

# A Torah Minute com™

By the Hakham  
Rabbi Ya'aqob Menashe, 'a"h

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5784 פְּרַשַׁת לֶךְ לֶכְחָ

## Lekh Lekha: Was Abraham Abinu's Leaving an Act of Faith or the Opposite

וַיְהִי רָעַב בְּאֶרֶץ וַיֵּרֶד אַבְרָם מִצְרָיִם לָגוֹר  
שָׁם כִּי־כָבֵד הָרָעַב בְּאֶרֶץ  
"And there was famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt, to dwell there, because the famine was heavy in the land" (Bereshith 12:10). There are two opposing interpretations of Abraham Abinu's act of leaving the land and going to Egypt.

In the view of the Ramban, Abraham Abinu, 'a"h, showed a lack of faith in G-d by leaving as soon as he saw there was famine in the land. It is not as though there was a mass exodus by the inhabitants to go elsewhere. For this sin, the Ramban says, the Children of Israel were exiled to Egypt.

Razal in Bereshith Rabba, view it as a meritorious deed. In fact, they counted it as one of the ten tests of Abraham Abinu, 'a"h, because he went to Egypt without even questioning how come G-d had promised him so much, yet as soon as he arrived in the Land of Israel, there was a famine.

(See Alshikh, Parashath Lekh Lekha. Rabbenu Bahye, Parashath Lekh Lekha)



מדרש בן איש חי  
Midrash BEN ISH HAI

## Storms are Created by Our Speech

The Shebet Mussar says that if a person should ask what power his breath has (in view of the fact that it has no actual substance to it), he must look at the power that speech has when it comes out of the mouth of a king. It can bring life and death, build and destroy, even though it has no actual substance to it. So too, wind has no actual substance - nothing we can actually hold. There is only the sound that emanates from it that we can hear. However, it can damage mountains, break rocks and uproot cedars.

It says in Birkath Hayim that storms were created in the world because of the sin of speech. It mentions in tractate Berakhoth in the Yerushalmi, that people sin with forbidden speech (which is the wind of words). So from the source of all winds, come storms that pass over the world. When a person sins with forbidden speech, such as Lashon Hara', he feels that he has committed no wrong since speech is nothing tangible, but only air. But he is mistaken.

In the future, when there is no more Yeser Hara' (evil inclination), there will be no more forbidden speech. As a result, there will be no more storms in the world. It behooves us, however, to use our speech for Torah now, because, just as when G-d spoke He created the world with the Torah, so too, words of Torah purify the air and bring life to the world.

(See Shebet Mussar 11:85, 21:17. Birkath Hayim Haftarath Ke Thesei)

לעלוי נשמת ההרוגים, להחזרת השבויים בשלום  
להצלחת החיילים, ולשמירת כל עם ישראל

## Reminding the Household to Light the Shabbath Candles

The Halakha is that on Friday afternoon, when it is close to dusk, but is still certainly day and not Shabbath, the Ba'al HaBayith (master of the house) should gently ask the members of the household whether they have separated the Ma'aser (tithes), made the 'Erub and separated the Hallah (from the dough of the bread that was baked). In truth, in many households today, these are not things that are done as a matter of course, in which case there is no need to mention them.

After that he must gently remind his wife and married children who light, to light the Shabbath candles. On Yom Tōb also, he should remind them to light the candles for Yom Tōb.

Additionally, it is appropriate for him to remind all the members of his household, prior to both Shabbath as well as Yom Tōb, to stop doing any Melakha (prohibited Shabbath labor).

(See Shulḥan 'Arukh with Rama, 260:2. Kaf Haḥayyim, ibid., Oth 19, 24, 25)

## Don't Say: Beli 'Ayin Hara'

'Ayin Hara' (the evil eye) is of concern to us. Indeed, we pray every morning, that we should not be affected by it. Often, when people say or hear something good, they have a fear of 'Ayin Hara' and add the words, "Beli 'Ayin Hara'" (without the evil eye).

Maran Mordekhai Eliyahu, 'a"ḥ, comments that this is a mistake. While it is not forbidden, he says that it can cause harm to the person to whom it is being said. As such, it is preferable not to say it at all. If, however, the person wishes to say it because he is worried about 'Ayin Hara', he should only say it in his heart (mind). If one is concerned about 'Ayin Hara', it is better for him to say, "Ben Porath Yosef, Ben Porath 'Aleḥ 'Ayin" (בן פורת יוסף, בן פורת עלי עין).

He must know, however, that we learn from the Gemara of Pesahim (110b) that if one is concerned about something, he will have cause to be concerned. If, on the contrary, he is not concerned, he is not affected. One should learn to have faith in G-d alone and trust that He will take care of him.

(See Dibrei Mordekhai, Parashath Wayḥi, Halakha BaParasha, [Seguloth Nekhonoth...])

## Women's Corner - by Rabbanith Ruth Menashe 'a"ḥ

### Women and the Holy Shabbath

Fridays are usually challenging since they represent times of engaging ourselves in performing important Miṣwoth (commandments). Any time we increase our spiritual practices, the negative forces in the world become intensified as well, serving as an obstacle, to prevent us from doing our holy work.

Ḥakham Yoseph Ḥayyim, in his holy work, Laws for Women, brings the following Halakhoth. On Friday, during the course of preparing for Shabbath, it is a good habit for the women to say the following three words: "Likhbod Shabbath Qodesh", in honor of the holy Shabbath. Any time we engage ourselves in special activities preparing for Shabbath we should pronounce these words.

It is a good practice to clear all the cobwebs in the house, every Friday before noon. We should refrain from washing clothes on Friday, as Ezra the Scribe instituted. Only in cases where we were unable to wash prior to Friday, is washing permitted (some are more lenient where there is a dryer in the home). In addition, children's clothes which are washed daily, may be washed on Fridays.