

Lech Lecha-The Greatness of the Avos-From the Schmuessim of Rav Michel  
Barenbaum, Zt"l  
By Rabbi Eliyahu Kirsh

Parshas Lech Lecha begins with the great trial of Avraham Avinu being asked to leave home and family and all that was familiar to him. This was indeed quite a trial. Avraham was well aware of what people would think and even the chillul Hashem involved in leaving his father at an old age. For this reason the Torah places the death of Terach at the end of Noach before going into Avraham's life in order not to make it obvious that he was leaving his father. We see in the fact that Avraham had compassion and even interceded for the people of Sodom that he had compassion for all and certainly for his own father. So the trial to leave him was great test against his own natural tendencies.

We also see Avraham's greatness in that Hashem appeared to him as he was recuperating from his bris milah. In this appearance or communication no mitzvah was given. Avraham did not even intend to receive any prophecies. Yet he did receive a divine visit. He merited this visit because he just had performed the bris milah on himself at the age of ninety-nine. Despite the pain, he did it joyfully. This shows the *shleimus* of Avraham Avinu.

Avraham's greatness was also manifested in that he discovered Hashem and figured out the entire Torah on his own. Not only did he discover but also he also used these capacities to change the world. Through Avraham's influence, much of the world came to know about Hashem. Avraham was chosen to start Am Yisroel for this purpose of publicizing Hashem's presence in the world.

From these anecdotes we see our obligation to emulate the Avos. Even if we live in a smaller generation, we must not pay attention to our generation. Rather one must strive to grow in *ruchniyus* as much as he/she can. In that sense, Noach was blamed for his lack of growth. Even according to the view that he was simply better than the rest of his generation, he was still obligated to reach his potential and not just take the easy way out by feeling he is so much better than most people so why work at improvement. We learn from the Avos that one must try to be the best he can possibly be if we are not on their level; we must utilize the potential to grow that Hashem gives every one of us.