

DAF HASHAVUA

לך-לך | LECH LECHA

SHABBAT ENDS:

London: 6.37pm
 Birmingham: 6.42pm
 Bournemouth: 6.48pm
 Cardiff: 6.52pm
 Dublin: 6.59pm
 Edinburgh: 6.44pm
 Glasgow: 6.49pm
 Hull: 6.39pm
 Leeds: 6.39pm
 Liverpool: 6.48pm
 Manchester: 6.43pm
 Nottingham: 6.42pm
 Sheffield: 6.43pm
 Southend: 6.33pm
 Southport: 6.49pm
 Jerusalem: 6.35pm



SIDRA
BREAKDOWN

לֶךְ-לֶכָּה
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:
Artscroll p.1133
Hertz p.60
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 (Isaac). Avraham circumcises both himself and Yishmael.

HAFTARAH (YESHAYA 40:27-41:16)
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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LOOKING DOWN AT THE STARS

BY: **RABBI MORDECHAI WOLLENBERG**

Woodford Forest United Synagogue

Towards the end of this week's *parasha*, Avram (as he was at that point) looks at his situation and reaches a perfectly reasonable conclusion. God has promised him a great future and many descendants, but Avram has no children.

God responds in a rather unusual way: "He took him outside and said, 'Look towards the heavens and count the stars, if you are able to count them.'" (*Bereishit* 15:5)

On a simple level, God takes Avram outside his tent to look at the night sky. But Rashi (1040-1105) quotes a fascinating Midrashic explanation. God was telling him, "*tzei me'itztaganut shelcha*" – "leave your astrological calculations." Avram had seen in the stars that he was not destined to have a son. God tells him: Avram may not have a son, but Avraham will!

Then Rashi offers an even more striking interpretation. God lifted Avram above the stars. The word *habet*, "look", implies looking down from above.

It is a remarkable image. Avraham looks at the stars and sees his destiny written there. God tells him: don't just look at them. Rise above them.

This is a fundamental Chassidic idea. A Jew lives within the natural world but is not defined by its limitations. We do not ignore reality or pretend that difficulties

do not exist. But neither do we allow the present reality to decide what the future must look like. The circumstances may be real, and the obstacles may be real, but they are not necessarily the end of the story.

Perhaps this is another dimension of the words that open our *parasha*: *Lech lecha* – "Go forth." Avraham's first journey is geographical. He must leave his land, his birthplace and his father's home. But later he is asked to make another journey: to leave behind the assumptions which tell him what is and is not possible.

We live in a world increasingly driven by predictions. Algorithms predict what we will buy and watch. Data analyses our habits and tells us what we are likely to do next. We ourselves can fall into the same trap: "This is the way I am." "I have tried before." "People like me don't do that."

Avraham teaches us not to confuse a prediction with a destiny.

“ Sometimes the challenge is not to change what we see, but to change where we are looking from.

Indeed, Judaism itself is built around the possibility of change. *Teshuvah*, repentance and return, means that yesterday does not have to determine tomorrow. A person can change direction, grow and become someone whom their previous history might never have predicted.

Perhaps that is why God did not simply tell Avraham that he had read the stars incorrectly. He lifted him above them.

Sometimes the challenge is not to change what we see, but to change where we are looking from.

Lech lecha is the call to keep moving beyond where we are, beyond what we have been, and sometimes even beyond what we believe we can become.



70 YEARS ON: THE SUEZ WAR OF 1956

BY: **RABBI MICHAEL LAITNER**

US Director of Education & Head of Research at the Rabbi Sacks Legacy

At the time of writing, British-Israeli relations are sadly at a nadir. What a contrast from October 1956, during the brief Suez War (also known as the Sinai Campaign), whose 70th anniversary we are commemorating.

This war confirmed structural changes in geopolitics and remains very worthy of contemporary consideration. This article will briefly set out the background to the war and what took place, before considering some ramifications.

The background to the war

In 1888, Anglo-French companies constructed the Suez Canal. This revolutionised world trade by cutting sailing time between Europe, Arabia and beyond. The Canal, a vital trading route, remained in Anglo-French hands until July 1956, when Egyptian President Gamel Abdul Nasser unilaterally nationalised it. The table below sets out the key events and dates of the crisis and its background.

This short war had major implications.

A bi-polar superpower world

In 1945 the newly formed United Nations included five permanent members on its Security Council: the USA, USSR, Britain, China and France, which each had a veto on Council decisions. These countries were expected to build the post-1945 order. Yet by 1956, Britain and France were so weak financially and militarily that American

DATE	KEY EVENT
1948 onwards	Egypt closes the Straits of Tiran to Israeli or Israeli-linked shipping, cutting off the port of Eilat. Israel faces ongoing fedayeen terrorist infiltrations.
Jul-Aug 1956	British PM Anthony Eden and French PM Guy Mollet authorise planning for possible action against Egypt.
Aug-Sept	France begins secret military cooperation with Israel, sensing mutual interest.
Aug-Sept	A conference in London suggests international control of the canal, rejected by Nasser.
Oct	Secret meeting at Sevres in France produces an invasion plan.
Oct	Israeli paratroopers drop near Mitla Pass, beginning the Sinai Campaign (Operation Kadesh).
Oct	Britain and France issue an ultimatum demanding that both sides withdraw from the canal area.
Oct	Britain and France begin air attacks on Egyptian targets prior to paratrooper drops (Operation Musketeer).
Nov	Israeli forces rapidly capture key Sinai positions, including Gaza and approaches to Sharm el-Sheikh.
Nov	The UN General Assembly calls for ceasefire and withdrawal; it took effect shortly afterwards.
Nov	Anglo-French forces land in Egypt
Nov	UN Emergency Force (UNEF) begins deployment in Sinai.
Dec	Britain and France complete withdrawal from Egypt.
Jan 1957	Israeli withdrawal

pressure and Soviet threats forced them to withdraw from Egypt. The Suez War confirmed the USA and the USSR as bi-polar superpowers, that Britain and France were secondary at best, unable to mount such an operation independently.

This opposition to the war, despite Britain and France being allied with the USA, stemmed from the superpowers' tussle for influence in Egypt, the most powerful country in the Middle East. The Anglo-French action smacked of colonialism, a concept in retreat after World War Two. It allowed the USSR to deride the West and embarrass the USA, which had been excluded from the planning whilst still being seen as aligned with Britain and France.

Israel's role

Times were tough in the 1950s as the nascent state strove to establish itself. A recurring, mortal danger was the infiltration of fedayeen, terrorists from Sinai or Egyptian-controlled Gaza whom Israel struggled to deal with. Concurrently, Nasser's closure of the Straits of Tiran attempted to impose a naval blockade to choke Israel's economy. Israel could not endure this existential pressure indefinitely but lacked the confidence to deal with it independently.

American support, given its efforts to woo Nasser, was not forthcoming. For Israel's military, the Anglo-French overtures were a golden opportunity, yet

politicians feared a potentially disastrous failure, despite the opportunity to improve British-Israeli ties post-1948.

Moshe Dayan, the IDF's Chief of Staff, was confident in his forces' ability and recognised the huge and much needed morale boost that an effective operation would provide. Ultimately, his strategy prevailed, so successfully, that Israeli forces achieved their objectives far faster than anticipated. For the first time, they demonstrated their ability to defend themselves well beyond Israel's borders rather than just within those borders.

British-raised Abba Eban (1915-2002) was Israel's Ambassador to the USA and the UN at that time. In his memoirs, *Personal Witness*¹, he notes that only Israel had a clear objective to achieve in this war. This helped him to advocate for Israel to capitalise on its achievements. When diplomats talked of returning to the *status quo ante bellum* 'the situation as it existed before the war' to avoid rewarding "aggression", Eban replied that this would just restart what had led to

the conflict, as Nasser and the fedayeen would simply continue to target Israel.

Eban's successful advocacy helped to soften American opinion and garner support. This led to the creation of UNEF which helped to safeguard Israel's southern border and keep the Straits of Tiran open, until Nasser dismissed UNEF in 1967.

Despite his significant losses, Nasser survived in post, biding his time until he could attack again.

Seventy years on, we can still declare, "See, the Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps" (Psalm 121).



Courtesy of IDF Mapping Unit

This map is for illustrative purposes only and should not be considered authoritative.

1 Ch.13, London, 1993.

ISRAEL IN THE PARASHA

This series is an adaptation of short ideas written by former Chief Rabbi Lord Jakobovits z"l in the 1960s, which were later reprinted in a compilation of his writings, 'Mishnat HaSar'.

LECH LECHA: THE BLESSINGS OF THE LAND FOR FAMILY LIFE

It is traditionally understood that God's instruction to Avraham to leave his land and his birthplace and journey to the Land of Canaan (*Bereishit* 12:1) was "for his benefit and for his good" (Rashi). Indeed, it was specifically in the Land of Israel that he was blessed with children, because, as the Talmud explains, "it was the merit of the Land of Israel that benefitted him" (*Rosh Hashanah* 16b).

This explains why the Torah states that Sarah gave her

maidservant, Hagar, to Avraham only "after they had dwelt in the Land of Canaan for ten years" (16:3). Since Avraham's eventual blessing of children was attributed to the merit of the Land, only the years of childlessness spent in the Land were counted. The long years of childlessness before then, while they were outside the Land, are not part of the calculation at all (Rashi). This reflects the unique merit of the Land of Israel.

“ It was specifically in the Land of Israel that he was blessed with children, because, as the Talmud explains, "it was the merit of the Land of Israel that benefitted him."

– *Rosh Hashanah* 16b

PHRASE OF THE WEEK

BY: **RABBI ALEX CHAPPER** | Borehamwood & Elstree United Synagogue

Each week, working our way through the alphabet, we explore a Jewish word or phrase, bringing clarity and deeper understanding to its meaning.

Is **ORLAH**:

1. Naomi's daughter-in-law? | 2. A prohibition on fruit? | 3. A chickpea?

Orlah refers to the prohibitions regarding the fruit of a tree during the first three years after planting. Not only is the fruit forbidden to eat but no benefit may be derived from it. This law is based on a verse in *Vayikra* (19:23) which explicitly prohibits such fruit from trees planted in Israel. However, according to Rabbinic law, it also applies in the Diaspora.

The word *orlah* literally means "blocked" or "sealed off" and reflects the concept of both a physical and spiritual barrier. The term is also

used to refer to the uncircumcised.

The *Midrash Sifra* points out that the three-year count begins on Rosh Hashanah, rather than Tu B'Shevat, the New Year for Trees, with a tree planted at least six weeks before Rosh Hashanah already counting as having completed its first year.

The fruit of the fourth year is known as *Neta Reva'i* and must either be eaten in Jerusalem or redeemed. This is because it possesses a degree of holiness and must therefore be treated in a special way.

Although the Torah does not give an explicit reason for this mitzvah, the *Sefer HaChinuch* explains that, at its root, its purpose is to inspire us to praise God. Rambam writes that its purpose is to honour God with the first of our produce. During the first three years, the fruit is not yet of sufficient quality to be offered, and so we wait until the fourth year.

We can also suggest that having to wait before enjoying the produce teaches restraint and the recognition that, ultimately, everything comes from God.

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THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT LECH LECHA

23-24 OCTOBER | 13 CHESHVAN

NO INTRODUCTION NECESSARY



BY: **DANIEL FRIEND**

Tribe Gap Year Student

When Noah (Noah) first appears in the Torah, we are immediately told who he is: "*Noach ish tzaddik, tamim hayah bedorotav*"; "Noah was a righteous man, complete in his generation."

Avraham (Abraham) receives no such introduction. *Parashat Lech Lecha* begins simply: "*Vayomer Hashem el Avram*"; "God said to Avram." We are not told that he is righteous, courageous or worthy. God tells

him to leave his country, his birthplace and his father's home, and Avraham goes.

Why does the Torah introduce these two figures so differently?

Perhaps Noah's story begins with a description because his greatness is mainly measured by what he manages to preserve. In a corrupt generation, Noah remains righteous. He does not allow the society around him to destroy his values.

Avraham's task, however, is different. He is not called merely to remain good. He is called to move, to build and eventually to influence the world. Therefore, the Torah does not introduce Avraham with a list of qualities.

His introduction is his response to a challenge.

This is an important distinction. A person can be described as kind, brave or committed, but such words remain untested until something is demanded of them. Avraham becomes known to us not through a biography, but through a decision.

We often spend time thinking about the type of person we are. The Torah may be asking a more serious question: what do we do when our values require something difficult?

Noah is introduced by who he was. Avraham is introduced by what he was willing to do.

Shabbat shalom.

Parasha Scramble!

Unjumble the letters to reveal words connected to the *parasha*.

1. MARVAHA
2. IRASA
3. NANCAA
4. MINEFA
5. TYGEP
6. SARTS
7. VONCETAN
8. HCEL AHCEL

THE TRIBE SCRIBE

Peace Treaties and Patchy Shoes!

God continues to help the Jewish people settle the land He promised them. Nearby towns continue to hear about them.

GOD IS ALWAYS GUIDING AND HELPING US.

YES, HE IS CONSTANTLY WITH US AS WE SETTLE HERE.

The people of **Giv'on** (Gibeon) hear how God is leading **Yehoshua** and the **Jewish people**. They begin to think about what they should do.

THE JEWISH PEOPLE FOLLOW GOD AND ARE A MIGHTY NATION.

WE MUST DECIDE HOW TO APPROACH THEM.

The **Giv'onim** (Gibeonites) decide to visit **Yehoshua**, pretending they have come from a far away land.

LET US GO TO YEHOSHUA AND SAY WE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE PEACE.

WE WILL MAKE IT LOOK LIKE WE HAVE TRAVELLED A LONG DISTANCE.

The **Giv'onim** gather old sacks, cracked wineskins, patched sandals, and dry bread to support their story.

THESE THINGS LOOK VERY OLD. I'M SURE I THREW OUT THESE SANDALS LAST WEEK!

YES YOU DID. I FISHED THEM OUT OF THE DUSTBIN!

The **Giv'onim** arrive at the **Jewish** camp and ask **Yehoshua** to make a peaceful agreement with them.

WE HAVE COME FROM A DISTANT LAND. PLEASE MAKE PEACE WITH US.

HMMM... I CAN CERTAINLY SEE THAT!

WOW! THEY MUST HAVE COME FROM A VERY FAR LAND. THERE'S PROBABLY NO SPORTS DIRECT OR RUSSELL AND BROMLEY IN TOWN!

THEIR SANDALS AND BAGS DO LOOK VERY OLD.

Yehoshua and the leaders make a peaceful agreement with the **Giv'onim**.

WE MAKE A PROMISE OF PEACE WITH YOU.

PHEW! THANK YOU. WE ARE GRATEFUL.

Later, the **Jewish people** discover that the **Giv'onim** actually live nearby.

HOLD ON A MINUTE! YOU LIVE CLOSE TO US.

OH OH. WE'VE BEEN FOUND OUT!

BUT WE WILL STILL HONOUR OUR WORD AS WE MADE A PROMISE BEFORE GOD.

Yehoshua gives the **Giv'onim** special jobs helping with the work around the **Mishkan** (Tabernacle).

YOU WILL HELP CARE FOR GOD'S HOUSE, CHOP WOOD AND DRAW WATER.

WE WILL SERVE FAITHFULLY.

WE CAN LIVE TOGETHER IN PEACE... WE LIKE THAT!