

# עֵטְרַת הַשָּׁבוּעַ



A Weekly Torah Publication from the Students of Mesivta Ateres Yaakov  
Ruth & Hyman Simon High School

פרשת לך לך  
ח' מרחשון תשס"ה  
October 23, 2004

Candle Lighting:	5:47
Latest שמע:	9:58
Latest שחרית:	11:00
Earliest הבדלה:	6:48

This week's edition of ATERES HASHAVUA is sponsored by the Rabbeim of Mesivta Ateres Yaakov in honor of Rabbi Shmuel Oratz upon his upcoming *Siyum HaShas!*

## TESTY TEACHERS

Rabbi Avi Tkatch

This week we read *Parshas Lech Lecha*, which literally means, "Go for yourself". Hashem told Avraham to leave his father's house, *for his own good*.

The parsha details the life of Avraham, the challenges that faced him, and how he dealt with them. Chazal teach us that Hashem challenged Avraham with ten tests, and he passed every single one.

We know that Avraham recognized Hashem at a very young age. However, he was quite alone in his belief. After he smashed all of his father's idols, his father reported him to King Nimrod who subsequently threw him into a fire. Avraham came out of the fire alive without a burn, steadfast in his beliefs. After this tremendous miracle, just as Avraham was gaining some recognition and began building a following, Hashem told him to leave his land and go to Canaan. Avraham happily obliged. As soon as Avraham arrived in Canaan, a terrible famine began there and he was forced to leave. Without questioning Hashem, Avraham went to Mitzrayim to find sustenance. When he got there, the king took his wife. Wherever Hashem told him to go, Avraham seems to find a bigger misfortune than where he was before.

Through all of this, Avraham never questioned Hashem dealt with every circumstance as it came, never complained and remained completely faithful to Him.

Why did Hashem need to give Avraham so many tests? Doesn't He know how loyal a person is without testing him? Furthermore, how did Avraham have the strength to deal with so many tests? It almost seems that whatever Hashem told him to do, something went wrong. Even so, Avraham still remained completely loyal.

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## WITH HASHEM IN MIND

Binyomin Agular, 10th Grade

Towards the end of this week's parsha, Avraham Avinu defeats the five kings and meets up with the king of Sodom for the second time since the war. The king explains to him, "Look Avraham, I really want my captives back. I'll pay you gold, silver, riches beyond your dreams, for my dear people." Avraham's response: "I have lifted my hand to G-d, the Highest, Creator of heaven and earth. If I take as much as a thread or a strap of a shoe, or if I take anything that is yours - and you shall not say "It is I who made Avraham rich" - it is far from me!" [יד:כב-כד] Wait a minute. What exactly is going on here? Why does Avraham mention Hashem? And why did Avraham think that the king would think he made Avraham rich when all he wanted were his captives? Why would he care if he made Avraham rich? Why is Avraham so opposed, anyway, to taking riches - or even a shoelace from the king? What is wrong with taking shoelaces anyway? Even Nike shoelaces can't be that expensive! The answer, I believe, can be found among the Meforshim and also, in a clarification of a Medrash given on this event.

The Medrash brings a moshol about a king who had a request for his son. The king explained, "My son, we have a problem in our kingdom. There are too many bandits in the forest. If you would go out and slay them I would greatly appreciate it. However, do not take their money for you are only fighting for the sake of justice, and I do not want others to think that you are in it for the money.

After fulfilling his mission, the prince returned and the king was overjoyed. He exclaimed to his son, "Since you have fulfilled your mission and not taken treasures - I will give you all the pearls, gold, silver in

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# FOCUS ON GREATNESS

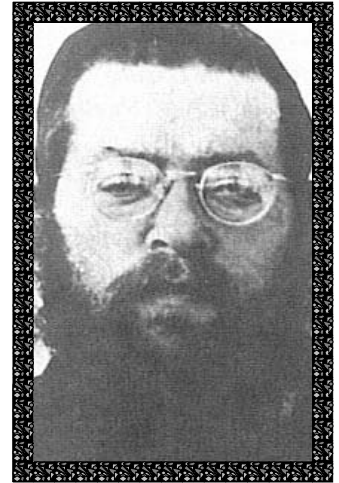
HARAV YOCHANAN PERLOW ZT"l

Stolin - Karliner Rebbe

5660 / 1900 - 21 Kislev 5716 / 1955

by Yaakov Sonnenblick

- Reb Yochanan, known as the Stoliner Rebbe, was born in the year 5660/1900 to Rav Yisrael Perlow zt'l.
- In 5681/1921 at the age of 21 he married the daughter of the Rebbe of Alek a short while before his father was *niftar*.
- He was invited to join the Stoliner/Karliner Chassidim in Lutzk, which he accepted and remained there until the outbreak of the war.
- In 5701/1941, with the Nazi occupation of the city, he escaped at the last moment to the forests and dwelled there for quite a while, till he eventually found his way to central Russia, where he remained till the war came to a end.
- The Rebbe lost his entire family in the Holocaust except for one of his youngest daughters.
- After he arrived at the Displaced Persons camp in Feldafing, Germany he decided not to share his true identity so as to better share the lot of his bereaved brethren.
- His attempt to conceal his identity didn't last long. When the secretary general of the American Agudath Israel, the unforgettable activist Reb Elimech (Mike) Tress visited the camp, he heard the *gabbai* call up someone by the name of "Yochanan ben Yisrael". He immediately figured out who the man was, and after davening he exclaimed "*Shalom Aleichem, Stoliner Rebbe.*"
- In 5706/1946 after the Rebbe settled in Haifa, Israel his influence spread, and he invigorated the Stoliner community , which thirsted for his every word.



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BINYOMIN AGULAR (continued from page 1)  
the treasury."

The Medrash then compares this *moshol* to the story of Avraham Avinu and the Melech Sodom. Hashem is the King, Avraham the prince - and the king of Sodom was a bandit. In order to make everything even clearer we have to understand what really happened with Avraham and the Melech Sodom a little better.

The Yad Yosef explains that Avraham Avinu saw right through the king of Sodom. The king of Sodom was a sneaky guy, and wasn't truly interested in redeeming his captives. What the king really wanted was to give Avraham a tribute for two major reasons. Firstly, so that Avraham would feel he owed the king. Secondly, so that the king could claim that *he* was the one who caused Avraham to become rich, not Hashem. Now with this in mind, the original questions relating to Avraham and the Melech Sodom can be answered - and we can also elucidate on the lesson, or one of the many lessons that the story contains.

This is what *really* happened - The king of Sodom wanted to give Avraham money for the reasons explained above. Yet he couldn't just give Avraham the money for Avraham truly understood that he mustn't trust in man, as explained in this week's Haftorah. [מִלֵּא] "But those who trust in

Hashem shall renew their vigor... They shall run and not tire." It is Hashem Who will give him strength, not man. Avraham had wealth and to rely on man, especially a wicked man like the king of Sodom would cause only trouble. The king of Sodom therefore had to pretend that he didn't want to give Avraham the money, but that he only wanted to be honest and fair and "felt that it was only right" to pay Avraham the money for his "dear people". Avraham Avinu in his wisdom saw right through the king's ploy, and understood that the king's plan was to make Avraham feel successful and dependent on him. Avraham Avinu therefore told the king that the Highest of High sustains him and that he would not even take a shoelace from him if Hashem didn't give it to him.

Yet we still have a question. What is wrong with taking a shoelace? Avraham surely wouldn't feel dependent on the king by taking a shoelace; could Avraham possibly become rich with such a small string? The answer is probably not. Yet the king of Sodom could claim that it could made Avraham rich. That is what the Medrash is trying to tell us. By taking money from the bandits people would say - "Aha! He's not so great. He's in it for the money!" The same by Avraham. By taking even a shoelace the king could claim that Avraham sold it,

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BINYOMIN AGULAR (continued from page 1)

made money and eventually became rich, hence, causing a *chillul Hashem* - even with such small gift.

Sounds illogical? Impossible? It does, but it isn't. The king of Sodom appears to us all the time as our Yetzer Hara and works the same way. This is the deeper lesson that we learn from this puzzling story. Our Yetzer Hara doesn't always work by logic. He works by enticement too. He appears to us sometimes as a friend. He would love to give us a gift to create an obvious danger. Yet we are not always fooled, so he appears to us as a friend who wishes to trade. "I'll benefit and you will benefit. You'll give something valuable to me (i.e. your time) and I will give an abundance (i.e. money, fun, happiness) to you. See? A trade. It will be fair." Yet from Avraham Avinu we must learn never to be

fooled. Think of Hashem, and ponder, "Is this what Hashem wants?" If not, as we learn from Avraham and the Medrash, don't do it. If we take a lot of the "treasures" the Yetzer Hara will befriend us, and tell us again and again that he can help us as he did last time. Yet, of course, in truth he is hurting us, bringing us closer to him and away from Hashem. Even with a *shmeck* of his enticement he can harm us! He will blow up our moment of false enjoyment and portray us as a sinner to others. Yet Avraham teaches us how to prevent all this. Think "Hashem". The Melech Sodom sounded friendly, but Avraham was thinking "Hashem" and thereby revealed the deception. Let us follow the words of the Haftorah and think "Hashem", for a renewed vigor with no evil inclination in the final Geulah, *bimheira biyameinu*.

FOCUS ON GREATNESS (continued from page 2)

- In 5708/1948 the Rebbe visited the United States and realized that the Jews in America were in desperate need of his leadership. He remained in Williamsburg, Brooklyn.
- Six years later, despite his health, the Rebbe went on a trip the Eretz Yisrael. Although, he was very successful in giving *chizzuk* to his chassidim and encouragement to the Jews there at large, he was forced to cut his trip short and return to America for medical treatments.
- On 21 Kislev 5716 the great rebbe was taken from us at the young age of 56.
- He was temporarily buried in America and a year later was moved to Teveria, alongside the tomb of Reb Mendele Vitebsker.
- His grandson Rav Boruch Meir Shochait continues to lead the Stoliner communities in Eretz Yisrael and Chutz L'Eretz to this very day.



Rav Shmuel Dishon *shlit"á*  
Mashgiach of the Stoliner-Karliner Yeshiva  
in Brooklyn speaking to our mesivta

RABBI AVI TKATCH (continued from page 1)

There are different types of teachers. Some teachers will come to the classroom, teach the material, and give a test to see how much of the information students can remember. However, a good teacher, one who is interested in the growth of the student, will not just teach, rather he will try to make sure the student understands. In doing so, the teacher will teach an idea, then challenge the student with questions, to help and ensure that the student will better understand the material.

This is what Hashem did for Avraham. HaKadosh Baruch Hu presented many challenges to him, so that when he would overcome the challenge, he would be a better person. By challenging Avraham's belief, Hashem sought to strengthen Avraham's stance and sense of conviction in those beliefs.

We can take this one step further. If a person does a good deed, it is nice. But if a person has to give up something in order to do a good deed (i.e. one might lose money in order to take the time to visit someone in the hospital) that deed is all the more special. The harder one works to do good, the more meaningful is the good deed. The more meaningful the good deed is, the stronger of

an influence it has on him. If we are willing to sacrifice a lot to do good deeds, it shows how much the good deed must mean to us, and that influences our lives and the lives of our children.

Avraham realized that he was a father, someone that needed to teach his children what he stood for. He was willing to do anything for Hashem. He knew that nothing could ruin his loyalty. Avraham put all of his strength into *avodas Hashem*. HaKadosh Baruch Hu challenged him and he persevered. He did it because he knew that if he would not stand up for what he thought was right in his day, then his children certainly would not stand up for their beliefs in their days. That is what gave him the strength to overcome every single one of Hashem's tests.

We live in a time that we are faced with many challenges. We must learn to be strong and stand up for what we believe in. If we keep in mind that our future is at risk, the lives of our children and grandchildren are on the line, we too will find the inner strength within ourselves to persevere. May we all merit to have the strength, to learn from Avraham, to hold strong to our beliefs in the face of any challenge. Good Shabbos.

