

# Toronto Torah

Yeshiva University Torah miTzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Lech Lecha

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## Aliyah After Aliyah

Rabbi Baruch Weintraub

Many commentators address the subtle differences between the beginning of this week's parshah and the end of last week's parshah. Parshat Noach ended (Bereishit 11:31) by telling us clearly that Terach, Avraham's father, decided to leave Ur Kasdim for Eretz Yisrael of his own free will, but our parshah begins (Bereishit 12:1) by telling us that G-d commanded Avraham to leave the land of his fathers and go to 'the land I shall show you'. The question is obvious: was Eretz Yisrael chosen as the final destination by Terach, or by G-d?

Rashi and Ramban (Bereishit 12:1) both contend that Terach indeed decided to begin a journey toward Eretz Yisrael for his own reasons. Upon reaching Charan, Terach decided to stop travelling and to settle down, and then Avraham was called by Hashem to begin walking again. Avraham was not told that the final destination would be Eretz Yisrael, but he could infer it from his knowledge of the special holiness of the land. This is difficult, though; if the commandment to Avraham occurred only in Charan, why is Avraham told to leave his "birthplace and land of his fathers", which he has already left? (See Ramban's answer to that criticism in his comments to 12:1.)

Ibn Ezra (ibid. 12:1) takes the opposite view: while still in Ur Kasdim, Avraham was told by Hashem to walk to Eretz Yisrael, and this was the reason that the whole family began its journey. Terach then decided to stay in Charan, while Avraham and Lot continued to Eretz Yisrael. This view is not immune to challenge, though; the

language of the Torah (ibid. 11:31) seems to make clear that Terach was the one who decided to leave Ur Kasdim.

Perhaps a third, middle way may be suggested. (See Rabbi Mordechai Breuer's Pirkei Bereishit, beginning on page 224, for a similar treatment of the subject.) The Torah actually describes Avraham's journey to Eretz Yisrael twice, because two completely different motivations were present. From Terach's point of view, the need to leave the family's place of origin and walk toward Eretz Yisrael was practical one; maybe Terach sought a better livelihood, maybe he left because memories of his deceased son, Haran, haunted him in Ur Kasdim, and maybe, as Rashi and Ramban argued, he was fleeing from the king. Regardless, Terach's level of motivation to reach Eretz Yisrael was not very high, as can be inferred for his ultimate failure to reach his final destination.

Avraham, on the other hand, was motivated by another goal. G-d himself had ordered him to leave Ur Kasdim, his birthplace, and go to an unknown land, which would be "shown to him" in some way. But Avraham could not set out alone; how could Avraham choose a route, without even knowing the direction?

It seems that this is the moment when the two stories interweave: Terach needs someone to push him; Avraham needs a signpost to show him the way. The two serve each other's ends. However, their different motivations also cause, in the long run, their separation;

Terach cannot bring himself to suffer the difficulties of the road for too long, stopping in Charan, and Avraham, running on what can be described as "Divine fuel", finishes his journey in Eretz Yisrael.

The lessons of this reading may be drawn in two levels:

On the national level, Terach and Avraham's route to Eretz Yisrael seems to set an interesting example for the aliyot of later generations. The young Hebrew nation coming out of Egypt and heading towards Eretz Yisrael was motivated by the Terach-like need to liberate themselves from Egyptian bondage, but also by their Avraham-like Divinely ordained goal of establishing "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Shemot 19:6) However, the practical need is not enough to drive them to face the dangers waiting for them in Eretz Yisrael; the first generation dies in the desert, and only their children are able to enter the land. Similar events take place in the second arrival in Zion, and then again with the tension between the views of the modern state of Israel as a Terach-like political asylum or as the Avraham-like beginning of our redemption.

On the individual level, the message seems to be clear: Service of Hashem cannot be achieved in a vacuum, and must be finely attuned to the needs and cries of reality. On the other hand, no thorough and complete repair of our world can be achieved without Avraham's fierce belief and faith in G-d's words.

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### OUR BEIT MIDRASH

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**Who is the prophet of our haftorah?**

Yeshayah (Isaiah) was a prophet in the period leading up to the exile of the ten northern tribes of Yisrael by the Assyrians. He lived in the southern kingdom of Yehudah, and he prophesied during the reigns of Kings Uziahu, Yotam, Achaz and Chizkiyahu. According to the Talmud (Sotah 10a), he was a descendant of Yehudah and Tamar.

As the Talmud (Bava Batra 15a) informs us, the book of Yeshayah was compiled by King Chizkiyahu and associates of his. The prophecies of Yeshayah may be classified in two categories, Rebuke and Redemption; the former dominates the early chapters of the book, while the latter occupies the latter portion. The split is not clean, though; portions of the former include redemption, and portions of the latter include rebuke.

**What is the message of our haftorah?**

Our haftorah speaks about the election of the Jewish People. The people in exile are questioning this election. They doubt; maybe G-d has forgotten us, and has distanced us from him. To that Yeshayah answers sharply: Don't they know that G-d is not one to forget or to become tired? When the day of redemption comes, Yisrael's enemies will be defeated and lost, and the Jewish people will be free to rejoice and thank Hashem. Yeshayah comforts and assures the people that they are still 'Yaakov whom I have chosen'.

**What is the connection between our haftorah and the parshah?**

The concept of the Jewish nation as an elected nation begins with Avraham in our parshah, as he is separated from his family by the command, "Lech Lecha - leave your country, your homeland and your family."

Again and again throughout his life, Avraham is required to prove his love and faith towards Hashem. Chazal tell us that Avraham was tried no less than ten times! According to the Rambam (Commentary to the Mishnah, Avot 5:3) the first test was Lech Lecha, and the last was the Akeidah.

Remaining strong in all of these tests, Avraham earned the title 'Ohavi', 'My lover' - the one who loved Me. This title is bestowed upon him by Yeshayah in our haftorah. In a world full of idol worshippers, Avraham achieved knowledge of G-d. The haftorah does not end with this note, though. In the same verse in which Avraham is called 'My lover', the Jews are called 'Avdi', 'My servant'.

Avraham is chosen not only because of his own will to recognize Hashem, but also because of the divine plan to unite the world under G-d, as 'avdi'. Maharal (Netzach Yisrael 11) elaborates on this point, asking why the Torah explains to us that Noach was chosen because of his deeds, while regarding Avraham

our parshah begins with the selection itself, without any explanation as to why Avraham was chosen. He answers that Noach was chosen as an individual, while Avraham was chosen to begin building a nation. Selection of an individual can depend upon his deeds and misdeeds, but G-d's considerations when choosing a nation should focus on the potential for the future. Hashem chose Avraham for what Avraham and his descendants were capable of accomplishing, and not for their previous accomplishments.

It seems that this concept of the Jewish nation as a servant is our haftorah's fundamental message. The people are worried because of their exile and their enemy's success. Yeshayah's answer is: Don't look at things as they appear, for Israel's election does not depend on the actual, but on the potential. Because our election is rooted in the future and not in the past or present, the fear that G-d will leave us has no basis; our goals still lie ahead.

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## 613 Mitzvot: #299, 312, 314, 320, 322, 402-404

### The Korban Musaf

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

Special *musaf* offerings are brought in the Beit haMikdash on certain days: Shabbat (mitzvah #402), Rosh Chodesh (#403), Pesach (#299), Shavuot (#404), Rosh HaShanah (#312), Yom Kippur (#314), Succot (#320) and Shemini Atzeret (#322). These korbanot include livestock, flour, wine and oil; their specifics are presented in Parshat Emor and Parshat Pinchas. Each *musaf* is accompanied by a special song of the Leviyim, and by blasts of shofarot and trumpets.

The term *musaf* is not biblical; this is a mishnaic term, meaning "addition".

To explain why we bring these additional offerings, *Sefer haChinuch* writes, "A human being is energized by his deeds; as a material being, his thoughts 'stick' only via action. For this reason, G-d instructed us to perform special deeds in the name of this day, so that we will be energized, to focus on the greatness of the day and its sanctity, and the miracles and kindnesses G-d performed for us at that time." Today, in the temporary absence of a Beit haMikdash, we employ special davening, special dress, and the other mitzvot of the day to help us celebrate.

In his *Torat ha'Olah*, Rabbi Moshe Isserles explains all korbanot as intended to demonstrate our faith in Divine creation of the world. Regarding the korban *musaf*, he suggests (3:41) that there are seven *musafim* in order to respond to seven specific claims that philosophers make against belief in Divine creation. The eighth *musaf*, that of Shemini Atzeret, is parallel to certain sub-claims. You can find the Rama's comments on-line at <http://hebrewbooks.org/pdfpager.aspx?req=35871&st=&pgnum=100>.

Our *musaf* amidah is explicitly linked to the korban, with a text that highlights the biblical verses related to the day's particular korban *musaf* and a special prayer for the rebuilding of the Beit haMikdash. Indeed, the Talmud (Berachot 30a-b) discusses whether one who davens alone should even recite the *musaf* amidah, since this amidah is parallel to a communal korban. In practice, though, *musaf* is recited by a person who davens alone. (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 286:2)

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**Biography**  
**Rabbi Ovadia Yosef**  
**Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner**

Rabbi Ovadia Yosef was born in Baghdad, to a working-class family, on the eleventh of Tishrei, 1920. At the age of four, he moved to Israel with his family; due to their penury, young Ovadia alternated time between studies and work. He studied at the Porat Yosef yeshiva in Jerusalem under Syrian sage Rav Ezra Atiyeh, and was ordained by Sephardic Chief Rabbi Ben Zion Uziel at the age of 20. Beginning in 1945, he served as a judge on rabbinic courts in Jerusalem.

In 1947, at Rabbi Uziel's request, Rabbi Yosef moved to Cairo to serve as Chief Rabbi. The arrangement did not last, though; Rabbi Yosef found himself at odds with the communal leadership regarding halachic matters, particularly kashrut. He returned to Israel in 1950, becoming a judge in Petah Tikvah, and then Jerusalem; in 1965, Rabbi Yosef joined Israel's Supreme Rabbinical Court.

During this time, Rabbi Yosef's responsa and other writings became immensely popular. In 1954 Rabbi Yosef won the Rav Kook Prize for Torah literature, and in 1970 he received the Israel Prize. He became Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv in 1968, and then Sephardic Chief Rabbi of the State of Israel in 1973.

Rabbi Yosef's responsa address contemporary issues of all kinds, and stand out for the breadth of the works cited in these encyclopedic writings. Rabbi Yosef is also known for political involvement, as the founder and spiritual leader of Israel's highly successful Shas party; he retired from the bench in 1986 because of legal limits on the political activity of the judiciary. His style of public address is that of the study hall, interweaving biblical passages and rabbinic teachings with caustic rebuke and hyperbolic rhetoric; the result sparks frequent controversy, particularly because Rabbi Yosef is one of the leading authorities in Jewish law today.

On June 13, 2012, Forbes Israel ranked Rabbi Yosef as the "most influential rabbi in Israel". Rabbi Yosef passed away on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of Cheshvan, 5774 (2013).

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**Torah and Translation**  
**Leaving Israel to Honour One's Parents**  
**Rabbi Ovadia Yosef**

**Yechaveh Daat 4:49**

**Translated by Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner**

אמנם כיבוד אב ואם מצוה גדולה היא, עד ששקל הכתוב מצוה זו למצות כיבודו של הקב"ה, וכמו שאמרו חז"ל במסכת בבא מציעא (דף ל"ב ע"א), וכן בירושלמי פאה (פרק א' הלכה א'). אולם מצות ישיבת ארץ ישראל דוחה מצות כיבוד אב ואם, כי נודע מה שאמרו חז"ל בספרי פרשת ראה: מעשה רבי יהודה בן בתירא ורבי מתיא בן חרש ורבי חנינא בן אחי ורבי יהושע, שהיו יוצאין לחוץ לארץ, והגיעו לפלטיא, וזכרו מארץ ישראל, זקפו עיניהם וזלגו דמעותיהם וקראו בגדיהם, וקראו המקרא הזה: וירשתם אותה וישבתם בה, ושמתם לעשות את כל החוקים והמשפטים, לומר לך ששקולה ישיבת ארץ ישראל כנגד כל המצוות. ע"כ.

ולדעת הרמב"ן בספר המצות, וכן בפירושו על התורה (במדבר פרק ל"ג פסוק נ"ג), מצות ישיבה בארץ ישראל היא מצות עשה מן התורה, ונוהגת גם בזמן הזה. וכן הסכים הרשב"ץ בספר זוהר הרקיע (סימן רכ"ו). וכן כתב בשו"ת הרשב"ש (סימן א' והלאה). ואף לדעת הרמב"ם שסובר שהיא מצוה מדברי סופרים, וכמו שכתב בכנסת הגדולה יורה דעה (סימן רל"ט אות ל"ג) בדעת הרמב"ם, מכל מקום היא מצוה גדולה שדוחה שבות של דבריהם, וכמבואר בגיטין (ח' ע"ב)...

והנה כבר אמרו חז"ל (ביבמות ו' ע"א). הרי שאמר לו אביו לחלל שבת או שלא להשיב אבידה לבעליה, יכול ישמע לו, תלמוד לומר איש אמו ואביו תיראו ואת שבתותי תשמורו אני ד', כולכם חייבים בכבודי, ואף כאן אם יאמר לו אביו לבטל מצות ישיבה בארץ ישראל, לא ישמע לו, שהוא ואביו חייבים במצות יישוב ארץ ישראל...

ואמנם בשו"ת הרשב"ץ חלק ג' (סימן רפ"ח) כתב, שאסור לצאת מארץ ישראל לחוץ לארץ אלא למצות תלמוד תורה ולמצות כיבוד אב ואם. ומבואר שאף לדעתו שיש מצוה מן התורה בישיבת ארץ ישראל, מכל מקום מצות כיבוד אב ואם דוחה מצוה זו. אולם הרי גם למצות תלמוד תורה לא הותר לצאת לחוץ לארץ אלא על מנת לחזור לארץ ישראל, וכמו שמבואר ברמב"ם (בפרק ה' מהלכות מלכים הלכה ט'), וכן כתבו התוספות בעבודה זרה (י"ג ע"א). ולכן יש לומר שגם הרשב"ץ לא התיר לצאת מארץ ישראל לחוץ לארץ למצות כיבוד אב ואם אלא כשיצא על מנת לחזור. וכן מצינו בגמרא (קידושין ל"א ע"ב)...

בסיכום: מצות ישיבה בארץ ישראל אין ערוך אליה... ובמיוחד כשהכוונה להתיישב בארץ ישראל לשם מצוה, ולקיים בה כל המצות התלויות בארץ. ולכן אם צוהו אביו שלא לעלות לארץ אל ישמע לו. ומכל שכן שהזוכה להתיישב בארץ, וציוהו אביו לרדת מהארץ לחוץ לארץ, שבודאי אסור לשמוע לו, כי מצות ישיבת ארץ ישראל דוחה למצות כיבוד אב ואם, ובפרט שגם הוריו מצווים לעלות ולהתיישב בארץ.

Zarah 13a) Perhaps Rashbatz only permitted leaving Israel to honour one's parents in order to return to Israel. This is also seen in Kiddushin 31b...

In sum: There is nothing comparable to the mitzvah of living in Israel... and especially when one intends to live there for the sake of the mitzvah, and to fulfill all of the land-related mitzvot. Therefore, one should not listen to a parent who tells him not to ascend to the land. Certainly, then, one who already merits to live in the land, and whose parent then instructs him to leave, may not listen to him, for the mitzvah of living in Israel overrides the mitzvah of honouring parents, especially since his parents are also instructed to ascend and live in the land.

Indeed, honouring one's parents is a great mitzvah, to the point that the Torah equates it with the mitzvah of honouring G-d. (Bava Metzia 32a, Yerushalmi Peah 1:1) However, the mitzvah of settling Israel overrides the mitzvah of honouring parents. The midrash (Sifri Reeh) is known, "Once R' Yehudah ben Beteirah, R' Matya ben Charash and R' Chanina, nephew of R' Yehoshua were leaving Israel. They reached a market and remembered Israel, and raised their eyes to heaven, and their tears ran down and they tore their clothing, and they recited, 'And you shall conquer it and you shall dwell there, and you shall guard all of the laws to practice them,' teaching that settling Israel is equal to all of the mitzvot."

According to Rambam (Sefer haMitzvot and Bamidbar 33:53), the mitzvah of settling Israel is a biblical commandment, applicable today; Rashbatz and Rashbash agreed. Even per Rambam that the mitzvah is rabbinic [per the understanding of Keneset haGedolah], it is still a mitzvah great enough to override rabbinic prohibitions, as seen in Gittin 8b...

The sages have already said, "If one's father would tell him to violate Shabbat or not to return a lost object, could he listen? The Torah says, 'You shall revere your mother and father, and guard My Shabbatot; I am G-d.' All of you are obligated to honour Me." Here, too, if his father would tell him to erase the mitzvah of living in Israel, he could not listen, for he and his father are obligated in the mitzvah of settling Israel.

Indeed, Rashbatz did write (3:288) that one may leave Israel to learn Torah or to honour parents; he said there is a biblical mitzvah of living in Israel, but he said the mitzvah of honouring parents overrides it. However, even for Torah study one may leave Israel only in order to return to Israel! (Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Melachim 5:9; Tosafot Avodah

## This Week in Israeli History: Cheshvan 9, 1992

Adam Frieberg

### Operation Bramble Bush

*The 9<sup>th</sup> of Cheshvan is Sunday*

As forty Scud missiles rained down on Israel during the first Gulf War, killing thirteen and terrorizing thousands, Israel seemingly heeded US pressure not to retaliate. Behind the scenes, though, Operation Bramble Bush was planned to assassinate Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. The elite commando unit, Sayeret Matkal, was tasked with the mission. Opinions varied among the highest military chiefs, but the decision was made to devise a plan, practice in the Israeli desert, and then decide whether or not to proceed.

Under the direct supervision of former IDF Chief of Staff Ehud Barak, a plan was crafted. First, agents would kill Saddam Hussein's terminally ill uncle. The IDF would then use two helicopters, flying low to avoid radar, to drop commandos and jeeps deep in Iraq. They would drive to a point about eight miles from the cemetery, expecting Saddam to attend his uncle's funeral. Forward scouts would dig in and wait, and signal to fire guided missiles at the

proper time. The soldiers knew that they would likely not return home alive.

All went well until two days before the mission. On November 5, 1992, during final rehearsals, a serious mishap occurred as Ehud Barak stood by watching. Mistaking the party playing the role of Saddam and his entourage for mannequins, soldiers fired two live anti-tank missiles at the group. Five Sayeret Matkal commandos were killed, six were injured, and the tragedy brought the mission to a halt. The deaths were reported as the result of a "training accident", but the media soon published that it had been part of preparations to kill Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah. It wasn't until 2003 that Yedidot Achronot described the full incident.

May the souls of these five soldiers, together with all those who have fallen defending our homeland, be bound up in the bond of eternal life.

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## Highlights for October 11 - 18 / 7 Cheshvan - 14 Cheshvan

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
<b>SHABBAT OCT. 11-12</b>				
<b>Fri. Dinner</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Jewish Evangelism	FHJC	
<b>7:45 AM</b>	R' Baruch Weintraub	Moral Values in Bereishit	Yeshivat Or Chaim	
<b>10:20 AM</b>	R' Baruch Weintraub	Parshah	Clanton Park	
<b>11:00 AM</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Tough Q's About Jews: Science, Racism, Money	FHJC	
<b>5:45 PM</b>	Adam Frieberg	Inviting Guests to a Brit	Shaarei Tefillah	
<b>Seudah Shlishit</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Halachah & Office Etiquette	FHJC	
<b>SUNDAY OCT. 13</b>				
<b>9:15 AM (8:30 Shacharit)</b>	R' Baruch Weintraub	Parshah Revisited	Zichron Yisroel	<b>Hebrew</b>
<b>After maariv</b>	R' Baruch Weintraub	Principles of Faith	Clanton Park	<b>Men, Hebrew</b>
<b>8:30 PM</b>	R' Baruch Weintraub	Principles of Faith	4 Tillingham Keep	<b>Mixed, Hebrew</b>
<b>MONDAY OCT. 14</b>				
<b>8:15 PM</b>	R' Baruch Weintraub	Parshah	Shaarei Shomayim	<b>Community Beit Midrash Night</b>
<b>8:15 PM</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Medical Halachah		
<b>9:30 PM</b>	R' Baruch Weintraub	Principles of Faith		
<b>TUESDAY OCT. 15</b>				
<b>12:30 PM</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Living Midrash	Shaarei Shomayim	<b>with Mekorot</b>
<b>WED. OCT. 16</b>				
<b>10:00 AM</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Jews & Clothes, 1 of 6	BEBY	<b>with Morasha</b>
<b>8:00 PM</b>	R' Baruch Weintraub	Prophecy for Our Time	Yeshivat Or Chaim	<b>Community Beit Midrash Night</b>
<b>8:00 PM</b>	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Business Ethics: Lending		
<b>9:00 PM</b>	R' Yehoshua Weber	Parshah Dilemmas		
<b>9:00 PM</b>	R' Baruch Weintraub	Chabura: Sanhedrin		
<b>8:45 PM</b>	Josh Gutenberg	Intro to Introductions: Beit Yosef & Shulchan Aruch	BAYT	<b>Week 2 of 5</b>
<b>THU. OCT. 17</b>				
<b>8:30 PM</b>	R' Baruch Weintraub	Chabura: Sotah	Clanton Park	