

Lech Lecha

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I could not have planned it better. This is Issue #2018, and #70 of *Ain Od Milvado*, two very important numbers in this week's *parsha*. Talk about *Hashgochab Pratis*.

More on that later, *b"H*. In the meantime, I was allowed to share the following personal note, which I feel is relevant to this week's *parsha*. This is what it says.

Dear God: I am writing this letter to You, and to me as well. Anyhow, you already know what I am about to write, even if I don't. You're probably even telling me what to write.

First of all, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for allowing me to live in Your land, *Eretz Yisroel*. There is not a day that goes by that I don't appreciate it and feel eternally grateful to You for the merit. I don't know what I did to deserve it, or if I even do, but I'm so very glad that I am here.

Now with the latest war I want to add something. Everyone dies at some point, some sooner than later. We have already lost so many in the last two weeks alone, and so horribly. We don't get to choose when we go, or how and where. But if I die in *Eretz Yisroel*, even just "accidentally," I thank you again. Admittedly it would be nice to go out in a more meaningful way, but at least it was still in *Eretz Yisroel*, making death so much more meaningful.

I do ask one personal thing, though. If I am meant to go soon, which would be considered early by most standards, help my family survive it. They're going to be shocked and sad, so please help them cope. I want them to be strong and happy in life so they can serve You with a complete heart. Please don't let my death break them in any way.

Having said that, here is my request regarding the rest of my brothers and sisters, even the ones who say that they do not feel the same way about me. Although, I have to say, You have certainly brought a lot of people together who, just weeks ago, were headed in opposite directions. It is wonderful that has happened. It is so painful that it cost so much.

So please save us from any more division and destruction. Nineveh was saved because it didn't know its right from its left. We were almost destroyed because we knew the difference only too well. *Dor HaFlagah*, the Generation of the Dispersion, wasn't destroyed because they worked together. We were destroying ourselves by working against each other. So, I beg You God, let this air of *achdus* become increasingly stronger, so that we will never go back to our warring ways again. The only one our infighting strengthens is the *Sitra Achra*, and those he works through.

I'm asking this of You specifically because I have learned that creating *achdus* in the Jewish people is beyond our capability. No one is smart enough to talk to so many people with so many different opinions and make them all get along. It would take a huge miracle, and last I checked, that was *Your* department.

Shabbos Day

WHY HAVE I put a request for *achdus* before a victory over our enemies? Because I know that the latter depends upon the former. That's the reason, isn't it, why division in this country is usually followed by some kind of unifying war?

During the *Yom Kippur* War in 1973, I was told, many thought it was the end of the Jewish State, *God forbid*. But when some asked Rav Abramsky, *zt"l*, one of the *Gedolim* of that generation, why he wasn't as concerned as others about the outcome he told them, "With this much *achdus* the Jewish people will not lose the war!" He was right, *Boruch Hashem*.

After all, You didn't bring us back to *Eretz Yisroel* to divide us. We are a nation that knows exile only too well. We are the only people to have been spread to the four corners of the earth, and the only one to have been ingathered from there afterwards. To do what? To fight against each other? To build walls between groups? We are supposed to be a single people with a single God living on a single land. It's in our dovening, in *Shabbos Mincha*.

Granted, national unity has not been our history. Moshe *Rabbeinu* had to fight off dissenters and breakaways in his day, and that was right under the auspices of God. After getting to the land and building a kingdom, it later divided into two parts during Rechavam's reign, remaining that way until foreign powers eventually

attacked and exiled all of us.

Even after we came back to the land, we had a difficult time being unified. The joke about “two Jews, three opinions” is no joke, just a sad reality. You would think that a nation that suffered the Holocaust would never want to fight one another ever again. We have enough enemies in the world. We don't need to become our own worst enemies as well.

But I think I know why it happens. I think I understand where the bad comes from. This was a land that once belonged to the most depraved people on earth, the *Canaanim*. But how can the holiest land be lived on by such evil people? Strangely enough, it was not a question I thought to ask until after I already saw the answer, in a *sefer*, as You know, called *Tiv HaAretz*. It explains a lot.

Based completely on the teachings of the *Arizal*, it explains that *Eretz Yisroel* is not something that *You* created, but something that *we*, the Jewish people, have to create. It is our job to redeem the holy sparks that are the basis of the land out of the side of spiritual impurity and bring them to the side of holiness. That is what transforms *Eretz Canaan* into *Eretz Yisroel*.

I guess we never did that fully. It would seem from history that as close as we have come to doing it, we were still far enough away to be affected by the *Klipos*, the spiritual basis of evil in the world. I also assume that it is also possible to reverse some of the redemption and send sparks back to the *Klipos*, just as Adam *HaRishon* did when he sinned. Not only did he not fix the rest of Creation, he undid a lot of what You had already rectified. That's how *Gan Aiden* turned into this very non-paradisaal world of ours.

I suppose this is something that has to be resolved once and for all before *Moshiach* comes.

Seudas Shlishis

I GUESS ALSO that this might be the reason why we had to go through what we just did, and what might be coming up, may it be sweet and easy, *please*. We may have recovered the physical land of *Eretz Yisroel* back in 1948, but not all of the spiritual reality of it. Some of *Eretz Canaan* still lingered after all this time.

We have been told that *Eretz Yisroel* today is built upon the ashes of the Holocaust. Six million sparks were released from this world and somehow gave us the right to get and keep our homeland in preparation of the final redemption, *may it come very soon and peacefully*. Might it be then that the death and suffering over the last

couple of weeks, reminiscent of the atrocities and cruelties of the Holocaust, be part of the final payments, part of the final extraction of the remaining sparks from the side of impurity in preparation for Moshiach's arrival.

I don't just *hope* so.

I *believe* so.

As You told us, Your ways are not our ways, which is why we have a difficult time comprehending Your calculations. Sacrifices have been imposed upon us that we ourselves would not have made, given the choice. We don't have the big picture view You do to know why they need to be made in the first place. That kind of understanding, we have been told, won't come until later.

In the meantime, it seems, it is *Lech Lecha* for all of us. We're going to have follow You blindly and trust You implicitly. We'll have to have faith that You will direct us down the best path possible, despite what the world and history seem to show us. Avraham did, and we have to learn from him how.

Isn't that what *Bris Ben HaBesarim* was all about? What a prophecy! Strangers in a land not ours for 400 years! Oppression for long periods of time! Sure, eventual redemption. But how many would still be around to enjoy it? How many of those generations were born and died in slavery, never getting a chance to realize the reality of the Your promise and their hope?

Now my *bubby's* prayer makes so much more sense to me than ever before. It was her own personal prayer that she constantly said because she had gone through so much in her lifetime, more than many other people of faith could ever handle and remain loyal to You. "God," she would say, "test me if You will, but also give the strength to pass Your tests."

Amen. Because it seems that, as children of Avraham *Avimu*, having our faith and trust in God tested is part of our legacy. Help us make passing Your tests part of that legacy as well.

Ain Od Milvado, Part 70

THE BRIS BEN *HaBesarim* took place in 2018, the issue number of this *parsha*, and it was also Avraham's 70th year, the number of this week's chapter of *Ain Od Milvado*. How impressive is that, since I started number these many years back, and didn't start *Ain Od Milvado* until last year, and had no idea that they would come out together in the one *parsha* that they make a difference. The odds must be astronomical against it, especially since not everyone is familiar enough those

numbers and the history behind them to realize the “coincidence” as it happens.

What does it mean? No clue. We’re not talking about the *Urim u’Tumim* here. We don’t have prophets to find out or confirm our suspicions. But one thing it does do with certainty is make you feel the Presence of God, even on the level of your learning and teaching. And the truth is, the *Zohar* says that’s what *Lech-Lecha* actually meant.

What’s the purpose of life? What do you want from life? These are questions that many of us consider at one point or another in our lives, but the answer tends to be something very personal, something that gives us pleasure in life. Not too many people get the real answer, *God’s* answer.

And what is God’s answer? His revelation of Himself to us. Not for His benefit, mind you, but for our benefit. That’s what God gave Avraham to encourage him to make the move to *Eretz Yisroel*, the promise of a more intense revelation of God, available nowhere else in the world.

And that’s what God told us as well when He said, “*I am God, your God, Who took you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, to be a God to you (Vayikra 25:38)*. God’s just not willing to reveal Himself as intimately anywhere else but in *Eretz Yisroel*, making it the only land where a person can really fulfill *ain od Milvado*.

Besoros Tovos for Klal Yisroel