

# Dvar Torah for Parshat VaYera

## Based on *The Aleph-Bet Book*

"[Avraham] saw the men...and ran to greet them...'Please...rest under the tree. I will get you some bread' (Genesis 18:3)...'[Avraham] will command his children...and they will keep God's way, doing charity and justice" (18:19).

Providing food and lodging for wayfarers brings one to knowledge of God's way.

Daat A:30

I'm sure you've heard this joke. You're about to hear it again.

A mother buys a beautiful vase to decorate the home. Of course, because it's so beautiful, she's always worried that it will break. One day she comes home and is greeted by her darling son, Mazik. "Hey, Ma," he says. "You know that beautiful vase you're always worried will break? Well, you don't have to worry any more!"

For various reasons, this week's Torah reading being one of them, traveling has been on my mind. As a result, one of Rebbe Nachman's familiar quotes came to mind. "Know! A person has to cross a very, very narrow bridge. The main thing is not to be afraid" (*Likutey Moharan II*, Lesson #48). Reb Noson writes in a letter to his son, "Certainly, those who have fallen off the bridge have nothing to worry about" (*Alim Letrufah [Eventually Yours] #376*)! Now that I've fallen off, he continues, I know more than ever that I have to hope for Hashem's grace and cry out to Him. We have no idea of why we had to fall, or how quickly we can be saved. We must keep on crying out and communicate our pain at being so removed from Him.

In the meantime though, how does one continue through the abyss? What road leads us safely through the awful darkness? The words of the Rebbe are the bridge. We must not become discouraged or intimidated, and we must rely on him. That is the way.

## II

## Based on *Alim Letrufah*

As they were fleeing Sodom, Mrs. Lot turned around to take one last look. As a result she turned into a pillar of salt (*Genesis 19:26*).

Mrs. Lot thought that with the raining down of sulfur and fire on the beautiful city of Sodom, all her troubles would begin and never end. She lost hope.

At the Shabbat night meal, the holy Baal Shem Tov, father of Chassidut, would eat *farfl* (farfel in English). He explained that *farfl* is related to the word *farfallen* (done; over; finished). Whatever happened during the week, whatever happened in the past, is finished. Let go of it. It's *farfallen*.

Reb Noson touches on this in many letters to his son Reb Yitzchak. In general, his message is, don't let past sins or troubles, real or imagined, prevent you from continued growth in Judaism. The following is

put together from various letters.

Don't let your spiritual history weigh you down. Even if you can't live the ideal spiritual life, even if you're not a spiritual athlete, there is much you can do to connect to Hashem (God). There many ways to avoid the paralysis of the confusion that pursues you. Sometimes the way is a little bit of Torah or a short prayer. Other times it may be talking with others about faith. Sometimes a good primal scream is just the thing.

Everyone has troubles, some worse than yours. That doesn't mean yours are nothing. It means that you're living life. The only thing that we can do is rely on Hashem's compassion.

If something has happened already, it certainly was God's will. Don't even think about it again. Don't look back at your goods, your relationships and obsess about the loss you've suffered. It only draws more suffering in its wake (see also *The Aleph-Bet Book Sweetening Judgement* A:2, A:50, A:99).

If you are going to remember the past, remember all the **GOOD** things Hashem has done for you! He gave us the Torah, He sent us spiritual giants to guide us, in particular Rebbe Nachman.

True, a broken heart is precious, but as precious as it is, turning the pain into joy is even more precious. Do something to cheer up. The depth, extent and constancy of Hashem's kindness is a secret known only to the tzaddikim. Build on it.

*agutn Shabbos!*  
*Shabbat Shalom!*

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[Home](#)

[Dvar Torah Index](#)

[Bereishis Index](#)