

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Reflections on Lech Lecha – Going out of ourselves and working on our character traits

Below are quotes from the Noam Elimelech, the Sfas Emes and from Rav Cable's classes. I have not asked permissions or for agreement with the way they are associated here. With that said, please understand this post as my efforts to integrate the material. The goal is to inspire adoption of the five crucial principles we need to begin to access the soul, begin daily hisbodidus and a process of viewing our human nature in a new way - as fuel we may harvest from the kelipas to free the shechina and ignite ahavas Hashem, generating a light that can stimulate from Hashem a new light and redemption.

The Sfas Emes In Flow from the Source on Lech Lecha:

"the past between the Jewish People and Hashem is made by cutting off the flesh that represents man's baser drives. It shows that there is part of creation that cannot be redeemed; only by separating from the orlah (foreskin) can one reach perfection...man cuts away the foreskin and shows that he is willing to give from himself in order to come closer to Hashem...the physical part of a human being is only half of his true entity. everything physical is imperfect, since the physical world is one of lack..Perfection is only possible through a connection to the spiritual half, the soul. cutting away from the body for the sake of Hashem creates this connection, thus facilitating man's striving toward perfection...after milah Avraham became like a new being. Because of his great love for Hashem he was privileged to introduce this path to the world...through briss mila a covenant was formed that elevated man's actions to the point that they influence the worlds above. After the milah Avraham's acts of chesed aroused a flow from Above and brought chesed to the entire world" p. 20-23 Flow from the Source.

Mipenini Noam Elimelech on Lech Lecha:

Go out from your land, from your birthplace, and from your father's house to the land which I will show you (Bereshis 12:1)

"This verse hints that a person should always search, investigate, and explore the world in order that he will view the greatness of the Almighty in everything he sees. Then he will merit the intellect and understanding to understand the upper worlds in his daily life. (this could mean that he will see G.d's providence guiding him on his path through life.) p. 51

Rabbi Cable in our weekly Chovos HaLevovos class continued in the Gate of Serving Hashem, chapter five. The thrust of this section is of paramount importance, for it teaches

How do we access our soul.

Here are some notes on Chovos HaLevovos, from Rav Cable's class:

"There is no way to sit down and decide I hereby declare I want to be in touch with my soul and then like a magic wand, now I have access to my soul. There is a process, conditions and rules in place on how it works.

The thing itself, Gd Implanted Inside your soul a driving force to know and recognize His chochma in the world.

1. follow Torah it is my guide. I want what Hashem wants. Everything I am looking for is coming from Torah. It is my school. That is where the answers are. That is my derech. I go to Torah.
2. he has reached maturity, discipline in use of faculties. Based on two levels: physiological reality and a discipline of learning how to use these faculties. Seichel has to do with analytical cognitive quadrants of the mind, memory, analysis. Then also perception, emotional intelligence, two areas of the outer expression of the soul in our minds. There is a physiological development like child to teenager to adult. And also to use faculties in a precise way with discipline, that is also implied in this maturity
3. he has clarity of the will of gd. I desire clarity to know what Hashem wants from me now. I want to get an A. I want to know what I am supposed to know in this level
4. climb all the levels. Not only do I want to know right now, I want to climb to all the highest levels, I want to grow, to reach all the madregas that there are. We go step by step. I want to climb the ladder. I don't want to know right now and stay in this place forever. I want all the levels. Like being in second grade but I don't want to stay in second grade. Knowing what Hashem wants from me has different levels. Rav Dessler says a person has to have in their lexicon a desire to reach the highest level. Even if I am not on that level, right now I have to do my madrega, I have to have an awareness of the ultimate level and a desire to reach it or I will be stuck and not move. We have to want to try to get there.
5. clearing heart from worries and distractions of this world and getting out of this mess. I have to be engaged in fighting distractions or I don't have a chance. Orlas haleiv. Refining middos, like gaiva and taiva especially.

We have to be engaged in all five conditions, it is pound for pound. Avraham attained Torah on his own...A person who has traits from great people, they have to acquire them for themselves, not just copy. The difference will be that if I saw someone, I can only do what I saw. If I have not seen something, I can't mimic, I am out of my zone. ***But if I acquire from within I have access to the answer.***

There are two types of water sources, a cistern, with water put in, it holds the water. Another is a natural spring, bubbling, there is an endless source of new water coming in because it replenishes itself. That is the difference between acquiring it and mimicking. What they saw is what is put into the system. Then they have the five pre-conditions to acquire genuine access to the soul. Then when a situation comes up, the soul will guide us. We have an endless supply of what to do what is right.

Verbal introspection takes us through the process of the five conditions. After driving through the process it helps us gain access to the soul. This acquisition, this transformation from cistern to a well, that is a huge transformation.

You come to know what Hashem wants from me, to clarify it from within myself to know based on Torah how to apply and live it, how to reveal Hashem's will in the moment, how to apply ratzon Hashem to do what is right. One usage of the word daas is this, to bring it down through my mind via a deeper clarity and awareness and apply and integrate it. The word daas has multiple usages and contexts but this is one use.

Avraham's life was a process that led to this. The soul is ephemeral. It comes into the body and gives life

*and gives intellect and perception. That is neshama. At that level, neshama, the soul sends messages into your mind. **The neshama sends messages but there are five preconditions in order to listen to the message.***

How do we motivate ourselves to do what we are to do, where and who am I right now? We have to be aware. This is where verbal introspection comes in, we become in tune with this reality.

MipenInl Noam Elimelech on Lech Lecha continued

The way to reach the level of seeing the greatness from Hashem in this world and thus merit to recognize the upper worlds is by rectifying and repairing one's character traits. (Everything we see or experience is a message from Hashem. If we could perfect our traits, we would truly see the world around us as a total expression of Hashem. The average person, however, does not see this divine guidance in the world since Hashem is hidden in nature. This is hinted at by the gematria of hateva, nature, which is equivalent to the gematria of the name of Hashem Elokim – both equal 86. Only once man has mastered his traits and bends them in the service of Hashem is the mask of nature removed so that he can see Hashem behind everything...

One must use his free will to break himself and transform his bad character traits into the side of pure holiness alone. Then he will merit to recognize the lofty nature of Hashem and to see His greatness. Hashem will open up the wellsprings of wisdom and help him better understand and comprehend things that previously he could not even fathom.

This is the meaning of the words lech lecha according to Rashi's explanation. Go for yourself, for your benefit. How should constantly introspect and examine yourself to aid you in detaching yourself from base earthly character traits and transform them into good qualities, as implied by the word artzecha in your land, literally your earth. In other words go out of yourself from your lowly bad traits and repair them. Bring these traits back to holiness....

..take time to identify your negative traits. Once you have discovered them, transform them into good qualities and translate your nature into something holy in the service of your creator. This will open your eyes and help you see the Gdliness in the world around you – just as you can discover Hashem in your bad traits and use them for good so too you can discover Hashem hidden in nature, speaking and calling out to you to serve Him.

*You should reveal your ways and character, examine them, and see that they are utilized for serving Hashem...- **the exaltedness and greatness of Gd that you are looking to see in the world, that is what is called trust. You will see Hashem's hand in this world and thus trust in Him that everything happens for the best. – and He shall do for you – then He will do for you and create for you experiences that you have never previously encountered. And He will bring forth your righteousness like a light. Understand this.**" p. 52-53*