

## Go you from your land. (12:1)

Two Avos, Patriarchs, left their homeland – Avraham *Avinu* and Yaakov *Avinu*. The Torah uses “different” vernacular in describing their respective departures. Avraham is to *lech lecha*, leave, go, while concerning Yaakov, the Torah writes, *va'yeitzei*, “And he (Yaakov) went out.” *Rashi* comments that when a *tzaddik*, righteous person, leaves a place, it makes an impression. He impacts the city’s beauty, glory and luster. Why does the Torah choose to make Yaakov’s departure impactful, while Avraham’s departure seems more like an escape, as if no one really cared?

The **Chasam Sofer, zl**, distinguishes between the communities that hosted Avraham and Yaakov. The third Patriarch left a city that had come under the influence of his father, Yitzchak *Avinu*, and his grandfather, Avraham. Torah, *yiraas Shomayim*, fear of Heaven, ethics and morality were the hallmarks of this community. The citizens were refined and upstanding individuals who appreciated and venerated the individual who had raised the standard of their community. Thus, when Yaakov departed, a void was felt in the community. One of its *tzaddikim* had moved on; his presence would no longer be felt within the community.

Avraham, on the other hand, lived in a city where idol worship was the norm and moral depravity was the accepted way of life. Nimrod, with his heretical beliefs, held sway over the minds and hearts of its inhabitants. Avraham was neither revered, nor liked. He was an outcast, a *persona non grata*, whose monotheistic teachings were reviled. Therefore, his leaving made no impact on the community. Indeed, the people were happy to be rid of him.

This explanation seems enigmatic. One would think that in a city filled with *tzaddikim*, the departure of one *tzaddik* would not leave much of an impression. On the other hand, in a city where ethics and morality are at a premium, every *tzaddik* would be venerated and elevated. Yet, we see the opposite. Why?

The answer is “appreciation”: If a *tzaddik* is to leave an impression on a community, he must be appreciated. People must acknowledge his value and contribution to their community, to their personal and communal lives. Otherwise, he is not appreciated. He is just another citizen. Impact comes with appreciation, and appreciation only comes with acknowledgment. One must open his eyes to observe how the *tzaddik*’s presence has changed his life. Otherwise, the *tzaddik* may as well live elsewhere.