

South Head Youth Parasha Sheet

PARASHAT LECH LECHA



Throughout Avram's entire life, Hashem tested him with ten very hard tests, some of which occur in this week's Parasha. Each test was more difficult than the previous one, yet Avram passed them all with flying colours. Our Parasha opens with the first of the ten tests. In a dream Hashem commands Avram 'Go from your land, your birthplace and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you'. Avram immediately listens to Hashem. This displays Avram's immense trust in Hashem. After all, for one to leave their homeland for an unknown place is not an easy task. Yet Avram trusted in Hashem and believed that He would direct him to a beautiful land.



Avram is accompanied by his wife Sarai, nephew, Lot, and servant, Eliezer. They are also accompanied by a contingent of people who have been convinced of Hashem's greatness by Avram.

Avram and his companions travel until they reach the land of Cana'an (today known as Israel). When they arrive in Cana'an Hashem promises Avram that the land of Cana'an will one day belong to his descendants. Hashem also tells Avram to look up at the billions of stars in the sky and tells him that his descendants will be as numerous as those stars. This is the first time of many times that Hashem gives Avram this promise.

It is not long after they arrive in Cana'an that a famine erupts. There is no food for the people to eat. Avram has no choice but to go to the land of Egypt to purchase food. However, Avram is afraid to travel to Egypt with Sarai. Sarai was a very beautiful woman. Avram fears that if Sarai accompanies him to Egypt, the Egyptians will kidnap her. Avram will not leave Sarai alone in Cana'an either, so he decides to take her with him to Egypt. He tells her to tell everyone that she is his sister for he fears that if the Egyptians see a beautiful married woman they will murder the husband and take away the wife. To be extra cautious, Avram also hides Sarai in a box in order that the Egyptians should not see her. Yet, when Avram arrives in Egypt, the Egyptian customs police open the box and behold, they find the beautiful Sarai. They immediately take her to Pharaoh's palace. When Pharaoh sees the beautiful Sarai he decides that he wants her as his wife. Pharaoh offers Avram many gifts in exchange for Sarai, which of course Avram does not accept. All he wants is to have his precious wife returned to him. Sarai tells Pharaoh, 'I am a married woman! You are not allowed to keep me in your palace! Return me to my husband!' But of course, Pharaoh does not listen. That night Sarai prays to Hashem and asks Him to save her. Hashem listens to her prayers and punishes Pharaoh. He strikes Pharaoh with many plagues. Pharaoh comes to realise that Sarai is indeed a special woman and so he returns her to Avram. Pharaoh also provides Avram with money, cattle and riches. Among the gifts is Pharaoh's daughter Hagar whom he gives to Sarai as a maidservant.

Upon return to Israel Avram has many cattle that he has just received from Pharaoh. Avram's nephew Lot also has cattle. Avram however tells his shepherds that they need to place muzzles on all of the cattle when walking the cattle through other peoples

fields as he does not want his cattle to steal other people's grass. Lot's shepherds figure that since Avram has no sons, and Hashem has promised the land to Avram, Lot will eventually inherit the land, so they don't take care to ensure their cattle don't eat from other people's grass as they figure it's not considered stealing. Avram is not happy with this so he makes a deal with Lot. One of them will live on one side of the country



and the other will live on the opposite side of the country. Lot decides to settle in the city of Sodom while Avram settles in the city of Mamrei. Lot's decision is not very wise. Sodom has a reputation of being a very wicked city. However, Lot feels that since he has been spiritually uplifted by Avram he will be able to withstand the wickedness of the people of Sodom.

Avram and Sarai loved to have guests. They had tremendous Hachnasat Orchim and so upon their return to Israel they set up a tent in the middle of the desert, which had four doors, one on each side. The four doors were to allow all travelers, no matter the direction they were traveling, north, south, east or west, to enter the tent to eat a nice warm meal. While the people would eat their food, Avram would take the opportunity to educate the people about G-d. When the people finished their meal Avram encouraged them to Bentch and to thank Hashem for the wonderful food they had eaten. When the people would say, 'We don't want to Bentch,' Avram would say, 'okay, don't Bentch! Here's the bill you must pay instead for your food', and Avram would give them a very expensive bill. Suddenly the people would say, 'okay Avram, we will Bentch!' In this way Avram shared the truth of Hashem with thousands and thousands of people who, in turn, shared it with many more people.

In our Parasha, Hashem makes a pact with Avram. This pact is called the Brit Bein HaBetorim. In this pact G-d tells Avram that the Jewish people will be sent into exile to Egypt for 400 years after which they will conquer the nation of Canaan and inherit the land of Israel. There's just one problem with this pact... Avram and Sarai are both



very old and they don't have any children. So Sarai suggests to Avram to marry the maidservant, Hagar so he can have children with her. Avram listens to his wife and Hagar conceives. Hagar becomes nasty to Sarai and causes Sarai to become quite distressed. As a result, Sarai begins to treat her harshly, in fact so harshly that Hagar runs away. But Hashem has other plans for

Hagar. He sends an angel to convince Hagar to return to Avram and Sarai. The angel tells her that she will bear a son who will become the father of a populous nation. Indeed, a son is born and Avram and Hagar name him Ishmael. Ishmael becomes the father of the Arab nation. At this stage Avram is 86 years old.

Avram's tests are not over yet. But before Hashem puts Avram to the test again, he first changes Avram and Sarai's names. Avram is now called Avraham which means, father of many nations, and Sarai's name is changed to Sarah, which means princess of the world. After the name change, it's time for Avraham's next test. Hashem tells him that he must circumcise himself. At this stage Avraham is 99 years old. Avraham once again does not hesitate to follow Hashem's command. In the same one day Avraham circumcises himself, his 13 year old son Ishmael and all of the 318 males

living in his household. This test was the very first Mitzvah that Hashem gave to Avraham. Hashem tells Avraham that the Mitzvah of Brit Milah is to be a covenant between them. Hashem tells Avraham that all his descendants are required to have a Brit Milah at the age of eight days. Hashem then promises Avraham that he and Sarah will have a baby boy. Hashem tells them that they should name the baby Yitzchak. Hashem also tells them that from Yitzchak will stem a great nation which Hashem will love dearly.

At the conclusion of the Parasha, Hashem tells Avraham and Sarah to count the stars in the sky. There are 100's of 1000's of stars, too many for Avram to count. Hashem says to Avraham, 'because of your kindness and your spreading Judaism around the world, I will make many descendants from you. You will have many children and grandchildren. The large number of stars you see in the sky, that is how many descendants you will have'.

Mission of the week: (1) Be like Avraham - encourage a friend to take on a new Mitzvah! (2) stand up for what you believe is the right thing to do, even if your friends don't agree with you.

**It was great seeing you in Shule!
We hope you enjoy reading this Parsha Sheet and quizzing your family!
Shabbat Shalom from Brookie and the South Head Youth Crew**