



## DVAR TORAH

Parshat Lech Lecha  
Hadassa Gerber Greenbaum

### Lech Lecha

Our Sages tell us that every word in the Torah is measured; there are no extraneous words. This raises a question at the very outset of this week's parsha. Instead of just using the Hebrew verb "Lech," — "Go" in the beginning sentence, "Go, from your land... to the land I will show you," the Torah says "Lech **lecha**" — "Go for yourself." Why add the additional word "**lecha**"?

Rashi ponders the significance of the inclusion of "**lecha**." His answer: lech **lecha** — go for you; for your own benefit and good. There I will make you into a great nation, here you will not merit to even have children.

The catalyst for the blessing of Avram ("And I will make you a great nation..."), unlike the blessing for Noah and the flood, is not tied to the corruption of mankind, but rather, it seems, to the strength and goodness of Avram. He left the land of his ancestors, and took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, their wealth and the "the souls they made" in Haran. What souls did they make? (At this point Avram and Sarai had no children.) Rashi says this is referring to those who converted to the belief in Hashem (G-d) because of them. So Avram was already reaching out to others, caring about others to such a degree that they too gave up their homeland and followed Avram. We also know that Avraham's concern for all people (G-d changed his name to Avraham in chapter 17) extended even to the evil people of Sodom: Avraham negotiated with Hashem about the lives of the Sodomites, asking "Will you destroy the righteous along with the wicked? What if there are 50 righteous... 45? ...40?" on down to 10. (Chapter 18:23-32)

There are other examples in the Torah of using the word "**lecha**" to embellish a verb. I will focus on two:  
In last week's parsha, G-d says to Noah "**Aseh lecha**" — Make for yourself an ark (6:14).

In Shemos (34:1), Hashem commands Moshe "**Pesol lecha**" — Engrave for yourself two stone tablets.

### Aseh lecha

"All flesh had corrupted its way on earth" and G-d told Noah, "I am about to destroy them from the earth" (6:12-13). Noah and his family will be saved, but the rest of humanity will be destroyed. Noah hears this and he is silent. The Torah does not note any conversation, prayers, or petitioning from Noah for his fellow man. So, Hashem speaks up. "**Aseh lecha** tevas atzei gopher" — Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. What can "**lecha**" intimate here?

Hashem could have found many ways to save Noah, his family and the selected animals. Why an ark? You, Noah, who does not go out and try to "convert" people to do the right thing, I, Hashem, will bring the people to you. According to Rashi, it took 120 years for Noah to build that ark — plenty of time for the people around him to see what he was doing and for Noah to tell them there will be a flood and they should repent. Make the ark for yourself, but the very act of building it will be a message to the people around you.

### Pesol lecha

During the sin of the Golden Calf, Hashem wanted to annihilate the people who had sinned and build a great nation, this time from Moshe. Moshe's only interest, however, was in saving the people. He prays and G-d relents. Still, as Moshe neared the scene of the sin, he grew angry and broke the tablets created by G-d. After this, Hashem commands Moshe "**Pesol lecha**" — engrave for yourself two stone tablets. What does "**lecha**" connote here?

Rashi says this means engrave for yourself two new tablets to replace the ones you broke. I would suggest an additional thought. Engrave new tablets, let's begin anew. You do your part, Hashem says, I will do mine. The two sets of tablets were different.

The first set was made entirely by Hashem, both the stones and the words on them. The second set was more of a partnership — the stones were carved by Moshe, the inscription was from Hashem. The first set was short lived. The second set lasted. If we do for ourselves, Hashem will meet us halfway, and the combined efforts will produce a Torah that will last.

### Lecha - for you

There are many different types of Jews and many different ways to take Hashem's commandments and integrate them into our being, making them our own "**lecha**." Some of us, like Avram, leave our past and find G-d. Other times, as with Noah, G-d finds us, bringing us opportunities to connect. And as with the second set of tablets, if we begin the process of carving the ways of Torah into ourselves, Hashem will be our partner in helping us and making it last. The word "**lecha**," for you, speaks to us all. It encourages us to strengthen our personal relationship with G-d and our Torah and gain a deeper understanding of how our lives are enhanced by doing so. Shabbat Shalom!

## DVAR TORAH

The next Shabbatot available to write a Dvar Torah are:  
Toldot 11/6, Miketz 12/4, Vayechi 12/18 & Vaera 1/1/22  
If interested, please email Bill Greenbaum at [dvar@lss.org](mailto:dvar@lss.org).

## WEEKLY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

### Monday:

- **Chug Ivrit led by Harel Fenigstein Chadashot (News from Israel):** 7:00pm-8:15pm. Available in person or via Zoom. Location: Room 206 Meeting ID: 853 8744 3723 Password: 180613
- **Beginners: The Jewish Living Workshop led by Dassa and Bill Greenbaum:** 7:30-8:30pm via Zoom. The Jewish Living Workshop, register at [www.lss.org/beginners](http://www.lss.org/beginners). Topic: Putting Up a Mezuzah Meeting ID: 0679 6915 Passcode: 593143.

### Tuesday:

- **The Marilyn & Sam Isler, "Studies in the weekly Parsha"** led by Rabbi Shaul Robinson: 10:30am–11:30am Meeting ID: 241022510. Dial In: 646 876 9923. Location: The Nathaniel Richman Cohen Sanctuary
- **Beit Midrash night, The M'lachim (Kings) Study Group** led by Ron Platzer: 8:00pm. Meeting ID: 850 0937 1460 Password: 560900
- **Beginners: Rabbi Buchwald's Introduction to Bible:** 6:30-8:00pm via Zoom. This course will review basic literary and theological approaches to Bible study, traditional and modern, through the analysis of the Biblical text. Registrants receive the Zoom link and class materials prior to the class. Register at [www.lss.org/beginners](http://www.lss.org/beginners). Cost: \$90, Free to LSS Members. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.

### Wednesday:

- **Chug Ivrit - Safa Ivrit (Hebrew Language) led by Harel Fenigstein:** 7:00pm-8:15pm. Available in person or via Zoom. Location: Room 206 Meeting ID: 854 6157 2450 Password: chug2
- **Food, Jews, History with Paul Shaviv:** 8:00pm Different and fascinating interactions between Jews, food and history! Discovery, trade, use, halakhah... Meeting ID: 836 3083 6501 Password: 648083

### Thursday:

- **Women's Talk Time:** led by School Psychologist Ruth Moser Riemer: 11:30am-12:30pm. Meeting ID: 972 4054 8238 Password: 142533
- **Jacob Adler Parsha Class:** Explorations in the Weekly Parsha led by Rabbi Shaul Robinson: 6:45pm. Meeting ID: 912 657 888 In person location: Belfer Beit Midrash

# Shabbat Shalom!

In case of a bereavement, please call our Clergy at 646-543-7485 (day or night)

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