

GREAT FOR SHARING  
AT THE SHABBOS TABLE!

# בשבת



אור ישראל

Living Life Deeper

PARSHAS  
LECH LECHA

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT  
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS  
RABBI AVICHAI BENSOUSSAN

## NO NEED FOR ROBOTS

In the beginning of *Parshas Lech Lecha*, Hashem tells *Avraham Avinu* to leave, "...your country, your birthplace, and your father's house."<sup>1</sup> Rashi,<sup>2</sup> as explained by the Mizrachi,<sup>3</sup> states that each term was used in order to give Avraham greater reward for his following Hashem's command. Every phrase evoked memories of Avraham's past, making it harder for him to leave. This was the place where he grew up, where his family had roots, where he knew the backstreets and alleyways. How difficult it would be to leave!

This idea would make a lot of sense for most of us, however, *Avraham Avinu* had a very different experience where he grew up. His own father informed on him to the king, and the king had sentenced him to death! What feelings could *Avraham Avinu* possibly have for his birthplace and his father's house?

Reb Hensch Leibowitz<sup>4</sup> (1918–2008) explains that it is important to recognize that a *tzaddik* is not a robot. Like all people, Avraham naturally had warm feelings towards his family and homeland. Yes, he very likely was happy to leave, but it would not have been proper to 'reprogram' himself to eradicate all his positive feelings towards his history. Rather, both feelings can coexist — the feelings that this place is not a place for me, and the feeling that this is my homeland.

Thus, when Hashem accentuated Avraham's history, it made the test that much more difficult, as it elicited all of the positive emotions Avraham had associated with his birthplace.

Hashem has given us a beautiful and full range of feelings and emotions, and each one has its place. If we attempt to quell and eradicate any one of these, we put ourselves at risk of dehumanizing ourselves completely. Of course, not all expressions of our feelings are appropriate at all times. Our job is to learn how to use our emotions in the best way possible in our quest to become close to Hashem.

1 Bereishis 12:1

2 Bereishis 12:2 s.v. אשר ארצך

3 *ibid.*

4 Cited in Pinnacle of Creation

Hashem has given us a beautiful and full range of feelings and emotions, and each one has its place.

### Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

The idea of channeling one's emotions and feelings might sound simple, but what is it really? What does it mean to channel one's anger, arrogance, or desires?

The first step is to recognize that our emotions are not 'out of our control,' and 'he made me feel that way.' We often give context and meaning to the facts that surround us, which then inspire our emotions. When we can reframe the context, we are doing ourselves a tremendous service in channeling our emotions.

An example -- a man comes in to see his son hitting his daughter. His immediate reaction is anger. However, had he known that his son was slapping a mosquito, there would have been no anger at all, if anything, he might have given his son a thank-you.

Thus, a person who is prone to a particular trait can take a moment to assess a situation. If it calls for that emotion, go ahead.

Acting in this way will allow a person the leeway to use their emotions properly, without removing them from their life totally.



**Do you think I was always like this? By nature, I have a fierce temper, but I have worked to overcome it.**

- R' Moshe Feinstein zt"l, explaining his renowned composure even during the most tense and provocative situations, *Reb Moshe (First Edition)*, Mesorah Publications, pg. 228

Get Involved! We Can Only Do What We Do With Your Help!

If you would like to sponsor, or distribute in your shul, please contact us at [info@ohr-yisrael.com](mailto:info@ohr-yisrael.com) or call 732-451-GROW (4769)

## KNOW-IT-ALL

Yehoshua was the type of kid who liked to know everything about everything. “How does that work?” “Why does that do that?” “Where does this come from?” were regular phrases that can be heard from him.

As Yehoshua grew, his reputation for knowing things grew with him. Soon, his peers would seek him out to get a better understanding of a particular subject, whether it was science, history or computers.

High school came and went, and Yehoshua now found himself learning full-time in *beis medrash*. One day he was sitting with his *rebbe*, Rabbi White, when the topic of knowledge came up.

“You know, Yehoshua,” Rabbi White said with a smile, “I’ve noticed that you have a name for yourself as the go-to person when someone wants to know something.”

Yehoshua smiled sheepishly and shrugged. “My parents have told me that ever since I was little, I liked to know things. And, *Boruch Hashem*, it sticks, so I remember what I’ve learned.”

Rabbi White nodded as his expression turned thoughtful. “It’s a wonderful *middah* to have, it truly is. You’re quite blessed to have that desire, as it will serve you well in life. If I may make a suggestion — try to focus your efforts on Torah. There is so much to learn, and so much behind everything we do. Use this nature of yours to understand Torah to its depth, and you will become an excellent *talmid chochom*.”

Yehoshua took those words to heart. He still enjoyed his regular mundane pursuits, but he spent the bulk of his time learning. For leisure he would read Jewish history books. Now his friends sought him out to know which *Tanna* was the *rebbe* of whom, or what was the background of the author of a particular *sefer*.

Yehoshua is still going strong, well-known in his community for the *shiurim* he gives; practical *halachah* mixed with a good understanding of the facts of the case, whether it be in a legal, medical, or scientific area. When asked, Yehoshua stated that he appreciated his *rebbe’s* approach. “He didn’t quash my desire to know more about this world. He didn’t demand of me to stop reading what I was reading. Rather, he knew how to channel my natural talents towards holier pursuits. And for that, I thank him.”

**“He didn’t quash my desire to know more about this world. Rather, he knew how to channel my natural talents towards holier pursuits. And for that, I thank him.”**

*\*Based on a true story, names have been changed.*

### DID YOU KNOW?

- It is impossible to eradicate a character trait. If one wants to work on a negative trait, the best course of action is to channel that trait towards positive action.<sup>1</sup>
- Avraham performed the sacrifice of Yitzchak with all of his heart. Despite this, tears were streaming down Avraham’s face out of love for his son.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Even Shelaima* 1:7

<sup>2</sup> *Yalkut Shimoni* 101:2