

Har Shalom  
Leckh Leckha  
Post Election 2016

Shabbat Shalom!!

I want to begin this morning by shocking you a little bit; this Shabbat morning, I am not going to speak about Batman, I am not going to speak about Star Trek, and yes, I am not even going to speak about Star Wars...(well, maybe a little towards the end..”).

On this Shabbat, I was to speak about Abraham, the father of our faith. This Shabbat reading we begin several months of Torah readings where we are introduced to the lives of our Avot and Imahot, our forefathers and foremothers. Those of you who follow the Torah readings week after week know that these are not pretty stories. As a matter of fact they are quite torrid, filled with every human emotion and passion possible. There is love and there is hate, there is jealousy and there is brotherly love. There is wrongdoing and there is forgiveness and of course, there is scandal, lots of it! It actually sounds a lot like the presidential campaign we just concluded.

And it all begins with Abraham and his wife Sarah and a call from God.

“And the Lord spoke to Avram saying, Leckh Leckha, go ...Leckha, from your land, from the land of your sojourning, from the land of your father into the land that I will show you...”

We know that there is a superfluous word in this sentence and the word is the word leckha.

- Literal translation is “For you”- Leave for you.
- Commentators:
  - o For your own good
  - o Midrash: for you, to find yourself
  - o Anyone else???

It is clear that God wanted to convey to avram something more than just the act of getting up and leaving everything he knew to a great unknown in a far away land.

I am a firm believer that there is no such thing as a coincidence and when I saw that it was on this Shabbat when we chose to honor Rabbi Cahan AND that it was on the heels of Veterans Day, I knew that for us,

on this Shabbat, God wanted to convey perhaps a different interpretation of the word Leckha....

One of the things that always surprises me is the secret lives of the members of the congregation. You come Shabbat after Shabbat and you think you know someone and then you learn something more about that person, something totally surprising and wonderful. Perhaps it's a hobby, or a sport. Perhaps it's something about their past, totally different than what you had envisioned.

Today, we honor our rabbi and teacher Len Cahan not for his work here at Har Shalom, which certainly is praiseworthy in its own right. But we honor Rabbi Cahan for a secret life he had, first as a Navy Chaplain, serving our country here and overseas, and more recently as a long serving member representing the Conservative Movement and the Rabbinical Assembly on the Board of the Jewish Welfare Board, which you heard about a little earlier.

As I thought about the word Leckha, I realized that on this Shabbat the word not only conveys the meaning of the word "for you", but in the

case of Rabbi Cahan and the thousands of men and women in uniform, the word Leckha conveys the thought of **only YOU**, or **it's up to you!!**

God tells Avram, Go, its up to you, it's only YOU who can do what I am asking.

The words Leckha tells us that God choses each and every one of us for our task. When Rabbi Cahan got ordained, he chose to serve the Jewish people in uniform, because, Leckha, it was not on someone else to do

that, it was HIS mission, it was HIS calling, it was up to him and

Elizabeth to leave their home and go to an unknown life of service to our country.

And when his stint in the Navy concluded, again, Rabbi Cahan again

heard the call and joined the JWB, offering counsel and advise to young rabbis serving in uniform.

My friends, the word Lecka is a personal call from God telling us, telling me, telling YOU, it's up to you!

Not only you can do it,

but Leckha,

it's up to you ONLY you can do it...and my friend, my rabbi and teacher Len Cahan heard that call....and we honor him and all veterans for that...

But this Shabbat is also the first Shabbat after a very contentious election. A LOT was said, a lot was posted for and against the candidates....and the country has chosen. And as with other big changes in our lives and our country, many are concerned, even scared as to what is the future of our country.

I woke up on Wednesday morning and during my spin exercise class I was thinking: If I was still a Navy Chaplain and the United States came to my tent asking to speak to me, what would I say to it???

Here is what I came up with:

- First, I would quote the sagest of all Rabbis:, Yoda, from Star Wars and say to America;

**“Do not fear, for “Fear is the path to the dark side. Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering and suffering leads to the Dark Side of the Force.”**

- Second, I would remind American that it is not always the figure

head that makes America great, it's the people. America was great 30 years ago, it was great 10 years ago, it was great yesterday, and it will be great tomorrow.

- And there and most important, it's time for Leckha, The Almighty is telling you, telling me, telling all of us that it is now up to us:
- If you think the election changes you, America, then what are you going to do about it? Are you going to keep working hard to contribute to the economy? Are you going to volunteer time and money to help those in need? Are you going to get involved with local politics to ensure your voice and interests are heard?
- America will only fail if you let it fail.
- Leckh, Leckha, it's up to you
  - o Continue to love all people
  - o Fight oppression with goodness and gmilut hasadim
  - o And trust in a loving and caring God that has chosen you to go and do and fight for a better world for our and our children.

As we honor today those who heard the call of our country and our people, I pray that the word Leckha inspires us not to be afraid, but to be committed to accept that mission that God has set before us.

Amen.