



TORAH 4 TEENS

BY TEENS

NCSY ISRAEL



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See Me For Who I Am

Whether our Avot and Imahot are capable of error is a millennia old question that many of our sages and even contemporary rabbis grapple with. In Parashat Lech Lecha, Sarah Imenu treats Hagar, her maidservant which she gave to Avraham as a wife, harshly; and Hagar subsequently runs away. What exactly Sarah did and the reason for Hagar’s strong reaction are disputed by many of the Torah’s commentators. The Ramban is not afraid to say that Sarah was wrong. He even goes so far as to say that Hagar’s son, Ishmael’s, unruly behavior is a direct punishment for Sarah and Avraham’s mistake here.

Rav Hirsch takes a slightly different approach. In his opinion Sarah didn’t treat Hagar any differently than she had done before. Her mistake was that she failed to see that Hagar’s status had changed. Sarah kept treating her as a servant, and yet as Avraham’s wife she had grown into a new status of freedom. Hagar couldn’t bear to be treated as less than what she had now become and therefore felt compelled to flee.

These two takes on Hagar’s story teach

us an invaluable lesson. Often, we treat the people around us as who they once were, not as who they are. If we fail to see someone in the here and now, and rather just see them as a function of what behavior they were worthy of in the past, we will stunt their growth and cause frustration and resentment.

When Hashem saves Ishmael in the next Parasha, the text reads that He sees him “BeAsher Hu Sham”, in his being there at that moment. This is the epitome of the lesson learned above. Hashem is teaching us to judge a person as their present self only, while letting go of all other notions we have of their past behavior. As human beings it’s often hard to let go of how we see people, especially if we’ve been hurt by them in the past. May we learn to give people a second chance and see them as their true selves in the present.



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12th Grade, Efrat

Aliyah: A Leap Of Faith

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־אַבְרָהָם לְרֵלָךְ מֵאַרְצְךָ וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבְּרִית אֲבִיךָ אֶל־הָאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֵרָאֶךָ׃

These opening words of Parshat Lech Lecha depict the direct commandment HaShem gave to Avraham. He must leave

his home, his birthplace, and all of his family and friends, and go to the place that HaShem will show him. And so, at the ripe age of 75, Avraham leaves the only home he has ever known, and sets out for the unknown.

The level of Emunah in HaShem that Avraham shows in this Parsha is simply incredible. The moment HaShem commanded Avraham to leave, he did so, without challenging HaShem or asking questions. He was able to wholeheartedly trust that whatever HaShem had in store for him was going to be for the best. The determination and Emunah that Avraham possessed has been passed down to us, so that we too can perform this beautiful mitzvah.

As an Olah who has been living in Israel for the past 7 years, I relate very strongly to this Parsha, and especially to this opening Pasuk. I know from personal experience that picking up and moving to a brand-new place is not easy. Leaving behind friends and family, your house and your environment where you felt most comfortable — for something completely different — can be very difficult. You have to have Emunah that

Hashem is going to help you succeed in this new place. Although there are many challenges one will face when making Aliyah, it is a small price to pay for the ultimate reward — having the Zchut to live in Eretz Yisrael.

Shabbat Shalom! ■

NCSY Israel is the premier organization in Israel, dedicated to connect, inspire, empower, and help teen olim with "Klita" to the Land of Israel by encouraging passionate Judaism through Torah and Tradition. Find out more at israel.ncsy.org





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