

THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



PARSHAT LECH LECHA

London's Leading Young Professionals Platform and Jewish Communal Centre



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
TAL Founder & Director

MOVERS AND SHAKERS!

A great man once said, "If you are going through hell – keep going!" We were created to be movers; we are blessed with wonderful feet that never seem to be still. We are movers we are shakers, and we push ahead.

In G-d's first official appearance to Avraham He relates to him that he must go – Lech Lecha - Go to yourself.

The Sages query the need to say go to yourself. How can a person go to themselves?

The Baal Haturim states the hidden gems behind these words. He notes that the numerical value of these words is 100. Avraham was old and without children. He was desperate to continue his legacy. In the words Lech Lecha (=100) Hashem was hinting to Avraham

that if he listened to His command, leaving his birthplace, then he would be blessed with a child that would be born to him at the age of 100. Furthermore, he was hinting to him that he would live for a further 100 years!

Sometimes we find ourselves stuck, we are used to our routine, but Hashem grants us times in the year to help us re-energise and move on. The higher we move, the more blessing we open ourselves up to.

It was just a few years ago on this weeks Parasha that we learnt of the sad passing

of Rabbi Ovadia Yosef Zts'l.

Rabbi Ovadia Yosef was a spiritual giant and leader of the Jewish people. He earned the respect of hundreds of thousands, and his Levaya was attended by close to a million people in Jerusalem – probably the highest amount of people to ever attend a Levaya in Jerusalem's history.

Rabbi Chatzkel Levenstein Zts'l once said that there is a lesson to be learned from the first three Parshiot of the Torah. Not only is the world, and subsequently, the Jewish people built in these Parshiot, but the worlds survival was also fabricated by only three people: Adam, Noach, and Avraham. We are around because of these individuals.

We see from here, the power that each individual has within themselves to create whole worlds, and to leave an everlasting mark on this one.

Interestingly Rabbi Shimshon Pincus Zts'l gives a deeper aspect to Hashem's command.

He explains that if a person does an act of Chesed (kindness), e.g. by giving £100 to a poor person, there are two aspects to his act.

First, there is the effect he had on the world: he helped a pauper obtain food with which to sustain his life. Second, there is the effect he had on himself: he built his personality and made himself into a Ba'al Chesed. Now he is a man of kindness.

R Shimshon asks which aspect is more important: That which he contributed to the

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9TH CHESHVAN 5786

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16:21pm

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tive of his deserving of merit. In this case however King David rejoices at the fact that Hashem in his Goodness decided that he actually *deserved* to be redeemed through his own deeds. This point is alluded to in the conclud-

ing phrase of this chapter; *"I will sing to Hashem because he has bestowed (גמל) upon me"* (ibid; 6)

King David uses the word "גמל" in connection with Hashem's kindness

which is closely related to the word "גמול" which means "reward". The implication is that Hashem has delivered his redemption in a manner which informed King David that he was deserving of it.



HALACHOT BY RABBI ELI MANSOUR

The Sequence of Hodu & Baruch She'amar

The Ben Ish Hai (Rav Yosef Haim of Baghdad, 1833-1909) writes that the section of Hodu should be recited in the morning immediately following the Korbanot section, which discusses the sacrifices offered each day in the Bet Ha'mikdash. King David established the reading of Hodu during the offering of the daily Tamid sacrifice, and so, in commemoration, we should recite Hodu immediately after we speak of this sacrifice.

Furthermore, the Ben Ish Hai writes, the declaration of "Hashem Melech, Hashem Malach, Hashem Yimloch Le'olam Va'ed" should be made soon after the recitation of Hodu. Therefore, if somebody recited the sections of Korbanot and Hodu at home, and then comes to the synagogue, he should repeat Hodu so he can juxtapose this recitation to the pronouncement of "Hashem Melech..."

Our custom is to recite Hodu before Baruch She'amar, but the custom among many Ashkenazim is to recite Baruch She'amar first, before Hodu. This sequence is indeed found in a number of ancient Ashkenazic texts of the Siddur. The Maharam Shick (Hungary, 1807-1879) went so far as to say that one who recites Hodu before Baruch She'amar does not fulfill the obligation of Pesukeh De'zimra. He explained that the verses of Hodu express praise for Hashem, which is the function of Pesukeh De'zimra, and so they must be included within the framework of

Pesukeh De'zimra, which begins with Baruch She'amar. Later Rabbis disputed this strict position, noting that the Arizal taught that Hodu should be recited before Baruch She'amar. Moreover, even the Ashkenazim recite the chapter of "Aromimcha Hashem Ki Dilitani" before Baruch She'amar, even though that chapter, like Hodu, expresses praise to Hashem. And, several Rishonim wrote explicitly that one should proceed directly from Baruch She'amar to the series of "Haleluya" chapters of Tehillim, such that Hodu must be recited beforehand.

Of course, every community should follow the custom that they've received from their forebears. The Arizal taught that every community has its own "gate" through which its prayers ascend to the heavens, and so each community should strictly adhere to its customs.

Significantly, however, Hacham Ovadia Yosef cites the Hida (Rav Haim Yosef David Azulai, 1724-1806) as stating that prayers that follow the Sephardic custom ascend through all the "gates," and thus an Ashkenazi who wishes to adopt the Sephardic prayer customs may do so. This is evidenced by none other than the Arizal himself, who was an Ashkenazi but decided to adopt the customs of prayer followed by the Sephardim. Similarly, Rav Natan Adler (Germany, 1741-1800) brought a Rabbi from Turkey to teach him the Sephardic tradition of prayer because he wanted to adopt those customs. Therefore,

Hacham Ovadia writes, an Ashkenazi may switch to the Sephardic prayer customs, but a Sephardi may not adopt the Ashkenazic prayer customs.

Accordingly, Hacham Ovadia ruled that if a Sephardi prays in an Ashkenazic Minyan, he should not serve as Hazan, as this would require him to recite Baruch She'amar before Hodu. Hacham Ben Sion Abba Shaul (Jerusalem, 1924-1998) maintained that a Sephardi may lead the services according to Ashkenazic custom, but Hacham Ovadia disagreed, and stated that a Sephardi must adhere to the Sephardic custom of reciting Baruch She'amar only after Hodu.

If a Sephardi mistakenly recited Baruch She'amar without first reciting Hodu, and he realized his mistake after completing Baruch She'amar, then he should recite Hodu at that point. This was the ruling of Hacham Ben Sion, and Hacham Ovadia would presumably agree that after the fact, if a person already recited Baruch She'amar, then he can and should still recite Hodu.

Summary: Sephardic practice is to recite Hodu before Baruch She'amar, whereas many Ashkenazim have the custom to recite Hodu only after Baruch She'amar. A Sephardi praying in an Ashkenazic Minyan must adhere to Sephardic practice, and so he should not serve as Hazan, as this would compel him to reverse the order in accordance with Ashkenazic practice. However, if a Sephardi mistakenly recited Baruch She'amar first, he recites Hodu afterward.



WEEKLY PARSHA OVERVIEW

Parshat Lech Lecha

Ten generations have passed since Noach. Man has descended spiritually. In the year 1948 from Creation, Avram is born. By observing the world, Avram comes to recognize G-d's existence, and thus merits G-d appearing to him. At the beginning of this week's Torah portion, G-d tells Avram to leave his land, his relatives and his father's house and travel to an unknown land where G-d will make him into a great nation. Avram leaves, taking with him his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, their servants, and those whom they converted to faith in G-d. When they reach the land of Canaan G-d appears to Avram and tells him that this is the land that He will give to his descendants.

A famine ensues and Avram is forced to relocate to Egypt to find food. Realizing that his wife's beauty could cause his death at the hand of the Egyptians, Avram asks her to say that she is his

sister. Sarai is taken to Pharaoh, but G-d afflicts Pharaoh and his court with severe plagues and she is released unmolested. Avram returns to Eretz Yisrael (Canaan) with much wealth given to him by the Egyptians. During a quarrel over grazing rights between their shepherds, Avram decides to part ways with his nephew Lot. Lot chooses to live in the rich but corrupt city of Sodom in the fertile plain of the Jordan. A war breaks out between the kings of the region and Sodom is defeated. Lot is taken captive. Together with a handful of his converts, Avram rescues Lot, miraculously overpowering vastly superior forces, but Avram demurs at accepting any of the spoils of the battle.

In a prophetic covenant, G-d reveals to Avram that his offspring will be exiled to a strange land where they will be oppressed for 400 years, after which they will emerge with great wealth and

return to Eretz Yisrael, their irrevocable inheritance. Sarai is barren and gives Hagar, her Egyptian hand-maiden, to Avram in the hope that she will provide them with a child. Hagar becomes arrogant when she discovers that she is pregnant. Sarai deals harshly with her, and Hagar flees. On the instruction of an angel, Hagar returns to Avram and gives birth to Yishmael. The weekly portion concludes with G-d commanding Avram to circumcise himself and his offspring throughout the generations as a Divine covenant. G-d changes Avram's name to Avraham, and Sarai's name to Sarah. Hashem promises Avraham a son, Yitzchak, despite Avraham being ninety-nine years old and Sarah ninety. On that day, Avraham circumcises himself, Yishmael and his entire household.

Rabbi Sinclair,
Seasonsofthemoon.com

Q

1. What benefits did G-d promise Avraham if he would leave his home?
2. "And all the families of the earth will be blessed through you." What does this mean?
3. Who were the souls that Avraham and Sarah "made"?
4. What were the Canaanites doing in the Land of Canaan when Avraham arrived?
5. Why did Avraham build an altar at Ai?

A

1. 12:1 - He would become a great nation, his excellence would become known to the world, and he would be blessed with wealth.
2. 12:3 - A person will say to his child, "You should be like Avraham."
3. 12:5 - People they converted to the worship of G-d.
4. 12:6 - They were in the process of conquering the land from the descendants of Shem.
5. He foresaw the Jewish People's defeat there in the days of Yehoshua due to Achah's sin. He built an altar to pray for them.

