

# LECH-LECHA #1 OR LECH-LECHA #2 – WHICH IS THE HARDER TEST?

*by Rabbi Yissocher Frand*

## Parshas Lech Lecha

### Lech-Lecha #1 or Lech-Lecha #2 - Which is the harder test?

*These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 698, Did the Avos Keep the Torah? Good Shabbos*

The Medrash Rabbah on this week's Parsha states in the name of Rav Levi: There are two times that "Lech Lecha" is written in the Torah and we do not know which is G-d's favorite - the first or the second. The first "Lech Lecha" is obviously the first pasuk of our parsha [Bereishis 12:1]: "Go out from your land, from your birth place, and from your father's house to the land that I will show you." The second "Lech Lecha" is in connection with Akeidas Yitzchok [the Binding of Yitzchak], where Avraham is told "Go out to the Land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you." [Bereishis 22:2] Rav Levi concludes that Akeidas Yitzchok was a greater test than the test of Avram leaving his homeland and thus the second instance of "Lech Lecha" is "more precious to G-d".

It is actually strange that Rav Levi was even puzzled by this question. Why would anyone think that the test of leaving one's homeland (particularly in the context of the great reward that HaShem promised to Avram if he complied with this commandment) might be comparable to the test of the Akeida? The Akeida would be most difficult for any parent - particularly such a person as Avraham, who was the paradigm of Chessed [kindness] and who had preached monotheism and the virtues of a Merciful G-d all these years to his many disciples.

A Nesivos Shalom (by the Slonimer Rebbe) at the beginning of the parsha addresses this issue. Certainly, the Akeida was a very difficult nisayon [test], but it was a "one shot affair". Avraham was called upon to ascend the mountain, sacrifice Yitzchak, and then the nisayon would be over. However, the nisayon of Lech Lecha in our parsha is a test of beginning a journey that will affect him and will last the rest of his life.

Everyone has his own personal odyssey in life. We are all charged with the task of bringing

completeness (shleimus) to our souls. We have to achieve correction (tikun) of our neshma [soul] in our own personal fashion. That is the charge of Lech LECHA (go in YOUR OWN way). This charge involves a lifetime of work. Many times, this charge requires getting out of the box that is one's environment, one's society, and one's family. We never enter life with a clean slate. We all enter life with baggage - emotional baggage, financial baggage, genetic baggage, family baggage. Sometimes the "baggage" is very good and extremely helpful. Other times the baggage can be a real handicap. The type of people that we are and the characteristics (middos) that we have are primarily not our own choosing.

When a person is given a mission in life and a goal to accomplish, it may involve the need to rid himself of so much of the baggage that he came with (one's land, one's birthplace, one's family). Such a challenge is not a one shot deal. Rather, it accompanies us day in and day out. Such a constant - lifelong - challenge may indeed be cumulatively a greater test than a test requiring only a momentary rise to the occasion, as difficult as that challenge may be.

---

This write-up was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tape series on the weekly Torah portion. The complete list of halachic topics covered in this series for Parshas Lech Lecha are provided below:

- Tape # 028 - Conversion (Geirus)
- Tape # 070 - Bris Milah: The Metzizah Controversy
- Tape # 119 - Conversion for Ulterior Motives
- Tape # 166 - The Childless Couple in Halacha
- Tape # 212 - Non-Jews and the Mitzvah of Kibbud Av
- Tape # 256 - Mohel and Baby: Who Goes to Whom
- Tape # 302 - The Mitzvah of Yishuv Eretz Yisroel
- Tape # 346 - Trading Terrorists for Hostages
- Tape # 390 - Geirus -- Mitzvah, Reshus, or Issur?
- Tape # 434 - Anesthesia During Milah
- Tape # 478 - Sandik -- Can You Change Your Mind?
- Tape # 522 - Calling Avraham, Avrum
- Tape # 566 - Learning Vs. Saving A Life
- Tape # 610 - The Widow and the Divorcee - How Long Must they wait to remarry
- Tape # 654 - Sonei Matonos Yichye - Refusing Gifts
- Tape # 698 - Did the Avos Keep the Torah?
- Tape # 742 - Can You Change Your Mazel?
- Tape # 786 - The On-Time vs. the Delayed Bris
- Tape # 830 - Standing for A Chosen and Kallah At The Chupah
- Tape # 874 - Saving Some-One's Soul- How Far Must You Go?

Tape # 918 - Hidur Mitzvah - How Important?

Tape # 961 - Tying Shoes - Not As Simple As You Think

Tape #1005 - Inviting People to a Bris - Good Idea or Bad?

Tapes or a complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail [tapes@yadyechiel.org](mailto:tapes@yadyechiel.org) or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information.

---

RavFrاند, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Yissocher Frand and Torah.org.