



ב"ה

Parshas Lech Lecha in a Nutshell
(Genesis 12:1–17:27)

G-d speaks to Avram, commanding him, "Go from your land, from your birthplace and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you." There, G-d says, he will be made into a great nation. Avram and his wife, Sarai, accompanied by his nephew Lot, journey to the land of Canaan, where Avram builds an altar and continues to spread the message of a one G-d.

A famine forces the first Jew to depart for Egypt, where beautiful Sarai is taken to Pharaoh's palace; Avram escapes death because they present themselves as brother and sister. A plague prevents the Egyptian king from touching her, and convinces him to return her to Avram and to compensate the brother-revealed-as-husband with gold, silver and cattle.

Back in the land of Canaan, Lot separates from Avram and settles in the evil city of Sodom, where he falls captive when the mighty armies of Chedorlaomer and his three allies conquer the five cities of the Sodom Valley. Avram sets out with a small band to rescue his nephew, defeats the four kings, and is blessed by Malki-Zedek the king of Salem (Jerusalem).

G-d seals the Covenant Between the Parts with Avram, in which the exile and persecution (galut) of the people of Israel is foretold, and the Holy Land is bequeathed to them as their eternal heritage.

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Still childless ten years after their arrival in the Land, Sarai tells Avram to marry her maidservant Hagar. Hagar conceives, becomes insolent toward her mistress, and then flees when Sarai treats her harshly; an angel convinces her to return, and tells her that her son will father a populous nation. Ishmael is born in Avram's eighty-sixth year.

Thirteen years later, G-d changes Avram's name to Abraham ("father of multitudes"), and Sarai's to Sarah ("princess"), and promises that a son will be born to them; from this child, whom they should call Isaac ("will laugh"), will stem the great nation with which G-d will establish His special bond. Abraham is commanded to circumcise himself and his descendants as a "sign of the covenant between Me and you." Abraham immediately complies, circumcising himself and all the males of his household.
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Halachic Zmanim
Shabbos, October 31
Eastern Daylight Time
Earliest Tallis 6:29 AM
Latest Morning Shema .. 10:01 AM
Earliest Mincha (Gedola) ..1:07 PM
Plag Hamincha4:51 PM
Earliest Evening Shema6:22 PM

Anshei Lubavitch Congregation
Rabbi Levi and Leah Neubort

Adult education:
Rabbi Avrohom and Rivky Bergstein

Youth Outreach:
Rabbi Eli and Ruty Steinhauser

Shabbos Schedule

Erev Shabbos – Oct 30 / Cheshvan 12
Candle Lighting.....5:36 pm
Mincha5:40 pm

Shabbos Day – Oct 31 / Cheshvan 13
Shacharis..... 9:30 am*
Torah Reading10:30 am
Rabbi Drasha 11:05 am
Mincha5:35 pm
Rabbi's Drasha.....6:05 pm
Shabbos Ends6:35 pm

**Latest morning Shema is now 10:01 AM. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).*

Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):
Minyan

Shacharis (Mon-Fri)6:15 am
Shacharis (Sunday) 9:00 am
Mincha (Sun-Thurs)1:45 pm
Maariv (Sun-Thurs)9:15 pm

Bulletin
*This week's Bulletin
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Chassidic Masters

"The Three Journeys of Abraham"

*Based on the teachings of
the Lubavitcher Rebbe
Courtesy of MeaningfulLife.com*

A sizable portion of the book of Genesis is devoted to the life of Abraham, the first Jew. Most curiously, however, we first meet Abraham rather late in his celebrated life: the first event of Abraham's life described in detail by the Torah occurred when he was seventy-five years old!

By that time, Abraham was able to look back upon a lifetime of fruitful—indeed unprecedented—achievement. As a young child, his inquisitive mind discerned a greater truth implicit in the workings of the universe, and he came to know the One G-d. A lone man pitted against the entire world, he battled the entrenched pagan perversity of his time, bringing many to a life of monotheistic belief and morality.

But then came an event of such significance that it eclipses the first seven and a half decades of Abraham's life. An event that marked the forging of a new phenomenon—the Jew—and redefined the journey of life.

The event was G-d's call to Abraham to "Go to you, from your land, from your birthplace, and from your father's house, to the land that I will show you." Now that you have realized the full capacity of your conscious powers, go on to you. I

will show you a place that is the essence of your own self, a place that lies beyond the land, birthplace, and father's house that you know.

Instinct, Environment and Reason

The countless factors involved in making us what we are can be generalized under three categories: the natural, the impressed, and the acquired.

We begin life already programmed with the drives and inclinations that form an inborn psyche and character. Then begins, from the moment of birth, the influence of our environment, as parents, teachers and peers impress their manners and attitudes upon our souls. Finally, a third and overriding influence comes with the attainment of intellectual maturity: man, alone among G-d's creatures, has been granted an objective intellect with which he can, to a great extent, control the stimuli to which he is exposed and the manner in which they shall affect him. With his mind, he is empowered to develop himself beyond—and even contrary to—his genetic and conditioned self.

This is the deeper significance of the words "your land, your birthplace and your father's house" in G-d's call to Abraham. Eretz, the Hebrew word for land and earth, is etymologically related to the word ratzon--will and desire; so your land also translates as your natural desires. Your birthplace--moladtecha--is a reference to the influence of home and society. And

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beis avicha, your father's house, refers to man as a mature and rational being, forging his mind-set, character and behavior with the transcendent objectivity of the intellect. (In the terminology of Kabbalah and Chassidism, the intellect is referred to as the father within man, since it is the progenitor of, and authority over, his feelings and behavior patterns.)

By conventional standards, this constitutes the ultimate in human achievement: the development of one's natural instincts, the assimilation of learned and observed truths, and the remaking of self through the objective arbiter of mind. In truth, however, the intellect is still part and parcel of our humanity, remaining ever subject to the deficiencies and limitations of the human state; while it may surmount the confines of the inborn and the impressed, ultimately, the intellect is never truly free of the ego and its prejudices.

But there is a higher self to man, a self free of all that defines and confines the human. This is the spark of G-dliness that is the core of his soul—the divine essence that G-d breathed into him, the image of G-d in which he was created. The eretz that G-d promised to show Abraham.

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[This explains the order in which the terms land, birthplace and father's house appear in the verse. When a person embarks on a journey, he first leaves his (father's) home, then departs his city (birthplace), and only then leaves the borders of his land; yet in our verse this order is reversed. According to the deeper meaning of these terms, however, the order is accurate: first a person departs from his base instincts via his education and environmental influences; these, in turn, are overruled by his faculty for objective reasoning; finally, he is called upon to transcend even his rational self in his journey to the divine essence of his soul.]

In his journey of discovery, Abraham must obviously depart the land, birthplace and father's house of his native Mesopotamia; he must obviously reject the pagan culture of Ur Casdim and Charan. But this is not the departure of which we are speaking in the above-quoted verse.

For Abraham received this call many years after he had renounced the pagan ways of his family and birthplace, recognized G-d, and had a profound impact on his society. Still he is told: Go! Depart from your nature, depart from your habits, depart from your rational self. After rejecting your negative, idolatrous origins, you must now also transcend your positive and gainful past. Reach beyond yourself, albeit a perfected self.

Human perfection is simply not enough. For anything human—even the objective, transcendent intellect—is still part and parcel of the created reality, ever subject to and defined by it. Yet G-d invites us—in His first command to the first Jew—to experience that which transcends all limit and definition: Himself.

But first we must go to you. Go away from your finite self, to come to the you that only G-d can show you—the you that is one with Him. ❖

From Our Sages

Avram took with him his wife, Sarai . . . and the souls which they had made in Charan (Genesis 12:5)

Abraham would invite people into his home, give them to eat and to drink, show them love, and bring them close to G-d, convert them and bring them under the wings of the Divine Presence. This is to teach us that whoever brings a person under the wings of the Divine Presence, it is considered as if he has created him, formed him and developed him.

-- (Sifri, Va'etchanan)

Abram traversed the land (Genesis 12:6)

Everything that happened to the Patriarchs is a signpost for their children. This is why the Torah elaborates its account of their journeys, their well-digging and the other events [of their lives]. . . . These all come as an instruction for the future: for when something happens to one of the three Patriarchs, one understands from it what is decreed to occur to his descendants.

-- (Nachmanides)

Not a thread nor a shoestrap, nor I shall take anything that is yours (Genesis 14:23)

In reward for Abraham's saying, "Not a thread nor a shoestrap," his children merited two mitzvot: the thread of blue [in the tzitzit] and the strap of the tefillin.

-- (Talmud, Sotah 17a)

Haftorah Lech Lecha in a Nutshell

Isaiah 40:27-41:16

The haftorah for this week discusses Abraham's journey to the land of Canaan at G-d's behest, and touches upon Abraham's miraculous battle against the four kings, both of which are described in this week's Torah reading.

The prophet Isaiah addresses Israel's complaint: ""My way [of serving G-d] has been ignored by the Lord, and from my G-d, my judgment passes [unrewarded]."

Isaiah reminds Israel of the Creator's greatness. The time will come when "He will give the tired strength, and to him who has no strength, He will increase strength. Youths shall become tired and weary, and young men shall stumble, but those who put their hope in the Lord shall renew [their] vigor, they shall raise wings as eagles; they shall run and not weary, they shall walk and not tire." Nevertheless, "there is no comprehension of His wisdom," and as such, at times we cannot understand why He chooses to delay the reward of the righteous.

The haftorah then turns its attention to the idolatrous nations of the world. Isaiah reminds them of Abraham's greatness, how after arriving in Canaan he pursued and defeated four mighty kings. "The islands saw and feared; the ends of the earth quaked." Nevertheless, the nations who witnesses these miracles did not abandon their ways. "The [idol] craftsman strengthened the smith, the one who smoothes [the idol] with the hammer strengthened the one who wields the sledge hammer; the one who glues its coating says, "It is good," and he strengthened it with nails that it should not move..."

G-d promises the Jewish nation to reward them for their loyalty to G-d. "Do not fear for I am with you; be not discouraged for I am your G-d. . . Behold all those incensed against you shall be ashamed and confounded; those who quarreled with you shall be as naught and be lost." ❖



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Good Shabbos to all!

שבת שלום גוט שבת!

