



Parshas Lech Lecha 2018, change & transform

This week's Parsha Perspective is dedicated in memory of Shlomo Ben Edward and Yosef Ben Zev Wolf. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.

Our Parsha introduces us to the father of the Jewish nation, Avraham Avinu. He is given a commandment to leave his birthplace and hometown and go on an unknown journey led by G-d. Avraham quickly got his camp in order and began this unique voyage without delay.

Soon, he arrived in Cana'an accompanied by his wife, Sarah, and his nephew, Lot. He is told by Hashem that his descendants will inhabit the very land that he is standing on. As he was exploring the land of Cana'an, a famine forced him to travel down to Egypt to buy food. Fearing that the Egyptians would kill him to take his wife, Sarah, because of her immense beauty, Avraham asked her to allege that he was just her brother.

When they arrived at the border, Sarah was taken and brought to Pharaoh. In retaliation, G-d struck Pharaoh's palace with a plague, causing Pharaoh to realize that he was deceived and quickly released Sarah. He gave Avraham and Sarah many gifts and escorted them out of his land.

The Parsha concludes with the Mitzvah of Bris Milah. G-d appeared to the aging Avraham at 99 years old and asked him to circumcise himself and establish an everlasting bond between them.

However, a question comes to mind: This week, we are introduced to Avraham, our forefather, the first Jew, and the first person to discover God on his own. The Pasuk says *"your land, your birthplace, and your father's house."* But they are the same place,

meaning the words are extra and unnecessary. The Torah is usually exact and precise in wording, so why did it need to mention each location individually?

The answer is given that when Hashem commanded Avraham to leave his land, his father's home, and his birthplace, he was not only talking about going physically. But rather emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. He needed to leave behind the preconceived notions, the mental baggage, and the emotional burdens holding him back from being the father of the greatest nation in the world.

He needed to eliminate the influences of a society that not only enabled but encouraged idol worship. But more importantly, hatred towards G-d. Only then will he be able to be objective and see his potential of being a leader to a people and a father to a nation.

All great leaders have that one moment when they must choose. Moshe had his moment when he left the palace, where he was brought up as a prince under the wing of Pharaoh himself. Yet when he saw the Jewish people, his brethren in slavery, he chose the Jewish nation. By killing an Egyptian taskmaster he saw was about to hurt a Jew, he left behind all influences and made his choice. This decisive action enables him to take his rightful place as the leader of the Jewish people and the greatest leader in our history.

In our daily life, if true and drastic change is what we want to achieve, we must leave behind anything that will hold us back from being happy. When we look at the person staring back at us in the mirror, what do we see? What change needs to be made to become the best version of ourselves?

Before we begin that process, we must set aside all the influences that block us from being objective to the potential we can achieve and return to our true selves. Only then can we get to work since we are not suppressed by any previous baggage. Now you can become the most excellent version of yourself and be a leader in your own life.

"It's only after you've stepped outside your comfort zone that you begin to change, grow, and transform."

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*