

**Parsha Plug: Parshat Lech Lecha**

<b>Bereshit 12:1-4, 15:1</b>	<b>בראשית יב:א-ד, טו:א</b>
<p><b>1</b> And the Lord said to Avram, “Go forth from your land and from your birthplace and from your father’s house, to the land that I will show you. <b>2</b> And I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. <b>3</b> And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you.” <b>4</b> And Avram went, as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him, and Avram was seventy five years old when he left Haran.</p>	<p>א וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל-אַבְרָם לֵךְ-לְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֹרְאָךְ: ב וְאָעֲשֶׂךָ לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל וְאִבְרַכְךָ וְאִגְדְּלָה שְׁמֶךָ וְהָיָה בְרָכָה: ג וְאִבְרַכְתָּ מְבָרְכֶיךָ וּמְקַלְלֶיךָ אֲרֹר וְנִבְרַכְוּ בְךָ כָּל מִשְׁפָּחֹת הָאָדָמָה: ד וַיֵּלֶךְ אַבְרָם כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֵלָיו ה' וַיֵּלֶךְ אִתּוֹ לוֹט וְאַבְרָם בֶּן-חָמֵשׁ שָׁנַיִם וְשִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה בְּצֵאתוֹ מִחָרָן:</p>

<b>Rav Chayim Paltiel on Bereshit 12:2</b>	<b>ר' חיים פלטיאל בראשית יב:ב</b>
<p>‘You will be a blessing’?...Some say this blessing is the blessing of Shem son of Noach, as it is written ‘Canaan will be a slave to him’. Even though Shem had five sons, I am giving the blessing to one of the descendants of Arpachshad (son of Shem).</p>	<p>והיה ברכה. שהברכות נתונים בידך. וכן דהיינו ואברכה מברכך. וי"ל אמ' תהיה מבורך מברכת שם בן נח דכתיב ויהי כנען עבד למו, ואף על גב דשם היה לו ה' בנים אני נותן לאחד מבני ארפכשד ואמ' מזרעו ואני נותן לך הברכה.</p>

<b>Rashi on Bereshit 12:2</b>	<b>רש"י על בראשית יב:ב</b>
<p>‘And I will make you into a great nation’: Since traveling causes three things: It diminishes procreation, it diminishes money, and it diminishes fame, therefore, he required these three blessings...          ‘And you will be a blessing’: The blessings are entrusted into your hand. Until now, they were in My hand; I blessed Adam and Noach. From now on, you may bless whomever you wish. Another explanation: “And I will make you into a great nation”: This is the basis of “the God of Avraham.” “And I will bless you”: This is this basis of “the God of Yitzchak.” “And I will make your name great”: This is the basis of “the God of Yaakov” in the first blessing of the Amidah. You might think that it should be concluded by mentioning them all. Therefore, the Torah states: “and you shall be a blessing”-- with you they will conclude, and not with them (Based on Pesachim 117b).</p>	<p>ואעשך לגוי גדול: לפי שהדרך גורמת לשלשה דברים ממעטת פריה ורביה, וממעטת את הממון, וממעטת את השם, לכך הוזקק לשלש ברכות הללו שהבטיחו על הבנים, ועל הממון, ועל השם...והיה ברכה: הברכות נתונות בידך, עד עכשיו היו בידך, ברכתי את אדם ואת נח ואותך, ומעכשיו אתה תברך את אשר תחפוץ. דבר אחר ואעשך לגוי גדול זהו שאומרים אלקי אברהם, ואברכך זהו שאומרים אלקי יצחק, ואגדלה שמך זהו שאומרים אלקי יעקב. יכול יהיו חותמין בכלן, תלמוד לומר והיה ברכה, כך חותמין ולא בהם:</p>

<b>Ramban on Bereshit 12:1</b>	<b>רמב"ן בראשית יב:ב</b>
<p>‘And you will be a blessing’: You will be a blessing that they will bless with you, ‘May you be like Avraham’. And not only this but all of the families of the earth will bless through you, not only the people of your</p>	<p>והיה ברכה - אתה תהיה הברכה, אשר יתברכו בך לאמר "ישימך אלקים כאברהם". והוסיף עוד כי כל משפחות האדמה יתברכו בו, לא אנשי</p>

land. Or 'they will be blessed through you' that they will be blessed because of him.	ארצו בלבד. או ונברכו בך, שיהיו מבורכים בעבורו.
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<b>Daat Zekeinim from Baalei Tosfot on Bereshit 12:2</b>	<b>דעת זקנים מבעלי התוספות בראשית יב:ב</b>
'You will be a blessing' is a grammatical command-- a command that every place that he goes that he will teach people to recognize their Creator and bless Him. And this is what he did...	והיה ברכה לשון צווי שצוהו שכל מקום שילך שילמד בני אדם להכיר בוראם ולברכו וכן עשה...

<b>Masechet Chagigah 3a</b>	<b>מסכת חגיגה ג.</b>
Is God only "the God of Avraham," and not the God of Yitzchak and Yaakov? Rather, the verse mentions "the God of Avraham," as he was the first of the converts.	אלקי אברהם אלקי אברהם ולא אלקי יצחק ויעקב אלא אלקי אברהם שהיה תחילה לגרים.

<b>Or HaChayim on Bereshit 12:2</b>	<b>אור החיים בראשית יב:ב</b>
...When Avraham left his land, he lost everything. And so God said to him: For leaving your land, I will make from your loins for you many who love you. For losing the benefit of your family, I will bless you and make your name great. And for the loss of the help from your father's home, I will make you a blessing.	...כשיוצא מארצו וכו' חסר לכולן, ולזה אמר אליו ה' כנגד מארצך אני אעשה לך הרבה אוהבים ממך מיוצאי חלצריך. וכנגד חסרון התועלת של בני המשפחה כנזכר ואברכך ואגדלה שמך, וכנגד חסרון המועיל מבית אביך והיה ברכה:

<b>Bereshit 15:1 with Rashi</b>	<b>בראשית טו:א עם רש"י</b>
After these incidents, the word of the Lord came to Avram in a vision, saying, "Fear not, Avram; I am your Shield; your reward is exceedingly great." <b>Rashi: After these incidents:</b> ...After this miracle that he slew the kings, he was worried and said, "Perhaps I have received reward for all my righteous deeds." Therefore, God said to him, "Fear not Abram, I am your Shield" from punishment, that you will not be punished for all those souls that you have slain, and as far as your being worried about receiving reward, your reward is exceedingly great.	אָתָּר   הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה הָיָה דְבַר־ה' אֶל־אַבְרָם בְּמַחְזָה לְאִמְרֵי אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אַבְרָם אָנֹכִי מִגֵּן לְךָ שְׂכָרְךָ הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד: רש"י: אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה: ...אַחֲרֵי שֶׁנַּעֲשָׂה לוֹ נֶס זֶה שֶׁהִרְגָה אֶת הַמְּלָכִים וְהָיָה דוֹאֵג וְאוֹמֵר שֶׁמֵּא קִבַּלְתִּי שְׂכָר עַל כָּל צַדְקוֹתַי, לִכְךָ אִמְרֵי לוֹ הַמְּקוֹם אֵל תִּירָא אַבְרָם אֲנֹכִי מִגֵּן לְךָ מִן הָעוֹנֵשׁ שֶׁלֹּא תַעֲנֵשׁ עַל כָּל אוֹתָן נַפְשוֹת שֶׁהִרְגַת, וְמֵה שֶׁאַתָּה דוֹאֵג עַל קְבוּל שְׂכָרְךָ, שְׂכָרְךָ הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד:

<b>Netivot Shalom Lech Lecha, Anochi Magen Lach</b>	<b>נתיבות שלום לך לך אנכי מגן לך</b>
This is why the end of the first blessing of the Amidah ends with 'Shield of Avraham', for Avraham our father was able to endure all of the tests and all of his circumstances because of his faith that God was his shield and his refuge.	וזהו מה שבך חותמין בברכה ראשונה של שמו"ע מגן אברהם, שאברהם אבינו עבר את כל הנסיונות ואת כל המאורעות מתוך בטחון שהקב"ה מגינו ומחסהו.

**Rabbi Yaakov Horowitz, *Parshas Lech Lecha: Looking Back, Moving Forward, and Charting One's Path***

Rabbi Shimon Schwab z'tl offers a profound insight into the words of this pasuk and the initial bracha of Shmone Esrei. In his sefer *Mayan Beis Hashoeivah*, he explains that we are all obligated to look back to previous generations as we develop our goals and chart a course for our future. At the same time, we cannot become stagnant and lead uninspired lives by living off the money in the bank – the accomplishments of our ancestors. He maintains that this message is vividly transmitted to us several times each day. We open Shmone Esrei by mentioning each of our three Avos – Avraham, Yitzchak and Yakov, as we give thanks to Hashem for providing us with such a rich past and a sacred heritage...We conclude the bracha, however, solely with the name of Avraham. For Avraham was the first to chart his own path, and – on his own initiative – acknowledge the presence of Hashem (*Chagigah* 3a). He was called Avraham the Ivri since he had the courage to stand alone and recognize Hashem as the Supreme Being (See *Midrash Bereshis* 42:8). Rabbi Schwab maintains that by noting these attributes of Avraham, we are reinforcing the notion that each person needs to develop his or her unique strengths and chart a course that will lead to a life filled with purpose and meaning. **Three Diverse Paths:** I would like to add to the theme of Rabbi Schwab's dvar Torah and suggest that these dual messages of the importance of tradition and the value of individual striving can be found in the first portion of the initial bracha where we recite the memory of our three Avos...Avraham, Yitzchak and Yakov shared a joint mission; to serve Hashem with all their skills and talents. They merely took different paths to their common destination. We begin our prayers each day by recalling the towering accomplishments of our forefathers. We bask in the glow of their memories and are inspired to do our very best to add yet another link in the chain of our mesorah (tradition). We look back to the lives of our Avos and Imahos, and learn the lessons they left us. At the same time, we move forward in our quest to lead meaningful lives ourselves – preparing for the time when we will pass to our children the eternal chain of our glorious heritage.

**Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, *Four Dimensions of the Journey (Lech Lecha 5779)***

Lech Lecha: "Go to yourself." The Jewish journey, said R. David of Lelov, is a journey to the root of the soul. In the words of R. Zushya of Hanipol, "When I get to heaven, they will not ask me, why were you not Moses? They will ask me, Zushya, why were you not Zushya?" Avraham was being asked to leave behind all the things that make us someone else – for it is only by taking a long and lonely journey that we discover who we truly are. "Go to yourself."