

SICHA SUMMARY

PROJECT LIKKUTEI SICHOS | 5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL



Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 20

Lech-Lecha - Zayin Marcheshvan

The Question:

The Mishnah rules that we begin inserting our request for rain in the prayers only on the 7th of Cheshvan, fifteen days after Sukkos, when the rainy season begins, in order to allow for the last pilgrims to reach the Euphrates River without being inconvenienced by rain on their journey home. (Taanis 10a)

The 7th of Cheshvan often falls in the week we read parshas Lech Lecha. These two events seem to embody opposing themes: The journey away from the land of Israel, back to the mundane reality of the diaspora. And Avraham's ascension from his pagan birthplace to the Land of Israel. What is the connection between them?

Hired or Sent:

To understand this, we need to preface with the distinction between two profiles of people who act on behalf of a superior: a hired laborer, and an agent. A hired laborer usually works in close proximity to the

employer, or at least in his estate or with his property. Yet he works only in order to receive his pay. The agent performs his tasks far from the messenger. But all he does is solely for the sake of the messenger, until the point that Halacha recognizes that the messenger and the agent are one entity.

The Explanation:

When the Jewish people came to bask in the radiance of G-d in Jerusalem during the festivals, they were like the laborer — in close proximity to G-d, but there for their own spiritual benefit. When they left the place of illumination for their mundane work at home, to perform material mitzvos, to work in accordance with G-d's will, and to sanctify the world, then they were acting as an agent. They might be far from the place where G-d rests His presence, but their work is purely for the sake of G-d.

This is why the 7th of Cheshvan is an appropriate time to read Lech Lecha. In his birthplace, Avraham also advanced spiritually and shared the message of monotheism widely. But he was doing so according to his own human understanding

and appreciation of the Divine. When G-d called Avraham to leave behind all his preconceptions and go to the land of Israel, He was inviting him to begin serving G-d for G-d's sake, not for his own satisfaction. This leap, from human-based worship to Divine-inspired worship, is absolute, it is a true journey.

This is the transition that takes place on the 7th of Cheshvan, when the last traveler returns to his home. We begin serving G-d in response to His desire to have a home in this world, instead of enjoying G-d's presence where it satisfies our spiritual sensibilities.
