

Parasha Meditation Lech Lecha

Bereishit 12:1-17:27

By Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum

Fixing the Level of *Going* – to our Higher Selves

Introduction:

Following the Footsteps of Avraham our Father

Avraham's journey parallels each of our personal journeys. When G-d told Avraham, "לך לך" – "*Lech lecha*,"¹ – "go to yourself" – to your essence,² He also told each of us at every moment: "*go to yourself*" – connect the soul in your body to your soul-root on high, which is always connected to G-d. When we connect the lower part of our soul to its higher source through our involvement in Torah and Mitzvot, we attain the ability to see G-dliness in *this* world! This is the meaning of the continuation of the verse: "...to the land that I will show you." When we follow in the footsteps of Avraham our Father, Hashem will show himself to us, even inside of the land – i.e. the physical world.

Fixing the Level of "Going"

Why does it state "לך מן הארץ" – "*go from your land*..." The word "לך" in Hebrew means to go towards a place or goal. The Hebrew word "אצ" – "go out" is used to indicate going from – leaving a place. Didn't Avraham have to go out and leave his environment completely, before he could go towards the Holy Land? It should, therefore, have rather stated "אצ מן הארץ" – "go out from (leave) your land, your birthplace and your father's house," and only then "לך אל הארץ" – "go to the land"³

Rav Tzaddok brings us an amazing *chidush* from the Zohar. Avraham was commanded to fix the level of going.⁴ In Judaism it is not so much where you are that matters, but the direction that you are going. Two people could be on the same spiritual level momentarily, but one who came from a very holy background is "going off the *derech*," while the other is returning to the path of spiritual heights from an impure environment. Avraham received the ability to go forward with even greater strength, not despite but specifically because of his lowly background. By means of distancing himself and detaching completely from his father, Terach – an idol-worshiper of the first caliber, as well as from everything else in his environment and culture, both spiritually and physically, Avraham was able to fix the level of going.

¹ Bereishit 12:1.

² *Kli Yakar*, Bereishit 12:1.

³ Rav Tzaddok of Lublin, *Pri Tzaddik*, Parashat Lech Lecha, Ot 1.

⁴ *Zohar*, part 1, p.77b.



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(011-972-2) 995-4945

info@berotbatayin.org

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Thus, he was paving the way for all of us – his descendants – to likewise leave our impure environment and culture, in our going on the path of *teshuva*.⁵

About this it states: “Hashem spread you our among the nations, and you remained small in numbers among the gentiles where Hashem had brought you....and you worshipped idols, the handiworks of wood and stone... but you were seeking from there Hashem your G-d and you found Him because you were seeking with all your hearts and all your souls.”⁶

No matter how low a place you are in, you can use the lowliness of this place as a springboard to go and propel yourself forward to even greater elevations. The more a rubber band is pulled back, the stronger it flies when it is finally released. This is the case with Yosef who rose from prison, to become the second in charge to the king.⁷ Likewise, Rabbi Akiva, was an unlearned shepherd,⁸ yet he became one of the greatest Rabbis in Israel with 24,000 students.⁹

Go to your Higher Self

Our self-image, which we project into the world, may not be the true reflection of the inner core of our being. We have built upon ourselves layers and layers of external self-identifications. G-d is telling us, together with Avraham, to seek true selfhood – “לֵךְ לְךָ”, yet at the same time abandon everything that establishes and confirms self-image – “מֵאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וּמִמּוֹלַדְתָּהּ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ” – “Go from your country, birthplace and father’s house. Avraham must leave the vital ground for self-confirmation, citizenship, property rights and inheritance – essential sources of security, in order to seek a new and higher identity independent of land, nationality and family. Avraham's new identity is founded upon his relationship with G-d. By choosing to make his identity based on his supernatural relationship with the source of the present and the future, he creates eternal selfhood, which becomes the fountain of Jewish survival. If each individual “I” includes a “thou,” then an “I” that stands in relationship with an “Eternal Thou” embodies that eternity into the very definition of his human “I”.¹⁰

Meditation:

Sit comfortable in your chair, close your eyes and take several deep breaths. Breathe deeply and feel completely relaxed in all of the limbs of the body.

1. Imagine Hashem’s light filling you from Above. In your mind see the letters that form the words “לֵךְ לְךָ” – *lech lecha*. They extend as far down and as far up as they can go. Claim all of yourself – your entire range of being.

⁵ According to the principle: “The deeds of the Fathers are a sign for the children.” See Ramban, *Bereishit* 12:6.

⁶ *Devarim* 4:27-29.

⁷ *Bereishit* 39:20, 41:14, 41:14.

⁸ *Yalkut Shimoni, Mishlei*, chapter 12, allusion 548.

⁹ *Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat* 128a.

¹⁰ Rabbi David Aaron, based on Martin Buber.

2. Go. Grow. Recall the lowest depths to which you've sunk...in pain or sorrow. Remember the greatest heights to which you've climbed...in love and labor.
3. Breathe in as you imagine the word לָךְ – *lecha* – to yourself, breathe out as you imagine the word לָךְ – *lech* – go.
4. Continue breathing in and out while visualizing לָךְ לָךְ – *lech lecha* and going deeper into yourself on the in-breath with the word לָךְ – *lecha*, while letting go on the out-breath as you imagine the word לָךְ – *lech*. Repeat this ten times.
5. Go from your country, your birthplace & your father's house "לָךְ לָךְ מֵאַרְצְךָ וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ"
6. Are you ready to abandon everything that establishes and confirms your selfhood? – Your country, your birthplace and your father's house? Are you ready to let go of the vital ground for self-confirmation, citizenship, property rights and inheritance? –Your essential sources of security.
7. "אֶל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֶרְאֶה" – "To the Land that I will show you"
With each in-breath, seek a new and higher self-identity independent of land, nationality and family. Seek your relationship with Hashem.
8. Are you ready to base your self-identity on your eternal connection with the Source of the present and the future? Think about the things that weigh you down – that are not really part of true self, that you want to let go of, in your journey to find your true inner self – Hashem's Divine spark within you.
9. With each in-breath, go deeper into your "I" which includes Hashem. It embodies the eternal Divine "You" into the very definition of your human "I".
10. With each out-breath try to let go of every un-essential layers of your self- image. "מֵאַרְצְךָ" – From your country, from the language and culture that you grew up in, from its national values such as democratic freedom, from the manners and body language of your country.
11. "מִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ" – From the customs of your neighborhood, the foods, traditions and unspoken expectations of your extended family.
12. "וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ" – from all the things your encountered in your childhood home that you promised yourself you would not repeat when you became a parent, but found yourself in the exact same behavior patterns. Go from those neuroses, judgments and criticism, those petty expectations and snobbiness.

Lech lecha – Lech lecha from all that weighs you down
Lech lecha – Lech lecha go to your crown!

From jealousy and anger
 Hatred and obsession
 From judgment and slander
 Sadness and depression

Lech lecha – Lech lecha from all that weighs you down
Lech lecha – Lech lecha go to your crown!

From humiliation and dissolution
 Pursuit of temptations that deceive
 From uncertainty and confusion
 to your inner Divine spark believe!

Lech lecha – Lech lecha from all that weighs you down
Lech lecha – Lech lecha go to your crown!

From holding on to the past,
 Childhood wounds and hurt feelings
 To release and feel peace at last
 With yourself in all your dealings!

Lech lecha – Lech lecha from all that weighs you down
Lech lecha – Lech lecha go to your crown!

Imagine being 100 % connected with your crown, – imagine it sparkle on top of your head with all its glory containing only the purest Divine Light. With each in-breath, the shape of your crown becomes clearer and more defined, and it sparkles more and more.
 Now that you are releasing the layers from your past that weighs you down, you can let go of any trace of fear of the unfamiliar. Open yourself completely to “הָאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֶרְאֶה” – “the Land that G-d will show you” – Open yourself to new possibilities in an unknown future.
 Open yourself to the unknown change, hope and miracles.
 Allow yourself to see the possibility for new beginnings, living a life of hope and constant moving forward.

Notes:

The words “לך לך” – “*Lech lecha*,” each have the *gematria* (numerical value) of 50 + 50 denoting going towards the fifties’ gate of purity leaving the fifties’ gates of impurity. The mitzvot become our exterior garment replacing the impurity of our past. In Egypt when we received the first collective mitzvah and became a people, Hashem took us out from the fifty gates of impurities and brought us to the fifty gates of understanding. On an individual level the same takes place through “לך לך” – “*Lech lecha*,” the first mitzvah which Avraham was commanded.

The name *Lech lecha*, literally: “Go to yourself,” refers to our constant ascent from lower to higher spiritual levels as we fulfill our purpose in the world. The numerical value of the two words is one hundred – the age of Avraham when Yitzchak was born. Hashem was alluding to Avraham, “When you reach *Lech lecha* – the age of one hundred – then I will make your name great through the birth of Yitzchak.”¹¹ The number one hundred is the number of completion. It encompasses all the ten *sefirot* with each of their ten sub-*sefirot*.

¹¹ *Ba’alei HaTosfot, Bereishit 12:1.*

About Us



Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum

Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum, a native of Denmark, is Founder and Director of Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin. She holds a Bachelor of Education in Bible and Jewish Philosophy from Michlala Jerusalem College for Women, and a Masters of Art in Jewish History from Touro College. Chana Bracha also began her practice as a spiritual healer through Emuna, tefila and energy work. For more than two decades Chana Bracha has taught Bible studies with special emphasis on women's issues in Israel and the United States. She creates curricula emphasizing women's

spiritual empowerment through traditional Torah values. Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin located in the Judean Hills of Israel offers a unique program to women of all ages and backgrounds to learn in a holistic Torah study environment that nurtures the mind, body and soul. Intensive textual study of Tanach, Halacha and Chassidut are woven together with creative spiritual expression, and connection with the land of Israel through organic gardening, herbology, Jewish sources of healing and sustainable living. Classes in Jewish mysticism, Chassidism and Jewish meditation are directed at the spiritual thirst so prominent in our times.

*In 2010 Rebbetzin Chana Bracha published her first book, *Women at the Crossroads: A Woman's Perspective on the Weekly Torah Portion*.*

Chana Bracha has a married son and several granddaughters. She lives with her husband and younger son on the land of the Judean hills, Israel.

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Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin contact info@berotbatayin.org or in Spiritual Healing with Rebbetzin Chana Bracha, please contact her at director@berotbatayin.org

or visit her blog: <http://rebbetzinchanabracha.blogspot.com/2010/11/emunah-healing-for-women.html>

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At Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin, we weave together Torah studies with creative spiritual expression, connecting with the Land of Israel, and healthy, organic lifestyles. In the heart of the Judean Hills, with its serene beauty, our students experience an approach to Judaism that bridges mind, body and soul. Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin is designed as a micro-community within the Village of Bat Ayin where women of all ages and backgrounds engage in intense Torah learning as part of an integrated, participatory approach to Torah living.

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