



# הַמִּזְרָחִי

# HAMIZRACHI

## PARSHA WEEKLY

PARSHAT LECH LECHA 5783 • 2022










ISRAEL  
Parsha Picture  
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קוּם הַתְּהִלֶּךָ בְּאֶרֶץ לְאֻרְכָּה  
וּלְרַחֲבָהּ כִּי לָךְ אֶתְנַנֶּה:  
בראשית יג:ז

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www.mizrachi.org  
www.mizrachi.tv  
office@mizrachi.org  
+972 (0)2 620 9000  
f t i

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Based in Jerusalem and with branches across the globe, Mizrahi – an acronym for *merkaz ruchani* (spiritual center) – was founded in 1902 by Rabbi Yitzchak Yaakov Reines, and is led today by Rabbi Doron Perez. Mizrahi's role was then and remains with vigor today, to be a proactive partner and to take personal responsibility in contributing to the collective destiny of *Klal Yisrael* through a commitment to Torah, the Land of Israel and the People of Israel.

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EDITOR

Rabbi Reuven Taragin

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Esther Shafier

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Ari Levine

Josh Maurer

Yaakov Panitch

Ian Schwartz

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Leah Rubin

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# A People Like All Others?

## Alone, Different and Unique



Rabbi Doron Perez

Executive Chairman, World Mizrahi

Jewish history begins with the solo journey of one man.

This monumental journey that was to shape the moral and religious course of Jewish and human history perhaps more than any other, begins in this week's parasha in response to a Divine call to walk this lone path.

The One G-d speaks to one man and singles only him out to undertake this odyssey – one person, one couple, and those closest to him.

The very first time that G-d speaks to the first Jew is in the form of this command to leave behind everything familiar. The opening words *Lech Lecha*, 'You must go' entail setting himself apart.<sup>1</sup> The rest of the verse certainly underscores the requirement to leave everything comfortable and familiar and go it alone – go... 'from your land, your birthplace, and from the house of your father, to the land that I will show you.'

Three concentric circles of belonging and identity from the outside in – leaving the place of natural patriotic national affiliation and connection (your land), leaving the place you know best that compromises your personal status, community standing and bonds of friendship (your birthplace), and leaving your extended family that has the deepest kinship with you (your father's house).

### Alone I Called on Him

The prophet Isaiah highlights the singularity and uniqueness of this journey in the following verses:

..הביטו אל-צור חצבתם, ואל-מקבת בור נקרתם. הביטו אל-אברהם אביכם, ואל-שרה תחוללכם: כי-אחד קראתי, ואברהם וארצהו. כי-נחם ה' ציון נחם כל-חבתיה וישם מדברה כעדו וערבתה כגרה' ששון ושמחה ימצא בה תודה וקול זמרה"

"... Look to the rock from whence you were hewn, to the quarry you were formed. Look back to Abraham your father and to Sarah who brought you forth. For he was **only one** when I called him, but I blessed him and made him many..." (Isaiah, 51:1-2)

Isaiah calls upon the Jewish people to look back at their founding father and mother and take note of this remarkable fact – that the transformative Jewish journey actually began alone, in a sense of solitude – with one person and one couple – a singular journey and a particularized path.

The Jewish people also set out from Egypt on a similarly independent and particular journey to the Land. Forged as distinct people in the smelting furnaces of Egyptian slavery and consolidated at Sinai by adopting its own values, culture, commandments and customs

Does this sense of a particularistic nation and a unique mission imply an eternal separation from others – an unusual 'otherness' and being different? Is this only a blessing or perhaps a kind of curse as well?

### 'A People That Dwells Apart'

The verse quoted arguably more than any other by Israeli politicians and diplomats alike is this unusual verse as part of the unlikely blessing of Bilam:

”כִּי־מֵרָאשׁ צָרִים אֶרְאֶנּוּ וּמִגְבוּעוֹת אֲשֶׁר־נָנוּ הָרַעַם לְבָדָד יִשְׁכֵּן וּבְגוֹיִם לֹא יִתְחַשֵּׁב.”

“As I see them from the mountain tops, gaze on them from the heights, **there is a people that dwells apart**, not reckoned among the nations” (Bamidbar, 23:9)

What does this blessing of ‘dwelling apart’ from all others mean? Is it good or bad – a definite blessing or also a curse?

The context is clearly a blessing, as are all the blessings of Bilam, as evidenced by Balak’s protest against Bilam for saying these words as he had been hired to curse the Jewish people, not to bless them.

What kind of blessing is it for the Jewish people to be alone among the nations and not considered, as it seems, a full part of the family of nations?

Some politicians have cited this as an example of the reality of anti-Semitism and the hostility of nations toward the Jewish people. Since this is a given, they have argued that the Jewish people and the nation-state of Israel should ignore what the nations of the world think, and certainly what their enemies think, and do what is in their own best interest. This reality of a certain degree of isolation and loneliness must be accepted as part of Jewish history.

Others have argued that this curse must be overcome in order to achieve “normalization” and peaceful international acceptance. They maintain that the mindset of a victim mentality as a persecuted people who are not accepted by others must be overcome in order to be accepted in the family of nations.

The truth is that neither of these explanations are accurate as they both interpret the verse as a curse, only their responses totally differ. One sees it as a curse of pre-determined fate that needs to be accepted while the other sees it as a curse to reject, contend with and overcome. But, as the context of the verse certainly shows, it is indeed not a curse but a blessing. The more accurate reading of the verse is not to highlight the negativity of the solitude and isolation of the Jewish people, but

rather the remarkable uniqueness and exceptionalism of their mission.

Anyone who has a unique mission is, ipso facto, also in a sense isolated and lonely – no one else has the same mission and there is not always an appropriate frame of reference to be both understood and validated. This is a potential negative corollary of the positive phenomenon of being distinct, differentiated and unique.

Rabbi Ephraim of Lunshfintz, the Kli Yakar, says on this verse that this unique path of the Jewish people began with the journey of Abraham, whom G-d sent on a unique spiritual path from the first words “Lech Lecha...”. It was here that after the Flood and later after the Tower of Babel, G-d separated a people from all others, specifically destined for the land of Canaan, in order to establish a holy nation that would be a blessing to the rest of the world. This unique path is at the heart of the Jewish journey, which is without precedent in human history.

### In what way is the Jewish nation unique?

In so many ways – we will highlight four. Firstly, their eternal **survival**. The Jewish people, arguably the most persecuted in history, have miraculously somehow survived to this day. The only two peoples left from ancient times are the Chinese and the Jews. The Chinese, however, were never driven into exile and were protected by their sheer geographical size, topography and the protection of their Great Wall. The Jewish people, on the other hand, were exiled twice and scattered to almost every country in the world for nearly 2,000 years, but miraculously survived as a distinct people.

Secondly, they have not only survived but thrived. They have managed to return from the multiple and unprecedented lengthy exile and dispersion and manage to rebuild a sustainable Jewish state contributing to human betterment in unimaginable ways.

Thirdly, they have managed to preserve their religious and cultural identity beliefs and practices. The same monotheism they

clung to 4,000 years ago is still their faith today. The Torah revealed at Sinai 3,000 years ago and their spiritual and religious mission, at its core, is the very same one today.

Fourthly, although a tiny people beginning with one person and remaining insignificant numerically, they have transformed the moral and spiritual furniture of the human mind beyond any reasonable proportion. As historian Paul Johnson has pointed out - belief in a personal and purposeful G-d through Monotheism, the 10 commandments of objective moral standards, and equality before the law are some of the many gifts of the Jews. How so few can impact on so many is the story of the Jewish People.

For these reasons, the 20th century historian, Arnold Tyonbee, called the Jews ‘a fossil nation’ and could not place them in any type of historiosophical category in his analysis of the basic patterns of human history. They simply broke every rule and pattern of history. His way of dealing with them was to ignore them completely – to regard them as a kind of anomaly, a fossil from times past that should be ignored because they are incidental to human history. Denial is a way of dealing with or not dealing with inconvenient facts.

It was this that the great Jewish and Israeli rabbi and diplomat, Yaakov Herzog opposed and came to debate. He made the controversial stand as the Israeli ambassador to Canada to debate the great professor at McGill University in 1961. Herzog believed that such malicious reading of history and subsequent delegitimizing of Israel needed to be countered – even if it meant an official representative of the State of Israel engaging in a debate with an antagonist professor. This debate and subsequently many of Herzog’s speeches were encapsulated in his book entitled *A People that Dwells Alone*.

Herzog has argued time and time again that the key to understanding the anomaly of Jewish history is appreciating its uniqueness. The key to understanding the Jewish right to Eretz Yisrael cannot be understood without understanding

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PIRKEI AVOT

# The Space Between Us



**Rabbi Reuven Taragin**  
Educational Director, World Mizrachi  
Dean of Overseas Students, Yeshivat Hakotel

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רבי חנינא סגן הכהנים אומר, הוי מתפלל בשלומה של מלכות, שאלמלא מורא, איש את רעהו חיים בלעו.

רבי חנינא בן תרדיון אומר: שנים שישבו וראו ביניהם דברי תורה, הרי זה מושב לצים, שנגמר (תהלים א) ובמושב לצים לא ישב. אבל שנים שישבו ויש ביניהם דברי תורה, שכינה שרונה ביניהם, שנגמר (מלאכי ג) אז נדברו יראי ה' איש אל רעהו ויקשב ה' וישמע ויכתב ספר זכרון לפניו ליראי ה' ולחשבי שמו... (אבות ג:ב)

This second *mishnah* of Avot's third *perek* quotes two seemingly unrelated statements in the name of two Rebbi Chaninas. Why are the two statements placed together? Are they connected by only the shared first name of the rabbis?

## The Interpersonal

Looking more carefully at the two statements, we notice that both include the same three words — “איש את רעהו” (man with his fellow). This is because both statements address forms of interpersonal relationships.

Though people are meant to assist and enrich each other's lives, our natural selfishness and competitiveness often make relationships tense and even hurtful. Our *mishnah* teaches how to avoid dangerous relationships and how to forge positive ones.

The *mishnah* opens with Rebbi Chanina S'gan HaKohanim (RCS" H) warning of an anarchic situation where people “swallow each other alive.” Government is needed to keep people from abusing one another. Rebbi Chanina S" H encourages us to pray for the peace of the monarchy so it can fulfill this important role.

Rebbi Chanina ben Teradyon's (RCB" T) statement, quoted immediately after RCS" H's, teaches how to create the ideal interpersonal relationship — one that (even!) Hashem's Shechina resides within. He explains that when people include Torah as a basic part of their relationships and meetings, Hashem not only joins, but even records their words in a special “book.”

Though the idea of Hashem's *Shechina* residing amongst people learning together appears later in this *perek* as part of a Rebbi Chalafta ben Dosa's longer list, it is also

mentioned by our *mishnah* to highlight the impact Torah learning has on our relationships. RCB" T's usage of the term “*yesh beineihem divrei Torah*” to describe the context of the two people's Torah learning emphasizes this point.<sup>1</sup> His goal is to depict not just two people learning, but specifically the Torah presence “between them.” Hashem is not just present, but also records their Torah because Torah is what the two share, their bond, and what “fills the space between them.”<sup>2</sup>

## Meeting Without Torah

RCB" T also relates to the flipside — the problematic nature of meetings that lack Torah content. Sharing Torah at meetings is not just ideal; it is critical. Without it, the meeting is deemed a “*moshav leitzim* (meeting of scoffers).” Why is meeting without including Torah content so severe?<sup>3</sup>

Some<sup>4</sup> explain that when meetings lack a Torah context, they inevitably gravitate to problematic content.<sup>5</sup> The Rambam<sup>6</sup> details a process like this: though conversations may initially concern neutral (meaningless) matters, the topic often moves to negativity about other people and eventually even about Hashem Himself. The Rambam concludes by contrasting this with “*sichat kashrei Yisrael* (the conversation of kosher Jews)” which focuses on Torah and wisdom.<sup>7</sup>

This answer explains the juxtaposition of our *mishnah* to the *perek*'s first *mishnah*. The first *mishnah* encourages reflecting upon the nature of our existence in order to inspire us to avoid *aveirah*. Our *mishnah* adds that avoiding *aveirah* is not enough. We need to involve ourselves in positive content. Spiritual, like physical, nature abhors a vacuum. If we do not fill our time with *chochmah*, it will end up being filled with negative content.<sup>8</sup>

## Filling a Void of Value

We can take the *mishnah*'s message a step further: A meeting lacking Torah content is problematic, not only because of the eventual negative consequence but in and of itself. We see this in the proof text quoted by *mishnah*:<sup>9</sup> “...*u'v'moshav leitzim lo yashav* (he did not sit in the scoffer's seat).” How does this *pasuk*, which merely encourages avoiding a *moshav leitzim*, teach that meeting without Torah is considered one?

The commentaries on the *mishnah*<sup>10</sup> explain that the proof is from the continuation of the *pasuk*: “*ki im b'Torat Hashem cheftzo* (rather, he desires Hashem's Torah).”<sup>11</sup> Both parts of the *pasuk* together make an important point. We should avoid meaningless meetings because we desire Torah learning so much that we can't bear to waste the time we could be spending learning. Additionally, a person passionate about Torah will naturally share Torah with anyone he meets with.

The Chasid Yavetz and the Sefat Emet compare such a person to one given the opportunity to keep whatever gold coins he manages to count out over a limited period of time. A person who squanders the opportunity by wasting his time clearly does not appreciate the value of gold. So too, a person who truly values Torah will take full advantage of the opportunity to speak in Torah with anyone they meet.<sup>12</sup>

The question of how we spend our time with others and in general has become even more important in contemporary times. The industrial and technological revolutions afford us more time and meaningful opportunities for how to spend it. Most of the world devotes most of this newfound precious time to (at best) meaningless pursuits. We are blessed with access to Torah

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HAFTARAH - PARSHANUT ON THE PARSHA

# Those Who Wait Upon G-d Shall Renew Their Strength



**Rabbanit Shani Taragin**  
Educational Director, World Mizrahi

While preparing this week's dvar Torah, I came across Rav Yehudah Shaviv's explanation as to the choice of this week's haftarah on, and decided to share his words, as translated by Kaeren Fish, with you:

"Parashat Lekh-Lekha is the first parasha that begins to recount the story of Avraham Avinu, the nation's first patriarch. It begins with G-d's command that Avraham cut himself off from his familial and geographical past, and ends with G-d's command that he permanently mark his flesh with a sign - circumcision - which will differentiate between him and his household and those around him. In between these two commands are many other details and events, some of which bear significance for all future generations, as we are taught: 'What happens to the forefathers serves as a sign for their descendants.' (See Ramban on Bereishit 12:6.)

"Yishayahu's prophecy typically does not elaborate at length concerning the patriarchs, since its focus is the prophet's own generation and those that follow. When the prophets speak of the patriarchs at all it is generally as reinforcement for their current message. Indeed, Yishayahu's prophecy here (40:27-41:16) mentions 'the seed of Avraham, My beloved' (41:9) - but is this sufficient reason for this prophecy to have been chosen as the haftora for this week's parasha?

"We may suggest that the description of Avraham here - 'Avraham, My beloved' - is a true characterization of our first patriarch. On the basis of his love for G-d, Avraham abandoned all that was familiar to him and followed the Divine word to an unknown land.

"On the basis of this love, Avraham does not rest. He wanders from place to place in order to spread his monotheistic faith and bring the knowledge of G-d to the world. This continuous wandering is his most outstanding feature as described in our

parasha, appropriately named 'Lekh-lekha' - a life of constant journeying. Even towards the end of the parasha G-d's command is couched in terms of movement: 'Walk before Me and be perfect' (17:1).

"This idea of constant movement and progress is meant to serve as an example and precedent for his descendants: 'They who wait upon G-d shall renew their strength, they shall rise up on wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not become faint' (Yishayahu 40:31).

"Just as Avraham constantly wanders on, and just as his descendants are called upon to be constantly progressing, so too is G-d's selection of Avraham continuous. His children are also perpetually chosen, as the prophecy teaches: 'But you, Israel, are My servant, Yaakov - whom I have chosen, the seed of Avraham My beloved...I have chosen you and not despised you' (41:8-9).

"This prophecy may be declaring to generations to come that the selection of Avraham did not automatically bestow upon all his descendants a similar status of selection. The continuation of the choosing process was selective; it included Avraham's descendants but not all of them - 'YA'AKOV whom I have chosen' - to the exclusion of Yaakov's brother Esav, his uncle Yishmael, and the other children of Avraham's concubines.

"However, it would seem that this prophecy was selected as the haftora for this week's parasha mainly owing to the traditional commentary of our Sages on the verses: 'Who raised one from the east whom righteousness met wherever he set his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings; his sword makes them as dust... That he pursued them, and passed on safely, on a path that his feet had not trodden. Who has wrought and done it? He Who calls the generations from the beginning...' (41:2-4)

"Whom and what are being described here? Targum Yonatan reveals: 'Who came and

emigrated from the east? Avraham, the choicest of all tzadikim.'

"And so this prophecy in fact describes Avraham's original journey from the east. Out of all the events which occurred during his stay in Canaan, the prophecy here addresses only one: his war against the kings. It appears that this was a pivotal event in Avraham's life which became a central precedent for his descendants, as several different nations participated in this event, thus yielding ramifications for all of humanity.

"Moreover, it is in the context of this event that Avraham is characterized as the 'ivri' (literally - from the other side): 'And one who had escaped came and told Avram the "ivri"...' (14:13). The implication here is that he stood alone against the whole world: 'Rabbi Yehuda said, the whole world was on one side and he was on the other side (me-ever echad)' (Bereishit Rabba 42).

"Contrary to the situation as it appears in the parasha, with the world divided into two - the camp of the four kings vs. the camp of the five kings - the expression 'Avram the ivri' teaches that in fact all the kings were on one side, and Avraham alone, with his household, was on the other.

"Here the break between himself and the nations of the world reaches its climax. For his descendants, this serves as a message of hope, relevant in the face of many different enemies: 'They who were furious with you shall be ashamed and confounded... they who wage war against you shall be like nothing and like nought' (41:11-12).

"But just as we hear of Avraham's warring encounter with the nations of the world, we similarly learn of the purpose of his encounter: 'Who raised (awakened) one from the east... Rabbi Reuven said, The nations of the world were tarrying in accepting monotheism, and who awakened them to belief in G-d? Avraham...' (Midrash Tehillim 100).

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# Halachic Q&A



## Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon

Head, Mizrahi Rabbinic Council | Rabbi of the Gush Etzion Regional Council

Rosh Yeshivah, Jerusalem College of Technology | Founder and Chairman, Sulamot and La'Ofek

**Question: If I wake up in the middle of the night and realize that I did not say Hamapil earlier, should I say it?**

Answer: Shu"t Betzel Chochma deals with this question, and he writes that you should make a bracha (and clean your hands before doing so). If one were to eat half of an apple and realize that he did not make a bracha, of course he would make a bracha at the latter point. The same logic applies here.

**Question: If I go to sleep in the afternoon and will sleep through the night, should I say Hamapil before going to sleep?**

Answer: The Biur Halacha writes about a case where one goes to bed just before alot hashachar (dawn) but will fall asleep right after. Does this person make a bracha of Hamapil? Is the bracha of Hamapil at night dependent on the time of saying the bracha or the time of actually sleeping? In practice, because we say safek brachot lehakel, the Biur Halacha writes not to make a bracha. Seemingly, we can apply the same logic in our case. The bracha would be during the day and the sleep would be during the night, so we will say safek brachot lehakel. Additionally, there is more of a reason not to make a bracha in this case. The bracha of Hamapil was instituted over sleep at night, and therefore, here there would be a hefsek between the bracha and the sleeping on which the bracha was instituted.

**Question: In the army, we often get up for guard duty shift in the middle of the night and then return to sleep. If my first sleep will be shorter than the sleep I will have after my shift, when should I make the bracha of Hamapil? Should I wait to say it before going back to sleep?**

Answer: The Gemara (Brachot 23b) says Answer: The answer to the question is seemingly dependent on two different understandings of the nature of the bracha of Hamapil. If Hamapil is essentially thanking G-d for the minhag shel olam (common order/practice of the world) of sleeping at night, you seemingly would make the bracha before you go to sleep for the first time. If Hamapil is a Birkat hanehenin (blessing of enjoyment) and you are making the bracha over your sleep, then there is more room to say that you would make the bracha before the longer sleep.

In practice, the Shulchan Aruch paskins that one makes the bracha on the first sleep. You may wonder: How can the bracha on the first sleep also work for the second sleep which may be hours later? Does this not constitute a hefsek (interruption)? This is really not a difficulty, as it is similar to eating an apple. One must not interrupt between the bracha and the initial bite into the apple, but afterwards, you continue eating the apple without a bracha even if you spoke or did other things in between. So too, one must

be careful not to interrupt between the Hamapil and initial sleep, but afterwards, a hefsek is not problematic.

However, there is in fact a difference between the cases. By Birkot hanehenin, if you are mesiach da'at (removal of thoughts/period of unawareness) from the apple, you do in fact need to make a new bracha. In our case, even though the soldier goes to do a guard shift, he does not make a new bracha. This is because the majority of people who wake up in the middle of the night are still thinking about going back to sleep and are not mesiach da'at from their sleep. This is certainly true with soldiers in the army who often count the hours of their shmira down until they can finally go back to sleep. Lehavdil, this is similar to what Tosfot says in Brachot 11b regarding Birkot Hatorah. A person makes one bracha in the morning and it serves him for the entire day, even when doing many other things. Tosfot explains that a person does not lose awareness of his responsibility to be learning Torah, and therefore, even when doing other things, a person always has the hope and direction to return to his learning. I shared this idea with Moreinu Harav Amital zt"l and he agreed.

● *Translated from Hebrew and abbreviated by Yaakov Panitch.*

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"Although Avraham had to resort to the sword in order to free his nephew from the clutches of evil, this episode in no way blurred the true purpose of his life and destiny.

"In the generations to come, too, Israel will be given the strength to pursue and destroy their enemies. They will be compared to 'a new sharp threshing tool with teeth' (41:15) – a threshing tool by means of which they

shall thresh the grain in order to extract the good, the edible interior, while dispersing the chaff into the wind."



# תקציר פרשת לך לך

הרבנית שרון רימון  
Tanach teacher and author



האחריות לבחור לאן ללכת, ומה לעשות במקום אליו הוא מגיע. לאורך חייו, אברם מחליט בעצמו מהו היעד הנכון והוא נדרש לבחור וליזום.

אברם יצא מתוך התרבות ה"בבלית" של אנשי מגדל בבל שניסו לעשות שם לעצמם ולהאדיר את כוחם ע"י התקבצות ושיבת קבע במקום אחד. בשונה מהם, אברם מבין שתפקידו לקרוא בשם ה', אין הוא יושב במקום אחד אלא נודד והולך ממקום למקום, בונה מזבחות וקורא בשם ה'. הליכה זו איננה רק פיזית, אלא מסמלת את דרך חייו של אברם, שכל מהותה הוא תהליך. דווקא אברם שלא שם עצמו במרכז, אלא הולך אחר ה', מקבל את הארץ לו ולזרעו, בעוד אנשי דור הפלגה מתפזרים ושםם אובד.

נח. בשונה מאברם, נוח מתואר כ"איש צדיק תמים ה'יה בדרתיו את האלהים התהלך נח" (ו,ט).

מדוע העלימה התורה את סיבת בחירתו של אברם ואת צדיקותו, ואילו אצל נוח התורה מבארת ומרחיבה?

צדקתו של נוח היא הסיבה להצלתו מהמבול, נוח ניצל מן המבול כגמול על מעשי העבר שלו. לעומת זאת, אצל אברם התורה ממקדת את תשומת הלב בעתיד הצפוי לאברם, ומשום כך היא מעלימה באופן מכוון את תיאור ראשית ימיו. העתיד הצפוי לאברם לוט בערפל, לא ברור לאן הוא צריך ללכת, לשם מה הוא הולך, ומה יעשה במקום שאליו יגיע. על אברם מוטל התפקיד לעצב בעצמו את העתיד.

התיאור הראשון של אברם הוא הליכתו עם אביו מאור כשדים לחרן והציווי הראשון שנצטוו בו מה' הוא "לך-לך" תיאורים אלו מאפיינים את יסוד ההליכה של אברם. עיקר מהותו של אברם היא ההליכה, הוא אינו הולך על מנת להגיע, אלא עצם הליכתו אחר ה' היא העיקר. אך אין בהליכה זו הקטנת ראש של הליכה בעיניים עצומות, אדרבה על אברם מוטלת

פרשת לך לך פותחת בקריאה של ה' לאברם "לך-לך מארץך וממולדתך ומבית אביך אל-הארץ אשר ארצה". התורה לא מודיעה לנו מיהו אברם ומה הסיבה לבחירתו, ונדמה שהבחירה באברם היא סתמית בלבד. מדוע ה' בוחר דווקא באברם לשליחות זו?

את אשר סתמה התורה בביאור דמותו של אברם ביארו ופירשו בהרחבה המדרשים. במדרש (בראשית רבה פרשה ח) מתואר כיצד אברם משכנע את בני דורו לנטוש את עבודת האילים ואף מנתץ את הפסלים. בעקבות כך הוא נתפס ועומד לפני נמרוד מנהיג הדור וכעונש על מעשיו מושלך לכבשן האש. אברם ניצל ומשפחתו בורחת מאור כשדים לעבר ארץ כנען. נמרוד הוא מנהיג דור הפלגה המורד בה' ע"י בניית מגדל בבל, לעומתו אברם מוביל בחייו דרך הפוכה, של אמונה בבורא עולם וקריאה בשם ה'. מדרשי חז"ל אכן מבארים ומסבירים היטב מדוע נבחר אברם, אך אין הם מסבירים דבר אחד - מדוע התורה בעצמה לא נימקה והסבירה את בחירתו של ה' באברם? שאלה זו מתעצמת לאור הפסוקים מפרשת

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the uniqueness of the Jewish spiritual mission.

## Normal, Abnormal and Unique

Israel as a nation should obviously strive to normalize its relations with all countries willing to do so - this is the nature of normative international statecraft and diplomacy.

But, emphasized Herzog, Israel should never seek to be a 'normal nation like all other nations' in terms of its values, culture, heritage and religious history. The Jewish people are decidedly different, and they must preserve that as a nation. Its international diplomacy must be guided by this. It must cultivate its relations with other nations out of a deep understanding

of the uniqueness of Jewish culture and the uniqueness of its contribution.<sup>2</sup>

The path of Abraham and the people he founded is completely unique. It is a fusion of the sacred and the secular, of geopolitics and metaphysics, of nationality and spirituality that exists only in the Jewish people. If we do not acknowledge this and look at Jewish history only through material eyes, Herzog argues, then we can do no better than to be seen as a peculiar nation, at best a strange fossil of history and at worst an ugly exception to be misunderstood, undermined and demonized.

Without seeing the distinctiveness of Jewish history, its 'otherness', it cannot be understood. Instead of discriminating against them because of this and applying double standards, they should be seen in a

unique light - to learn from and emulate. It is the inability to accept this Jewish uniqueness that has led to discrimination and demonization. When viewed fairly and for who they are they are a great source of blessing to all. As G-d charged Abraham ויהי ברכה - You will be a source of blessing to all.<sup>3</sup>

1. This point arises from the use of these two words together - see the comments of Rav S.R Hirsch and the Netziv on this verse.
2. Rabbi Menachem Mendel Kasher, Torah Sheleima, on Bamidbar (23:9), Footnote 58.
3. The word blessing appears five times in the opening verses of the Parasha - the key Jewish mission is to be a blessing to all.

# The First Aliyah



**Sivan Rahav Meir and Yedidya Meir**  
World Mizrahi Scholars-in-Residence

Actually, Avraham Avinu was the first *oleh chadash* (new immigrant) to the Land of Israel. This week, we recognize this fact officially – Avraham’s “*aliyah day*” – in parashat Lech Lecha. Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin writes that all the challenges Avraham overcame – all the tests he passed – have given us strength throughout the generations to overcome those same challenges and pass those same tests. So, too, regarding *aliyah*: “Every person’s sudden awakening to get up and make *aliyah* to the Holy Land has its source in the power of Avraham to meet the challenge of ‘Go forth from your land.’”

Ever since that first “Lech-Lecha,” millions have continued to follow in the footsteps of Avraham. Among them were Chasidim of the Baal Shem Tov, students of the Vilna Gaon, Jews of Yemen in “Operation on Eagles’ Wings,” the pioneers before the founding of the State, the Jews of Iraq in “Operation Ezra and Nehemiah,” immigrants from East and West after the founding of the State, Jews from the former Soviet Union after the fracturing of the Iron Curtain, Jews from Ethiopia in “Operation Moses,” Jews from the United States through “Nefesh B’Nefesh,” Jews from France, and many others.

This is an unprecedented phenomenon in world history: A people scattered in every direction, to the furthest corners of the earth, stays faithful to a single piece of land, and ultimately returns to it after two thousand years.

It’s not easy to leave your land and your father’s house, but perhaps the awareness that you are making the same journey as Avraham gives you strength.



Three years ago was the first time that I saw *Aliyah* from the other side. Not the emotional arrival at Ben-Gurion Airport, but the excited packing up in the USA. Our neighbor, Rachel Kastner, is on her way to Israel. After high school in Manhattan, after Columbia University, after she already began working in the movie industry in America, she heard the ancient command: “Lech lecha, go forward.”

At her going away party tonight, everyone had to wear blue and white. Rachel explained her experience this way:

“Over the last few weeks, I was not thinking at all about big ideals but only about little details. I am not involved right now in Zionism, Judaism or Avraham Avinu, but in the weight of my suitcase, how I am going to buy a washing machine in Israel, and how I will find work after I arrive. I thought about Avraham Avinu and how he heard the same divine command and how he had to pack his tent and wander and search for food and water. The Torah also gives us details about the hunger and thirst, and all the hardships along the way.

Because everything important and great that we do in life also consists of forms that we need to fill out and lines in which we have to stand and wait. If only we could feel meaning in the small details, too. It reminds me of the saying that G-d is in the details. Lech lecha. Go forward, despite the bureaucracy...”



Do we have the courage to swim against the stream, even against the torrent of social media “likes”? To be in the minority? To be different? The weekly Torah portion, parashat Lech lecha, presents us with the

father of our nation, Avraham Avinu, who blazes a new trail. He teaches us not to be concerned about Judaism’s refusal to adopt the ways of the surrounding culture. Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch explains the Jewish DNA which Avraham passed down to us, an inheritance for all the generations that would come after him: “The isolation of Avraham was the result of his total opposition to the culture of his day. His values stood in stark contrast to the accepted values of that era. Avraham’s values were a rejection of the attitude that: ‘I am a morally upright person of consequence since I live according to what fashion dictates’. For Avraham Avinu, what mattered was a person’s relationship with G-d. In our times, people advocate for ‘Judaism according to the spirit of the times’. The sharpest protest against this idea is the first *mitzvah* that was spoken to Avraham: Lech lecha! Go forth! Be different! Did the appearance of Avraham in history fit the ‘spirit of the times’ in Babylonia, Assyria, Sidon, Egypt? From the time of Avraham, until today, great courage and complete faith in our inner truth is demanded of us. How could we have survived – and how will we survive – if we had not inherited from Avraham Avinu a permanent minority status that comes with the courage to be different?”



מה הדבר הכי אמריקאי, הכי שונה, שחווינו בשליחות בארצות הברית? ללא ספק: “אמזון פריים”. שירות של חברת אמזון שמביא לדלת הבית את מה שהזמנת תוך 24 שעות. זה נשמע עניין טכני, אבל הוא מהותי מאוד. מדובר על מצב תודעתי חדש שבו אם אתה רוצה משהו – אתה מקבל אותו. רק תזמין עכשיו, ולמחרת הוא בידך. זה לא שבישראל יצאנו לשאוב מים מהבאר, אבל בכל זאת הכנו רשימות וחשבנו מה צריך. המיידיות הזו היא הרסנית למי שרוצה לפתח איפוק, תכנון והמתנה, ולהצליח לדחות סיפוקים.

*Continued on next page*



# For the Shabbat Table



**Rabbi Danny Mirvis**  
Deputy CEO, World Mizrachi  
Rabbi at Ohel Moshe Synagogue, Herzliya Pituach

“**A**nd Hashem said to Avram after Lot had parted from him, ‘Raise your eyes now and see from the place where you are – to the north and to the south and to the east and to the west. For all the land that you see – I give it to you and to your descendants forever. And I shall place your descendants like the dust of the earth, so that if a person can count the dust of the earth, so your descendants will be counted. Arise! Walk about the land by its length and by its width! For I have given it to you’” (Bereishit 13:14-17).

After parting ways with Lot, Avram is commanded by Hashem to look out across the entire Land of Israel and promised that everything he sees will forever belong to him and his descendants, who will be innumerable like the dust of the earth.

Why does Hashem specifically bless us to be like the dust of the earth? If the sole intention of the blessing is that we will be innumerable, then surely there are less degrading comparisons available, such as the sand of the sea or the stars of the

sky (Bereishit 22:17). What is this specific comparison used?

The Midrashim (Bereishit Rabba 41:9, Midrash Tehillim 110) explain that people tread on the dust of the earth, kick it around and show it no respect whatsoever. Yet one day, those people will pass away and be buried in the dust of the earth, which shall remain on top forever. Similarly, Hashem blesses us that although nations will come along and treat us like the dust of the earth – tread on us, kick us around and persecute us – ultimately we shall remain on top, while those nations will be buried and forgotten.

Based on Seforno (Bereishit 28:14), we can explain that being like the dust of the earth is not only a blessing itself, but a prerequisite for the blessings of the accompanying verses. “G-d’s future salvation will be after the great humiliation of Israel” – It is once we have reached our lowest ebb and become like the dust of the earth that our salvation will arrive and we will spread out in a land of our own.

The Midrash (Tehillim 20:2) tells the story of a father and son who were on a journey.

As is the norm when taking children on a long journey, the restless son turned to his father and asked, “Where is the state?” (i.e. “Are we nearly there yet?”) The father responded, “I will give you a sign – when you see the cemetery then you know we are nearly there”. Cemeteries used to be placed on the outskirts of cities, explaining the father’s response, yet this Midrash is not coming to provide a handy tip for dealing with restless children. This is the story of the Jew in exile. Once we reach the cemetery – when we are faced with death, persecution and everything looks bleak – our redemption is near.

These messages hold specific relevance for our generation today. Looking back at the last century we can deeply empathise, both with being treated like the dust of the earth and with coming through the cemetery to reach our land. Following all the suffering, persecution and humiliation we have experienced, may it be the will of Hashem that we are truly in the process of our final redemption.

Shabbat Shalom!

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ועל מה הם רבו? חז"ל מספרים שהרועים של לוט שלחו את הבהמות שלהם לרעות בחופשיות בשדות זרים. הרועים של אברהם היו מוכיחים אותם ואומרים להם שמדובר בגזל. רועי אברהם הקפידו תמיד לשים זמם (כלומר: מחסום, רסן) על פיות הבהמות, כדי שלא לגנוב חלילה אפילו קצת דשא ממי שכבר ישב בארץ. המנטליות הזאת של לוט לא מתאימה לארץ ישראל, ובפרשה מסופר שהוא יוצא לגור – לא מפתיע – בסדום.

המסר הוא לא רק לילדי גן: רוצה לרשת את ארץ ישראל? להשמיע דיבורים גדולים על זכותנו על הארץ? זה מתחיל בזה שהבהמה שלך לא תיקח ביש מהשדה של השכן.

שנים, כשהילדים חזרו מהגן עם הדפים על פרשת “לך לך”, אני זוכרת ששמתי לב שהגננת התרכזת בשני נושאים, גדול מאוד וקטן מאוד.

הנושא הראשון הוא היסטורי ודרמטי: “כִּי אֶת כָּל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה רֹאֶה לְךָ אֶתְנַתְּנָה וְלִזְרַעְךָ עַד עוֹלָם... קוּם הִתְהַלֵּךְ בְּאֶרֶץ לְאֶרְכָּה וְלִרְחֹבָה כִּי לְךָ אֶתְנַתְּנָה.” אחרי פרשות מאוד אוניברסליות (“בראשית” ו”נח”), זוהי הפרשה הלאומית הראשונה: יש בה עם ויש בה ארץ. הקשר שלנו לארץ ישראל מתחיל. אבל זה לא מספיק. למה שאברהם ובניו (כלומר, אנחנו) יזכו לגור בארץ? כאן פירטה הגננת עניין אחר, קטן לכאורה: היא סיפרה מה קרה במריבה בין אברהם לבין לוט, שניהם הרי חיו יחד בהתחלה, אבל נאלצו להיפרד בגלל מריבה בין הרועים שלהם.

בשבת, בבית הכנסת ישראל הצעיר בשכונת לורנס בניו יורק, דיבר הרב יעקב טראמפ על תכונה של אברהם אבינו שאנחנו נוטים לשכוח: סבלנות. בעצם, הוא לא זכה שחלומו יתגשם בחייו. הוא יצא לדרך למסע, עם הרבה אורך רוח. שנים ארוכות לא היה לו ילד, והוא המשיך להאמין. גם אחרי שיצחק נולד, אברהם לא זכה לראות את כל הנבואות וההבטחות מתגשמות. למעשה, אנחנו אלה שצריכים להמשיך ולהגשים אותן. התרבות מסביב דוחפת אותנו אל סיפוקים מידיים, בלי הרבה מאמץ. פרשת לך לך מזכירה לנו שלפעמים צריך עמל וסבלנות של אלפי שנים.



הגננת יודעת מה הן עושות. הן לא יכולות ללמד את כל פרטי הפרשה, אז הן בוחרות את העיקר. לפני כמה

# Journey of the Generations



Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l

**M**ark Twain said it most pithily: When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in seven years.

Whether Freud was right or wrong about the Oedipus complex, there is surely this much truth to it: that the power and pain of adolescence is that we seek to define ourselves as different, individuated, *someone other than* our parents.

When we were young they were the sustaining presence in our lives, our security, our stability, the source that grounds us in this world. The first and deepest terror we have as very young children is separation anxiety: the absence of parents, especially of the mother. Young children will play happily so long as their mother or caregiver is within sight. Absent that, and there is panic. We are too young to venture into the world on our own. It is precisely the stable, predictable presence of parents in our early years that gives us a basic sense of trust in life.

But then comes the time, as we approach adulthood, when we have to learn to make our own way in the world. Those are the years of searching and in some cases, rebellion. They are what make adolescence so fraught. The Hebrew word for youth – the root is N-A-R – has these connotations of ‘awakening’ and ‘shaking.’ We begin to define ourselves by reference to our friends, our peer-group, rather than our family. Often there is tension between the generations.

The literary theorist Harold Bloom wrote two fascinating books, *The Anxiety of Influence* and *Maps of Misreading*,<sup>1</sup> in which, in Freudian style, he argued that strong poets make space for themselves by deliberately misinterpreting or misunderstanding their predecessors. Otherwise – if you were really in awe of the great poets that came before you – you would be stymied by a sense that everything that could be said has been said, and better than you could possibly do. Creating the space we need to be ourselves often involves an adversarial relationship to those who came before us, and that includes our parents.

One of the great discoveries that tends to come with age is that, having spent what seems like a lifetime of running away from our parents, we have become very much like them – and the further away we ran, the closer we became. Hence the truth in Mark Twain’s insight. It needs time and distance to see their wisdom, to see how much we owe our parents, and to acknowledge how much of them lives on in us.

The way the Torah does this in relation to Abraham (or Abram as he was then called) is remarkable in its subtlety. Lech Lecha, and indeed Jewish history, begins with the words, “G-d said to Abraham, ‘Go from your land, your birthplace, and your father’s house to a land I will show you’” (Gen. 12:1). This is the boldest beginning of any account of a life in the Hebrew Bible. It seems to come from nowhere. The Torah gives us no portrait of Abraham’s childhood, his youth, his relationship with the other members of his family, how he came to marry Sarah, or the qualities of character that made G-d single him out to become the initiator

of what ultimately turned out to be the greatest revolution in the religious history of humankind, what is called nowadays Abrahamic monotheism.

It was this biblical silence that led to the midrashic tradition almost all of us learned as children, that Abraham broke the idols in his father’s house. This is Abraham the Revolutionary, the iconoclast, the man of new beginnings who overturned everything his father stood for. This is, if you like, Freud’s Abraham.

Perhaps it is only as we grow older that we are able to go back and read the story again, and realise the significance of the passage at the end of the *previous* parsha. It says this:

Terach took his son Abram, his grandson Lot, son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. But when they came to Harran, they settled there. (Gen. 11:31)

It turns out, in other words, that Abraham left his father’s house long after he had left his land and his birthplace. His birthplace was in Ur, in what is today southern Iraq, but he only separated from his father in Harran, in what is now northern Syria. Terach, Abraham’s father, accompanied him for the first half of his journey. *He went with his son*, at least part of the way.

What actually happened? There are two possibilities. The first is that Abraham received his call in Ur. His father Terach then agreed to go with him, intending to accompany him to the land of Canaan, though he did not complete the journey, perhaps because of his advanced age. The second is that the call came to Abraham

in Harran, in which case *his father had already begun the journey on his own initiative* by leaving Ur. Either way, the break between Abraham and his father was far less dramatic than we first thought.

I have argued elsewhere<sup>2</sup> that biblical narrative is far more subtle than we usually take it to be. It is deliberately written to be understood at different levels at different stages in our moral growth. There is a surface narrative. But there is also, often, a deeper story that we only come to notice and understand when we have reached a certain level of maturity (I call this the concealed counter-narrative). Genesis 11-12 is a classic example.

When we are young we hear the enchanting – indeed empowering – story of Abraham breaking his father’s idols, with its message that a child can sometimes be right and a parent wrong, especially when it comes to spirituality and faith. Only much later in life do we hear the far deeper truth – hidden in the guise of a simple genealogy at the end of the previous parsha – that Abraham was actually completing a journey his father began.

There is a line in the book of Joshua (24:2) – we read it as part of the Haggadah on Seder night – that says, “In the past your

ancestors lived beyond the Euphrates River, including Terach the father of Abraham and Nahor. They worshiped other gods.” So there was idolatry in Abraham’s family background. But Genesis 11 says that it was Terach who took Abraham from Ur – not Abraham who took Terach – to go to the land of Canaan. There was no immediate and radical break between father and son.

Indeed it is hard to imagine how it could have been otherwise. Abram – Abraham’s original name – means “mighty father”. Abraham himself was chosen “so that he will instruct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord” (Gen. 18:19) – that is, he was chosen to be a model parent. How could a child who rejected the way of his father become a father of children who would not reject his way in turn?<sup>3</sup> It makes more sense to say that Terach already had doubts about idolatry and it was he who inspired Abraham to go further, spiritually and physically. Abraham continued a journey his father had begun, thereby helping Isaac and Jacob, his son and grandson, to chart their own ways of serving G-d – the same G-d but encountered in different ways.

Which brings us back to Mark Twain. Often we begin by thinking how different

we are from our parents. It takes time for us to appreciate how much they helped us become the people we are. Even when we thought we were running away, we were in fact continuing their journey. Much of what we are is because of what they were.

#### AROUND THE SHABBAT TABLE:

- How are you similar to your parents, and how are you different?
- Are you continuing the journey your parents began?
- If Terach worshipped idols, why do you think it is important for Rabbi Sacks to suggest that Avraham was still influenced by him and continued his journey?

1. Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973); *A Map of Misreading* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).
2. Jonathan Sacks, *Not in God’s Name: Confronting Religious Violence* (New York: Schocken Books, 2017).
3. Rashi (on Gen. 11:31) says it was to conceal the break between son and father that the Torah records the death of Terach before G-d’s call to Abraham. However, see Ramban ad loc.

*Continued from page 4*

— the study of which is the best use of our time.

The *tefilla* Rabbi Nechunya ben Hakaneh said when leaving the *beit midrash*<sup>13</sup> (which we recite as part of a *siyum*) includes thanks to Hashem for including us amongst the *yoshvei beit hamidrash* (those who sit in the Beit Hamidrash) and not *yoshvei karanot* (idlers). It is one or the other: either we have Torah learning as a constant goal (even when we are unable to be involved in it) or, inevitably, we waste much of our time idling. Even if we sometimes have meaningful things to be involved in, only a commitment to and focus upon Torah learning ensures that we maximize our time.

May our *mishnah* inspire us to enrich all of our friendships and meetings with Torah learning and make Torah learning the staple of our lives.

● Summarized by Rafi Davis.

1. Note that the original version of this *mishnah* (as evidenced by manuscript versions) leaves out the part about one person learning.
2. For more on this topic, see Rav Chaim Volozhiner’s *Ruach Chaim*.
3. This question is less problematic according to Rabbeinu Yonah (Avot 3:2) who explains the *mishnah* as referring to two people who set aside time to be involved in problematic or meaningless pursuits. The simple interpretation of the *mishnah*, though, is that it refers even to people meeting for constructive purposes. (See, for example, Rashbatz in his *Magen Avot* to this *mishnah*.)
4. See, for example, the commentary of the Mirkeves HaMishnah (Rav Moshe Alshakar).
5. See Masechet Avodah Zarah 18b.
6. *Mishneh Torah* Hilchot Tumat Tzara’at 16:10.
7. The Rambam quotes the same *passuk* as our *mishnah*, Malachi 3:16, to bolster his assertion.

8. See Avot D’Rebbi Natan 20:1 and Rambam, *Mishneh Torah* Hilchot Issurei Bi’ah 22:21.
9. *Sefer Tehillim* 1:1-2.
10. See the commentaries of the Rambam, Rabbeinu Yonah and others on the *mishnah*.
11. *Ibid*.
12. Similarly, Chazal explain that one example of *davar Hashem bazah*, someone who denigrates the word of G-d, is one who has the ability to learn Torah but does not take advantage of that opportunity. Avot 6:2 records that every day, a *bat kol* comes from *Har Chorev* and decries those who have the opportunity to learn Torah and don’t take advantage. Berachot 5a teaches that if a person is suffering and can’t identify a particular sin as the source, he should assume that he is being punished for not taking full advantage of his time to learn Torah.
13. Masechet Berachot 28b.



# A Great Nation



**Rabbi Hershel Schachter**

Rosh Yeshivah, Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University

**H**ashem told Avraham Avinu to go to Eretz Yisrael and that, once there, “ואעשך לגוי גדול – I will make of you a great nation” (Bereishis 12:2). The Torah uses the term גוי (nation) in contrast to the other nations of the world, which the subsequent passuk labels as משפחות האדמה (families of the earth). The Halachah declares that the Jewish Nation is the one and only גוי, “ומי כעמך ישראל גוי אחד בארץ – And who is like Your people Israel, one nation on earth” (Divrei HaYamim I 17:21). Rav Soloveitchik explained that the word גוי is related to the word גוייה (body), and only Klal Yisrael is viewed as a singular entity to which the term גוי may be applied.

Rav Yosef Engel (Otzros Yosef, drush 2) demonstrates that this concept can be found in the Gemara in Nazir (61a-b). The Gemara teaches that nezirus only applies to one who belongs to a tzibbur (congregation), and not to a non-Jew, who would only be accepting nezirus upon himself as an individual. A non-Jew is not subject to the dinim of tum'ah, nor, by extension, to the dinim of nezirus. The source of this distinction is the passuk,

“ואיש אשר יטמא ולא יתחטא ונכרתה הנפש ההוא מתוך הקהל –

The man who will be unclean and does not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from the midst of the congregation” (Bamidbar 19:20), excluding a non-Jew, who is not included in any congregation (kahal).

Whenever there is a mixed marriage in which one parent is a Kohen or Levi and the other is not, the status of the child is determined by the yichus (lineage) of the father. This is based on the passuk, “אבותם לבית למשפחותם – according to their families, according to their fathers' household” (Bamidbar 1:2). The same is true regarding non-Jews, when the two parents come from different nationalities. Certain

nations, such as the Mitzri'im, Edomim, and Amalekim have a special status in Halachah, and if there is an intermarriage between two different nationalities, the status of the children is determined based on that of the father alone.

Why, then, is it that in a case of a mixed marriage between a Jew and a non-Jew, the lineage does not solely follow the father? There were three opinions among the Tanna'im as to the parental requirement that results in Jewish offspring – that both parents be Jewish, that either the father or the mother be Jewish, or to follow solely the lineage of the mother. The first two opinions were rejected over two thousand years ago, and the accepted opinion is to follow the lineage of the mother alone. The most logical opinion, one would have thought, should have been a fourth possibility – that the yichus should be determined solely by the father. Yet, such an opinion was never advanced.

The reason seems to be based on the distinction we made above between a גוי and a משפחה. We follow the lineage of the father to determine which משפחה the child belongs to, both in the case of the non-Jewish משפחות האדמה as well as in the case of משפחות לוייה and משפחות כהונה. However, determining whether someone is Jewish or not is not a function of which משפחה he comes from, because the Jewish Nation is a גוי.

The institution of geirus demonstrates that this must be the case. Through geirus, a non-Jew can become Jewish even though he is not a blood relative of any Jewish family. A ger has the same Jewish status as someone who was born Jewish because he has joined the Jewish גוי, even though he is unable to join the Jewish משפחה. Since determining one's status as a Jew is dependent on the classification of גוי and not on the classification of משפחה, all of

the Tanna'im understood that this status is not governed by the child's paternal lineage. Rather, it must be based on different criteria, and the accepted opinion is to follow the child's maternal lineage.

This is why the institution of geirus was given to Avraham Avinu at the same time that he was told that the nation he would found would be classified as a גוי. The Gemara in Yevamos (63a) provides an added level of interpretation of the phrase “ונברכו בך כל משפחות האדמה – And all the families of the earth will be blessed through you” (Bereishis 12:3): “The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Avraham, ‘I have two good shoots to graft (להבריך) into you – Rus HaMo'aviyah and Na'amah Ha'Ammonis.’” Based on this Gemara, the Rashbam explains in his commentary on the Torah that the word ונברכו is related to the term הברכה – the grafting of the branch of one tree onto another tree. The meaning of this passuk is thus that non-Jews will be able to be “grafted” onto the Jewish People – in other words, that we will be able to accept geirim. This is solely due to Klal Yisrael's status as a גוי, in contrast to משפחה.

Hashem conveyed this message to Avraham in conjunction with his receiving Eretz Yisrael, as alluded to in the phrase, “ומי כעמך ישראל גוי אחד בארץ – And who is like Your people Yisrael, a unique nation in the land” (Shmuel II 7:23). This is because the principal place for the tziruf (combination) of Klal Yisrael as a גוי is in Eretz Yisrael, its National Homeland. There are certain mitzvos that only apply in Eretz Yisrael because they are strictly agricultural in nature. However, there are other mitzvos that are unrelated to the land per se, yet only apply in Eretz Yisrael because they are obligations incumbent upon the tzibbur as a whole.

● Adapted from Rav Schachter on the Parsha.

# Two Foreign Princesses



**Rabbi Yisroel Reisman**  
Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshiva Torah Vodaas

**A**s we prepare for Shabbos Parshas Lech Lecha, I would like to begin with a riddle. Who is it in the Tanach who was a princess and gave up the house of her father, the king, to join a Jewish house, even without fame and fortune, only to join Klal Yisrael? Of course, you all know the answer. However, there are two answers. The most famous is Rus, who gave up her father's house and wealth to join Klal Yisrael, even though she was living in poverty at the time she returned with Naomi.

There is a second such woman. Her name is Hagar. As Rashi relates in Parshas Lech Lecha 16:1, Hagar also כשראה בית פרעה היתה, כשראה נסים שנעשה לשרה אמר מוטב שתהא בתי שפחה ולא גבירה בבית אחר. Hagar also left the king's palace to become a *shifcha* in the house of Avraham. So Hagar was truly a great woman, just like Rus, and yet there were such different results. The result of Rus is that Dovid and Moshiach descended from her, and the result of Hagar was that Yishmael descended from her. It is a *Davar Pele*.

It is also evident that Hagar was a great woman, for Sarah offered Avraham Hagar as a wife, as it says in 16:2, אוּלַי אֶבְנָה מִמֶּנָּה. Perhaps I will raise her children. My descendants will come through her. If



**Who is it in the Tanach who was a princess and gave up the house of her father, the king, to join a Jewish house, even without fame and fortune, only to join Klal Yisrael?**

Hagar was a person worthy of having a Yishmael, Sarah chose the wrong person. So we need an explanation of what happened. We have two women with the same *mesiras nefesh*, Rus, who was drawn close and Hagar, who was sent away.

Says Rav Druk in his Sefer Darash Mordechai, one thing happened. ותקל גברתה בעיניך. There came a time when Hagar looked at Sarah with a cynical look. Chazal say (Eiruvim 65b) א"ר אילעאי – בשלשה דברים אדם ניכר בכוסו ובכיסו ובכעסו – a person is *Nikkir B'koso, B'kaisa, B'kiso* when he drinks, when he gets angry, and when he deals in finances. Rav Druk brings some also say when he is fooling around. ותקל גברתה בעיניך. She joked about Sarah. Sarah was not considered a *choshuv* in her eyes. So you go from a mother of Moshiach to a mother of Yishmael? Yes.

There are things in the world that are sacred, that have value, that are spiritually important. There are people who represent Torah, Avoda and Yir'as Shamayim. A person's *penimios* is recognized בשחוק, by what he jokes about. The reverence he has for things that are *kodosh*. Hagar ותקל גברתה בעיניך in her *penimios*, deep inside she did not appreciate the greatness of Sarah and after that things went downhill.

We live in a generation where people are cynical about those in power. If you look at the political world, it is no surprise that the successful politicians are not the ones who are respected by everyone. And yet, Klal Yisrael always has reverence for *Devarim She'bik'dusha*, people with *kedusha*, the people who run *kehillos* or *yeshivos*.

Unfortunately, there are those who are infected by the cynicism of the world. ותקל גברתה בעיניך. The lesson of Hagar is that you can be at the door of being the mother of Klal Yisrael אולי אבנה ממנה, but you can lose everything. You can lose everything if you do not have the proper respect, the proper reverence for *Devarim She'bik'dusha*. What a lesson.

# Trying Your Best



**Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis**

Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth

**A**t the beginning of Parashat Lech Lecha, we have details of the epic journey that Avraham and Sarah made to reach the promised land – *Vayeitzu lalechet artzah canaan vayovovu artzah Canaan*. We are told that they left Charan, in order to go to the Land of Canaan and then they arrived in the Land of Canaan. Surely this is unnecessary repetition? Why do we need to know that they wanted to go there and they arrived there as well?

The Chafetz Chaim points out that this was not the only journey with the intention of reaching the Land of Canaan. At the end of last week's Parasha of Noach, we are told about another journey. This



**You don't have to complete every job that you start, but that doesn't free you from starting those tasks.**

was embarked upon by Terach, Avraham's father, they went to reach the Land of Canaan, but when they reached Charan, they stopped over there.

The Chafetz Chaim tells us that the message that emerges from these passages is, it's not good enough just to have good

intentions; we should always strive to achieve our aspirations. Terach didn't do that but Avraham did.

I would like to judge Terach a bit more favourably because we are taught in the Ethics of the Fathers – *Lo alecha hamlacha ligmor veloh atah ben chorim livatel mimenah* – You don't have to complete every job that you start, but that doesn't free you from starting those tasks. Terach did start a worthwhile task, he did embark on that journey, however ultimately, his dream was fulfilled one generation later.



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# Make Your Name Great



Rabbi Shalom Rosner  
Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh

**A**vraham is commanded to uproot from his current location and settle in Eretz Yisrael where G-d promises to “make him into a great nation, and that he will be blessed, and G-d will **make Avraham’s name great.....**” ואגדלה שמך (Bereshit 12:2).

Avraham served to sanctify Hashem’s name. He did not seek personal recognition. Did Avraham desire that his name be made great? That he become a celebrity? In today’s technological age, people post all facets of their life on social media seeking “likes”, “friends”, and personal recognition. If a picture is not shared on facebook, Instagram or some other media, it is as if such event never transpired. Is this the blessing that Hashem was promising to Avraham? That his name would be made “great” in the eyes of others? True, Avraham wanted his message of monotheism to go “viral”, but he did not crave thousands of followers for his self-image. What exactly is the intention of “*va’agadla shemecha*” – that I will make your name great?

Perhaps we can answer this question, based in an idea presented by the *Igra DeKallah* (written by the Bnei Yissachar-Rav Tzur Elimelech Spira of Dinov). He suggests that the intention is not to make Avraham’s name great for others, but rather to make his name great – for himself! Each individual has potential to achieve great things. However, not everyone lives up to their full potential. The



**Each of us has to look into ourselves to identify our purpose and mission and to do what we can to fulfill that mission.**

blessing to Avraham is that he would be able to fulfill his full potential. In fact, later the Torah describes Avraham as בא בימים – (Bereshit 24:1) – which is interpreted to mean that he made each day count. He maximized his potential each and every day. By acting appropriately, as an *oved Hashem*, Avraham will simultaneously be sanctifying G-d’s name, since his actions will be attributed to the Almighty.

Rav Kook in *Siddur Olat Re’iyah*, explains the passage recited on the *Yamim Noraim*, אלוקי עד שלא נוצרתי איני כדאי “My G-d, before I was created, I was unworthy.” There is a reason why one was born in the twenty-first century rather than in another century. Each of us has a unique mission in life: to fulfill a specific purpose in a specific generation. We would have been useless in another generation, but we are essential in this generation. Each of us has to look into ourselves to identify our purpose and mission and to do what we can to fulfill that mission. We should seek to maximize our potential and do what we can to make this world a better place.

Each of us was granted certain *kohot* (abilities) and we have to utilize them properly, not so that we can become famous – but so that we can fulfill our mission on this earth.

After 120 years, when we ascend to Heaven, we are asked our name. Why is that so important? As the Midrash on Kohelet tells us טוב שם משמן טוב – “a good name is more valuable than precious oil” (Kohelet 7:1). Man is given three names. One by his parents; one by his friends (nickname) and one name that **he creates for himself** (by his actions).

It is a custom to recite a *pasuk* at the end of the *Amida* that begins and ends with the letters of our name so that we will not forget our name. A name highlights the essence of an individual. Rav Shimshon Refael Hirsch suggests that as the word for name – שם – “shem”, can also be read Sham (there) – the name depicts where the person is in life.

May we be *zoche* to build a great name for ourselves – not to gain fame but rather to be able to reach our potential and fulfill our mission on this earth by contributing our part. May we recognize where we can have a positive impact on our families, friends and community and act in a way that can facilitate making this world a better place while being *mekadesh shem shamayim* – sanctifying G-d’s name.

# Lech Licha: The Importance of Shalom



**Michal Horowitz**  
Judaic Studies Teacher

In this week's *parsha*, *Parshas Lech Licha*, we begin the journey with Avram. At the age of seventy-five, he sets out to the Land of Canaan along with Lot his nephew and Sarai his wife. Many important and fundamental events happen in the life of our first patriarch and matriarch in this week's *parsha* – from the journey to Canaan and a famine in the Land, to his descent to Egypt to find food, to Sarah's being taken by Pharaoh, to the war of the Four Kings and the Five Kings, to the Covenant Between the Pieces, to Hagar's flight from the home of Avram and Sarai, and finally *Bris Milah!*

After descending to Egypt for food, Avram and Lot ascend and both are wealthy in cattle and flock.

*And the land was not able to bear them to dwell together; for their possessions were great, so that they could not dwell together; and there was quarreling between the shepherds of Avram's flocks and the shepherds of Lot's flocks, and the Canaani and Prizi were then dwelling in the land; and Avram said to Lot: Please let there not be strife between me and between you, and between my shepherds and your shepherds; for we are men, brothers we are (Bereishis 13:6-8)... and Lot chose for himself the entire plain of the Jordan, and Lot traveled eastward, and they parted from each other (ibid, v.11).*

To avoid quarrel and strife with his nephew, who he adopted as his own son after Lot was orphaned of his father, Avram and Lot part ways. If we pay close attention to the *pasukim*, we will note that the verses offer us seemingly irrelevant information: “*And there was quarreling between their flocks... – and the Canaani and Prizi were then dwelling in the land.*” While it's very nice to know who then lived in the land, why is this piece of information relevant right here, right

now, to the quarrel between Avram and Lot's shepherds? Upon Avram's arrival in the land, we are immediately informed that the Canaanites were living the land, as the verses states: *and the Canaanites were then in the land (Bereishis 12:6).*

Why repeat this information once again, and specifically in the segment that details the strife between Avram and Lot? Rabbi Dr. Abraham J. Twerski zt'l teaches, “Beginning with the Five Books of Moses to the most recent writings of *mussar*, we are repeatedly adjured to avoid strife and divisiveness. We are promised unlimited blessings and success if only we are united. Alas! Satan continues to plague us with the worst curse that can befall us, as he sows divisiveness and pits one Jew against another.

“The Torah tells us that the quarrel between Avram's and Lot's herdsmen occurred at a time when ‘*the Canaanite and the Perizzite were then dwelling in the land.*’ Avram's plea to Lot was, ‘*Please let there be no strife between me and you.*’ Avram was saying, ‘Here are two different nations, the Canaanite and the Perizzite, living side by side in peace. Why do we, who are blood relatives, have to quibble and live in dissension?’

“Avram's plea continues to reverberate in our ears throughout our history. We Jews are children of one ancestor, why must we be at odds?

“We can give various reasons for our disagreements. I firmly believe that these are nothing but rationalizations. I believe that our archenemy, Satan, sows the poisonous seeds of discord. He causes us to be divisive and to separate from each other. This is the basis of our fragmentation. Inasmuch as senseless divisiveness would be intolerable to rational people, we ingeniously formulate rationalizations to justify why we cannot live in harmony.

Rationalizations are logical-sounding reasons that serve as excuses, but they are not the true reason. The Canaanite and the Perizzites had their differences, but Satan did not bother to sow dissension among them, so they lived in peace. When we justify our divisiveness, we are handing Satan his greatest triumph.

“When the Chafetz Chaim learned that there was dissension among the staff of his *yeshiva*, he said, ‘I will close down ninety *yeshivos* rather than allow one iota of dissension.’

“We can easily find more reasons why we should be together than why we should be apart. But we can find them only if we so desire” (Twerski on Chumash, p.39).

The director of a new organization once contacted ha'Gaon Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman zt'l (1914-2017) complaining about a new organization that had a similar name to that of the older organization. “So why don't you just change the name of your organization?” R' Aharon Leib inquired.

“With all due respect,” the man replied, “if someone came to the Rosh Yeshiva and told him that his last name, Shteinman, bothers him and he wants the Rosh Yeshiva to change his last name to Buzaglo, would the Rosh Yeshiva change his name?”

R' Aharon Leib looked the director in the eye and said, “Believe me, I would do anything to avoid *machlokes* (strife). If my last name really bothered someone else and it would help another Jew if I changed my name to Buzaglo, I would gladly do it” (Reb Aharon Leib, Artscroll, p.361-362).

Chazal (Shabbos 10b) teach us that one of the names of Hashem is *Shalom*, Peace. As we have an imperative to walk in His ways (Sotah 14a, Shabbos 133b), let us emulate His *middah* of *shalom* and strive for peace amongst our nation... כִּי-אֶנְשֵׁי מִיִּם אֲחֵי, אֲנִי וְנָחֵנוּ.



# The Biblical Borders of the Land of Israel



**Rabbi Menachem Leibtag**  
Tanach Study Center | Yeshivat Har Etzion

In His first three promises to Avraham, G-d describes the land in very general terms. Later in Parshat Lech Lecha, Avraham enters into two covenants with G-d concerning his future. Both covenants precisely define the Promised Land, but each covenant consists of an entirely different piece of land!

1) At **Brit Bein HaB'tarim**: "**Ha'Aretz**": "On that day G-d made a covenant with Avraham, saying: to your offspring I assign **this land**, from the **river of Egypt to the river**, the river **Euphrates**, the Kenites, Knizites... (the ten nations)".

After Avraham's defeat of the Four Kings, G-d promises him that his offspring will one day **conquer** ("yerusha") the land, just as Avraham himself had just done. However, this conquest will take place only after several generations of bondage in a foreign land, after which they will gain their independence and their oppressor will be punished. The land in which they will establish their sovereignty is described as expanding from the Nile to the Euphrates.

This covenant with Avraham Avinu reflects the **historical/national** aspect of Am Yisrael's relationship with G-d, as it focuses on the long-term, historical process required for Avraham's offspring to achieve their sovereignty. Notice that in this covenant, the Promised Land is consistently referred to as "**ha'Aretz**," and its conquest as "**yerusha**."

2) At **Brit Milah**: "**Eretz Canaan**": "I assign the land in which you sojourn to you and your offspring to come, all the **land of Canaan**..."

In preparation for this covenant, G-d first changes Avram's name to Avraham, in anticipation of the birth of a child from Sarah. G-d then promises Avraham that

He will establish and maintain a special relationship between Himself and Avraham's descendants – "lihyot lachem l'Elokim" – He will be a close, intimate G-d for them.

This covenant reflects the **religious/personal** aspect of Am Yisrael's relationship with G-d, as it emphasizes a unique, intimate relationship with the Divine. In this covenant, the Promised Land is referred to as "**Eretz Canaan**."

Hence, there are two aspects latent in the "kedusha" (sanctity) of Eretz Yisrael:

**A) The National Aspect** – the "kedushat ha'Aretz" of Brit Bein HaB'tarim relates to the **conquest** of the land and the establishment of a national entity – a sovereign state. This "kedusha" is achieved once Bnei Yisrael gain sovereignty, upon Yehoshua's conquest of the land.

**B) The Personal Aspect** – the "kedushat Eretz Canaan" of Brit Milah already existed in the time of the Avot and remains eternal. This kedusha reflects G-d's special Providence over this land, even while inhabited by other nations. This intrinsic "kedusha" is forever present regardless of who seizes control over the Land, be it Persians, Romans, Crusaders, Turks etc.

Based on our understanding of these two covenants, their conflicting presentations of the land's borders can now be reconciled.

Avraham Avinu was chosen to father a nation that will "become a blessing" for **all other** nations. The special land set aside for that nation by that promise is called "ha'Aretz." In Brit Bein HaB'tarim, "ha'Aretz" is defined as the land between the Nile and Euphrates. These rivers are not borders; never in the history of

mankind have these rivers marked the borders of a single country. Rather, these rivers mark the two **centers** of ancient civilization – Mesopotamia ("N'har Prat") and Egypt ("N'har Mitzrayim").

Therefore, whereas Brit Bein HaB'tarim reflects the **national** aspect of our relationship with G-d, its borders of "ha'Aretz" reflect our destiny to become a blessing to **all** mankind. We are to become a nation 'declaring G-d's Name' at the crossroads of the two great centers of civilization.

The more precise geographic borders of this special land are defined in Brit Milah, as Eretz Canaan – the land in which our forefathers sojourned. Given its destiny to become the homeland for G-d's special nation, this land possesses intrinsic kedusha. This inherent sanctity sensitizes the land to the moral behavior of its inhabitants.

The basic borders of Eretz Yisrael are those of "Eretz Canaan," i.e. 'from Dan to Be'er Sheva,' as promised in Brit Milah. Once this 'kernel' area is conquered, its borders can potentially be extended. The potential limits of this expansion are established by Brit Bein HaB'tarim – from "N'har Mitzryaim" to "N'har Prat."

We have shown that our relationship to the Land of Israel, like our relationship with G-d, exists at both the national and individual levels. G-d chose this special land **in order** that we fulfill our destiny.

While "kedushat Eretz Yisrael" at the individual level may be considered a Divine **gift**, its kedusha at the national level is most definitely a Divine **challenge**. To achieve its fullest borders, we must rise to that challenge.

# We're Never Off-Duty



**Rabbi Eli Mansour**

Edmond J Safra Synagogue, Brooklyn

**P**arashat Lech-Lecha begins with G-d's command to Abraham Abinu to "go forth" – "Lech Lecha" – and move to Eretz Yisrael. Rashi explains the phrase "Lech Lecha" to mean, "Le'hana'atecha U'le'tovatecha" – "for your benefit and your wellbeing."

To explain Rashi's comment, the Ben Ish Hai (Rav Yosef Haim of Baghdad, 1833-1909) discusses the concept of "Nisosot Kedusha" – the "sparks of sanctity" that are dispersed throughout the world. Wherever we find ourselves at any given moment, he explains, we have a task, and that is to reveal and extract the sparks that are concealed in that place. The Ben Ish Hai gives an example from his own life. He was once imprisoned for a brief period of time by the authorities in Baghdad, and while he sat in jail he managed to write a book of Torah scholarship. Evidently, the Ben Ish Hai said, there were sparks of Kedusha that needed to be released at that place, in that prison cell, and so Hashem sent him there so he could study and write words of Torah, through which he extracted those sparks.

To give a modern-day example, let us imagine somebody who lives in New York and needs to schedule a business meeting in Chicago. He boards the plane, lands, takes a taxicab to the office, and the secretary tells him that the person he needs to meet will be available in another ten minutes. In the meantime, she offers him a cup of tea, and he recites a Beracha and drinks. Ten minutes later, the secretary returns and apologetically informs him that an urgent matter arose and the meeting had to be canceled. The man's instinct would be to bemoan the fact that he traveled all the way to Chicago for nothing. But from our religious perspective, this is not true at all. Hashem brought him to Chicago



**We are not to abstain from the pleasures of the world, but to enjoy them, in a way that brings Kedusha and extracts the sparks of sanctity that are waiting for us to come along and uncover them.**

because there were sparks of Kedusha that only he could release. By reciting a Beracha, and through the other Misvot he performed over the course of his trip, he did the job assigned specifically to him that needed to be done specifically at that location.

This is why our tradition does not encourage us to live a secluded or monastic lifestyle. We are urged to engage in worldly, mundane pursuits such as work, eating, marriage, and so on, in moderation and in strict compliance with Halachic guidelines. The Hatam Sofer (Rabbi Moshe Sofer of Pressburg, 1762-1839) noted the difference between Hanoach, a righteous Sadik who was taken alive from this world and brought to the heavens, and Abraham Abinu, who became the founder of our nation. Hanoach withdrew from the world and involved himself exclusively in spiritual matters, and thus was removed from this world. Abraham, however, became our nation's founder because he was fully engaged in the world, accumulating wealth, waging battles, serving scrumptious food to wayfarers, and working with people to disseminate the belief in G-d. The sparks of sanctity are dispersed throughout the world and are extracted by bringing Kedusha to the mundane frameworks within which they are concealed.

Each time we recite a Beracha over food, for example, we extract the sparks of sanctity from that place and from that piece of food. This goal is achieved not by withdrawing from worldly affairs, but by engaging in worldly affairs in a sacred manner as dictated by the Torah.

The Ben Ish Hai thus explained that G-d's command of "Lech Lecha" was directed not only to Abraham Abinu, but to each and every one of us. We are all to "go forth," to go about our normal, mundane lives in a manner that extracts Kedusha from all the places we go. Rashi, therefore, comments that this is to be done for our "benefit" and "well-being." We are not to abstain from the pleasures of the world, but to enjoy them, in a way that brings Kedusha and extracts the sparks of sanctity that are waiting for us to come along and uncover them.

The practical lesson of this insight is that a Jew is never "off-duty." At no point in any day are we in a place or a situation that exempts us from our religious obligations. We must not view our mundane activities merely as necessary but as unwanted responsibilities that we quickly and hurriedly complete so we can return to religious life. Rather, they are part and parcel of religious life. It is specifically there where we have the great mission and challenge of uncovering and retrieving the sparks of Kedusha. Wherever we are and under any circumstances that we confront, we have a job to do. At every moment, Hashem brings us to the precise place where we need to be to perform Misvot and do our part in revealing all the sparks of holiness, so they can gradually combine into a large, raging flame of Kedusha that will, one day, illuminate the entire Earth.



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# How to Mend the World



**Rabbi Moshe Weinberger**  
Congregation Aish Kodesh, Woodmere

**D**uring one fundraising trip, the Meor Einayim was carrying a significant amount of money which had been donated by wealthy Jews. The non-Jewish authorities used this money as a pretense to arrest him, accusing him of stealing money from gentiles. Some wealthy *chassidim* bribed the officials at the prison to move him out of the underground dungeon where he was being held to a second-floor cell with a small, barred window.

The Rebbe was feeling extraordinarily broken at this time. He had dedicated his life to helping Jews escape false imprisonment, but instead of continuing to work on this critical *mitzvah*, he himself was now falsely imprisoned and suffering. Now he could not continue involving himself with the *mitzvah* and others would have to redeem him.

At one point, he heard a woman's voice through the window, "Reb Nachum!" He walked over, looked out the window, and saw a woman outside. She said, "Can I tell you a *vort* on this week's *sedra*, *parshas Lech Lecha*?" "Of course," he responded. The woman then said, "We know *Rashi* says on the first words of the *parshah*, 'Go for yourself,' that Hashem was telling Avraham that he should travel for his own benefit and for his own enjoyment (see *Rashi* on *Bereishis* 12:1). If Avraham benefited personally from the journey, why was this considered one of his ten tests?"

Answering her own question, the woman explained that the reason this was considered a test is because Avraham's mission in life was to provide hospitality and healing to travelers, those who were homeless. Hashem wanted Avraham to truly know the pain of being a traveler who does not know where he will sleep at night or where he will find his next meal. He knew that Avraham would be able to heal the

world more effectively and that he would benefit by doing the *mitzvah* on an even deeper and greater level after personally being humbled and experiencing the same feeling of being a stranger in a strange land that his guests feel.

At this point, Reb Nachum realized that the woman outside the jail was Rochel Imeinu herself, a woman who knows exile because she is buried by the side of the road, away from her husband and the rest of her family in Beit Lechem (*Bereishis* 35:19). She continued, "So too, Reb Nachum, this imprisonment is 'for your benefit and for your enjoyment.' Now you will truly know the pain of those you are working to liberate. While it may seem discouraging, it is for your benefit because you will be able to involve yourself in the *mitzvah* without hesitation because you will have truly nullified yourself through your deep understanding of others' pain and suffering."

How did Avraham Avinu's and the Meor Einayim's suffering enable them to mend the world? It caused them to disregard any sense of self and any personal considerations because of their intimate recognition of the pain of those they were responsible to alleviate. Rebbe Nachman says, "Everything a person lacks, whether children, a livelihood, or health, comes from the person himself. This is because the light of Hashem shines upon him constantly. But the person, through his own evil actions, casts a shadow over himself which prevents the light of G-d from reaching him" (*I Likutei Moharan* 172). The *Midrash* we quoted earlier says that Avraham Avinu mended the world and mended the relationships between people. The sins of the tree of knowledge of good and bad, the generation of the flood, and the generation of the dispersion, where humanity was literally torn and divided

(הפליגה) from one another created a separation between humanity and Hashem and created division between people.

We know Avraham mended this separation because before him, even the righteous king, Malkitzedek, was called only "priest to G-d above (*Bereishis* 14:18), implying that G-d's existence above was apparent, but His presence on Earth was completely hidden from man. But Malkitzedek blessed Avraham "to G-d above, who possesses Heaven and Earth" (*ibid.* 19). Avraham mended the division between Heaven and Earth, revealing Hashem's glory not only in Heaven, but here on Earth as well. How did he do this? How was he able to influence the world in this way, drawing people closer to one another and to G-d?

Rav Avraham Yitzchak Hakohein Kook *zy'a*, writes (*I Oros HaKodesh* p. 86) that this influence does not take place in the obvious way one might think: "The universal longing for the influence of the Jewish people in the world does not take place through the dissemination of intellectual teachings, via straightforward and obvious influence and instruction. Rather, when this [the Jewish] nation fully internalizes its unique role, the world is naturally elevated simply through [the Jewish nation's] possession of this unique mission as part of its own humanity."

May Hashem enable us to put aside our own personal concerns to serve Him and help others, thereby removing the blockages we create between His light and our lives. May we thereby mend the brokenness of the world and soon see the time when "the Earth will be filled with the knowledge of Hashem like the water covers the seabed" (*Yeshayahu* 11:9) with the arrival of Moshiach and the complete redemption soon in our days!

# Two Large Tears



Rabbi YY Jacobson  
TheYeshiva.net

## Selfish

A big, burly man visited the rabbi's home and asked to see the Rebbetzin, the rabbi's wife, a person well known for her numerous charitable deeds.

"Rebbetzin," he said in a broken voice, "I wish to draw your attention to the terrible plight of a poor family in this district. The father is dead, the mother is too ill to work, and the nine children are starving. They are about to be turned into the cold, empty streets unless someone pays their rent, which amounts to \$6,000."

"How terrible!" exclaimed the Rabbi's wife. "May I ask who you are?"

The sympathetic visitor applied his handkerchief to his eyes. "I'm the landlord," he sobbed.

## An Image

When I was a child, I once read a chapter of a diary and it moved me profoundly:

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson, the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe (1880-1950) describes in his diary how his father, Rabbi Sholom Dov Ber, the fifth Rebbe of Lubavitch (1870-1920) would review the Torah portion of "Lech Lecha" (the third portion of the book of Genesis) each year on Friday afternoon, prior to the Sabbath. (This is an ancient Jewish custom, to review the weekly Torah portion on Fridays).

The Rebbe related how when his father would recite the opening words of the portion, "Lech Lecha Maartzecha", "two



**Step out of yourself and commit to that which G-d desires of you. Allow your life to be linked to rays of truths looming larger than your ego.**

gigantic tears rolled down from his saintly face."

"Lech Lecha Maartzecha" are the Hebrew words expressing G-d's instruction to Abraham to "Go from your land, your birthplace and your father's home, to the land that I will show you." Each year, recalling these words, the Rebbe's eyes swelled with tears.

But what did he see in this verse that melted his heart? What was it about this message that moved him so profoundly?

## Capturing the Drama

This brief instruction to Abraham – the first communication of G-d to the father of Judaism – captures the essence, mystery and destiny of 4,000 years of Jewish history, a history soaked in so much courage, blood, tears, and triumph. What is Jewishness? What is the ultimate meaning of Jewish existence? What is the calling of the Jew?

It is the response to a call: "Go from your land, your birthplace and your father's home, to the land that I will show you." Go away from yourself and become Mine. Judaism, in its truest meaning, is about

creating a paradigm shift – from self-centeredness to G-d-centeredness; from my land to the land which I am shown.

3700 years ago, a lone human being, sophisticated and refined, heard a call. This was not merely an instruction about geography, a demand to relocate homes; it was an invitation to an existential shift. Leave yourself. Step away from your perspective, and begin to see things from My perspective. Stop living according to your habits and inclinations, and begin to live according to My will.

For one who never heard the call, this seems like lunacy. But Abraham and his descendants heard a call, and they could not remain indifferent. To betray it would be akin to a sensitive soul refusing to be moved by a heart-stirring poem or piece of music. When Abraham became aware of the living presence of G-d, there was no turning back. He could deny it all he wanted, but he knew that life without it would be that much more shallow and superficial. To reject the call might have spelled loyalty to the scientific demand for laboratory-type evidence, but would have come at the expense of betraying his deepest layer of self.

Close to 4000 years later, the call still summons us. "Go from your land, your birthplace and your father's home, to the land that I will show you." Step out of yourself and commit to that which G-d desires of you. Allow your life to be linked to rays of truths looming larger than your ego.

Can we hear the call? Do we know how to respond?

# Lech Lecha: L'chaim!



**Rabbi Judah Mischel**

Executive Director, Camp HASC; Mashpiah, OU-NCSY

**R**av Yitzchak Zilber, zt'l, legendary champion of Russian Jewry, was a humble *talmid chacham* and teacher whose incredible self sacrifice and dedication inspired and strengthened generations of Jews. Having been imprisoned in gulags of the former Soviet Union, he escaped to Tashkent and later arrived in Eretz Yisrael, where he continued his efforts in teaching Torah around the clock. Thousands of Russian *olim* to the Holy Land sought his counsel and Torah instruction.

In the early 1970's, most Jews from the USSR arrived without a *bris milah*. While the country scrambled to accommodate the waves of Aliyah, neither the Ministry of Absorption nor the Chief Rabbinate were prepared for the challenge of providing to the masses an opportunity to do this mitzvah. The bureaucratic mechanics created a waiting period of weeks. As it is extremely important not to delay the essential mitzvah of *milah*, Rav Zilber worked feverishly to help the *olim* accomplish it as soon as possible. In Yerushalayim, he reconnected with Dr. Yaakov Tzatzkis, a urologist who had performed clandestine circumcisions in Moscow. Together, they made countless *brisim* in their own homes, and across Eretz Yisrael, for Russian Jews of all ages.

Dr. Tzatzkis recalled:

After a *bris*, it's customary to drink *l'chaim*. We would bring a bottle of wine, maybe a little vodka to help ease the pain and some cookies or cake. Sometimes the *baalei simcha* themselves would bring something.

One cold and rainy day we had the unexpected opportunity to perform a *bris* at Bikur Cholim hospital in Yerushalayim. Rav Yitzchak suddenly

came running to meet me at the hospital, and arrived with a bottle of wine and some cookies. I saw that he wasn't wearing a coat.

The next day, again, I met him outside without a coat. "Rav Yitzchak, this is not like winter in Moscow, but it is raining and cold! Why aren't you wearing a coat?" He mumbled something unintelligible. When I pressed him further, Rav Yitzchak relented: "OK, so I pawned it...."

I looked at him inquisitively.

"When you called me to join you for the *bris* yesterday," he explained, "I ran out of the house right away. My wife didn't have any warning to prepare something for the *simcha*. I didn't have any money in my pockets. What was I supposed to do? We needed some *mezonos* and wine to celebrate the *bris*. So I walked into the store on Rechov Strauss down the block from the hospital, gave them my coat, and they gave me what I needed. How could a Yid enter the covenant of Avraham Avinu without a *l'chaim* to celebrate?"



When Avram was ninety-nine years old, Hashem appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am *E-l Sha-dai*. Walk in My ways and be *tamim*, wholehearted.

I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will make you exceedingly numerous (you will multiply you very greatly).

This is My covenant, which you shall observe between Me and between you and between your offspring after you, that every male among you be circumcised. (17:1-2, 10)

This was the first time in history that the *Ribbono Shel Olam* invited us all into an

exclusive, sacred covenant and partnership. *Milah* thus connects us to everyone who came before us, as well as everyone who will come after us. It opens for us a blessing for national growth, development and expansion *תאריך תאריך*.

The practice of *milah* is rooted in the recognition that Hashem created the world in an 'imperfect' state, and that Hashem's *mitzvos* are obligations and opportunities to work toward improving Creation and perfecting the world. The mitzvah of *milah* has and will always remain a defining symbol and sign of our commitment to *Yidishkeit* and to Hashem.

During the Second Temple period, Greco-Roman culture centered around adulation of the 'perfect' human body, and specifically the male physique. Meanwhile, generations of Jews faced *gezeiros*, severe decrees banning *milah*, and doing the mitzvah required great self-sacrifice. *Midrash Tanchumah*, (Tazria 5) relates a debate between the great sage and martyr, the *heilgeh* Rebbi Akiva, and the evil Roman governor of Judea, Turnus Rufus:

The wicked Turnus Rufus challenged Rebbi Akiva: "Which is better and more beautiful, the works of the Almighty, or those of flesh and blood? Rebbi Akiva replied, "The works of flesh and blood are more beautiful."

Turnus Rufus then asked, "Why are Jews circumcised?" Rebbi Akiva replied, "I knew you would ask this and that is why I pre-empted you and answered that the works of man are superior."

Rebbi Akiva then brought sheaves of grain and loaves of bread. "These sheaves are the works of the Hakadosh Baruch Hu, while these loaves are the works of flesh and blood.

*Continued on page 24*



# Afflictions and Attitudes

## Mrs. Shira Smiles

International lecturer and curriculum developer

The image we have of the Imahot are women of extreme piety, sensitivity, and kindness. It is therefore difficult to understand how Sara Imeinu ‘afflicted’ Hagar (Bereisheet 16:6) to such a degree that Hagar fled to the desert. How was it possible for Sara Imeinu to cause another person pain? If Sarah did indeed afflict Hagar, why did she feel it was necessary?

Chazal teach us that after Avraham Avinu took Hagar as a wife, she immediately conceived. She then became haughty and lorded herself over Sara Imeinu. She told the women who would come to visit that Sara Imeinu was not as righteous as she appeared. The biggest proof was that she, Hagar, conceived right away and Sara could not. Rabbi Eliyahu Ki Tov in Sefer Haparshiyot notes that Sara Imeinu was afraid that people would be influenced by Hagar’s behavior and follow suit. She was even more concerned that a child born to a mother who lacked such basic hakarat

hatov would imbibe this middah and the world would not be able to handle the effects of such a nation. Hagar therefore needed to be put in her place, to be humbled and appreciate the kindness that surrounded her. If one is unable to be strict when needed, then his kindness is simply a weakness of character. Overcoming a natural inclination towards compassion and acting harshly when appropriate is the true test of a quality’s genuine measure. To treat Hagar with strictness was truly a nisayon for Sara Imeinu. In a sense, the harshness of Sara Imeinu towards Hagar was even greater than giving Hagar to Avraham Avinu as a wife. Here Sara Imeinu passes the test; she controlled her emotions and acted against her nature to preserve Hashem’s will in the world.

Rav Yitzchak Isaac Sher in Leket Sichot Mussar shares an additional insight into this episode. He sees Hagar’s role as similar to Eliezer’s in the house of Avraham Avinu. Eliezer was tasked with teaching

the doctrine of his master to the masses. Hagar was not just a ‘maid’, she was the chief disciple of Sara Imeinu. She was a very spiritual woman, charged with teaching the words of Sara Imeinu to the women of her generation. We thus understand why she was chosen to marry Avraham Avinu and how she was worthy to see angels when she fled from their home. Understanding this can help us appreciate the essence of this ‘affliction’. When Hagar married Avraham Avinu she felt that she no longer needed to be in a position of ‘translator’, she wanted to create her own teachings and her own ideas. She felt worthy to be in a position of ‘teacher’. Yet with deep wisdom, Sara Imeinu insisted that Hagar remain in her former position. It is therefore no wonder that although Hagar had a hard time being downgraded, the angel told her to go back and accept this affliction for it was a necessary means to improve her character and fulfill her G-d given role.

Continued from page 23

“Are not the loaves superior?”

The Midrash concludes with a lesson that the commandments that *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* gives us are לְצַרְרָא אוֹתָם בְּרָחֵם, to purify and further refine us.



An interpretation of God’s name *Shadai* is *She’amar l’olamo dai*, “The One who said to His world, ‘Enough.’” This refers to Hashem halting the expansion and development of the world before it would become complete or ‘perfect’. In doing so, Hashem left space for us to apply our creative efforts to improve His world. By holding back from completing Creation, Hashem enables us to participate in a

continuous expansion that is qualitative as well as quantitative.

All of Creation had been ‘yearning’ to be more, to be greater, to be fulfilled and self-actualized. Had *Sha-dai* not told Creation to stop, there would have been no sheaves of wheat for Rabbi Akiva to bring before Turnus Rufus — for they would have already evolved on their own into baked loaves of bread.

It is the name *Sha-dai* — this attribute which leaves the male body ‘incomplete’ — which obliges us to bring a Jewish child into the covenant. This is what allows us to participate in ‘completing the creation’ of the child’s body.



“I will surely open the floodgates of the sky for you and pour down blessings on you until there will not be sufficient room for them!” (*Malachi*, 3:10)

Gemara (*Taanis*, 22b) explains this verse: “Hashem will bless us *ad bli dai*, with an excess of blessings, beyond that which we require, with an abundance so great that עד שיבלו שפתותיכם מלומר די “our lips will be worn out (*yivlu*) from saying *Dai*, ‘It is enough!’”

From bread to *Bris Milah*, may we live with the awareness and appreciation that everything is בֵּינֵינוּ וּבֵינֵיכֶם, “between us and Hashem”; may we celebrate our role and privilege as co-creators, with overflowing blessings. *L’chaim!*

# So Who Are You, Mother?



**Rabbanit Yemima Mizrachi**  
Popular Torah teacher and author

**H**ow strange. It seems that as the world evolves, even the most basic definitions become blurred. Only in the last few weeks the country has been in turmoil over the term: “mother”.

Is the mother the one who gave birth to the child? Not necessarily. When the maids Bilhah and Zilpah gave birth to a child, they carried it “on the lap” of the mothers Rachel and Leah, and they, the non-biological mothers, called the children by their names. Therefore, the Sages would borrow, “Whoever teaches his neighbor Torah, for him it is as if he were his child.” This definition shows that parenthood is a nurturing and growing essence.

If so, will the mother be the one who raised them? Not always.

On this Shabbat, the 11th of Cheshvan, Rachel died in childbirth. The day of her death is Benjamin's birthday and the midwife, the wise woman, gave a new definition to the concept of mother: “But as she breathed her last – for she was dying – the midwife said to her, ‘Do not be afraid for this is also for you a son (ben)’, she named him Ben-oni;”... This is also your child, she told the dying Rachel, his mother. This is also your son.



**A mother is an indescribable figure, she is a way and she is a home, she is earth and sky, she is the people and women we have become, she is childhood and above all – definitions that must constantly adapt.**

So who are you, mother?

Rabbi Yochanan Fried once excitedly told me that he was among the troops who entered Bethlehem during the Six-Day War, and he described how the soldiers ran to look for Mother Rachel's tomb and they did not realize they were passing it... It was suddenly so small compared to what they remembered in their imagination...

I, too, when I return to my mother's house today, the house that seemed so big to me then suddenly seems small. I can not understand how she managed the huge factory we were then, how she always made sure we had a proper house, hot and healthy food, education and information... How did she manage all that?

It seems to me that it is not for nothing that in 2022 we are once again called upon to define mothers. For a mother cannot be squeezed into the confines of her figure. A mother is an indescribable figure, she is a way and she is a home, she is earth and sky, she is the people and women we have become, she is childhood and above all – definitions that must constantly adapt. “And the first mother is called Sarah because she sets measure and moderation (mesura). Moderation is a gentle and exact measure for things of great value.... In her heart there is a gentle submission, a gentle measure for all that is good and honest, for all that is beautiful and just and holy. She preserves within herself this measure of judgment and morality, of true Divine manners. She knows what is proper for a pure person at all times and in all circumstances. With fine judgment, she truly evaluates everything according to the circumstances”... (Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsh on Parshat Lech Lecha).

You have no definition mother, because you are the definition. You, with your wisdom, give to each girl what corresponds to her soul, to each boy what corresponds to his strengths. With such devotion. In moderation.

# Hebrew Language in the Parsha



**David Curwin**  
balashon.com

In Parshat Lech Lecha, we read about the tension between Avram and Lot:

וְגַם-לְלוֹט הָהֵלֵךְ אֶת-אַבְרָם הָיָה  
צֹאן-וּבָקָר וְאֵהָלִים: וְלֹא-נִשְׂאָ אֹתָם  
הָאָרֶץ לְשִׁבְתָּ יַחְדָּו כִּי-הָיָה רְכוּשָׁם רָב  
וְלֹא יָכְלוּ לְשִׁבְתָּ יַחְדָּו: וַיְהִי-דָיֵב בֵּין רֵעֵי  
מִקְנֵה-אַבְרָם וּבֵין רֵעֵי מִקְנֵה-לוֹט ...

“Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, so that the land could not support them staying together; for their possessions were so great that they could not remain together. And there was quarreling between the herdsmen of Abram’s cattle and those of Lot’s cattle...” (Bereishit 13:5-7)

If we look at two of the words, translated here as “their possessions” and “cattle,” we will discover an interesting phenomenon.

Let’s look at the word רְכוּשָׁם, “their possessions,” first. The word רְכוּשׁ means “property, possessions,” and is related to

the word רֶכֶשׁ – “a team of horses” (as in Esther 8:10, רֶכְבֵי הָרֶכֶשׁ – “riding on horses.”)

The word for “cattle,” מִקְנֵה, has a similar story. It derives from the root קנה, “to buy, purchase.” Both words associate “property and possessions” with animals: horses and cattle. And these aren’t the only Hebrew words connected to both meanings.

Another such word is נָכָס. In Biblical Hebrew it meant “wealth” (a synonym of עוֹשֵׁר), as in the blessing Yehoshua gave to the two and a half tribes:

בְּחִזְקֵיכֶם תָּשׁוּבוּ אֶל-אֲהֵלֵיכֶם

“...Return to your homes with great wealth...” (Yehoshua 22:8).

Today נָכָס is used to mean “asset, property.” Linguists, however, say that its origin is connected to cattle as well. The verb נָכַס meant “to slaughter,” and therefore עֹשֵׂי נָכָסִים originally described “cattle (to be killed).”

One last word that today doesn’t refer to either cattle or property, but originally meant both is טָגְלָה. This word has had over a dozen changes of meaning over the centuries, so I don’t have space to go into all of them here. But in its earliest meaning it likely meant “a heard of cattle” (the meaning preserved in Akkadian.)

It then came to mean property (for example in Kohelet 2:8). In other cases, it had the more specific meaning of “treasure.” In the Torah, we see Israel described as G-d’s טָגְלָה – essentially His property. But associatively, טָגְלָה came to indicate the close relationship between G-d and Israel, His “treasured” people. This special relationship began back in our parasha, with G-d’s covenant with Avraham.

## Parsha Riddle



**Reb Leor Broh**  
Mizrachi Melbourne

Find three places all of which have names whose letters form words that also appear in Lech Lecha, but not as names.

### Answer to the Parsha Riddle

- Shalem**, the place (14:18) also appears as Shalem – complete (15:16)  
(מ:ת) (ש:ל:מ) (ש:ל:מ) (ש:ל:מ) (ש:ל:מ) (ש:ל:מ) (ש:ל:מ) (ש:ל:מ) (ש:ל:מ) (ש:ל:מ)
- Dan**, the place (14:14) also appears as Dan – I will judge/punish (15:14)  
(ד:נ) (ד:נ) (ד:נ) (ד:נ) (ד:נ) (ד:נ) (ד:נ) (ד:נ) (ד:נ) (ד:נ)
- Goyim**, the place (14:1) also appears as Goyim – nations (17:5)  
(ג:י:ו:ם) (ג:י:ו:ם) (ג:י:ו:ם) (ג:י:ו:ם) (ג:י:ו:ם) (ג:י:ו:ם) (ג:י:ו:ם) (ג:י:ו:ם) (ג:י:ו:ם) (ג:י:ו:ם)





# HAMIZRACHI

PARSHA WEEKLY

## OUR PARTNERS

Department of Education of the World  
Zionist Organization

### AUSTRALIA

Mizrachi Australia

### MELBOURNE

Blake Street Hebrew Congregation  
Elsternwick Jewish Community  
Mizrachi Melbourne

### SYDNEY

Mizrachi Bondi

### PERTH

Dianella Shule – Mizrachi Perth

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### BELGIUM

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Menashe Michaeli

### BULGARIA

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Jewish Community

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ADATH Congregation  
Hebrew Academy

#### HAMPSTEAD

The ADATH

#### TORONTO

Beit Tzion Congregation  
Bnei Akiva Schools of Toronto  
Shaarei Tefillah Congregation

### CROATIA

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Bet Israel Jewish Community of Croatia

### CZECH REPUBLIC

#### PRAGUE

Prague Jewish Community

### ECUADOR

Equador Jewish Community

### FINLAND

#### HELSINKI

Jewish Community of Helsinki

### GERMANY

#### KOLN

Jewish Community

### GUATEMALA

Guatemala City Jewish Community

### HOLLAND

#### AMSTERDAM

AMOS Amsterdam Modern Orthodox Sjoel

### HONG KONG

#### CHABAD HK

Jewish Women's Association (JWA)

Kehilat Zion – Hechal Ezra

Ohel Leah Synagogue

The Jewish Community Centre

United Jewish Congregation (UJC)

### ISRAEL

#### JERUSALEM

Amudim Beit Midrash for Women

Baer Miriam

Hashiveinu

Jacques Sueke Foundation

Michlelet Mevaseret Yerushalayim (MMY)

Midreshet Emunah v'Omanut

Midreshet Eshel

Midreshet HaRova

Midreshet Rachel v'Chaya

Neve Hagiva'a

Shapell's/Darche Noam

Torat Reva Yerushalayim

Yeshivat Eretz HaTzvi

Yeshivat Hakotel

Yeshivat Orayta

#### BEIT SHEMESH

Tiferet Midrasha

Kehillat Nofei Hashemesh

Yeshivat Ashreinu

Yeshivat Hesder Lev HaTorah

### HERZLIYA

Mizrachi OU-JLIC Herzliya

### MEVASERET ZION

Yeshivat Mevaseret

### RAMAT GAN

Israel XP at Bar Ilan University

### THE NEGEV

Mechinat Ruach HaNegev

### MACEDONIA

#### SCOPIA

Jewish Community

### MALTA

Jewish Community

### PORTUGAL

#### PORTO

Rabbi Daniel Litvak

### SERBIA

#### BELGRADE

Rav Isak Asiel

### SOUTH AFRICA

#### JOHANNESBURG

Mizrachi Glenhazel Shul

### SWEDEN

The Jewish Community of Stockholm

### SWITZERLAND

#### BERN

Jüdische Gemeinde Bern

#### ZURICH

Mizrachi

### UNITED KINGDOM

Mizrachi UK

### UNITED STATES

#### NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Kol Hatorah Kulah

National Council of Young Israel

RZA-Mizrachi USA

## CALIFORNIA

Beth Jacob Congregation  
Harkham Hillel Hebrew Academy  
West Coast Torah Center  
Young Israel of North Beverly Hills  
YULA High School  
Young Israel of Century City

## COLORADO

DAT Minyan  
East Denver Orthodox Synagogue  
The Denver Kehillah

## CONNECTICUT

Beth David Synagogue  
Congregation Agudath Sholom  
Young Israel of West Hartford

## FLORIDA

Beth Israel Congregation  
Hebrew Academy RASG  
PlayHard PrayHard  
Congregation Torah Ohr  
Sha'arei Bina Torah Academy for Girls  
Young Israel of Hollywood-Ft. Lauderdale

## GEORGIA

Congregation Beth Jacob  
Congregation Ohr HaTorah

## HAWAII

Kehilat Olam Ejad Ganim

## ILLINOIS

Mizrachi-Religious Zionists of Chicago

## MARYLAND

Kemp Mill Synagogue  
Pikesville Jewish Congregation  
Bnai Jacob Shaarei Zion Congregation

## MASSACHUSETTS

Congregation Beth El Atereth Israel  
Congregation Kadimah-Toras Moshe  
Congregation Shaarei Tefillah  
Young Israel of Brookline

## MICHIGAN

Young Israel of Oak Park  
Young Israel of Southfield  
Congregation Kadimah-Toras Moshe

## MINNESOTA

Congregation Darchei Noam

## MISSOURI

Yeshivat Kadimah High School Nusach

Hari B'nai Zion Congregation  
Young Israel of St. Louis

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

Hillel at Dartmouth

## NEW JERSEY

Ahavas Achim  
Volunteer Chaplain Middlesex County  
Congregation AABJ&D  
Congregation Adath Israel of the JEC  
National Council of Young Israel  
Congregation Ahavat Achim  
Congregation Ahavath Torah  
Congregation Brothers of Israel  
Congregation Darchei Noam of Fair Lawn  
Congregation Etz Chaim of Livingston  
Congregation Israel of Springfield  
Congregation Ohr Torah  
Congregation Sons of Israel of Cherry Hill  
Ma Tov Day Camp  
Ohav Emeth  
Pal Foundation  
Shomrei Torah of Fair Lawn  
Synagogue of the Suburban Torah Center  
Yavneh Academy  
National Council of Young Israel  
Young Israel of Teaneck

## NEW YORK

Congregation Anshei Shalom  
Congregation B'nai Tzedek  
Congregation Bais Tefilah of Woodmere  
Congregation Beth Sholom  
Ramaz  
Ma'ayanot Yeshiva High School for Girls  
MTA – Yeshiva University  
High School for Boys  
Young Israel of Merrick  
Congregation Beth Torah  
Congregation Etz Chaim of  
Kew Gardens Hills  
Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun  
Congregation Ohab Zedek  
Great Neck Synagogue  
Iranian Jewish Center/Beth  
Hadassah Synagogue  
Irving Place Minyan  
Jewish Center of Atlantic Beach  
Kingsway Jewish Center  
Lincoln Square Synagogue  
Merkaz Yisrael of Marine Park

North Shore Hebrew Academy  
Young Israel of Merrick  
NYC Department of Correction  
OU-JLIC at Binghamton University  
OU-JLIC at Cornell University  
Queens Jewish Center  
Stars of Israel Academy  
The Riverdale Minyan  
Vaad of Chevra Kadisha  
West Side institutional Synagogue  
Yeshiva University High School for Girls  
Young Israel of Hillcrest  
Young Israel of Jamaica Estates  
Young Israel of Lawrence-Cedarhurst  
Young Israel of New Rochelle  
Young Israel of North Woodmere  
Young Israel of Oceanside  
Young Israel of Scarsdale

## OHIO

Beachwood Kehilla  
Congregation Sha'arei Torah  
Congregation Torat Emet  
Green Road Synagogue  
Fuchs Mizrachi School  
Heights Jewish Center

## PENNSYLVANIA

Shaare Torah Congregation

## SOUTH CAROLINA

Brith Sholom Beth Israel  
Congregation Dor Tikvah

## TENNESSEE

Baron Hirsch Congregation

## TEXAS

Mayerland Minyan Synagogue  
Robert M. Beren Academy  
United Orthodox Synagogues of Houston

## VIRGINIA

Keneseth Beth Israel

## WASHINGTON

Bikur Cholim-Machzikay Hadath  
Northwest Yeshiva High School  
Sephardic Bikur Holim Congregation

## VENEZUELA

### CARACAS

Ashkenazi Kehilla  
Mizrachi Venezuela



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