

In memory of all those brutally murdered in the war on Israel,
including the fallen soldiers of the IDF

בס"ד

1 NOVEMBER 2025 | 10 CHESHVAN 5786

VOLUME 39 | #8

DAF HASHAVUA

לֶךְ-לֶךְ | LECH LECHA

SHABBAT ENDS:

London: 5.23pm
Birmingham: 5.27pm
Bournemouth: 5.34pm
Cardiff: 5.37pm
Dublin: 5.43pm
Edinburgh: 5.27pm
Glasgow: 5.32pm
Hull: 5.23pm
Leeds: 5.24pm
Liverpool: 5.33pm
Manchester: 5.27pm
Nottingham: 5.27pm
Sheffield: 5.27pm
Southend: 5.19pm
Southport: 5.34pm
Jerusalem: 5.27pm



לֶךְ-לֶחָא
LECH LECHA

3rd Sidra in:
בְּרֵאשִׁית
BEREISHIT

By Numbers:
126 VERSES
1,686 WORDS
6,336 LETTERS

Headlines:
**AVRAHAM IN
THE LAND**

LECH LECHA:
Artscroll p.54
Hertz p.45
Koren Sacks p.77
Soncino p.60

HAFTARAH:
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Koren Sacks p.1415
Soncino p.82

Sidra Summary

1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – BEREISHIT 12:1-13

God appears to Avraham (at this stage still called Avram), telling him to leave his homeland, Charan (Babylonia), and travel to a land “that God would show him”, where he would flourish and father a great nation. Avraham takes his wife Sarah (at this stage still called Sarai), his nephew Lot and his entire household. They arrive in Cana’an. Avraham travels throughout the Land. Famine strikes and they are forced to go down to Egypt in order to survive. Afraid of being killed if the Egyptians discover that Sarah is his wife, Avraham asks her to say she is his sister.

2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 12:14-13:4

Pharaoh’s officers take Sarah away to their master’s house. They give Avraham copious gifts as ‘payment’. God strikes Pharaoh with a plague. Suspecting that Sarah may in fact be Avraham’s wife, Pharaoh confronts Avraham and then orders him and Sarah to leave. They travel back to Cana’an with Lot.

3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 13:5-13:18

Arguments break out between the shepherds of Avraham and Lot. Avraham suggests that they part ways. Lot chooses to live in the immoral city of Sedom. God appears to Avraham and promises that his offspring, who will be countless, shall inherit the Land.

4TH ALIYA (REVI’I) – 14:1-14:20

A war breaks out among nine kings. The king of Sedom is defeated and Lot is taken captive. This prompts Avraham to mobilise his small force, which miraculously defeats the victorious kings and rescues Lot.

Point to Consider: *Who came to tell Avraham that Lot had been taken captive? (see Rashi to 14:13)*

5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 14:21-15:6

Avraham refuses the King of Sedom’s offer to keep the spoils of the war. Avraham relays his pain to God at being childless. God tells him that his offspring will be countless, like the stars.

6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 15:7-17:6

Wary of future sins, Avraham asks for a hint as to how his offspring will merit to inherit and to keep the Land (see Ramban’s commentary). God instructs Avraham to cut up several animals, indicating that the future Temple offerings will protect the nation. Birds of prey descend on the carcasses. Avraham falls into a deep sleep. God tells him that his offspring will be enslaved in a foreign land for 400 years. Sarah, still childless, tells Avraham to take her maidservant, Hagar, as a second wife. Hagar becomes pregnant and is disrespectful to Sarah, who sends her away. An angel appears to Hagar in the desert, telling her to subjugate herself to Sarah. Hagar gives birth to Yishmael.

7TH ALIYA (SHEVI’I) – 17:7-17:27

God instructs Avraham in the mitzvah of *brit milah*. God says that Sarah will have a child, Yitzchak. Avraham circumcises both himself and Yishmael.

HAFTARAH

The Biblical prophet Yeshaya (Isaiah) reassures Israel that even when they are downtrodden, God does not tire of them and does not forget them; He remains in charge of Creation and we remain His chosen people.



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United Synagogue Daf Hashavua

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COVENANT AND CONVERSATION

THE POWER OF EXAMPLE

To mark the upcoming 5th yearzeit of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l and The Rabbi Sacks Global Day of Learning 2025 on 20 Cheshvan (11.11.2025), we will feature over several weeks a potpourri of parasha articles taken from the archives of the Covenant & Conversation Family Edition. Learn more from Rabbi Sacks at www.rabbisacks.org

Until Lech Lecha, the Torah focused on all of humanity. Adam, Eve, Cain and Abel are human archetypes. The first pair represent the tensions between husband and wife, the latter the rivalry between siblings. Then comes another pair of stories – the Flood, and the building of the Tower of Babel – this time about society as a whole. Each is about the tension between freedom and order. All four narratives are about the human condition. Their message is universal and eternal, as befits a book about God, who is universal and eternal. In the first eleven chapters of Bereishit, we see the God who created the universe, made all of humanity in His image, blessed the first humans, and made a covenant with all humankind after the Flood. The God of the universe is the universal God.

Why then does the entire story shift in Bereishit 12? From here onward it is no longer about humanity as a whole but about one man (Abraham), one woman (Sarah), and their children, who – by the time of the book of Shemot – have become a large and significant people, but still no more than one nation among many.

What is happening here? Does God lose interest in everyone else?

That surely cannot be the case.

We have many examples to show us that God cares about all of humanity.

When Joseph looks back on his time in Egypt, he tells his brothers that it turned out well, as he was able to save many people in Egypt from starvation, as well as his own family. When God sends Jonah to Nineveh, the Assyrian city, it is to persuade the people to repent and thus avoid their destruction. Jonah doesn't understand why at first, but he comes to see that God is concerned not only with Bnei Yisrael (the Jewish people) but with

the Assyrians too.

So why does our Torah for the most part shift focus to Abraham, and from then on only follow him and his family? The stories in Bereishit 1-11 teach us that people do not naturally live as God wishes. They sin. They even kill one another. So after the Flood, God becomes not only our Creator but also our Teacher. He instructs humanity, and He does so in two ways: He sets out general rules – the covenant with Noach – and then He chooses an example, Abraham and his family. They are to become role-models, compelling



examples of what it means to live closely and faithfully in the presence of God, not for their sake alone but for the sake of humanity as a whole. Abraham is recognised as a man of God by his contemporaries, even though they are not a part of his specific covenant.

The same is true of Joseph, the only member of Abraham's family in Bereishit whose life among the Gentiles is described in detail. He is constantly reminding others about God.

Jews are not called on to be

Jews for the sake of Jews alone. They are called on to be a living, vivid, persuasive example of what it is to live by the will of God, so that others too come to recognise God and serve Him, each in their own way, within the parameters of the general principles of the covenant with Noach. We are not called on to convert humanity, but we are called on to inspire humanity by being compelling role-models of what it is to live, humbly but unshakably in the presence of God, as His servants, His witnesses, and

His ambassadors. This is not for our sake alone but for the sake of humanity as a whole.

To be a Jew is to be one of God's ambassadors to the world for the sake of being a blessing to the world, and that necessarily means engaging with the world, acting in such a way as to inspire others as Abraham and Jonah inspired their contemporaries. That is the challenge to which Abraham was summoned at the beginning of this week's parasha, and it remains our challenge today.



IT ONCE HAPPENED...

In the late summer of 1999, I was in Pristina making a television programme about the aftermath of the Kosovo campaign. Outside every church was a NATO tank. At the start of the conflict it had been the Serbian Christians who had attacked mosques. Now they feared reprisals from the returning refugees. The mood was tense. Murders were taking place every night. Revenge was in the air. The most important task was to establish order and a return to civil peace.

I interviewed General Sir Michael Jackson, then head of the NATO forces. To my surprise, he thanked me for what 'my people' had done. The Jewish community had taken charge of the city's 23 primary schools. It was, he said, the most valuable contribution to the city's welfare. When 800,000 people have become refugees and then return home, the most reassuring sign that life has returned to normal

is that the schools open on time. This he credited to the Jewish people. Meeting the head of the Jewish community later that day, I asked him how many Jews were there currently living in Pristina. His answer? Eleven.

The story, as I later uncovered it, was fascinating. In the early days of the conflict, the State of Israel had, along with many international aid agencies, sent a field medical team to work with the Kosovan Albanian refugees. Immediately they noticed something others had missed. The aid agencies were concentrating, not unnaturally, on the adults. There was no one working with the children. Traumatized by the conflict and far from home, they were running around and feeling lost.

The team phoned back to Israel and asked for young volunteers. Virtually every youth group in Israel, from the most secular to the most religious, sent out teams of youth leaders at two-week intervals. They worked with the children, organising summer camps, sports competitions, drama and music

events, and everything else they could think of to make their temporary exile feel like a summer holiday. At all levels it was an extraordinary effort. The Kosovan Albanians were Muslims, and for many of the Israeli youth workers it was their first contact and friendship with children of another faith. Their effort won high praise from UNICEF, the United Nations children's organisation. It was in the wake of this that 'the Jewish people' – Israel, the American-based 'Joint' and other Jewish agencies – were asked to supervise the return to normality of the school system in Pristina.

That episode taught me many things: the power of chesed, acts of kindness; the beauty and healing power of kindness extended across the borders of faith; and the way young people can rise to great moral achievements if we set them a challenge. The entire relief effort in Kosovo was a wonderful convergence of many people and agencies, from many faiths and nations.



THE ORDEAL OF THE JEWS RESIDING IN ENGLAND, 1210

BY: **BEN VOS**

Communities and Strategy Manager

Through war and marriage, by 1199 when King John was crowned, this descendant of William the Conqueror held most of what then constituted France, but his inheritance was fragile. The king was also, theoretically, the ultimate owner of every castle, forest and peasant's hut in England. Beneath him, every knight and serf owed fealty and served the next person up in this obligatory Christian pyramid, through military service, or payment in kind or in cash.

Within a few years, John lost his northern French lands to Philip II, the first King of France (reigned 1180-1223), dramatically shrinking John's equivalent to a 'tax base'. From Rome, Popes coaxed devout Europeans - including John's late brother 'Richard the Lionheart' - to partake in ever more expensive, slaughterous and unsuccessful Crusades. And clannish Ireland, though recently conquered, was restive; fighting Gaelic chieftains or even rebellious Anglo-Norman lords, was a drain on John's resources.

The feudal order, where obligations were met by bushels of wheat or days spent under arms - even where the latter was transmuted into cash ("scutage") - would not finance recovery and stabilisation. Funds from outside the system were needed to fund the security and aggrandisement of the Crown.

Abortive and realised campaigns in subsequent years eroded the support of those whose resources were called upon. Many were outraged when John murdered a dynastic rival, his nephew Arthur. Worse, the Pope closed all the churches and graveyards of England for eight years, in a squabble with John over who should be Archbishop of Canterbury.¹ None of this pleased John's subjects.

Much more money would be needed to recover the lost continental lands. John imposed ever more frequent scutage, sold town charters and innovated other ways to generate income. But the capacity of the medieval state and the indulgence of its Christian subjects were limited.

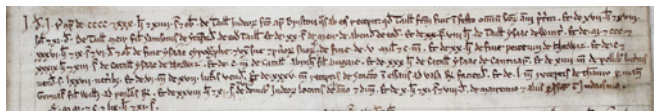
As chattels of the king, the Jews in England were protected by the royal personage only as a parasite protects its host. The relationship was not altruistic, and John believed the Jews had concealed their wealth from him on a previous attempt to get some of it. So, in 1210, "...by the king's order, all the Jews throughout England, of both sexes, were seized,

imprisoned, and tortured severely... one of this sect at Bristol [where the mass incarceration had begun], even after being dreadfully tortured, still refused to ransom himself or to put an end to his sufferings, on which the king ordered his agents to knock out one of his cheek-teeth daily..."²

The coinage then in England amounted to about £250,000-worth. The amount taken in 1210 from around 5,000 Jews resident everywhere from Norwich to Winchester³ was upwards of £40,000, enough to fund wars or build castles.

Some of the barons who extracted *Magna Carta* from John at Runnymede in 1215, pillaged the homes of London Jews the following year, in order to fortify the city in a war against that same king. If under earlier Plantagenet kings the Jews in England had lived well, the reigns of Richard the Lionheart and his brother John, started a century of decline in status and safety.

Today we are blessed to live in a *malchut shel chesed*, a modern liberal democracy in which we are free to practice our Judaism.



Extract from the Great Roll of the Pipe for the thirteenth year of the reign of King John, A.D. 1210-1211. Courtesy of www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papal_Interdict_of_1208.

² Roger of Wendover, Flowers of History: https://archive.org/stream/rogerofwendovers02rogeiala/rogerofwendovers02rogeiala_djvu.txt

³ <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/jews-in-england-1066/jews-in-england-1-source-5/>



THE CLOSING SCENE

SEFER MELACHIM (KINGS) II: CHAPTER 25, PART 2

BY: **PNINA SAVERY**

Ma'ayan and US Educator

In our last article, we discussed the exile of the Jewish people and the destruction of the *Beit HaMikdash* (Temple) by the Babylonians. After this, a remnant of Jewish workmen remain behind in Israel. Gedalia ben Achikam is appointed as a governor to oversee this community.

This represents hope that Jewish life can still flourish in the land of Israel, even without the *Beit HaMikdash* or a king. However, loyalists from the royal family oppose Gedalia's cooperation with the Babylonians and assassinate him. Fearing harsh punishment by the Babylonians, many Jews flee to Egypt. This was the final part of the *Churban* (destruction) and is commemorated annually with the Fast of Gedalia on 3rd Tishrei.

Interestingly, the chapter ends with the release from prison of the former king, Yehoyachin, 37 years after he was initially exiled in the first stage of the *Churban*. Yehoyachin changes his clothing, eats in the royal court and is given a royal stipend for the rest of his life. Why does our *Sefer* end with this description? Some explain that it is to emphasise the extreme low point that we have reached. Our former king is now dependent on the Babylonian enemy for all of his daily needs.

Another approach, as suggested by Yehuda Kiel in his *Da'at Mikra* commentary, sees this as a positive sign that our situation is improving. In fact, Yehoyachin's food is provided on a daily basis: "*devar yom b'yomo*" (*II Melachim* 25:30). This phrase appears one other time in *Sefer Melachim*, by Shlomo during the dedication of the *Beit HaMikdash*. Shlomo prays that God should look out for the people on a daily basis: "*devar yom b'yomo*" (*I Melachim* 8:59). Thus, what happens to Yehoyachin shows that God is still watching over the Jewish people.

Just like God was the orchestrator of the exile and *Churban*, so too He is the orchestrator of our eventual revival. Even at our lowest point, there is hope that things will get better. Indeed, in the future, Yehoyachin's grandson, Zerubavel, will lead the exiles back home to Israel at the beginning of the Second Temple era.¹

Now that we have finished *Sefer Melachim*, we have two possible approaches to the book

as a whole. On one hand, we can conclude that *Sefer Melachim* is a depressingly negative book. We read about wicked king after wicked king, and countless sins of idolatry, civil war and unjust society. At the end, we see the terrible destruction and exile. On the other hand, we can understand it as part of the Torah's reward and punishment system: we sin and we are punished. However, this doesn't mean that God has cast us off. Prophet after prophet encourages the people, reminding them that God is still among them.

Whilst this is not explicitly stated in *Sefer Melachim* itself, it is hinted at throughout. Yehoyachin's release from prison is a perfect example of one of these hints. *Sefer Melachim* ends with this to provide the people with hope for our future. This is a message for all generations and is perhaps even more relevant today. We can always find hope in the knowledge that our future will be brighter, and that the Redemption will one day come.

“ Just like God was the orchestrator of the exile and *Churban*, so too He is the orchestrator of our eventual revival. Even at our lowest point, there is hope that things will get better.”

¹ See Alex Israel, *Kings II*, p.369-370.

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT LECH LECHA

30 OCTOBER - 1 NOVEMBER | 10 CHESHVAN

MAKING NECESSARY CHANGES



BY: **SHLOMO GREENBERG**

Tribes Projects
Executive

God commands Avraham (Abraham), *"Go for yourself from your land, from your relatives and from your father's house to the land that I will show you"*. Why

does God command Avraham to distance himself from everything that is familiar to him, including leaving where he lives?

Making changes is a very difficult thing to do.

Avraham understood that the environment and the people around us, affect us. To be different, to be who we truly want to be, we may need to make changes, whether it's distancing

ourselves from places or people that negatively affect us. Do the places we go to or the people around us encourage us to be better people or be the best versions of ourselves?

We can learn from Avraham the secret of change: to distance ourselves from the things that are not good for us and, with careful thought, to move towards a way of life that we truly want to live.

Avraham's Travels

We hear a lot about the Jewish people's journey in the desert after being freed from Egypt, but a journey no less impressive is that of Avraham and his family in this week's (and the end of last week's) *parasha*. The distance from their place of origin to the land of Canaan was impressive, over 1,200 miles - that's like walking the distance from London to Scotland four times!

Using the places listed below, fill in the blanks as to where Avraham went on his travels.

(Hint: the answers can be found in the last few verses of last week's *parasha* and the first chapter of this week's *parasha*).



Courtesy of Google Maps

Egypt, Ur of the Chaldees, Shechem, Beth-El, Haran, The Negev

In last week's *parasha*, Avraham left (a)_____ with his family and travelled north to (b)_____. There, God came to him and gave him the commandment to leave the land. He then travelled south to the city of (c)_____, where God promised the land of Canaan to his descendants and he built an altar. From there he moved his tent to (d)_____, before journeying to (e)_____. Only when a famine began in Canaan he went westwards to (f)_____.

Answers: (a) 1. Ur of the Chaldees (b) 2. Haran (c) 3. Shechem (d) 4. Beth-El (e) 5. The Negev (f) 6. Egypt



THE TRIBE SCRIBE

LECH LECHA: DESTINATION - GREATNESS!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU NEED TO WEIGH MY SUITCASE? IT'S JUST 14 BOWLING BALLS AND MY SUPER-SNEAKY MISCHIEF MACHINE.

ARE YOU TELLING ME I CAN'T TAKE THREE GALLONS OF CHICKEN SOUP THROUGH SECURITY? OY VEY!

IT SAYS FREE FOR A REASON.

SECURITY

DUTY FREE

FREE SAMPLES

BOARDING SHMOARDING - WHY IS MY GROUP ALWAYS THE LAST LOT TO BOARD? THIS IS **MESHUGA** (CRAZY)! EVEN THE **JEWS** IN THE DESERT ONLY HAD TO WAIT 40 YEARS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THIS IS YOUR CAPTAIN SPEAKING. WE ARE CURRENTLY DELAYED DUE TO UNFAVOURABLE WEATHER CONDITIONS. WE'LL KEEP YOU UPDATED.

MORE **TSORIS** (TROUBLE)! I COULD'VE BUILT A MISCHIEF TOWER BY NOW!

DR **TSORIS**, YOU CAN **KVETCH** (COMPLAIN) ALL YOU LIKE ABOUT THE JOURNEY, BUT WITHOUT THE AIRPORT AND PLANE YOU WOULD NEVER MAKE IT ON HOLIDAY!

THIS WEEK'S **PARASHA** DESCRIBES **AVRAHAM'S** (ABRAHAM'S) EPIC JOURNEY. THE **TORAH** IS NOT JUST TELLING US ABOUT HIM PACKING HIS BAGS, BUT ALSO STEPPING OUTSIDE HIS COMFORT ZONE TO GROW.

AVRAHAM FACED TEN TOUGH TESTS, BUT THEY WEREN'T SETBACKS! THEY WERE STEPS ON HIS JOURNEY TO GREATNESS.

WE CAN'T DOWNLOAD OR FAST-TRACK SPIRITUAL GROWTH. WHEN WE MEET THE CHALLENGES IN OUR LIVES HEAD ON, WE ARE TAKING A STEP TOWARDS BEING OUR BEST SELVES. SO WHEN LIFE FEELS LIKE AIRPORT SECURITY, **KVETCH** LESS, GROW MORE! DESTINATION: GREATNESS!



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Tribe is the Young People's Department of the United Synagogue: Creating a future for our community through engaging, educating and inspiring the next generation.