

# PARSHA PRESS

LECH LECHA

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Candle Lighting 5:50PM



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## OUR UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP WITH HASHEM

Ms. Rebecca Aryeh

This week's parsha is the first time we hear about Avraham Avinu. The pasuk says:

”וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל אַבְרָם לֵךְ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אֲבִיךָ אֲשֶׁר אֵרָאךְ”  
The Lord said to Avram, “Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you.”

Many mefarshim comment on the lashon of “lech lecha.” Why is it brought as a double expression? Where is Avraham going? However, something that is often not addressed is that this is the first time in the Torah that we're introduced to our forefather, the person who spread Hashem's awareness to the world, Avraham Avinu! Why don't we know about the actions of Avraham Avinu and his tzidkus until Hashem says “lech lecha?” Why don't we have a parsha introducing him and his past?

According to the Ramban, we don't hear about Avraham before now, because when we are introduced to the father of monotheism, we don't want to talk about his idol worshipping past. The Maharal takes a different route and explains that if the Torah had discussed Avraham's greatness and how he discovered Hashem on his own, we may think that Hashem only chose him because he's a tzadik, and if his children aren't tzadikim, then we may think that Hashem would, chas v'shalom, leave us. However, Hashem will never stop being our Avinu Malkeinu and His love for us is unconditional and it is not based on our actions. Expanding on this idea, Rav Michael Rosensweig explains that if the Torah would have told us how Avraham found Hashem, a person may think that Avraham's route to connecting to Hashem is the only way to have a relationship with Him. However, Hashem is so broad and infinite, and each person's relationship with Hashem is individual and unique.

Many times, we tend to compare ourselves to the people around us. Human nature is such, that we measure our success based on the accomplishments of our peers, (continue reading)

## AVRAHAM'S SACRIFICE

Adina Adelman, Grade 9

לֵךְ-לְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ, וּמִבֵּית אֲבִיךָ אֲשֶׁר אֵרָאךְ  
“Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you.”

Last Shabbos, when learning this pasuk with my six-year-old brother, we came up with two questions. Our first question was, what is the rationale behind the order of the words, “מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אֲבִיךָ”? Next, we wondered why the Torah, which doesn't include any unnecessary details, specify every aspect of the place where Avraham left?

An idea occurred to me which I believe can answer both questions. Each of these words describes a different aspect of the place which Avraham was prepared to leave behind. The term מֵאֶרֶץ refers to the physical place where Avraham lived. The term וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ refers to a way of life and the environment in which he was brought up. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, is the term וּמִבֵּית אֲבִיךָ, which refers to the spiritual environment in which Avraham's father, Terach, raised him. Each of these terms describes a different part of Avraham's past which he needed to leave behind in order to fulfill the will of Hashem. The pasuk progresses from the most mundane aspect to the most divine aspect of Avraham's upbringing.

# HE'S GOT OUR BACKS

Atara Shtern, Grade 11

Parshat Lech Lecha begins with Hashem's commandment to Avram to leave his land and travel to an unidentified place. As a reward, Hashem will make Avram into a great nation, bless those who bless the nation, and curse those who curse the nation. This pasuk brings me right back to kindergarten, and more specifically, to recess.

Imagine the scene: your five-year-old self skips out to recess holding her best friend's hand in one hand and her corn pops in the other. A little girl comes over to her and yells, "You are not my friend anymore! I hate you." Your friend responds, without missing a beat, "If you're not friends with her, then you're not friends with me either." It may seem like a silly kindergarten playground incident, but it actually can apply as an example to Parshat Lech Lecha.

Hashem reassures Avram that even in times when we feel as if we have no one, when we feel cursed, betrayed, destroyed and forgotten, we will always have a best friend looking out for us. When someone curses us, He'll curse them right back. When someone blesses us, He'll give them a high five. Although not always immediate, Hashem consistently follows through with this promise.

We can look to our nation's history for examples which validate this point. Nations like the ancient Egyptians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, and even the modern Germans have almost no power nowadays. This is all of Hashem's doing. Current events can be frightening and off-putting, but looking back reminds us that Hashem was, is, and will always be on our side.

The Daas Zekanim brings a Medrash Tanchuma which interprets the above pasuk as referring to Birchas Kohanim. From Avram, Hashem would eventually create a tribe through which all of His children would be blessed. Not only does Hashem shower us with blessing Himself, but He set aside humans to bless us with His magic touch as well.

Parshas Lech Lecha enters with the new month of Cheshvan, notorious for feelings of emptiness and darkness. There are no holidays and we are beginning the longer winter evenings. Let's take the message of Hashem's promise with us as we begin this month's journey. As dark as it is, our best friend is holding our hand the whole way through.

## RABBI RICE'S HALACHA CORNER

The חפץ חיים in his work *אבות חסד* notes that the תורה speaks at length about the אברהם אבינו in the הכנסת אורחים. We don't find such an in-depth description of any single event anywhere else in the תורה. It must be that the תורה wants us to learn from אברהם how to conduct ourselves in hosting guests and the importance of having guests.

Is there a מצוה of הכנסת אורחים to bring someone into your home that could be physically or spiritually detrimental to you and your family? The פלא יועץ writes that if you know that someone is not a good person, do not allow him into your house. Especially, if an individual has only one small house for his wife and children, it is a sin to accept a guest into the house to sleep, because this will make the family uncomfortable and resentful.

We learn from אברהם אבינו, who was very generous and the source of הכנסת אורחים. Nevertheless, ה' told him to listen to שרה and to remove ישמעאל from the home because he was a bad influence on the home. The אנציקלופדיה תלמודית elaborates that nowadays we live in more dangerous cities with more uncertainty. Therefore, the שלחן ערוך doesn't include the מצוה of הכנסת אורחים because we don't want to force a person into an unfortunate situation where they took in a guest who ruined the home.

Is it proper to ask your guests for דברי תורה? The ספר חסידים סיי ש"ב writes that you should be careful because it may embarrass the guest if he doesn't have anything to say. This is cited by פתחי חושן (הלכות אוגאה) Rav Yaakov Emden in his סידור says that you shouldn't press the guest for a דבר תורה right away because he may be tired from his travels.

(continued from front) families and the world at large. Learning from others and their successes is important to propel us forward and encourage us to strive to do more. However, this mindset can also be harmful to ourselves if it causes us to be unhappy with our own achievements, and jealous of others'. This parsha teaches us, by not mentioning Avraham's past, that each of us have specific circumstances, personality traits, strengths and weaknesses that Hashem has tailored to our needs, in order to best connect to Him and to the people around us. Our connection and relationship to Hashem is personal and individual; each person has his/her own path and special relationship with Hashem that isn't comparable to anyone else's.

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