Assembly Notes

PARSHAS LECH LECHA 5784

Assembly Theme: Yidden show respect and concern for each other

Avram and Sarai were self made Maaminim (believers). Chazal (our Sages) describe the journey of Avram (the name he was called early on in his life) from the age of three, in recognising that there is Hashem Echad, One G-d who created the world and cares about how we live our lives. Hashem gives us freedom of choice, so that we become His partners and earn the rewards that we receive.

Avrohom and Sarai could have lived the most meaningful, beautiful, inspiring life as a small family or a small group. But they reached out to others. They impacted many thousands of people. Eventually Hashem changed their names from Avram to Avraham and Sarai to Sara to signal that they should reach many more people all over the world, and teach them to live with G-d.

Since then, a Jew's role in life is not only to live up to Hashem's wishes; but to also to see that others fulfill their purpose in life. There are two ways to influence others. The first is by speaking to them politely and with respect in general and sharing Torah ideas with them. The second way is even stronger: showing a living example of a person who lives as Hashem tells us to, and is happy to do so (Simchas Hachayim).

This was the way of Avraham and Sarah, and they bequeathed this to every single one of us.

Today, Erev Shabbos, is the 7th of Cheshvan. It is the day that in Eretz Yisrael they begin to pray for rain. Rain is essential for the food of a country and for its whole economy. In Eretz Yisrael the rains are already needed from the end of Sukkos. Zayin (7) Cheshvan is two weeks later.

Why did they wait two whole weeks before davening for the much needed rain?! Because people were returning to their homes from Yerushalayim. For those living furthest away it took two weeks to get home. It would be uncomfortable to travel in the rain. So all the Jewish people delayed asking for rain!

This is a powerful message to all of us about Ahavas Yisrael and respect. First of all, those living two weeks away were a small minority of the population. Second, they themselves needed the rains for their crops. Yet, all of Klal Yisrael delayed asking, in order not to make someone else uncomfortable.

Sometimes we need this message in order to remind us to respect each other!

STORY OF THE REBBE

The Rebbe arrived in the USA on 28 Sivan 5701 (1941). In 5707 (1947) he went to France to meet his mother and bring her to the USA. The Rebbe also did many things for the Frierdikke (previous) Rebbe in France, such as organising publishing, helping the refugees and farbrenging with the Chassidim.

At one farbrengen the Rebbe advised the people to occasionally go for a walk in a neighbourhood that was not so observant, because that may be the only way that they could make contact with people from that neighborhood. Some people might become inspired just by seeing someone who looks like a Chassid and is dressed like a Chassid.

One day, a Chossid did just that; he walked down the street in Paris. A woman saw him from the upper floor of a house and called out to him that she wanted to talk to him. She came downstairs and said that she had a grandson around Bar Mitzvah age who had no knowledge about Yiddishkeit. Would the Chassid be able to help him? The Chossid said that she should send her grandson to the Rashi Shul and there he would be taught.

The boy's name was Dovid Lesselbaum. He began learning to read, then learning Chumash and other studies. Eventually he went to a Yeshivah in Yerushalayim and then to a Chabad Yeshivah. He got married in Israel and he became a prominent Chossid. He published the weekly Sichat Hashavua in French and taught Chassidus widely to French speakers.

I am telling this story today because Rabbi Dovid Lesselbaum passed away this week, in his nineties. I will IYH share a Rebbe story about him with a big miracle, maybe next week.

Talking with respect to others and being a Dugma Chaya (living role model) can have a very wide effect which can reach many people over generations!

GOOD SHABBOS!

גוט שבת!