

The souls that they made in Charan (12:5) – The **Tanna D’Bei Eliyahu** writes that Shem tried to influence the nations of the world for 400 years to no avail. The commentaries explain that he was unsuccessful at influencing anyone. Avraham was the first success at influence as he created souls. **Rav Baruch Mordechai Eizrachi Shlita** asked why Shem was not successful at being Mikarev like Avraham? He answers that different people have different talents. The Avos had the unique ability to create souls. Shem and Ever lacked that ability. At the same time, Shem and Eiver DID have the ability to create Avos. All of them learned how to be avos in Yeshivas Shem V’Eiver. Sometimes, you need a Yeshiva in order to create the superstars who will lead the next generation.

The souls that they made in Charan (12:5) – Rav Ovadiah Yosef ztl. cited a midrash which described how far Avraham went in order to be mikarev someone. The Midrash as repeated by Rav Ovadiah ztl. described an elder who came to Avraham’s tent and, after receiving free hospitality took out his idol in order to offer thanks. Avraham demurred and tried to show him the error of his ways. After the conversation—of numerous hours-- the man again took out his idol. For the lack of respect, Avraham asked him to leave. Hashem appeared to Avraham and told him that He was waiting 90 years for the chance to have this man influenced by Avraham in order to have him see the error of his ways. Avraham sent for the man and encouraged the man to return. After extended conversation and a refill on the provisions, the man took out the idol and instead of praying to it, smashed it noting that the extended hospitality clearly demonstrated a higher belief system than the idol. Rav Ovadiah added that we clearly see the importance of not giving up on someone – even at 90 – and that Hashem still waits for him. He also added that the way we approach someone clearly impacts the way they choose to see us and that which we represent – so be mikabel b’sever Panim Yafos. (The **Beis Yosef** adds that this was the fear of the king of Sodom who was willing to give up all of the Rechush – but feared the kiruv power of Avraham – hence he requested – Tein Lee HaNefesh)

And they were good to Avraham because of her and he got sheep and cattle etc (12:16) – Avraham accepted gifts from Pharaoh and not from the king of Sodom. Why? Moreover, why does the king of Egypt give gifts when he took Sarah but the king of Gerar did not offer the same gifts when HE took Sarah? **Rav Eliyashiv ztl.** explains That the rule of a king as hinted to by Shmuel HaNovi is that he has the right to take the royal subjects as per his wish. But he does not have the same right when he is taking advantage of an outsider. Avraham’s trip to Egypt was as a visitor while he moved to Gerar. When he moved to Gerar, he was subjected to the same rules as any other royal subject – as was Sarah. But when Pharaoh took Sarah, he had the responsibility to pay her relatives for the actions as they were not within the local custom.

And Lot was with him (13:1) – Originally Lot was a part of the family but once left Mitzrayim he was considered a “hanger on”. Why? **Rav Schachter Shlita** quoted **Rav Soloveitchik ztl.** who explained that Lot was originally a believer in monotheism until he entered the technologically advanced society of Mitzrayim. Just like Lot went to Mitzrayim and gave up his beliefs and spirituality for the benefits and comforts of society, many in our generation give it up

for comfort. Rav Schachter Shlita added that we need to create a sense of spirituality in our children too. It is hard to do but we need to create a sense within our children to discern Kedusha. Avraham did that by the Akaida,

And he followed his travels from the East to Beit El to the place where his tent had been originally (13:3) – **Rashi** cites the Gemara (Erachin 16b) that says that he returned to the same places – the same hotels that he stopped in on his way down to Mitzrayim. This teaches us that one should not change his lodging places. **Rav Moshe Tzvi Neriah ztl.** adds that it also teaches us a certain Derech Eretz about how money should not change the humble lifestyle that a person leads. Avraham went down to Mitzrayim in poverty, having to borrow in order to get there. However, he left Mitzrayim wealthy. He still stayed in the same inns and didn't opt for more opulent surroundings. Money didn't change his lifestyle, it just gave him a better way to carry it out.

The bird he did not split (15:10) – The animals Avraham was encouraged to split represent the nations of the world but the bird – a reference to the Jewish people, Avraham was told to leave whole. The **Maharal** explains that the Jewish people are compared to a flying bird. The secret to the Jewish people is the fact that as many try to trap her (spiritually) she always manages to fly away – and soar – because of the spirit.

And I will give to you and your children after you the land of your youth (17:8) – **Rav Yosef Leib Bloch ztl. of Telz** explained that the concept of Zechus Avos is not merely one of a gift because of protectzia. Rather, when a child follows in the footsteps of the parent, it is as if the parent is still alive in the soul of the child. Each action done by the child is an action as if done by the parent and the parent's Zechus guides the goodness due the child too. Thus, when the children inherit Eretz Yisrael, it is only those who inherit in the footsteps and style of Avraham who are entitled to inherit it. The **Lutzker Rav** ztl. adds that the same is true for Torah as well. A Bris is a preparatory step for Kabbalos Ol Malchus Shomayim and Limmud Torah. But only those with a Bris are entitled to the same ability – Lo Asa Chein L'Chol Goy.

Haftorah: Rav Yonasan Sacks Shlita explains that while the Jewish people cry out that Hashem is unfair in his punishment and that He has forsaken us, this is a major challenge to the concepts of Emunah of Yichud Hashem and Sachar V'Oinesh. Rav Sacks explains that this is the message the Novi wants us to take and keep in mind. Hashem's Cheshbon is not merely that which WE think it is. The response to Golus and challenge needs to be introspection not suspicion. Even when it looks like Hashem is favoring other nations – it is to us to know that they will fall. There is a just reward based on merit.