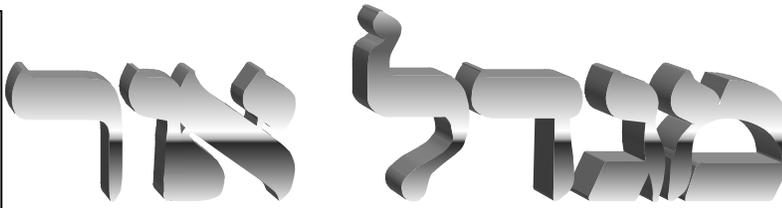


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 May his neshoma have an aliya and may  
 he be a 'melitz yoshar' for the family.

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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

**Zmanim for שבת**

Wesley Hills, NY

- 6:03 - הדלקת נרות
- 6:21 - שקיעה
- 9:12 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:53 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:49 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 6:20 - שקיעה
- 7:01\* - צאת הכוכבים
- 7:32 - צאת 72

\* Based on Emergence of 3 Stars  
 Times Courtesy of MyZmanim.com

**Did You Know?**

What is the greatest Mitzvah? Shabbos? Keeping Kosher? Living in Israel? The mishna, which we say every morning, states, "Talmud Torah k'neged kulam," Torah study is equal to all of the other mitzvos mentioned there.

So is there anything that trumps Torah study? Well, besides for the fact that one must interrupt his studies to perform mitzvos that no one else can do for him, such as putting on Tefillin, there is something greater than Talmud Torah.

It is 'kavod haTorah,' honoring Torah and those who study it. We learn this from the fact that the Gemara tells us (Kesuvos 17a) "We cease Torah Study to attend to a corpse..." It continues that for a Talmid Chacham, one is not exempt from attending his funeral until there are 600,000 mourners. Just as the Torah was given with 600,000, so must it be accompanied by that many when it goes.

Why should it be that way? Would someone who spent his days toiling in Torah truly want so many hours taken away from people who would otherwise learn Torah?

One answer is that by recognizing the greatness someone achieved in Torah we are able to enhance our own future Torah by tangibly expressing our admiration. The fact that this is the halacha means it is HaShem's will, even if the niftar might not have wanted it otherwise.

Like putting an esrog in a silver case, it helps us recognize the value of what's inside, thus increasing our appreciation of Torah. And that is something a Talmid Chacham would always desire.

**Thought of the week:**

**Be careful the environment you choose for it will shape you; be careful the friends you choose for you will become like them.**

**"ויבחר לו לוט את כל כנר הירדן ויסע לוט מקדם ויפרדו איש מעל אחיו." (בראשית יג:א)**

**"So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan, and Lot traveled from the East, and they parted, each man from his brother." (Gen. 13:11)**

After the shepherds of Avram and Lot quarreled over whether it was right to graze on other people's property since one day the land would belong to Avram, and thus to Lot, his only heir, Avram knew it was time to split up. He offered Lot the choice of lands to settle, and Lot chose the Jordan plain, and he settled in the city of Sodom. It was fertile pasture land, and Lot chose it for himself, preventing Avram and his shepherds from using it.

Since Avram told Lot to choose which direction he wanted to head, the words, "for himself," seem superfluous. It could merely have written, "So Lot chose the whole plain of the Jordan." As the Torah does not have extra words, we should ask ourselves what it comes to teach us.

The first thing to note is that by choosing this land, Lot knew Avram would be precluded from grazing there. As such, his choice was, "for himself," meaning he did not take Avram's welfare into account. He was looking out for his own interests, and only someone who is not concerned for others could do what Lot did in this verse. It is a condemnation of him, exposing his selfishness. Avram his uncle, to whom he owed so much, did not register on Lot's list of priorities. He did not exhibit appreciation and he is placed in the negative spotlight.

The commentaries point out that Lot wished to distance himself from Avram and his G-d. The Sipurno points out that Avram was settled in the East, and he told Lot to go "to the right or to the left" meaning North and South. Lot chose instead to go west, putting as much distance between them as possible. In this way, he showed himself to be diametrically opposed to Avram's philosophy of chesed and putting others first. He thus chose, "for himself," to the exclusion of a decision Avram would have made.

Ultimately, Lot's decision would be a fateful one, and he would be captured during a war. His uncle came to save him, yet he remained in Sodom, and had to be rescued again before the cities were destroyed. He didn't come out unscathed, as he lost his wife and other members of his family, and had to hide in a cave with his two daughters.

This was a result of his making a choice based on what he found to be "good," not what G-d would consider an appropriate choice. By saying he chose, "for himself," the Torah tells us that his decision was based solely on his personal perspective, ignoring the teachings of Avram about a higher power.

Because he was so selfish, Lot ignored what HaShem might have used as criteria for making a choice. He didn't think about hakaras hatov to his uncle Avram, he didn't think about what type of people he would be living amongst, and he didn't pay any heed to loftier, more spiritual considerations in making his decision. By doing so, he set himself up for failure, for it is the word of G-d that shall endure and the plans of Man that falter.

Let us learn from Lot that when making choices we should consider others and consider G-d's wishes. Only then will we really be making the best choices "for ourselves."

*When a young student at Yeshivat Porat Yosef didn't show up for several days, the Rosh Yeshiva, Chacham Ezra Attiya, one of the greatest Sephardic rabbis of the 20th century, went to investigate.*

*The boy's father explained that he needed his son's help in the family grocery store. R' Attiya tried to explain to the man the importance of Torah study but to no avail.*

*When the man arrived the next day, R' Attiya was waiting for him with an apron, ready to work. He explained, "Your son's learning is more important than mine. Your decision is murdering the leader of the next generation." The father was impressed and understood that he had chosen poorly.*

*With that, young Ovadiah Yosef, who would grow to be Chief Rabbi and the greatest Sephardic Jewish leader in generations, went back to Yeshiva.*