



# REBBETZIN SHIRA SMILES

FACULTY, OU ISRAEL CENTER

Dedicated by  
**Barbara Albek**

## Special Stars

*Parashat Lech Lecha* is filled with many of Hashem's promises to Avraham Avinu and his future descendants. "*Vayoztai oto hachutzah vayomer habet na hashamayimah u'sfor hako-chavim im tuchal le'spor otam vayomer lo ko yihiyeh zar'acha* — And He took him outside, and [Hashem] said, "Gaze, now, toward the Heavens and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And [Hashem] said to him, "So shall your offspring be!" (*Bereisheet 15:5-6*) With the most beautiful imagery, Hashem promises Avraham Avinu that his children will be numerous as the stars in heaven. Just as one can't count the stars, the Jewish people will be too many to count. What is the significance of comparing the Jewish people to the stars?

*Rabbeinu B'chaye* explains that there are

many different kinds of stars, each one is a different size and possesses a unique power. Likewise, within the Jewish people there is great diversity, and various levels of service of Hashem. Judaism does not have a "one size fits all" approach.

Rav Simcha Wasserman *zt"l* explains that although the Jewish people can be viewed as one unit serving Hashem, and there is an aspect of community in our *avodat Hashem*, each person is beloved to Hashem for his individual service and is not eclipsed by the whole. Just as each star has a name, each Jew is special to Hashem and is treated as "an only child." When we contemplate this message, we can each feel our personal importance and realize how unique and intimate our relationship with Hashem is.

We find a fascinating insight into this extraordinary illustration offered by Rav Leib Bakst *zt"l*. The Midrash teaches us that the stars were created as a consolation, to appease the moon who's light was diminished. Thus, the stars are particularly beloved by Hashem, as they were created to uplift and relieve the distress of another entity. Hashem's comparison of Avraham Avinu's descendants to the stars not only equates their quantity, but it also expresses the reason for Hashem's intense love of His people. That is, Hashem created the Jewish people to bring goodness, kindness and light to the world.

Rav Chaim Volozhin *zt"l* would frequently remind his son that a Jew's purpose in this world is to help another. Rav Avraham Schorr teaches that this is one of the reasons that a

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person's heart is situated on the left side of his body, although classically it is the right side that symbolizes strength. When facing one another each person's left side mirrors his friend's right side. One's heart was created to feel another's pain and joy and to fill another's need. The mandate of each Jew is to look around and see whom we can help, who's day we can brighten with a smile or a compliment. We can wish each other "good morning" or "have a good day" with the intention of sharing a heartfelt brachah. These are all ways we can become the 'stars' that Hashem envisioned in His promise to Avraham Avinu. ■

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