

Parshas Lech Lecha

When *Avraham Avinu* was commanded by *Hashem* to leave his ancestral home, he was promised that he would be blessed and become famous and then the *Torah* says, "והיה ברכה" - and be a blessing." *Rashi* interprets this in two ways. First, Avraham will have the ability to give effective blessings, or second, his name will conclude the first blessing of the *Amida*, *Shmona Esrei*. Even though we introduce the connection that *Hashem* has with us as the, "G-d of Avraham, G-d of Yitzchak and G-d of Yaakov," we conclude the *bracha* with "Shield of Avraham." If we are invoking the relationship with all of the *Avos*, the Patriarchs, why is it so special that we conclude with Avraham only? Moreover, in several places in the *Torah*, we refer to *Hashem* as the G-d of *David*, *Eliyahu* and other great men.

The Sefer HaZikaron [Rabbi Avraham Halevi Bakrat of Tunis (1506)] explains that the introductory blessings of the *Amida* were created to praise *Hashem* to the utmost of our human abilities but to do so in the most succinct way. We begin by relating our relationship to *Hashem* as one which is rooted in history. It is not based solely on our own personal relationship with Him. It is predicated on the choices of our great progenitors. When we conclude the blessing, we are defining *Hashem's* greatness by invoking *Avraham Avinu* as the perfect human, the pinnacle of *Hashem's* creation, and that is used to illuminate His greatness, He is the G-d of the greatest person.

What is the specialness of *Avraham Avinu*? Why did *Hashem* call him *my beloved*? What was unique about his path in serving *Hashem* that places him in this special place?

We know that *Avraham's* life mission was to proclaim *Hashem's* existence and sovereignty. He discovered *Hashem* by observing *Hashem's* wisdom and by perceiving the great kindness that *Hashem* bestows upon His world. This became *Avraham's* mission, to introduce *Hashem* as a kind and benevolent King. In this, he differed from *Noach*, last week's hero, who was the agent of *Hashem* to save the world from annihilation but did not succeed in persuading the rest of the world to return to *Hashem*. *Avraham* showered selflessness and kindness on everyone he met and used that as the introduction to *Hashem*. This was the real fulfillment of "אלקיך את ד' ואהבת - you shall love *Hashem* your G-d" which our sages explain to mean, "*Hashem's* name should become beloved through your actions." This is the ultimate "calling in the name of *Hashem*." In the fact that *Avraham* was a blessing to all those who encountered him, he merited being the one whose name is used to laud *Hashem* in the most exalted way. This is the meaning of "והיה ברכה", *you will be a blessing*.

As parents, educators and leaders, we must always be mindful that this is the test of our efforts to teach and to influence others in the service of *Hashem*. Is *Hashem's* name becoming beloved through us or are we simply using influence and power to force practices on our charges? We will be beloved to *Hashem* when we are increasing love of *Hashem* in our sphere of influence by modeling kindness, thoughtfulness and selflessness.