א ביסל תורה!

October 23, 2026

THE PARSHA NEWSLETTER OF MAIMONIDES SCHOOL

י״ב חשון תשפ״ז · **לך לך**

Value in Small Quantities

By Ahava Askarinam '29

In this week's פרשה, פרשת לך לך, אברהם faces many challenges that test his אמונה, faith, in Hashem. אברהם goes to a new land all alone, and for the majority of his challenges, he does not have much of a support system beyond שרה, his wife. In פרק יד, the number of people around אברהם changes drastically in a short amount of time. אברהם puts an army together for war and is able to gather 318 men to save לוט, who was captured by a group of very powerful kings. The תורה tells us that אברהם didn't sit back watch; instead, he quickly assembled an army: "וַיִּשְׁמַע אַבְרָם כִּי נִשְׁבָּה אָחִיו" and אברם heard, that his nephew was captured and he mustered his trainees, children of his house, 318" (בראשית יד:יד). "וַיָּרֶק אֶת חֲנִיכָיו יְלִידֵי בֵיתוֹ שְׁמֹנָה עָשָׂר וּשְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת When simply reading the text, the number 318 seems to be random. Why couldn't it have been 300 or 400 men? The גמרא offers an interesting answer for why the תורה uses this specific number.

In מסכת נדרים דף לב., the גמרא proposes that the 318 men were really just one significant person, אליעזר. אליעזר was אברהם's top servant, whom he trusted. For example, אליעזר was the one sent to find a wife for his son, יצחק. This interpretation connects to the fact that the numerical value of אליעזר's name is 318. Therefore, the גמרא suggests that the number 318 represents אליעזר rather than 318 separate men. The idea of having אברהם and אליעזר stand before a large army of powerful kings is very remarkable. They were relying on Hashem for guidance, showing how much strength אברהם had through his אמונה. This teaches us that in life, quantity isn't always more important than quality.

The תורה uses the number 318 for a reason, it wasn't just a random quantity or a large number of people. Rather, 318 adds up to the exact numerical value of אליעזר. In today's society, everything needs to come in large volumes for some unknown reason. Everything comes in a family-sized pack these days. This idea of adding significance to exact numbers can be applied in many different areas of life as, in today's society, everyone believes that they need a large community, social circle, or an overwhelming amount of resources to tackle a problem. Instead, all you need is a simple support system. אברהם had people like שרה and אליעזר to support him throughout his life and help him tackle his many challenges. A support system doesn't have to be large; a meaningful support system is as good as a large one.

Ultimately, פרשת לך לך reminds all of us Jews to build strength within ourselves, especially the strength of our נשמה, our אמונה in Hashem, and how we treat others. Each of us has the power to become our own אברהם by looking at our surroundings and recognizing the value of what we already have. This week, we should try to look at the people and resources around us and appreciate the value they bring to our lives. Sometimes, what seems small at first can be more than enough.

This month's issue is not sponsored! If you would like to sponsor a future month of A Bisl Torah please visit our website

To read past issues or sponsor future visit ABISLTORAH.ORG

Faith Even When it is Impossible

By Anton Druskin '28

In this week's פרשה, לך לך, it says that אברהם, "וְהֶאֱמִן בַּה' וַיַּחְשְׁבֶהָ לּוֹ צְדָקָה" "believed in Hashem, and He considered it righteousness" (בראשית טו:ו). Why is אברהם praised for his faith here? By this point, אברהם has already demonstrated tremendous faith: he left his homeland when Hashem commanded him to, he traveled to an unknown destination and followed Hashem through many challenges. If אברהם's faith was so remarkable, why does the תורה wait until now to tell us that he believed?

The רמב"ן addresses this question. He explains that the promise in our פרק was different from previous promises. Earlier in the פרשה, Hashem promised אברהם greatness, blessing, and a nation to come from him in the future which all seemed impossible because of how grand they were, but here, Hashem promises אברהם something that seems impossible for an entirely different reason, because it goes completely against the laws of nature.

After אברהם complains that he remains childless, Hashem tells him: "הַבֶּט־נָא הַשָּׁמַיְמָה וּסְפֹר הַכּוֹכָבִים אִם־תּוּכַל לִסְפֹּר אֹתָם וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ כֹּה יִהְיֶה זַרְעֶךָ" "Look towards the heavens and count the stars if you are able to count them. He then said to him: So [numerous] will your descendants be" (שם טו:ה). אברהם and שרה were already elderly and had no children. According to the רמב"ן, this promise required a particularly high level of faith, since אברהם was childless and had no natural reason to expect descendants. This idea becomes even clearer when we look at the context. At the beginning of the conversation, אברהם says: "מַה תִּתֶּן לִי וְאָנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ עֲרִירִי" "What will You give me, since I remain childless?" (שם טו:ב).

אברהם is not doubting Hashem's power. Rather, he finds it hard to understand how this promise will be fulfilled. Years have passed since Hashem first promised him descendants, and he still doesn't have a child. Yet after Hashem repeats the promise, the תורה tells us that אברהם "וְהֶאֱמִן בַּה'" "had faith in Hashem." אברהם chooses to trust Hashem even when he cannot see how the promise will be fulfilled. Another reason as to why this was a difficult promise to believe in is that this is something that both אברהם and שרה wanted strongly. The one thing they never had is a child of their own, together. And after so many years of being childless this is something that has been imprinted deep into their minds, that it will never happen. The fact that אברהם was able to accept Hashem's words, despite his old age, is amazing.

Receive A BISL TORAH on WhatsApp

A BISL TORAH
is published weekly
at Maimonides School,
Brookline, Massachusetts

If you would like to receive A Bisl Torah via Email, Email bisltorah@maimonides.org

EDITORS-IN-CHIEF
Eitan Orkaby '27
Theo Fraenkel '28

EDITORS
Anna Szalat '28
Noah Levy '29
Naftali Orkaby '30

FACULTY ADVISOR
Rabbi Yaakov Jaffe

FOUNDERS
Binyamin Orkaby '24
Ephraim Fischer '24