In his sefer Ruach Chaim, Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin teaches that the verse in Mishlei (20:7) states: “The righteous one walks with integrity; happy are his children after him.” When a person strives to develop accomplished levels in character traits and in personality refinement, these features become as second nature for him. His children, then, can hope to achieve these levels with relatively minimal effort, for they accept these standards as normative, since this is how they have been trained to act. In this manner, these characteristics are transmitted throughout the generations. In fact, we are witness to Jews who, regardless of their level of Torah scholarship, are prepared to sacrifice even their very lives for the sake of Torah and its teachings. This is particularly due to our having inherited this level of preparedness from Avraham Avinu, who, according to the Midrash, was the first to be willing to jump into the fiery furnace to defend his values of monotheism. 

Each of the ten tests to which Avraham was subjected (see Avos 5:4) was designed to cultivate another ethical or moral value within him and as an identifying feature of the nation which he was to father. Among these is the willingness to pick up and leave one’s ancestral homeland to travel and resettle in the promised land, a place that offers greater potential for spiritual growth and mitzvah observance. Also noteworthy is the patience and trusting confidence which the Jewish people possess to accept the ways of God as being truly good and beneficial. This was demonstrated by Avraham in this week’s parasha, when he trusted God even after a famine struck the land which had been promised to him as a place of blessing and abundance.

The Environ of a Tzaddik

He made himself travel away from the Forerunner of the World [from God]. He said: “I want neither Avram nor his God.” — Rashi

This comment of Rashi sets the stage for the story of the downfall of Lot. The tragedy of Lot and his move to Sodom was precipitated not only by a desire to pursue the material life it offered, but Lot’s descent was also set in motion by his willingness to depart from the company and influence of Avraham Avinu.

In his Darchei Mussar, Rabbi Simcha Zissel of Kelm notes that this background information provided by Rashi is insightful, but we may wonder where this lesson is indicated in our verse. After all, even after departing from the company of Avraham, Lot remained steadfast in the mitzvah of being hospitable by offering lodging and food for the guests. Perhaps his move to Sodom was not a function of his being misguided at all. Where do Chazal see this move as being a critical failure on Lot’s part?

Chazal note that Lot had the opportunity to remain with Avraham Avinu and to observe him and to learn from him. Yet, Lot allowed his desire for the material lifestyle offered by Sodom and the surrounding area to draw him away from this privilege. Anyone who allows himself to depart from an environment of enormous spiritual growth in order to pursue mundane matters is deserving of sharp criticism, and can be categorized as a rasha.
INDIVIDUAL NEEDS VS. COMMUNAL GOALS

Avraham was the only partner. With one partner there can be no Bris, no mitzvah of Bris Milah, the two parties were...  

And the king of Sodom said to Avram: ‘Give me the people and take the possessions for yourself.’”  
Bereshis 14:21

Following his courageous rescue of Lot and the five kings after their war against the four kings, Avraham found himself in a very powerful position. He had freed thousands of captured soldiers and had successfully retrieved all of their confiscated possessions. Naturally, these five kings were extremely grateful for his heroic efforts. Their leader, the king of Sodom, humbly requested of Avraham that he give him his people back while keeping the riches and the property for himself as the spoils of war. Avraham responded by saying that he would take absolutely nothing for himself, not even a shoestring, so that nobody would be able to claim that the king of Sodom was the one who caused Avraham to become wealthy (14:22-23). Attempting to glorify the name of God, Avraham refused to accept any type of monetary reward. He was concerned that financial compensation could possibly tarnish the full impact of his kiddush Hashem.

At the same moment, however, he did demand from the king of Sodom payment for Aneir, Eshkol and Mamre and the other soldiers who had assisted him (ibid., Verse 24). Avraham found himself in a very powerful position. After his courageous rescue of Lot and the five kings after their war against the four kings, he had again demonstrated his international standing. His activities in a similar vein, and was rebuked when he failed to do so. Prior to capturing Yericho, Yehoshua issued a proclamation which prohibited the entire nation from seizing the spoils of Yericho for personal use (Yehoshua 6:17-19). He concluded that dedicating to Hashem the spoils of this first battle in Eretz Yisrael would spiritually uplift the people and assist them in their quest of Eretz Yisrael.

Later in Tanach, we find that Yehoshua Bin Nun was also expected to conduct his activities in a similar vein, and was rebuked when he failed to do so. Yehoshua’s sincere objective on behalf of the Jewish community was thus inappropriate in the eyes of Hashem – for the goal was not adequately established with sufficient concern for the feelings and desires of each individual. The best intentions to enhance the welfare of our fellow Jews, even when our motives are solely l’shem Shamayim, must be formulated only after we consider the sensitivities of each individual person, for each is endowed with a לתמחאת – the image of Hashem.

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A COVENANT BETWEEN PARTNERS

The rabbis teach that Avraham performed all the mitzvos of the Torah even though the Torah had not yet been given. Why then did he fulfill the mitzvah of Milah only after Hashem actually commanded it? The Gri“z proposes that a possible answer to this question is suggested by the term

With one partner there can be no Bris, no mitzvah of Milah.

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WE STAND FIRM AND UNWAVERING

To understand the נון of Bris Milah, Rav Moshe Feinstein, explains that Avraham Avinu spent his life pursuing one mission – to spread faith in the one God to the people of the world. He would travel from place to place...
admonishing idol worshipers and promoting monotheism. Now, in order for the message to be accepted by the masses, one must present himself as an equal in both appearance and action to those he wishes to influence. For this reason, we find that Kohanim are specifically warned not to remove their sideburns or shave their beards, just as the rest of Bnei Yisrael is warned not to do so. In other cultures, the members of the priesthood conduct themselves in their own mode of dress, style of hair growing, and even marital status. This creates a barrier between them and the people they must guide. Why should they listen to rebuke from someone who conducts himself on a different level of spirituality? Bnei Yisrael are commanded otherwise. The same restrictions that the general public have are also placed upon our mentors. Thus, in their interaction with their followers, a closeness can be felt, so that a lofty lifestyle may be aspired to by all.

This was the fear of Avraham, for in the commandment of circumcision he would now create for himself a different physical status from the people he sought to inspire. People would now distance themselves from Avraham and his prechings by claiming that observance of the commandments is good for the circumcised Avraham and his progeny but not for them. People would accuse him of abandoning his life’s mission of connecting with the people by fulfilling this commandment. Avraham knew otherwise, that observing the word of Hashem left no room for questions or calculations. To become the chosen people we must always stand firm and unwavering even when others question our practice. By doing so, Hashem blessed Avraham and the Jewish people with the respect of all the nations of the world.

Halachic Corner

It is customary on Motzaei Shabbos after Shemoneh Esrei to recite the last verse of Tehillim 90 - "זיווהי פנים ואלוהין עליים - "And the pleasantness of God shall be upon us", and Tehillim 91 -  "יהוה דברי ושם - "He who dwells in concealment". One reason is that according to tradition, the verse פנים יי 屬 chapter which immediately follows it, namely  ד誰י ימ. This is the mizmor in which Moshe Rabbeinu blessed Bnei Yisrael at the completion of the Mishkan. Therefore, Chazal established that this mizmor be recited at the beginning of the workdays. Another reason is that the chapter  דדרי and the Song of Calamities", that is, a prayer for protection against calamities. Therefore it was established that this psalm be recited at the beginning of the week, beseeching God to safeguard us from calamities all week long.

Questions for Thought and Study

1. Why does the Torah say that Avraham “passed through” the land of Canaan (" עובר")? Why doesn’t it just say that he went through the land?  See Ohr HaChaim 12:6
2. How was the way Lot left Egypt with Avraham different from when they had traveled previously? Which words indicate this?  See Malbim 13:1
3. Why did Hashem tell Avraham to look to the north first when showing him the land of Canaan?  See Ba'al HaTurim 13:14
4. How was the King of Sodom sensitive to the stringencies that he knew Avraham kept?  See Ohr HaChaim 14:18
5. Why did Avraham cut the animals in half when he made the covenant with Hashem in Pasuk 15:10?  See Rashi and Ramban
6. How did Sarah give Hagar to Avraham as a wife differently than how Rachel and Leah gave their maidservants to Yaakov? Which word indicates this?  See Ha’amek Davar 16:3

This Week Likutei Peshatim is Sponsored

- By Hebrew Theological College wishing mazel tov to Rabbi & Mrs. Ben-Zion Rand on the birth of a grandson, born to Shlomo & Yehudis Rand; to Naomi Samber on the birth of a great-grandson, born to Avrumi & Shayna Millen; and to HTC Board of Regents member Dr. Michael Friedman and his wife Susan on the engagement of their granddaughter, Ashira Shabat, to Moshe Kurtzer.
- Please join Hebrew Theological College at our 97th Anniversary Dinner on Tuesday, December 3rd, at the Westin O’Hare. We are honored to pay tribute to Rabbi Sender and Tova Kutner, Lev V’Nefesh Award, and Dr. Avi and Deena Stein, Distinguished Leadership Award. We’re also excited to welcome musical sensation Shulem Lemmer. For more information or to RSVP or place an ad for the dinner, please go to www.htc.edu/dinner, or call 847-982-2500.
- Attention parents of 8th grade boys! On Tuesday, November 26, at 7:45 PM, prospective parents are cordially invited to an Open House at the Yeshiva, 7135 Carpenter Road in Skokie. Learn about the excitement at FYHS and hear from our Menahel / Principal, Rabbi Dovid Kupchik. See for yourself what makes FYHS unique and attracts students from the Chicago area and across the country.
**Explore “Torah Giants and their Writings”,** Bliststein Institute of Hebrew Theological College presents the Samuel T. Cohen and Sarah W. Cohen “High Tea and Torah” lecture series. Dr. Chani Tessler will deliver the lecture this Tuesday, November 14, at 12:35-1:15. Rabbi Zvi Zimmerman will speak on “The Challenge of the Akeida”. Complimentary appetizers as well as a discounted menu available for shiur participants. Men and women invited to attend. For more info: Rabbi Joshua Zisook at 847-982-2500 or jzisook@htc.edu.

**Hebrew Theological College’s Gourmet Torah at Shallots Bistro will take place this Thursday, November 14, 12:35-1:15. Rabbi Zvi Zimmerman will speak on “The Challenge of the Akeida”. Complimentary appetizers as well as a discounted menu available for shiur participants. Men and women invited to attend. For more info: Rabbi Joshua Zisook at 847-982-2500 or jzisook@htc.edu.**

**Hebrew Theological College, Skokie, IL is seeking a full-time bookkeeper/payroll with strong analytical and problem-solving skills who can be successful in a fast-paced environment. Bachelor’s Degree or equivalent in a business or accounting field with at least 3 years of accounting experience. Handle daily cash management, banking/tuition receivables, payroll and related tax filings and journal entries. Experienced candidates should send cover letter and résumé to careers@htc.edu. No phone calls please.**

**Hebrew Theological College, Skokie, IL is seeking a full-time or part-time accounts payable clerk. As a vital team player of the finance department, you will help manage all aspects of the accounts payable process using Banner ERP system. You must have attention to detail and your data entry skills must be top notch for this position. Interested candidates should send their résumé to: careers@htc.edu. No phone calls please.**

**Last spots available! Bliststein Institute invites women of the community to begin their journey toward a high-demand high-pay profession in Computer & Information Sciences and Web Design. This Computer Bootcamp will teach you how to set up and customize fully-functional websites. Scholarships and child care are available. For more information, please call 773-973-0241 and ask for Mrs. Mann. Better yet, come this Sunday morning at 9:00 AM, at 2606 Touhey Avenue.**

**Attention 11th and 12th grade young women. Due to a generous grant from the JUF, Bliststein Institute is offering an outstanding class in Computer Science Principles on Sunday afternoons, beginning November 17th, from 1:00 to 3:00 PM. Earn 3 credits, free of charge, and start your journey in the exciting field of Computer and Information Sciences. The class is limited to 20 students. For more information, please call 773-973-0241 and ask for Mrs. Mann.**

**Yeshivas Hakayitz 2020 enrollment is now open. Eligibility: Boys entering grades 7 & up, Aug. 16-19. Whether you are enrolling your son in Yeshivas Hakayitz or not, this is a 5 full-day Yishuv/Hakayitz adventure of a lifetime! As-Wa-Kiya Camp on Stony Lake & Michigan’s west coast is our home. Adventures include instructional sailing & skiing, tubing, canoeing, kayaking, SUP, zipline, target sports, high ropes course, lakefront inflatables, Silver Lake boating, sand dune jeep tours, hikes, sandboarding, horseback riding, & more. See details: ykh.htc.edu.**

**Are you downtown? Got 5, 15, 30 or 45 minutes? Learn & daven at M. Geller, Ltd., 29 E. Madison, Ste. 1805. 1:05 PM, 30 minute shiur; 1:35 Mincha; 1:47, 5 minute dvar Torah. Shirur led by: Monday- Lema’an Achai- Rabbi Leventhal; Tuesday- Chicago Community Kollel- Rabbi Shmuel Sussman; Wednesday- Rabbi Moshe Simkovich; Thursday- Chabad- TBD. Info: 312-984-1041.**

**Park Plaza Senior Living Community enriches the quality of life for our residents through daily shiurim, live music, exercise classes, lectures, outings and much more. Park Plaza also has beautifully furnished apartments for rent: daily, weekly and long term or for your simcha. For more information, visit our website at www.park-plaza.org or contact Adina at 773-465-6700 or at adina@park-plaza.org.**

**TAG Chicago is here to help! Offering filtering solutions for smart phones, tablets and computers. We offer free volunteer assistance to keep your devices safe. Visit tagchicago.org, call 847-920-8245 or email Help@TAGChicago.org to book your appointment. 8150 Central Park, Skokie. Remember - “Call before you buy!” We will help guide you.**

**Bliststein Institute is pleased to partner with The ARK in offering our students and recent graduates a free career workshop given by The ARK’s Employment Clinic this Tuesday, November 12, 2:30-3:30 PM. In the Bliststein Institute Library. For more information or to pre-register, email scohen@htc.edu.**

**Bliststein Institute invites students, alumnnae and women in the community to attend a meet-and-mingle style career night on Sunday, November 17, in the Bliststein Institute Library. Great networking opportunity. Dinner will be served beginning at 6:30 PM. The event will begin at 7:00 and conclude at 8:00. Babysitting available upon request. Please pre-register by emailing scohen@htc.edu.**

**Yehuda Moshe, 4721 Touhy, Night of Knowledge 22, this Sat., Nov. 9, 7:00 Registration. 7:45 Mrs. Judith Gutstein: Kristallnacht Remembrance. Session 1, 8:00: Select one lecture: A) “A Salute to the Pritzker Military Museum - A Visual Presentation”. Leah Cohen Gaynes, Pritzker Military Museum; B) “Lessons from the Ancient Avot” by Rabbi Moshe Shapiro; C) “A Yekke Returns to his German Roots - A Visual Presentation”, Norman Goldmeier, Attorney.**

**Yehuda Moshe - Session 1 continues: D) “Baby, Baby, Can’t you Hear My Heartbeat?”, Tales From the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit - A Visual Presentation”, Dr. Michael D. Schreiber, M.D., Chief, U of C Neonatology. All invited to Session 2 at 8:50: “Representing Israel One Day at a Time” - The Consulate Press Officer, Renie Schlesinger, in conversation with Veteran Chicago Journalist, Regine Schlesinger. Join us for a Melave Malka following the sessions. Early registration discount. 847-673-5870.**

**ida Crown Jewish Academy’s Open House for Prospective Families will be held on Wednesday evening, November 20, at 7:00 PM. Come see our state-of-the-art building, sit in on a shiur, meet our incredible teachers and students, and see what we are all about! Register online at www.icja.org and receive 25% off your child’s ICJA application fee. For more information go to www.icja.org or call 773-973-1450.**

**Join a worldwide event of inspiration for women! The 17th annual Rachel Iimeiynu Yahrzeit Video, featuring Rabbi Paysach Krohn, Rabbi Moshe Weinerberger, Rabbi Ephraim Shapiro, and Reb. Tehila Jaeger. Proceeds to feed hungry children in Eretz Yisroel, under the guidance of HaRav Shmuel Kamenetsky, קספ. This Motzei Shabbos, Nov. 9, at Sha’arei Tzedek Mishkan Yair, 2832 Touhy. Doors open 8:00 PM. Video at 8:30 (video length approx. 78 min.). Suggested donation. Info: 773-807-5161.**

**Rabbi Yona Reiss, Av Beis Din of the cRc, will be speaking at an Oneg at Congregation Ezras Israel, 7001 N. California Avenue, this Friday night, Parashat Lech Lecha, at 7:30 PM. The community is invited: 773-764-8320.**
Madraigos Midwest is hiring a Steps To Healthy Living Teacher (male). Our non-profit has an exciting part-time opportunity for a motivated, experienced, and highly competent male teacher or fundraisers, will honor Noah & Suzanne Mishkin and Yossi & Shuli Tsadok. Stay tuned for details!

Wealth Management, for a practical workshop on budgeting, US and Israeli taxation, and financial planning. Monday, November 18, 2019, from 7:00-9:00 PM, at the DoubleTree by Hilton Chicago North Shore – Skokie. Kindly register at www.nbn.org/IL/Chicago.

Community Tuesdays begins on November 12 at Bernard Horwich JCC. Free program beginning at 10:30 AM with NIA workout class; lecture with Dr. Justin Gordon, discussing his book, “Holocaust Postal History”, at 11:45. Open game room begins at 1:00 PM.

You're invited! Arie Crown Early Childhood Open House, this Sunday, November 10, 1:00-2:30 PM, at the EC campus, 4915 Conrad Street, Skokie. All current and prospective early childhood families are invited to a special free event: arts and crafts, face paint, and more. Explore our classrooms while learning about our exceptional program. Raffle for free pizza lunch for a year!

The Lubin Family invites the entire community to a Siyum Sefer Torah in loving memory of Mrs. Eloise Lubin, הָלְיָה שֶׁחַ֖תֶּה הַרְבּֽוֹת - Sunday, November 17, 12:00 PM. Completion Ceremony 1:00 PM. Procession from the Lubin home, 6508 N. Whipple Street, to Congregation Bnei Ruven. For more information visit: chabadareas.com/torah.

Congregation KINS invites the community to join us for an inspiring Shabbat of Song with Baruch Levine, November 22 & 23. Baruch Levine will lead the davening Friday night & the Shabbat dayMusaf davening. There will be a Friday night Oneg Shabbat, 7:30 PM, at the home of Josh & Shoshi Ross, 2821 Estes, and a Saturday night Melave Malka, 8:30 PM at the home of Jeremy & Rebecca Amster, 3121 Sherwin. Sponsorship opportunities available. For more info visit www.congkins.org.

JCC Chicago seeks outstanding Early Childhood Assistant Teachers, Monday-Thursday, 12:00-4:00 PM. Be part of a team of educators, social workers & specialists who support the whole child through a developmentally appropriate curriculum embracing Jewish life & complementing the home. Learn more and apply online at https://www.jccchicago.org/careers/early-childhood-assistant-teachers-2/.

Register now! Nefesh-Chicago Nov. 17th Professional Training with co-founder of Mind-Focused Therapy, Dr. Robert Lebovits, a highly-respected Nefesh L’em member, back by popular demand. Requesting on “The Delivery Treatment for Couples & Families” (a topic heavily requested by MHPs), Earn 3 or 6 CE/CEUs. Morning or afternoon session or both! To register online & program info: https://nefeshchicago.org/register/ or arrive at the WiFi Building at 8:45 AM for registration at the door. Various pricing options available.


The Roshei Yeshiva and Hanhalas Torah Umesorah will be speaking throughout the Chicago area during this very special Shabbos. It’s promises to be an uplifting and inspiring Shabbos that the Chicago community will long remember!

ATT proudly announces the winners of the 10th Annual Hartman Family Fdn Educator of the Year Awards: Mrs. Sra. Kavitha (HT) whose top award is in memory of Mrs. Gayle Anne Herwitz; Mrs. Betty Hainsfurther (ACHDS); & Miss Breindy Miller (JDBY). Awards selected by a committee of educational consultants & community members. ATT & Hartman Family Fdn hope the awarding of this prize not only recognizes 3 outstanding teachers & embodies the profession in the Chicago, but also elevates & enforces the profession in the community.

The Q is back! Save the date for Midwest NCSY’s Ultimate Live Trivia Experience, a fun, fast-paced, show-off-your-knowledge competition, on Saturday night, Dec. 21. The event, NCSY’s annual major fundraiser, will honor Noah & Suzanne Mishkin and Yosh & Shuli Tsadok. Stay tuned for details!

Madragos Midwest is hiring a Steps To Healthy Living Teacher (male). Our non-profit has an exciting part-time opportunity for a motivated, experienced, and highly competent male teacher or mental health professional. 10 hours a week. Please send résumés to info@madraigosmidwest.org.
**3.**

**2.**

**1.**

Answers:

1. One explanation is that even though Avraham did not own the land (and passed through with a large contingency), the Canaanites did not say anything at all to him. Secondly, Avraham felt that he was not settling in the land (yet), but was just passing through and following wherever Hashem would send him.

2. In Pasuk 13:1 it says that Lot “traveled with him” (었던). This indicates that Lot had now become rich and felt that he was traveling with Avraham as an equal. Previously, in Pasuk 12:4, it says that Lot traveled “with him” (לך). This term (לך) represents that Lot traveled with Avraham originally in a subservient way, as he had very few possessions of his own.

3. It was through Avraham’s merit that ultimately Bnei Yisrael would slaughter the daily זית sacrific in the northern part of the Beis HaMikdash.

4. The King of Sodom knew that Avraham would not take bread and wine from idolators. He therefore arranged that Avraham would get food from סנט קיין (who, according to Midrash, was שא, the son of נ). That is why the gift of סנט קיין is mentioned here. (See Ohr HaChaim for other possible explanations.)

5. Rashi says that the common custom when creating a covenant is for both parties to pass between the animal, which is cut in half. Ramban says that Avraham was alluding to future sacrifices of this type. In some sacrifices, gifts to the Kohanim would be cut out. In others, fats were cut away to burn on the נגס (Altar).

6. Sarah gave Hagar to Avraham as a wife. However, Hagar remained a maidservant to Sarah. This is indicated by the extra word "ל" ("to him"). which is not mentioned regarding Yaakov.