

“And He took him outside and said, ‘Gaze now up at the heavens’”

HKB”H Took Avrohom outside and Commanded Him to Gaze Heavenward as a Symbolic Gesture to the Wisdom of Abaye and Rovo

In this week’s parsha, parshas Lech Lecho, we read (Bereishis 15, 3): **“וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָם הֲנִי לֹא נֹתֵן זָרַע וְהִנֵּה בֶן בֵּיתִי יוֹרֵשׁ אֹתִי, וְהִנֵּה דָבָר ה’ אֵלָיו לֵאמֹר, לֹא יִירָשְׁךָ זֶה כִּי אִם אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא מִמֶּעֶיךָ הוּא יִירָשְׁךָ, וַיֹּצֵא אֹתוֹ הַחוּצָה וַיֹּאמֶר הֲבַט נָא הַשְּׁמַיִמָה וּסְפֹר הַכּוֹכָבִים אִם תּוּכַל”**—then Avrom said, “See, to me You have given no offspring; and see, my steward inherits me.” Suddenly, the word of Hashem came to him, saying, “That one will not inherit you; only the one who shall come forth from within you shall inherit you.” And He took him outside, and said, “Gaze, now, up at the heavens and count the stars if you are able to count them!” Here Rashi comments: **“וַיֹּצֵא אֹתוֹ הַחוּצָה, לְפִי פְשׁוּטוֹ הוֹצִיאֵו”**—according to the simple reading of the text, Hashem took Avrom out of his tent to view the stars. We must explain why HKB”H chose to do so. Why did He want Avrom to gaze up at the heavens and count the stars? HKB”H could have simply promised Avrom that his offspring would be as numerous as the stars without making him leave his tent.

Likewise, it is worth noting a point made by the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh. HKB”H had already promised Avrom that his offspring would be too numerous to count (ibid. 13, 16): **“וְשִׁמְתִי אֶת זָרְעֶךָ כְּעֶפֶר”**—I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth so that if one can count the dust of the earth, then your offspring, too, can be counted. So, why did Avrom feel compelled to voice the complaint: **“הֲנִי לֹא נֹתֵן זָרַע”**—see, to me You have given no offspring? Here is the answer provided by the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh:

“אֲכַן כּוֹוֶנֶת הַכְּתוּב הִיא עַל זֶה הַדְּרָךְ, שֶׁבְהִיּוֹת שְׁבִשׁוֹרֵת הַזֶּרַע שֶׁאִמְרוּ לוֹ ה’ אֱמַר כְּעֶפֶר הָאָרֶץ, וְדָבָר יָדוּעַ כִּי הַנִּמְשָׁלִים לְעֶפֶר הָאָרֶץ, הֵם בְּנֵי אָדָם הַבְּזוּיִים וְהַפְּחוּתִים שֶׁאֵין בָּהֶם נֶפֶשׁ קְדוּשָׁה, עַל דְּרָךְ אֹמְרוֹ (קְהֵלֵת ג-כֵּא) וְרוּחַ הַבְּהֵמָה הַיּוֹרֶדֶת הִיא לָאָרֶץ, וְהֵם הַנִּקְרָאִים עֲמֵי הָאָרֶץ, וּבְנֵי אָדָם כְּאִלוֹ לֹא יִתְמַלְא רִצּוֹן הַצְּדִיקִים בָּהֶם, לְזֶה אֱמַר אַבְרָהָם הֲנִי לֹא נֹתֵן זָרַע, פִּירוּשׁ דְּבַר הַשּׁוֹה לִי לֹא נֹתֵן זָרַע, וְלִזֶּה הַשִּׁיבֵנו ה’ וַאֲמַר לוֹ, סְפֹר הַכּוֹכָבִים כִּי יִהְיֶה זָרְעֶךָ, וְהֵם הַצְּדִיקִים הַמְשׁוּלִים לְכּוֹכָבִים דְּכֵתִיב (דְּנִיאל יב-ג) וּמִצְדִּיקֵי הַרְבִּים כְּכּוֹכָבִים, וְלִזֶּה נָחָה דַּעְתּוֹ.”

Hashem’s initial promise to Avrom is made in terms of the “dust of the earth.” This is usually a designation reserved for lowly characters devoid of kedushah—as illustrated by the term “am ha’aretz.” Hence, Avrom was not satisfied with HKB”H’s initial promise; he desired offspring of upstanding spiritual and moral character—tzaddikim. To allay this concern, the promise was repeated with reference to the heavenly stars. We see from a possuk in Daniel (12, 3) that tzaddikim are compared to stars. Thus, his mind was set at ease.

The Ohr HaChaim is not totally satisfied with this answer, however. For, we find in the Midrash (B.R. 41, 9) that even HKB”H’s promise to Avrom that his offspring would be as numerous as the “dust of the earth” was intended in a very positive sense: **“וְשִׁמְתִי אֶת זָרְעֶךָ כְּעֶפֶר הָאָרֶץ, מֵהָ עֶפֶר הָאָרֶץ מִסּוֹף הָעוֹלָם וְעַד סוֹפוֹ, כִּי בְּנִיךָ יִהְיֶה מְפּוֹזְרִים מִסּוֹף הָעוֹלָם וְעַד סוֹפוֹ, וּמֵהָ עֶפֶר הָאָרֶץ אֵינוֹ מִתְבָּרֵךְ אֲלָא בְּמֵיִם, אֲף־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵינָן מִתְבָּרְכִין אֲלָא בְּזִכּוֹת הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁנִּמְשָׁלָה לְמֵיִם”**—just as the dust of the earth is found everywhere on earth, so, too, will your offspring be found in every corner of the earth; just as dust is enhanced and enriched only by water, so, too, Yisroel are only enriched in the merit of Torah—which is compared to water. Hence, we see that even the promise that his offspring would resemble the “dust of the earth” was intended in a positive sense and not in a negative sense. Thus, we need to explain why Avrom felt compelled to add the request: **“הֲנִי לֹא נֹתֵן זָרַע”**—I desire offspring that will resemble me.

The Ohr HaChaim concludes that before hearing HKB”H’s second promise—comparing his offspring to the heavenly stars—Avrom believed that the comparison to the “dust of the earth” was negative and derogatory. Therefore, he beseeched Hashem: **“הֲנִי לֹא נֹתֵן זָרַע”**—I desire offspring that will resemble me. After hearing the second promise, however—that he would merit having exalted offspring comparable to the stars in the heavens—he realized that the initial promise also alluded to the greatness of his future offspring. For this reason, our blessed sages also interpreted

the analogy to the “dust of the earth” in very positive terms. In light of the Ohr HaChaim’s explanation, we must still endeavor to clarify the necessity for the two promises and the distinction between them. What is the significance of having offspring that resemble both the “dust of the earth” and the “stars of the heavens”?

Why Is Torah Wisdom Specifically Related to Abaye and Rovo?

Let us begin our inquiry by introducing a passage from the Gemara (Suceh 28a; B.B. 134a). Here the Gemara refers to Talmudic wisdom as “havayos d’Abaye v’Rovo”:

“אמרו עליו על רבן יוחנן בן זכאי, שלא הניח מקרא ומשנה, גמרא הלכות ואגדות, דקדוקי תורה ודקדוקי סופרים קלים וחמורים, וגזירות שוות תקופות וגמטריאות, שיחת מלאכי השרת ושיחת שדים ושיחת דקלים, משלות כובסין, משלות שועלים, דבר גדול ודבר קטן - דבר גדול מעשה מרכבה, דבר קטן היות דאביי ורבא.”

They said about Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai that he did not leave Scripture, Mishnah, Gemara, halachot, aggadot, scriptural exactitudes, Rabbinic exactitudes, “kal-va’chomer” arguments, “gezeirah-shavah” expositions, the astronomical cycles, “gematrios,” parables of washermen and parables of foxes, the speech of demons, the speech of palms, the speech of the ministering angels, a great matter and a small matter. A “great matter” refers to “ma’aseh merkavah”; a “small matter” refers to the inquiries of Abaye and Rovo.

The term “havayos d’Abaye v’Rovo”—the inquiries or dialectics of Abaye and Rovo— is curious and requires some explanation. Throughout the Talmud Bavli, we find numerous pairs of Amoraim who enlighten the world with their illuminating teachings. Among them are Rav and Shmuel, Rav Huna and Rav Chisda, Rabbah and Rav Yosef, Rabbi Yochanan and Reish Lakish and many more. So, why did Abaye and Rovo in particular merit this unique designation? Why are the subjects of Talmudic debate referred to as “havayos d’Abaye v’Rovo”? It is also curious that our sages chose to describe Rabbi Yochanan’s proficiency in terms of his mastery of even small matters such as “the inquiries of Abaye and Rovo.” Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai was one of the greatest Tannaim; while Abaye and Rovo were Amoraim who lived several generations after him.

We can suggest a very nice explanation based on a fascinating incident illustrating the greatness of Abaye and Rovo. The Gemara relates the following incident which occurred while Abaye and Rovo were still young students learning Torah from Rabbah (Berachos 48a):

“אמר להו רבה למי מברכין, אמרי ליה לרחמנא”—Rabbah asked them, “To Whom do we direct our Berachos?” They replied, “To the Merciful One.” **“ורחמנא היכי יתיב”**—Next he asked, “And where does the Merciful One dwell?” **“רבא אחוי לשמי טללא”**—Rovo responded by pointing toward the ceiling. **“אביי נפיק לברא”**—Abaye went outside and pointed toward the heavens. **“אמר להו רבה תרווייהו רבנן הויתו”**—Rabbah said to them, “Both of you will grow up to be great Torah scholars.” The Gemara concludes: **“והיינו דאמרי אינשי בוצין בוצין מקטפיה ידיע”**—this exemplifies the saying: Small pumpkins are discernible as soon as they sprout from the vine. Similarly, it was obvious, even in their youth, that Abaye and Rovo were destined to become great Torah scholars. Let us try and understand the great wisdom inherent in the responses of the young Abaye and Rovo—which impressed Rabbah so much that he immediately perceived and attested to their future greatness in Torah scholarship.

Encouraging Others to Serve Hashem Is a Fundamental Principle of the Entire Torah

I have been inspired to propose an explanation concerning Abaye and Rovo’s precocious wisdom. In truth, they are not really disagreeing with one another. Rather, each of them is revealing a different facet regarding the service of Hashem—**“אלו-אלו”**—both are illustrations of divine truth. My explanation is based on a principle found in the ingenious teachings of our master the Chasam Sofer addressing the possuk describing Chanoch (Bereishis 5, 24): **“ויתהלך חנוך את האלקים ואיננו כי לקח אותו”**—and Chanoch walked with G-d; then he was no more, for G-d had taken him.

The Targum Yonason comments: **“ופלח חנוך בקושטא קדם ה’ והא ליתוהי עם דיירי ארעא, ארום אתנגיד וסליק לרקיעא במימר קדם ה’ וקרא שמייה מיטטרון ספרא רבא.”** Chanoch truly served Hashem; alas, he was no longer present among the inhabitants of earth; for he ascended to the heavens by Hashem’s decree; he was then named Metatron, the great scribe. Tosafos (Chullin 60a) write in the name of the author of the “piyut” (Shacharis for Simchas Torah): **“תקיף”**—**“מטטרון שר, הנהפך לאש מבשר”**—the mighty prince Metatron, who had been changed from flesh to fire.

The Chasam Sofer comments that Chanoch, while still alive in this world, separated himself from all other human beings so as not to be corrupted by them. He remained isolated with HKB”H in sanctity and purity. As his reward, he ascended to heaven while still alive and was transformed into the “malach” Matat (מט”ט). In contrast, we do not find that Avrohom Avinu ascended alive to the

heavens to become a “malach.” For, he chose a different path. Rather than remaining isolated all day long communicating with HKB”H, he chose to fraternize with others outside of his home in order to bring them closer to Hashem.

As the Chasam Sofer explains, Avrohom Avinu realized that this was not the purpose for which man was created; he was not created for the purpose of ascending to heaven alive and transforming into an angel. HKB”H has myriads of angelic creatures above in the heavens. Hence, he created man to serve Hashem in the capacity of a human being. He is meant to associate with other human beings and to introduce them to Hashem and His Torah. If man successfully fulfills this noble task then, after he dies, he merits to become even greater than the ministering angels—the “malachei ha’sharet.”

“Those Who Teach Righteousness to the Multitudes Will Shine like the Stars Forevermore”

We can now begin to comprehend to some small degree the magnitude of Abaye and Rovo’s wisdom. For, when Rabbah asked them: “ורחמנא היכי יתיב”—and where does the Merciful One dwell?—he was asking them how does man make HKB”H King of the Universe. By remaining in the study hall and pointing upward, Rovo insinuated that one must sit in the “beis-midrash” and engage in Torah study—dedicating oneself entirely to Hashem. In this manner, a person is able to overcome the yetzer—in keeping with the dictum (Kiddushin 30b): “אם פגע בך מנוול זה משכהו לבית המדרש”—if you encounter this vile one, drag him into the “beis-midrash.”

Notwithstanding, after one has learned for oneself how to live according to Hashem’s precepts, one is then obligated to teach others how to do so as well. Hence, Abaye cleverly saw fit to expand on Rovo’s answer. By stepping outside, he hinted that it is necessary to leave the confines of the “beis-midrash” in order to draw outsiders nearer to Hashem. This doctrine is exemplified by Avrohom Avinu (Bereishis 18, 1): “והוא יושב פתח האהל כחום היום”—and he was sitting at the entrance to the tent in the heat of the day. Rashi comments on this possuk: “לראות אם יש עובר”—he was on the lookout for passersby in order to bring them into his home. Our master, Sar Shalom of Belz, zy”a, provides the following clarification of Rashi’s comment: “לראות אם יש עובר”—Avrohom was on the lookout for those committing transgressions, “aveiros”—“ושב”—so that he could instruct them in the ways of teshuvah--“ויכניסם לביתו”—and then bring them into the spiritual confines and protection of his home. [Translator’s

note: Note the connection between the word עובר with “aveiros” and ושב with teshuvah.]

Let us now utilize this idea to further explain Abaye’s gesture of pointing toward the heavens. He was alluding to the words of the possuk (Daniel 12, 3): “והמשכילים יזהירו כזוהר הרקיע ומצדיקי הרבים ככוכבים לעולם ועד”—the wise will shine like the radiance of the firmament, and those who teach righteousness to the multitudes will shine like the stars forevermore. We can suggest the following reason for why they are compared to the stars. Inside one’s house, one can illuminate the darkness by lighting candles. Outside the house, however, only the heavenly stars illuminate the darkness of the night.

Therefore, those who guide others to be righteous, following in the footsteps of Avrohom, who leave the confines of their houses to enlighten outsiders in the ways of the Torah, are compared to the stars—the heavenly bodies that illuminate outside. This is precisely the message Abaye meant to convey by stepping outside and pointing heavenward. It is one’s obligation to step outside in order to draw others nearer to the Torah—fulfilling the words of the possuk: “ומצדיקי הרבים ככוכבים לעולם ועד”—and those who teach righteousness to the multitudes will shine like the stars forevermore.

Accordingly, we find that both Rovo’s and Abaye’s viewpoints represent divine truth. Clearly, at the outset, one must act in accordance with Rovo’s point of view—immersing oneself in the study of Torah day and night. For, if a person does not engage in Torah study himself, he will not be qualified to guide and influence others. As we have learned (B.M. 107b): “קשוט עצמך ואחר כך קשוט אחרים”—first correct yourself and then correct others. Nevertheless, after one has performed his due diligence—having toiled in the “beis-midrash”—he must step outside in accordance with the viewpoint of Abaye. He must draw others near, to learn Torah and to serve Hashem. Even Rovo would agree to this.

Instill the Love of Hashem in Others as Avrohom Avinu Did

Clearly, serving Hashem as Avrohom Avinu did—by leaving the confines of one’s home to spread the word of Hashem and to teach others Torah—is part and parcel of the “Mitzvas aseh” that we recite twice daily—Shacharis and Arvis—(Devorim 6, 5): “ואהבת את ה’ אלקיך”—you shall love Hashem, your G-d. This idea is expressed by the Rambam in Sefer HaMitzvos (Mitzvas Aseh 3) as follows:

“מצוה ג’ היא שצונו באהבתו יתעלה... וכבר ביארנו שזאת המצוה גם כן כוללת שנהיה קוראים לבני האדם כולם לעבודתו יתעלה ולהאמין בו... שאתה כשתאהב איש אחד, תספר בשבחי ותרבה בהם ותקרא בני אדם לאהוב אותו... כן כשתאהב אותו יתעלה באמת כאשר הגיע לך מהשגת אמתתו, אתה קורא בלי ספר הסכלים והפתיים לדעת ידיעת האמת אשר ידעתו. ולשון הספרי ואהבת את ה’, אהבהו על הבריות כאברהם אביך, שנאמר ואת הנפש אשר עשו בחרן. ורצונו לומר כמו שאברהם מפני שהיה אוהב... קרא בני האדם להאמין בשם מרוב אהבתו, כן אתה אוהב אותו עד שתקרא אליו בני האדם.”

We are commanded to love the Almighty. This includes calling out to other human beings to serve HKB”H and to believe in Him. Just as you love Hashem and have merited to find the true path, you must share this love and knowledge with others. Because Avrohom loved Hashem, he reached out to teach others to believe in Hashem. In like fashion, you should love Hashem to the degree that you feel compelled to impart this love and knowledge to others.

We see clearly that it is impossible to properly fulfill the positive command of “you should love Hashem, your G-d” unless we follow in the footsteps of Avrohom Avinu—who was willing to leave his tent in order to influence others to love Hashem. How beautifully this helps us explain a statement found in the Tikunei Zohar (Introduction 2b): **“עוף דאיהו צפור דליה איהו מטטרו”ן, עליה אתמר (קהלת י-כ) כי עוף השמים יוליך את הקול, קול דקריאת שמע.”** According to the Tikunei Zohar, the malach Matat takes the “krias shema” prayers of Yisroel up to Hashem.

Based on what we have established, we can propose an explanation for this phenomenon. As explained, in this world, Chanoch did not leave the confines of his “dalet amos” in order to influence others with his Torah. Hence, he did not adequately fulfill the mitzvah of: **“ואהבת את ה’ אלקיך” - “אהבהו על הבריות”**—loving Hashem to the extent that you impart that love to others. To remedy this shortcoming, the malach Matat—who is Chanoch—transports the “krias shema” prayers of Yisroel up to Hashem. He specifically transports the “krias shema,” because it mentions the mitzvah of **“ואהבת את ה’ אלקיך”**—you shall love Hashem, your G-d.

Avrohom Prayed for Holy Offspring that Would Follow in His Footsteps

Let us continue onward and upward to explain why Avrohom beseeched Hashem: **“הן לי לא נתנה זרע”**- see, to me You have given no offspring. We have already learned the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh’s interpretation of this statement. Although HKB”H had

already promised Avrom that his offspring would be as plentiful as the dust of the earth, he wanted more; he prayed to Hashem that his offspring would follow in his footsteps. Consequently, HKB”H made him an additional promise—that they would resemble the stars in the heavens. Let us explain the significance of these two distinct categories—“the dust of the earth” versus “the stars in the heavens.”

Upon careful examination, it appears that before HKB”H chose Avrohom’s path, two distinct viewpoints and paths existed in the world regarding the service of Hashem. Firstly, there was the view of Chanoch. He believed that a person should insulate himself from other human beings and remain isolated with Hashem alone and His Torah. Secondly, there was the doctrine adopted by Avrohom. He opined that the glory of Heaven was enhanced by leaving the confines of one’s house and spreading the name of Hashem and His Torah throughout the world.

In this light, let us address Avrom’s statement beseeching Hashem: **“הן לי לא נתנה זרע”**- see, to me You have given no offspring. In truth, HKB”H had already promised him that his offspring would resemble the “dust of the earth.” We learned from the Midrash that the “dust of the earth” possesses a noteworthy quality: **“מה עפר הארץ אינו מתברך אלא במים, אף ישראל אינן מתברכין”**—it is blessed and improved only by water just as Yisroel are only blessed and improved by the Torah, which is compared to water.

The drawback with this promise, however, was that offspring of this sort might very well adopt the path of Chanoch. They might keep the Torah to themselves and serve Hashem in total isolation from the rest of the world—neglecting to publicize His name and glory to others. Due to this concern, Avrom issued the heartfelt plea: “to me You have given no offspring.” He was saying: I wish to establish the chosen people from my offspring; I want them to follow in my footsteps and to know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that it is not sufficient to serve Hashem alone. It is essential to spread the name of Hashem and the love of Hashem to others throughout the world.

We can now begin to appreciate why Hashem arranged for Avrom to leave the entryway of his tent. The Ramban in parshas Lech Lecho (Bereishis 12, 6) teaches us an important principle. Before a miracle is delivered from above, it must be triggered by a symbolic gesture performed down below. This is referred to as a “poel dimyon.” The requisite “poel dimyon” to fulfill Avrom’s plea that he merit offspring that would adopt his doctrine and follow in his

footsteps was: **“ויוצא אותו החוצה”**—as Rashi explains, he was drawn outside to gaze up at the stars.

The Gemara states (Yoma 28): **“אברהם אבינו זקן ויושב בישיבה”**—**“היה”**—Avrohom Avinu was an elder sitting in a **“Yeshivah.”** According to the Gemara, while sitting at home, he engaged in Torah study. Thus, he demonstrated Rovo’s philosophy—implied by the gesture of pointing his finger toward the ceiling of the **“beis-midrash.”** Yet, in order to create a **“poel dimyon”**—a symbolic gesture—HKB”H arranged for Avrom to leave his house and go outside. This act accorded with Abaye’s philosophy that it is imperative to leave the confines of the **“beis-midrash.”**

“ויאמר הבט נא השמימה וספור הכוכבים”—HKB”H instructed Avrom to gaze up at the heavens and count the stars. In similar fashion, Abaye pointed up to the stars indicating that it is necessary to teach and guide the masses, as it states: **“ומצדיקי הרבים ככוכבים”**—**“לעולם ועד”**—and those who teach righteousness to the multitudes will shine like the stars forevermore. For this reason, HKB”H promised him: **“כה יהיה זרעך”**—so shall your offspring be! HKB”H was alluding to Rovo and Abaye who were destined to pave the way for Yisroel to follow in Avrohom’s footsteps. They would teach Yisroel that it is vital both to engage in Torah study in the **“beis-midrash”** and also to go outside and spread the name of Hashem and love of Hashem in the world.

Avrohom Avinu Saved the Dialectics of Abaye and Rovo from Sedom

Now, come and behold the wonders of the Torah! The possuk in parshas Lech Lecho (Bereishis 14, 12) states: **“ויקחו את לוט ואת”**—**“רכושו בן אחי אברם וילכו והוא יושב בסדום”**—and they captured Lot and his possessions, Avrom’s brother’s son, and they left; and he was dwelling in Sedom. Regarding this possuk, our teacher, the Arizal, writes:

“כבר הודעתך איך רבא האמורא נמשך נשמתו משורש דנעמה העמונית בת לוט, וזה סוד ואת כל ר'כושו ב'ן א'חי ראשי תיבות רבא, וכאשר הקליפות שבו את לוט גם את נשמת רבא שבו עמו, עד שיצאה נעמה העמונית ויצא ממנה רבא.”

He reveals to us that the neshamah of the Amora Rovo stems from Naamah the Amonite, a descendant of the daughter of Lot. An allusion to this is found in the first letters of the words of this possuk **“רכושו ב'ן א'חי”**—which form the name Rovo. Hence, when the forces of evil, the **“klipot,”** took Lot hostage, Rovo’s neshamah was also taken hostage. Ultimately, Naamah the Amonite emerged and Rovo descended from her.

Now, the divine kabbalist, the author of the Megaleh Amukos, discusses this matter (end of Parshas Noach) with a significant addition. He adds that when Avrohom saved Lot, he had in mind to recover and save the Torah she'b'al peh—which, as mentioned above, is referred to as **“הויות דאביי ורבא”**, the **“dialectics of Abaye and Rovo.”** Here is what he writes:

“כמו שלא היו יכולים ישראל לקבל תורה שבכתב עד אחר גלות מצרים, כן לא יכלו ישראל להשלים תורה שבעל פה עד שהיו בבבל שם נגמר תלמוד רב אשי, ולכן מיד אחר ירידת אברהם למצרים שהיתה עבור תורה שבכתב, זכר בתורה ענין ד' מלכים שהיו בעמק המלך על בבל שהיא עמוקה ואמרפל הוא מלך בבל, שם זכו ישראל לקבל תורה שבעל פה.”

“זוה סוד שרמז בזה הפרשה והריגת המלכים, וישמע אברם כי נשבה אחיו ואת כל ר'כושו ב'ן א'חי אברם, שכתב האריז'ל בספר כונות שהוא ראשי תיבות רב'א, שבאותו פרק נתכונן אברהם להוציא ניצוצות של רבא שהיה תקוע בלוט, וקשה מאי ענינו לכאן, אבל לדידי ניחא שבזו המלחמה היה מתעסק אברהם, להוציא ניצוצות של תורה שבעל פה שזכו ישראל בימי אביי ורבא שהיו בבבל.”

Just as Yisroel could not receive the Torah she'b'chtav until after the exile in Egypt; so, too, they could not complete Torah she'b'al peh until being exiled to Bavel. Therefore, after Avrohom went down to Egypt for the Written Torah, the Torah mentions the matter of the four kings, including the King of Bavel, where Yisroel merited receiving the Oral Torah. This is the underlying theme alluded to in this passage depicting the killing of the four kings. As pointed out by the Arizal, there is an allusion in this passage to Rovo, whose neshamah was buried within Lot. At first glance, it is difficult to comprehend Rovo’s connection to this passage. In light of the Megaleh Amukos’s explanation, the connection is quite simple. Avrohom battled the four kings in order to extract the sparks of Torah she'b'al peh that Yisroel would merit during the times of Abaye and Rovo in Bavel.

In summary, Avrohom waged war against the four kings in order to save Lot. He did so to save the neshamah of Rovo. Together, Abaye and Rovo revealed the Torah she'b'al peh to Yisroel. As we have shown, Abaye and Rovo exemplify the two aspects of Avrohom’s doctrine concerning the service of Hashem. On the one hand, it is necessary to dwell in the house of Torah to ascend the spiritual ladder of Torah and kedushah. On the other hand, it is imperative to step outside of that sacred environment in order to spread and endear the name of Hashem in the world. For this reason, HKB”H arranged that Avrohom specifically would liberate the light and illumination of Abaye and Rovo’s Torah; for they followed in the footsteps of Avrohom Avinu.