

# Dvar Torah for Parshat Lekh Lekha

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Based on Likutey Moharan Tinyana, Prologue

“Avraham was one” (Ezekiel 33:24). Avraham worshiped God only because he [Avraham] was one, because he considered himself alone in the world. He paid no attention whatsoever to people who turned him away from God and hindered him, or to his father or others who would interfere. Rather, it was as if he was the only one in the world. This is the meaning of “Avraham was one.”

It's the same for anyone who wants to enter the service of God. The only way for him to enter is by thinking that other than himself, there is absolutely no one else in the world. He must ignore anyone who would hinder him, such as his father and mother, or his father-in-law and his wife and children, or the like; or to the obstacles presented by other people who ridicule, object to or obstruct his service of God. He must be unconcerned about them and pay them no mind. Instead, he should adopt an “Avraham was one” attitude—as if he is the only one in the world, as above.

What gives a person the strength to stand up to the whole world, to think differently, with a different outlook and attitudes on life, and to behave differently? Our first Patriarch, Avraham Avinu, is called HaIvri (Genesis 14:13) not only because he was from eiver, the other side of the River Jordan, but because he was on the opposing side of the world's majority opinion on major issues. From where such strength?

Many of us are schizophrenic. Not, God forbid, psychologically or theologically, but at some deep level of our soul. Up to a certain point, there is no doubt in our mind—or heart—that our

Jewishness not merely defines us, but is us. Up to that point, we, too, are unconcerned about the objections of others and can overcome obstacles. Up to that point, we are one. Beyond that point, we are two (or more). We ourselves are unconvinced. We want very much to live a life of faith; but it's only a part of us. Other parts agree with the zeitgeist, with the man in the street. So the interference we struggle with is due to the relatively shallow depth of our oneness. We aren't one through and through.

How do we deepen our oneness, connect to our soul? Rebbe Nachman offers advice that helps on a few levels (see Likutey Moharan I, Lesson 22:6–8). One is sighing: “From the sound of my sighing, my etzem (bone, essence) has clung to my flesh” (Psalms 102:6). Daring to express one's dismay about the body's excessive enjoyment frees some inner-space; the soul moves into it. The tzaddik is the soul of the Jewish people. When one attaches himself to the tzaddik one can hear the tzaddik's “sigh,” his teachings that urge us to follow the call of the soul. That too creates inner-space for the soul.

As the soul assumes greater influence by penetrating and moving closer to the body, we have the opportunity to further close the gap between “the two of us” so that we become one. The opportunity? Using the body to do mitzvahs and to practice the advice of the tzaddik (e.g., hitbodedut; see here and here).

agutn Shabbos!  
Shabbat Shalom!

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