



SIMCHAT SHMUEL

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Parshat Lech Lecha opens with Hashem's instruction to Avram to leave behind his ancestral homeland and depart for the Land of Israel. It is in this Land that he *will become a great nation, be blessed and his name will become great*. **Rashi** explains that in addition to Avram's name becoming greatly recognized for his accomplishments, there is more being alluded to in the words- *V'Agadla Shemecha*- and your name will be great.

זהו ואגדלה שמך, הריני מוסיף אות על שמך, שעד עכשיו שמך אברם מכאן ואילך אברהם, ואברהם עולה רמ"ח כנגד איבריו של אדם

And this is the meaning of and I will make your name great. I will add a letter to your name, for until now, your name was Avram. From now on your name will be Avraham, and Avraham equals 248, corresponding to the parts of the human body.

According to **Rashi**, when Hashem promises Avram that his name will become great, it is an allusion to the fact that Hashem will add an additional letter to Avram's name and he will be known from then on as Avraham, and that the numerical value of his new name

corresponds the parts of the human body. How are we to understand this interpretation offered by **Rashi**? What is the significance of Avraham's new, "great name" corresponding to the parts of the human body?

In a fascinating teaching, the **Avodat Elazar, the Kozshnitzer Rebbe zy'a**, explains that when we first are introduced to Avram, his name connotes that he is the *Av Ram*- he is the "father," if you will, of teaching the world about *Romemut Hashem* - that there is one G-d who exists above and beyond this world. However, as he enters into *Eretz Yisrael*, his understanding of our relationship to Hashem evolves to become more complete as reflected in the promise *V'Agadla Shemecha* your name will become great. His new name Avraham which corresponds in *gematria*, to all the various parts which come together to form a complete human being, represents the transformation to a more complete spiritual clarity. Avraham ceases to teach the world solely about *Romemut Hashem*- but also begins to teach the world about *Gadlut Hashem*- the greatness of G-d.

The Rebbe explains further that the term *Gadlut*- greatness can only be measured when an item is placed near something that is smaller or less than the item that is *gadol*. So too, Avraham's new name represents a spiritual evolution in Avraham's own understanding of his relationship with *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, which he begins to share with the entire world.

The name Avram marks the beginning of his spiritual journey, teaching others about

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the one G-d who exists beyond our world, however the more sophisticated understanding, represented by his new name *Avraham*, represents a transition where he begins to teach the world that *Hashem* is paradoxically also *gadol* - *Hashem* is great and immi- nently present in our lives, even as His pres- ence remains beyond our physical capacity to see or grasp.

Similarly, **Rebbe Meir HaLevi of Apta zy'a, the Ohr LaShamayim**, sees the trans- formation from **אברהם - אב** to **אברהם - אב רם** as a movement from the lofty and transcendent to the practical, to experienc- ing holiness and awareness of *Hashem* in this world. The added ה enables Avraham to bring spiritual holiness into human life and share it with others. Perhaps this is the meaning of “**ואגדלה שמך**”: true greatness is not simply rising higher, but bringing what is highest, bringing the Heavenly, into this world.

Yehi Ratzon, may each of us merit to heed each of these powerful teachings, and work to embrace the paradox that represents a more complete, heightened spiritual aware- ness: that though *Hashem* may be physically beyond us here in this world, His great pres- ence is indeed imminent and here with us, in each and every moment. ■

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