is something deeper here. To be the first Jew is to be the first person persecuted. אלקים יבקש את נרדף, God wants those who are persecuted. Just as Abraham is the first Jew, the first believer, he is also the first person to be frustrated. He is frustrated all the time. He can’t stay in Charan. He is commanded to come to the land of Israel. He comes here and begins to understand that this land is the body that can reveal God’s unity, but he can’t manifest this revelation. God promises him offspring, but he still can’t manifest what he wants, he is therefore frustrated. He has a Messianic dream. He wants to be the Mashiach, but he can’t finish the story (the Ramban writes that his war with the 4 kings was like the Messianic wars). It says that the Patriarchs performed all the mitzvot even before the Torah was given, what about the mitzvah לא תחיה כל נשמה החרם תחרים? What about the commandment not to allow idolatry in the land of Israel? This is what he started doing in Ur Kasdim. He remember that this was his first act in Ur Kasdim. There is a mitzvah to do the same here in the land of Israel. Why didn’t he perform these mitzvot? It says in Chassidut that to perform these

mitzvot, it must be only after the Jewish people are living according to the sovereignty of the Torah (הנהגת התורה). Because Abraham was before the Torah and before the Jewish people, even though he wants to perform these mitzvot, he can't. So he's very frustrated. So where did he perform the entire Torah? We have to say that he performed these mitzvot spiritually. This causes him frustration too. What this tells him is that everything is God's mercy (אֵרֶךְ אַפַּיִם). The words בָּהּ יִהְיֶה זֶרַעְךָ, So will your seed be, they equal אֵרֶךְ אַפַּיִם. But, you will have to wait for this. You have to have patience. Abraham is on a streak, he feels the potential in this land, he shines a bit of the final goal, but he can't fully manifest the goal. He is absolutely frustrated. His toil is אֵרֶךְ אַפַּיִם, why? Because the Canaanites are in the land.

What about Abraham's truth, he started with truth and ended up loving-kindness? Where did all his power go. We see some of it in the war with the 4 kings. He is able to kill, and is then worried about what he did. Why did God tell Abraham to go to the land of Israel? After he destroyed his father's idols, everyone wrote bad things about him. Have you ever seen a son so disrespect his father? they said. There is this delinquent child who has no respect for his parents. You might think this will pass, but it won't because it was also written in Wikipedia. So nothing will help. Whenever someone searches for "Abraham" they'll open Wikipedia and then years later, he will still know that he broke his father's idols. How do we know this is not just a joke. Because these are the final words of Parashat Noa'ch which says that Terach died, even though his father was still alive. Because the Torah doesn't want to tell us that he left his father before he died, he didn't respect him. The Torah doesn't want to tell about all his previous actions. The Torah is trying to fix his image. Hiding things with the hope that his image can be fixed. But, it didn't help. This is Abraham's frustration. Everyone starts out with truth, but then is told, have patience. You have to go to the land, and until the truth grows out of the land will take a long time, and in the meantime all you should do are acts of loving-kindness. But, as much loving-kindness as he does, everyone still remembers his beginning and what he did then. There is a true moral to this story: you are frustrated because you want to get rid of the idolatry. But, you can't because the Canaanite are still here. So what do you start with? You start with creating a hunger in the land, a hunger for hearing the word of God. And then even your wife will be taken to the house of Pharaoh to elevate all the beauty, all the pleasure in the world. This is what you can do in the meantime. He says, Say you are my sister. If you are only my sister, then according to Egyptian custom, they don't have to kill me in order to give you all their pleasure, because you are not committed to me. But, if you are my wife, they will have to kill me. But, in the end it is revealed that they are husband and wife, but they are still able to elevate all the wealth they took out of Egypt.

Let's end with something from Ayin Beis (Chukat 5674). The main point of the ma'amar is that there are two things that reveal the essence (עֵצְמִית), speech, which is even more than thought. Words that come out of the heart enter the heart, etc. And whomever hears the Rebbe's words, that is infinitely more than reading them in a book, because there is the expansion of the Rebbe's essence in his words. The second thing is the Rebbe's light in his face, which reveals the essence of the Rebbe's soul even more

than his words. As much as speech is spiritual, it only reveals the midot, but with the light of the face, which is entirely physical, there is a revelation of the Rebbe's essence. This is beauty, מלך בפי תחזינה עניך. To receive the king's beauty, he says using a parable, that if a king is present during a war, just seeing his face raises the soldier's morale, allowing them to sacrifice themselves. And, this is infinitely more than any words he may say. The same is true of a Rebbe. As Rebbe Yehudah Hanassi says, if I would have seen Rabbi Meir's face.

How do we take all this and apply it to Lech Lecha? These are truth and beauty. The truth is the expansion of the essence through speech. Abraham receives a hei. Sarah too, her yud becomes a hei and hei. The Alter Rebbe explains that each is a different point. The fact that Abraham couldn't have children was only because he was not circumcised, the hei he received did not make the difference. Even without the hei, just with circumcision, he could already give birth. But, with Sarah the hei does the opposite. As long as she is called Sarai, she can only give birth in the world of Atzilut, but when the yud is taken out, she can give birth to Yitzchak here, in the lower 3 worlds. What then does Abrahams hei do? It makes him into the father of "many" (המון) nations, making him able to influence the entire world, all the way to Mashiah who will call upon many nations to follow God. Abraham influences through his speech. The power to give birth is mostly in the mother, there is much more going on in the womb than in the father. That she is faith and beauty, איהי אמונה, is related to children (it equals בנימ). So the woman is the expansion of the essence through the beauty, the light of the face. The beauty of speech is the lower speech, the beauty of Tirzah, the beauty of a child in cheider devoted to his Rebbe. But the beauty of the Chassid who is all Rebbe, that is the higher beauty, all beauty. That is Sarah's beauty. So the two dimensions discussed in the ma'amar this week, the expansion of essence through speech and through the light of the face, correspond to all that we have talked about. Beauty is thus greater than truth.

God took truth and threw it down to earth, you will never get rid of what it says in Wikipedia, that you broke idols. By Moshe Rabbeinu, the story about his killing the Egyptian follows him his entire life. It's always a source of problems. First of all truth has to marry beauty and then Yisrael will come out. And to get married the truth has to soften a little, Abraham has to recognize that he is really a chariot for loving-kindness. You will have a grandson, Yaakov, who will be all truth. As much as Yaakov is truth he doesn't go around killing people (so much). But, you the first, Abraham, have to recognize that you are a chariot for loving-kindness. To be the father of many nations with this article in Wikipedia is not simple at all, everyone's looking at you. But, this is what there is.