

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

LECH LECHA WITH ADDENDUM
Haftarah: Yeshayahu 40:27 - 41:16

OCTOBER 24, 2015 11 HESHVAN 5776

Minha & Arbit 5:45 PM -Candle Lighting 5:45 PM
Friends – We need assistance and a commitment for Friday evenings

Shabbat
Class with Rav Aharon 8:00 AM – Latest Shema 9:16AM
Shahrit 8:30 AM, Torah 9:45 and Musaf at 10:30

Kiddush this week is sponsored
In celebration of the marriage of
Sam and Dana Lobell!
Sheva Berachot to Follow

Shabbat Morning Children's Program 10:30 - 11:30 with Jennifer
Ages 2-5 - in the Playroom/
Girls Ages 6-12 - In the Upstairs Library / Treats, Games, Stories, Prayers and Fun!

Children's program at Bach at 4:30PM –
Ladies Class at the Lembergers at 4:30

Class with Rav Aharon at 4:45PM
Minha 5:15 PM - Seudat Shelishit 5:45 PM
Birkat HaMazon 6:30 PM Arbit 6:35 PM – Shabbat Ends at 6:45

SUNDAY MORNING Shaharit at 8AM

DAILY MINYAN
Monday, Thursday 6:55, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday at 7:00AM

LOOKING FORWARD:

What Do Blind People Actually See?
Sunday, October 25th at 5:30 pm
@ the BACH - 210 Edwards Blvd. Long Beach
See Flyer

The Sisterhood will be having a Friday night dinner in the Synagogue on November 6.
Cost is \$26 ages 15 and up, \$15 ages 8-15, \$10 ages 3-8. Under 3 free.
Reservations must be made by email to hmizny@gmail.com –
include how many people and ages of everyone.
We must receive reservation by Monday November 2. No reservation will be counted without a check.

Sisterhood dinner Tuesday evening November 17
Honoring Baruch and Karen Kahn.

Please take the time to settle your outstanding pledges and obligations

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**Daily Minyan Mon – Thurs at 979 Third Avenue,
 17th Floor, Artistic Frame at 4PM – Please join us!
 212-289-2100 – Mincha– The most important
 tefilah of the day –Give us 11 minutes and we'll
 give you the World To Come!**

Editors Notes

This Land Is Your Land, This Land is My Land

In the opening words of this week's portion, HaShem tells Abraham Lech Lecha, go forth (for your own benefit) from your land to the land I shall show you. Writing this on an El Al flight looking out the window as we pass the Italian peninsula, the Greek Islands and make our way over the Mediterranean, it's difficult not to imagine those who over the centuries and millennia sought to return to their homeland via ship, caravan or foot. All following the footsteps of Abraham our father who came here and walked the land and was promised, "to your children I shall give this land." We are the generations who were and are blessed to witness the fulfillment of the promise of the prophets that, to this land we will return and the land will go from desolate and cursed to one of unimaginable abundance and miraculous bounty.

Yet what must hang over the head of every visitor as it certainly hangs over the head of each resident and citizen is the recent wave of terror. Motivated by their cowardly leaders, suicidal lone wolves have been stabbing people at random. These mostly young people have been raised under a well-organized campaign of propaganda which year after year, lesson after lesson, television show after television show and preacher after preacher lead them to look upon the Zionist as an occupying enemy and each of them must look at suicidal jihad as a life aspiration.

Most of the attackers get their wish and are quickly killed but the damage in loss of life, in injury and in the developing mood of terror is real (although from the fact that every flight going and coming seems to be full, it's obvious that people both citizens and tourists are refusing to give in). Terrorists win when the population in fear changes their routine, their shopping habits and everything they do when they go out. Terrorists want to destroy an economy by planting fear. The failure of an economy can be any states demise.

On Shabbat we had breakfast and took a short walk with former Israeli ambassador to the UN and to the United States, Danny Ayalon. The ambassador mentioned that it is scary and people are concerned as one has no idea who the next knife wielding

menace will be or which direction he'll be coming from, yet still each must battle to maintain a sense of normalcy. He recalled the intifada of 2000/2001 where 1000 people died in suicide bombings and overcoming that partially with a wall and better security. He recalled the rockets and the development of iron dome. And he hoped this too would be short lived. He explained that the strength of the Israeli people was in maintaining normalcy,

He stated though that Israel faced a bigger problem, which is in the press and social media. Israel faces a constant and losing battle. When the Palestinian President said Israel had murdered a 13 year old attacker and the world quickly condemned Israel for using unjustified force, pictures were later published of the boy in an Israeli hospital bed. Abbas never retracted the story. Look at the comments of the president and of the secretary of state. Both refuse to take sides.

G-d promises Abraham that He will bless him and make his name great. Today, we Abraham's children seem to be having a difficult time getting the word out.

I have to admit, although we send out 20,000 emails each week and we post the article in the Jewish Voice, I am far from an expert in public relations and social media. My daughter showed me that my face book page post from years ago are limited to the day I went to a rabbinical seminar where we were supposed to learn the ins and outs, and dos and don'ts of social media. I tried it with twitter to and that at least lasted a few months. And although I rarely use it at least I understand instagram. My son Moses suggested a 15 second insta torah video on instagram. For me it's still an untapped world.

Still when I see some of these people grow to hundreds of thousands and millions of followers, I imagine how much buzz they can create. Another way is for all of us who regularly use social media to make an effort to get the truth out.

<http://thetruthaboutisrael.org.il/> is ambassador Ayalon's website based on his 25 years of experience in the field. Their mission is to educate and train Israelis for hasbara, covering the core values of the state of Israel, and the fundamental rights and justice for the Jewish people; and to prepare diplomats, Israeli students, businessmen and professionals with the latest in PR and media techniques to promote Israel abroad and improve her standing in the international community. Their goal is to lead and put out people to wisely fight the fight

against the de-legitimization, BDS and incitement against Israel.

The organization can boast of phenomenal success of the series of videos by Danny Ayalon, "The Truth About", which were translated into 12 languages and viewed by millions around the world. Danny Ayalon was elected as the number one influential diplomat by Foreign Policy magazine.

When you have a moment, visit the site. You'll learn something and find ways to help.

When Israel is oppressed, all of us want to help and all of us need to help. Israelis are walking the streets, going to restaurants, going to school and work and they are refusing to let the terrorists win. We too need to do our part. We need to get on planes and come to the Holy Land. We need to support the people here and the economy. We need to get people out and into markets and restaurants by donating to programs which do this.

HaShem tells Abraham, Lech Lecha, go for your own benefit. This is the country I am giving your children. Those children are us. If we want this land, we need to fight for it, support it and make a difference. Start by posting the links to Facebook, twitter and instagram and don't stop,

The Zionist Congress, Bibi Netanyahu and The Ten Lies

I wrote this week's article on an El Al flight which left JFK on Sunday night and landed on Monday when I submitted to the Jewish Voice. Today Tuesday, the 37th session of the Zionist Congress began. The first session was held in Basel, Switzerland, from August 29 to August 31, 1897. It was convened and chaired by Theodor Herzl, the founder of the modern Zionism movement. The Congress formulated a Zionist platform, known as the Basel program, and founded the Zionist Organization. This session began with a speech from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. I am writing this on my iPhone so blame any mistakes on Apple.

The prime minister addressed the present situation, but stated that more important was to understand what we are fighting. His message was similar to the one conveyed to us on Shabbat by Ambassador Ayalon.

The Prime Minister explained: The greatest assault we face is not the physical. That assault we can and will overcome. The more dangerous assault is the ideological one behind the physical attacks. These

are the ten big lies propagated by our enemies. And all we can when it comes to lies is to do our best to puncture them with the truth.

1. Israel is trying to change the status quo on the Temple Mount. That's not true. The arrangement has remained the same for years. Moslems visit and pray there. Christians, Jews and others may visit but not pray. And non Muslims may only visit Sunday through Thursday from 7-11AM. How many of each denomination visit? Guess! There are three and a half million Muslim visits, eighty thousand Christian visits and only twelve thousand Jewish visits. The Site of the temple prepared by David and built by Solomon three thousand years ago remains the most sacred in the world to Jews, yet the State has not and has no intention of changing the status quo. Anything and everything to the contrary is simply one huge lie.

2. Israel seeks to destroy Al Aksa mosque. This lie would be farcical were it not so tragic. It is not the Jewish people who destroy holy sites. It's the Muslims. It was the mufti of Jerusalem, the partner of Hitler who started this lie which led to the pogroms against the Jews in 1920, 1921 and 1929. Almost 100 years later and after 50 years in Jewish hands, the mosque still stands. This lie is particularly venomous when told by Shiite and Sunni while blowing up the holy sites of each other. It is only the Jews who respect and protect the holy sites of others.

3. The reason you have a surge in violence is because we have a surge in settlement construction. That too is a lie. In Netanyahu's first term, 3000 units were built annually. Under Barak 5000. Under Sharon 1900. Under Olmert 1700 and under Netanyahu's current terms 1500. Forget the reasons. The fact is that these numbers are exact and far from a surge there has been a reduction. This point is raised again and again throughout the world. The Palestinians are revolting because of the surge. There is no surge.

4. The Israelis are executing Palestinians. The fact is that someone who is attacking, children, seniors, soldiers or police with a knife or meat cleaver and hacking with intent to kill, needs to be stopped. Abbas in front of the press and cameras holds up an image of a boy who he says was murdered. This same boy who hacked at a 13 year old on a bicycle leaving him in critical condition was shown to be alive and well in Hadasa hospital under Israeli care. And while he leaves the hospital today his victim fights for his life. Yet Abbas does not recant his lie, he emphasizes it.

5. Israel uses excessive force in general. Think what police would do in New York, Paris or Moscow if faced with a knife wielding attack. One must stop the attacker. The instructions in Israel are clear. If there is a threat to life take action to neutralize the attacker. Before stating Israel uses excessive force, imagine what you would want done if you or your loved one were attacked.

6. The cause of the attacks is the stagnation in the peace process. Even at the height of the peace process there was terrorism and often much worse than what we are seeing. We have had terrorism when there was no Israel. We have terrorism when there were no settlements. Did terrorism begin in 1967. No the hatred and attacks extend a century and throughout history. Terrorism is a result of a desire to end the State of Israel.

7. Abbas is a moderate. Another lie! True, he doesn't send his forces to attack. But he is a master at inciting. And he incites each and every day. "I welcome every drop of blood spilled in Jerusalem." Are these the words of a moderate? He glorifies these killers and has not condemned a single attack in the last thirty days. Someone who makes a public square in the name of a murderer must be condemned. But Abbas is not.

8. Only international observers should oversee the Temple Mount. Probably the last thing we need to maintain any semblance of normalcy is to place the UN in charge of The Temple Mount, the most potentially volatile square kilometer in the world. Israel enforces the status quo. The truth needs to be stated.

9. The violence is a direct result of the fact that there is no Palestinian state. Palestinians have repeatedly refused to accept a nation state for themselves if it means accepting a Jewish state next door. In 1921 when the Jewish community in Hebron was massacred and when attacks continued through the decade, it wasn't because of the lack of a Palestinian state. There was no desire for a Palestinian state. And they refused one in 1948, but the attacks continued into 1956 and into 67 despite the fact that the West Bank and Gaza were still in Arab hands. From 1920 through 67 when the Arabs controlled those areas, it didn't stop the hatred or attacks. After 1967 the narrative reversed. It was because we have Yehuda and Shomron that they hate us. And look at the result of giving back Gaza by Ariel Sharon. Abbas handed it over to Hamas. We didn't get peace for land, instead thousands of rockets came raining over Jewish heads. And what was the purpose of those attacks we asked. To liberate the West Bank? And

the answer from Hamas was that too, but first to liberate Haifa, Tel Aviv, Jaffa and Jerusalem too. No Palestinian representative is willing to accept a true peace. The goal is to eventually eradicate the Jewish state.

10. And the lie told more often and by everyone from world leaders to Jews as well is that the entire conflict in the Middle East is based on the Palestinian Israeli conflict. We see, though four years after the so called Arab Spring the disintegration of Libya, Syria and Iraq, the wars in Yemen, the troubles in Sinai and Saudi Arabia. What does all that have to do with the Palestinians? How many times did we hear that? And the core of the Palestinian problem was the settlements. Thousand are butchered in the Middle East, month after month. Yet still the finger points at Israel.

Ten lies told over and over, again and again. People in the west believe these things often with a religious fervor.

The core of the problem in the Middle East is the battle between militant Islam and modernity. The problem with the Palestinians is an unwillingness to accept a Jewish state regardless of what that Jewish state is.

As the Prime Minister completed his speech to thunderous applause I thought of a story I had heard. A friend living in a settlement that in any peace settlement will end up on the Palestinian side was asked where he would move to. He said he would stay. But they'll kill you, he was told. Then what kind of peace is that, was his response.

The truth is our greatest tool. You may not agree with everything the government is doing and wants to do, but the world is built on Emet. Take the truth and shout it from the mountain tops, send it to friends and burst the bubbles of those great lies.

Shabbat Shalom,

David Bibi

Lekh Lekha 5776
Victor Bibi

Abraham was spiritually patterned to conform with the Divine Attribute of Hesed. Lot his nephew stood spiritually behind this attribute nourishing from his uncle's spiritual back. This relationship began with the death of Lot's father Haran in the city of Ur. The connection prevailed in this manner as Lot accompanied Abraham in

his travels from Haran to Canaan, Canaan to Egypt and finally from Egypt back to the land of Canaan.

Abraham then began a new settlement in the land - signifying a new spiritual era. His attachment to the land of Canaan would parallel an awakening in the spiritual worlds above in the secret of the unification between Hakadosh Barukh Hu with the spiritual land known as the Shehina. The result, a new reality demanding an alteration in the relationship between Abraham and Lot. The latter had previously represented an esoteric husk nourishing from the back of Abraham's Divine Attribute of kindness. However, in this new era, he would no longer be allowed to remain attached this way but instead would need to be spiritually removed from the back of Abraham. Hence as a result, we are taught that a quarrel broke out amongst the herdsmen. Abraham is very particular in his request of Lot that he no longer qualifies to nourish from his spiritual back. He therefore asks that he be separated from "upon me" (13:9). We see later in Pasuk 11 that Lot acquiesces to this request, as it says " The man separated from the back of his brother".

This division would not completely sever their relationship. Lot was still in spiritual possession of two esoteric tents and another spiritual jewel known as his שוכר rekhush. R. Tuvia notes that the tents (mentioned as being in possession of Lot) refer to the souls of Ruth the Moabite and Naama the Ammonite. (BR 41 and Yev 63). R. HaAri explains that the spiritual jewel of Lot was an aspect of the soul root of Hevel the slain son of Adam in the form of the 4th century Amora אבר Rava, the head of the Yeshiva in Mehoza.

This explains the exploits of the four kings in capturing Lot. They had thereby attempted to frustrate the emergence of King David and the Mashiah (descendants of Ruth) ; the Monarchy of the lineage of Yehuda (descendants of Naama); as well as the lofty soul of Rava. The latter reference is hinted at by the strange locution of the verse, (14:12) And they took Lot and his possessions the son of the brother of Abraham... The words in the verse נב ושוכר יהא form an acrostic of the initial letters אבר or Rava. The meaning of the word שוכר rekhush being a holy spiritual spark or soul. The 19th century scholar, R. Yisshaq Shrem asserts that this interpretation of the word שוכר conforms with its use in connection to the extraction of the possessions or sparks from Egypt that was to occur centuries later. Namely when Israel left Egypt לודג שוכרב.

The assurance that these souls would emerge from Lot and thrive was Abraham's primary impetus in immediately setting out to rescue Lot. Rashi teaches that to accomplish this, Abraham enlisted his students in the effort. (14:14). "He armed his disciples who had grown up in his house ". For it is properly suited for scholars to extract or redeem souls as they are familiar with the spiritual techniques

associated with their release; being knowledgeable with the secrets of the Torah. This desire of Abraham to save these souls was communicated quite well; as the king of Sedom said to him (14:21) Give me the people and you will take the שוכר rekhush.

In the work of Rabbenu HaAri on transmigration of the souls (hakdama 36 second version) he notes that a descendant of Naamah (the wife Shelomo Hamelekh) was King Assa who like Rava possessed an aspect of the soul root of Hevel the son of Adam. It appears to me that Rava ascended into leadership in Babel to further correct the soul of King Assa who we are taught imposed forced labor on the scholars who were compelled to neglect the study of Torah (Sotah 10). Rava who was endowed with the same spiritual root, effectuates a tikun; a correction for the soul of King Assa. We are taught in the Talmud that Rava asserts himself by giving the scholars of his time primary rights to sell goods in the market (BB22), granting the scholars exemptions from certain taxes, giving them preferences in adjudicating their judicial cases prior to others so they can devote more time to study (Nedarim 62).

The Yalkut Shimoni advances that it is in conversation with the soul of the Mashiah (a descendent of Lot and Ruth) that Abraham addresses his plea not to quarrel. Abraham asserts that in the future both will be seated spiritually next to Hashem and there is actually no need to quarrel as both sides of the throne are equally fine. If you go left I will go right, if to the right I will go left. (13:9). The midrash quotes R. Yodon saying that Hashem will placate Abraham saying, Your grandson (Mashiah) sits on my right, whereas I sit on your right as it says, Sit on my right side while I make your enemies my footstool. (Tehillim 110:1)

A Jew Never Despairs RABBI ELI MANSOUR

We read in Parashat Lech-Lecha of Abraham Abinu's miraculous military victory against four large empires. These empires had waged war against the city of Sedom and the surrounding cities, capturing all their citizens, including Abraham's nephew, Lot. When Abraham heard about his nephew's capture, he immediately mobilized his servants into an army of 318 men, and pursued the four kings. In miraculous fashion, Abraham defeated them and freed all the captives.

The Midrash, as several commentators cite, tells that Abraham did not, in fact, launch his attack with 318 soldiers. Rather, he was accompanied by just one person – his faithful servant, Eliezer. The name "Eliezer" has the numerical value of 318, and thus

when the Torah speaks of Abraham mobilizing 318 men, it really means that he took Eliezer. The two of them fought alone and miraculously triumphed.

Rabbenu Bahya (1255-1340), one of the great Spanish commentators, adds more details to the Midrash's account. He explains that Abraham initially did have 318 men, but they all left him before battle. Torah law requires that before the army sets out for battle, the Kohen must speak to the troops and announce certain exemptions, including for those who are frightened and may thus discourage their comrades. Abraham followed this procedure, and all 318 men promptly left, as they were frightened by the prospect of waging combat against four powerful armies. In the end, Abraham fought this war accompanied only by Eliezer.

Rav Tzadok Ha'kohen of Lublin (1823-1900) viewed this episode as establishing a vitally important precedent and infusing within the Jewish Nation one of its most remarkable qualities. Namely, we do not despair. The Jews arose from the gas chambers of the Holocaust to create a sovereign state and rebuild our nation. We have always believed and lived with a keen sense that "Yeshuat Hashem Ke'heref Ayin" – G-d can resolve even the most seemingly intractable crisis in an instant. This quality originates from the story of Abraham and Eliezer. After the 318 men left, Abraham found himself alone and, seemingly, helpless. How could he possibly wage a war against four powerful armies by himself? Yet, he didn't despair. He took his trusted servant, and they prevailed.

Rav Tzadok noted that the numerical value of the word "Yeush" ("despair") is 317. Eliezer – whose name has the numerical value of 318 – represents the need to transcend despair and believe that G-d can always help. This is the lesson of this story, and it is a lesson which we need to apply every day throughout our lives as we confront challenges and hardships. A Jew never despairs, because a Jew knows that G-d is all-powerful and can bring the solution in an instant. No matter how desperate one's situation is, he must never lose hope, and remember that G-d is capable of helping.

JUSTIN TRUDEAU: CANADA'S OBAMA
The next Prime Minister of Canada will get along
fine with the President.
Robert Spencer

For years, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper has served as a welcome counterpoint to Barack Obama, and the object of wistful musings about what

a fine President of the United States he would have been, if only he had been born south of the border: generally realistic about the jihad threat, determined to do what was necessary to meet that threat, and a strong supporter of Israel.

But now Canada at last has its own Obama: Justin Trudeau. And that means that Canada, like the United States, faces deep trouble ahead.

The new Prime Minister of Canada, like Obama, has consistently downplayed the nature and magnitude of the jihad threat and ascribed it to other causes. Christine Williams, a Canadian journalist and a Federally appointed Director with the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, has noted that in the wake of the Boston Marathon jihad bombing, Trudeau issued a bizarre statement: "There is no question that this happened because of someone who feels completely excluded, someone who feels completely at war with innocence, at war with society."

At war with innocence. That rivals the Obama Administration's ascribing the Fort Hood jihad massacre to "workplace violence." In reality, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev explained after the bombing that he and his brother committed murder at the Marathon because they wanted to defend Islam. Tamerlan Tsarnaev had vowed to die for Islam.

But – also like Obama – as far as Justin Trudeau is concerned, if you're looking into Islam as having anything to do with jihad terror attacks, you're looking in the wrong place. Williams notes that Trudeau in 2013 "came under fire for his participation in Canada's largest Islamic Conference, held in Toronto, and entitled, 'Reviving the Islamic Spirit.'

The criticism was over the conference's sponsor, IRFAN [International Relief Fund for the Afflicted and Needy], which was stripped of its federal charity status because of its ties to the terrorist group, Hamas. Even the moderate Muslim Canadian Congress advised Trudeau not to attend."

Did the Hamas links put Trudeau off? Not any more than the Council on American-Islamic Relations' ties to Hamas stop American politicians – at least those on the Left – from appearing and glad-handing at its conferences. Trudeau," Williams reports, "according to a report, smothered the Islamic conference in platitudes. He apparently went so far as to imply a totally inapt comparison in trying to liken the fierce division between English and French Canada, under Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier, to that of the current divisions between mainstream Canada and Islam." Trudeau has been behaving this way for years. In 2011, he visited the Al-Sunnah Al-Nabawiah mosque in Montreal, which was identified by U.S. intelligence officials as a site where "known al-Qaeda members were recruited, facilitated or trained."

What is a man like Justin Trudeau, with the kind of record that he has, likely to do as Prime Minister?

Pamela Geller points out that he is already on record with some very specific intentions that should be disquieting to anyone interested in defending the West: "Canada," Trudeau said in September, "must immediately accept 25,000 Syrian refugees We can expect the following from Justin Trudeau in the short term." He didn't say anything about trying to screen out jihadis from among them – if that were even possible.

Trudeau will also restore Canada's diplomatic relations with Iran and end his country's involvement in military operations against the Islamic State. He will doubtless aid Obama in pressuring Israel at the G8 summit, where Harper had stood in the President's way. At home, Trudeau will scrap a bill that strips convicted terrorists of their Canadian citizenship, along with part of Canada's counter-terror legislation.

In sum, Justin Trudeau, young, handsome, born to the scepter courtesy his father, will fit right in with Barack Obama, David Cameron and the other leaders of the Western world today. And that's why we're in the fix we're in.

A NEW MIDDLE EAST

The vision of the dreamers among us -- who saw two decades ago how our region was changing into the "new Middle East" -- is now taking shape before our eyes. No, it's not a Middle East of peace, stability and prosperity, nor is it a Middle East controlled by the United States. This is a Middle East of instability and religious extremism, but more than that, it is a Middle East in which the tone is set by Russia and Iran and the pace is dictated by the knife-wielding attackers in the streets of Jerusalem.

The dream to establish a new, good Middle East in our region was based on U.S. strength in the 1990s. The United States that defeated Iraqi ruler Saddam Hussein and later conquered his country, while at the same time pushing Iran into a corner. Russia was a weak state at the time, barely standing on its own two feet. American strength led Arab leaders to seek close relationships with the U.S., and as late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat learned in his day: The way into Washington and into the Americans' hearts is through a peace deal with Israel. But a lot of water has run through the Jordan River since then, and peace did not take root, certainly not in the heart of the Arab street, nor did it save the Arab world from its troubles or stop religious extremism from spreading. And meanwhile, the United States has grown tired and decided to disconnect from the region for the moment -- in any case, it has already lost much of its power to exert influence or to dictate what happens there.

But there is no vacuum in our region -- the Americans' spot has already been filled with the Russian-Iranian alliance. And that is how the axis of evil of yesteryear became the central axis underlying the region today. The Russians are increasing their involvement and control in Syria, and Iran is doing the same in Iraq. And Egypt is not hiding its desire to become a part of this axis, as it is upon it -- and not the United States -- that the survival of many Arab regimes now depends.

Israel is not a natural nor a desired partner in the Russian-Iranian alliance that is now trying to impose itself upon the Middle East, but, at least as far as the Russians are concerned, it is also not an opponent or an enemy. Russia is looking to push the Americans out of the region, and at the same time to put an end to the religious extremism that may even come knocking on Moscow's door.

The Russians understand what Washington has yet to grasp -- that there is no connection between the spread of the Islamic State group and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and that promoting an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement will not stop the extremism and madness in the region. So the Russians are focusing on their own issues, and they have not issued a condemnation of Israel for working to restore calm to its cities.

But at the same time, Russia is helping Iran increase its presence in the region. And Israel and Iran are like Russia and the United States -- competing for influence and status. So the struggle between them is difficult to resolve and may even get worse.

The Russians and the Iranians, and especially their allies in Hezbollah, and of course, Syrian President Bashar Assad, are already openly speaking about the up-and-coming "new Middle East" with Syria as a cornerstone, after the Russians and the Iranians establish their presence and strike the Syrian rebels. From there, they will move on to Iraq and maybe Lebanon as well, and they will raise their status in Egypt -- and that is just the beginning. Indeed, the United States is a strategic ally to Israel and will continue to be so. The U.S. will come and go and will obviously return in full force at some point. But for the next few years, the east is red (the color of the former Soviet Union) and Moscow will likely be the focal point.

The Russians, like the Americans, will also learn with time that stopping radicalization and extremism may be a task beyond their ken; and eliminating the Islamic State may not even be an immediate goal for them, as the terrorist organization's existence justifies their presence in the region. But over the next few years, they will be the landlords here, and meanwhile the U.S. State Department will continue to offer

protest and to call for calm, with no one outside the United States paying attention.

Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading

Lech Lecha- Abraham leaves his homeland and makes an everlasting brit with Hashem.

- 1- Hashem tells Abram to leave Haran for Israel. After a famine in Israel Abram heads to Mitsrayim.
- 2- Paraoh takes Sara. Paraoh gets a plague and returns Sara. Abram leaves Mitsrayim back toward Israel.
- 3- Abram and Lot split up. Lot goes to Sedom. Abram settles in Hebron. Hashem blesses Abraham that he will have many decendants and Israel.
- 4- The war of the 4 kings and the 5 kings. Abram saves Lot and defeats the 5 kings.
- 5- Melech Sedom makes a compensation offer to Abram for the victory. Hashem reassures Abram and promises him the land.
- 6- Abram seals brit ben habetarim with Hashem. Sara gives Hagar to Abram. Ishmael is born. Abram's name is changed.
- 7- Hashem tells Abraham the covenant of brit milah and that Sara will have a baby. Abraham circumcises himself and his household.

EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

"Now the people of Sedom were wicked and sinful to Hashem, exceedingly." (Beresheet 13:13)

We tend to think of Sedom as a place that existed in ancient history. Let's hear a true story of recent times by Rabbi Dovid Kaplan.

How it happened is not certain, but the fact is that it happened and was reported by many of the news stations. An art connoisseur Elizabeth Wellington was visiting one of the fancier art museums in New York. At some point, she tripped or lost her balance and fell heavily to the ground, howling in pain and writhing in agony. Her ankle was bent at a grotesque angle. The pain was excruciating. Unfortunately for her, as she lost her balance, she lunged forward and her finger caught the bottom of an \$80,000,000 (!) Picasso, damaging the painting.

All the people in the immediate vicinity, without exception, gathered around the painting to assess the damage. "Do you think it's repairable?" asked one person in a panicky voice. "How could this have happened?" lamented another. All the while, Elizabeth called for help and moaned with pain. Yet the people totally ignored her. They lovingly carried the painting into a special emergency repair room in the museum, and Elizabeth was left alone on the floor.

The most grotesque angle in this story is the angle these people have on life and its value. Think about it. If the painting was only worth five thousand dollars, they'd have all rushed to help her. While halachah recognizes a factor called hefsed merubah (significant financial loss), it's never taken into consideration when human suffering is involved.

The conclusion of the story was that the museum spokesman announced a short time later that there was no permanent damage done to the painting. I think Elizabeth was lucky. I mean, if she would have caused serious damage they would probably have thrown her to the lions, or worse, to the humans! Rabbi Reuven Semah

"And the fugitive came and told Abraham the Hebrew" (Beresheet 13:14)

When Abram's nephew, Lot, was captured by the four kings during their great battle with the five kings, the fugitive (Og Melech Habashan) came to tell Abram "the Hebrew" that his nephew was in danger. We know Abram went with his few men, destroyed the kings and brought back Lot. The Rabbis tell us that Abraham is called הִרְבֵּה עֹג, Hebrew, because the word rcg means side, meaning, the whole world is on one side and Abraham is on the other side. Abraham was willing to go against idol worship and recognize Hashem against the flow of the entire world.

The question is, why is this description of Abraham said here by the battle of the kings, and not anywhere else that it talks about Abraham? The Skverer Rebbe z"l answers that this point about Abraham is why the fugitive (Og) came to tell him that his nephew was a captive. Og knew that no regular person would put himself in danger to save someone else, only someone like Abraham, who is willing to be different than the rest of the world. Only Abraham would be different enough to save his nephew from danger.

We are descendants of Abraham and we are called Hebrews because we also stay apart from the world. When everyone else has a lifestyle which is trendy and popular, we examine the Torah to see how to conduct our lives. We begin fasting on a fast day when we reach twelve or thirteen years old, even though some would say it's dangerous. We close our stores on Friday by sundown even though it's only 4:30 pm, and others call it foolhardy. We are confident of our way of life because we come from Abraham the Ibri. Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

Rabbi Wein MISTAKES

Mistakes, large and small, national and personal are all part of human existence. Nevertheless, all of us know that mistakes have a tendency to rise up and

bite us at a later date. The current wave of terror, lone wolf as it may be, that has beset Israeli society, is pretty much directly traceable to a number of major mistakes made by well-meaning leaders of Israel. All of these mistakes were made with good intent and since no one possesses the gift of prophesy, the resulting troubles may not have been apparent initially. But that in no way changes the consequences of those mistakes and the fact that we now have to deal with them.

The 1967 Six-Day War gave Israel and the Jewish people sovereignty and dominion over the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The Moslem Wakf, that had previously ruled the Temple Mount and excluded Jews from praying at the Western Wall – though this was in violation of all armistice agreements signed between Jordan and Israel – recognized that it was defeated in the war that it helped initiate and handed over the keys to the Temple Mount to the Israeli army.

However, Israeli defense minister Moshe Dayan immediately returned the keys to the Wakf and restored their hegemony over the holiest site in the Jewish world. Since then the Wakf has been busily destroying all possible remnants of the Jewish Second Temple and other artifacts proving Jewish sovereignty and connection to the site.

This has constantly stirred up the masses' false claims that Israel somehow desecrated and even once attempted to destroy the Al-Aqsa Mosque built on the platform of the Temple Mount. The propaganda in this regard and the incitement that it occasions are the main catalysts that drive Islamic terrorism against Israel and the Jewish people.

Those that negotiated the Oslo agreements have lived to see them violated continually, and now even publicly renounced by the Palestinian Authority which was established by those agreements. Yasser Arafat and the PLO were withering on the vine in distant Tunisia when the peacemakers began their mischief.

Israel brought Arafat and his corrupt inviolate gang back to the Land of Israel and foisted them upon a bewildered Palestinian population. The presence of Arafat and his successor Abu Mazen in the land of Israel has brought only violence, terrorism, corruption and bitterness to the Palestinians, and wars and death to Israelis.

Oslo was a grievous mistake. We are currently paying the price demanded by that mistake. The slogan of the time was that peace can only be made between enemies. The rub is, however, that the

enemies must want to make peace in order for any agreement to remain meaningful and effective. It is obvious that from day one there has been no faith exhibited towards Israel by the PLO or the Palestinian Authority.

Constant incitement, fabrications, threats and brazen hypocrisy are, in the main, exports of the Palestinian Authority to Israel and the general world. Oslo cannot be changed but we should at least recognize and admit that it was a mistake.

The Gaza disengagement and the hurried withdrawal (almost flight) from Lebanon have also proven to be mistakes of considerable consequence. Hezbollah in the north and Hamas in the South have boxed Israel into a situation where tens of thousands of rockets can be delivered in a moment against innocent Israeli civilians. Land for peace was also one of the great slogans that brought about these mistakes. However it is apparent that the issue is not one of borders or land but is rather whether the Jewish people have the right to exist and develop in their ancestral homeland.

Only now, many decades after the establishment of the State of Israel, is the reality of this core issue sinking into the consciousness of the vast majority of Israelis. We realize that we have wrongly framed the issue that divides us from the Palestinians. We have taught the world to sanctify and even canonize the mistaken issue of land for peace.

That mistake also haunts us in all of our international relationships. We are always negotiating about the wrong thing and making concessions that eventually lead us nowhere. Mistakes are very painful to admit and even harder to correct. But the beginning of any process of righting the ship certainly depends upon recognizing and admitting past mistakes and errors and resolving not to commit them again

Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks Journey of the Generations

Mark Twain said it most pithily. "When I was a boy of 14, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be 21, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in seven years."

Whether Freud was right or wrong about the Oedipus complex, there is surely this much truth to it, that the power and pain of adolescence is that we seek to define ourselves as different, individuated, someone other than our parents. When we were young they were the sustaining presence in our lives, our security, our stability, our source of groundedness in

the world.

The first and deepest terror we have as very young children is separation anxiety: the absence, especially, of the mother. Young children will play happily so long as mother or care-giver is within sight. Absent that, and there is panic. We are too young to venture into the world on our own. It is precisely the stable, predictable presence of parents in our early years that gives us a basic sense of trust in life.

But then comes the time as we approach adulthood, when we have to learn to make our own way in the world. Those are the years of searching and in some cases, rebellion. They are what make adolescence so fraught. The Hebrew word for youth – the root n-a-r – has these connotations of ‘awakening’ and ‘shaking.’ We begin to define ourselves by reference to our friends, our peer-group, rather than our family. Often there is tension between the generations.

The literary theorist Harold Bloom wrote two fascinating books, *The Anxiety of Influence* and *Maps of Misreading*, in which, in Freudian style, he argued that strong poets make space for themselves by deliberately misinterpreting or misunderstanding their predecessors. Otherwise – if you were really in awe of the great poets that came before you – you would be stymied by a sense that everything that could be said has been said, and better than you could possibly do. Creating the space we need to be ourselves often involves an adversarial relationship to those who came before us, and that includes our parents.

One of the great discoveries that tends to come with age is that we begin to realise that having spent what seems like a lifetime of running away from our parents, we find that we have become very much like them – and the further away we ran, the closer we became. Hence the truth in Mark Twain’s insight. It needs time and distance to see how much we owe our parents and how much of them lives on in us.

The way the Torah does this in relation to Abraham (or Abram as he was then called) is remarkable in its subtlety. *Lekh Lekha*, and indeed Jewish history, begins with the words, “God said to Abraham, Go from your land, your birthplace and your father’s house to a land I will show you” (Gen. 12:1). This is the boldest beginning of any account of a life in the Hebrew Bible. It seems to come from nowhere. The Torah gives us no portrait of Abraham’s childhood, his youth, his relationship with the other members of his family, how he came to marry Sarah, or the qualities of character that made God single him out to

become the initiator of what ultimately turned out to be the greatest revolution in the religious history of humankind, what is called nowadays Abrahamic monotheism.

It was this biblical silence that led to the midrashic tradition almost all of us learned as children, that Abraham broke the idols in his father’s house. This is Abraham the Revolutionary, the iconoclast, the man of new beginnings who overturned everything his father stood for. This is, if you like, Freud’s Abraham.

Perhaps it is only as we grow older that we are able to go back and read the story again, and realise the significance of the passage at the end of the previous parsha. It says this: “Terach took his son Abram, his grandson Lot, son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. But when they came to Harran, they settled there” (Gen. 11:31).

It turns out, in other words, that Abraham left his father’s house long after he had left his land and his birthplace. His birthplace was in Ur, in what is today southern Iraq, but he only separated from his father in Harran, in what is now northern Syria. Terach, Abraham’s father, accompanied him for the first half of his journey. He went with his son at least part of the way.

What actually happened? There are two possibilities. The first is that Abraham received his call in Ur. His father Terach then agreed to go with him, intending to accompany him to the land of Canaan, though he did not complete the journey, perhaps because of age. The second is that the call came to Abraham in Harran, in which case his father had already begun the journey on his own initiative by leaving Ur. Either way, the break between Abraham and his father was far less dramatic than we first thought.

I have argued elsewhere (in my new book, *Not in God’s Name*), that biblical narrative is far more subtle than we usually take it to be. It is deliberately written to be understood at different levels at different stages in our moral growth. There is a surface narrative. But there is also, often, a deeper story that we only come to notice and understand when we have reached a certain level of maturity (I call this the concealed counter-narrative). Genesis 11-12 is a classic example.

When we are young we hear the enchanting – indeed empowering – story of Abraham breaking his father’s idols, with its message that a child can sometimes be right and a parent wrong, especially when it comes to

spirituality and faith. Only much later in life do we hear the far deeper truth – hidden in the guise of a simple genealogy at the end of the previous parsha – that Abraham was actually completing a journey his father began.

There is a line in the book of Joshua (24:2) – we read it as part of the Haggadah on Seder night – that says that “In the past your ancestors lived beyond the Euphrates River, including Terach the father of Abraham and Nahor. They worshiped other gods.” So there was idolatry in Abraham’s family background. But Genesis 11 says that it was Terach who took Abraham, not Abraham who took Terach, from Ur to go to the land of Canaan. There was no immediate and radical break between father and son.

Indeed it is hard to imagine how it could have been otherwise. Abram – Abraham’s original name – means “mighty father”. Abraham himself was chosen “so that he will instruct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord” (Gen. 18:19) – that is, he was chosen to be a model parent. How could a child who rejected the way of his father become a father of children who would not reject his way in turn?[1] It makes more sense to say that Terach already had doubts about idolatry and it was he who inspired Abraham to go further, spiritually and physically. Abraham continued a journey his father had begun, thereby helping Isaac and Jacob, his son and grandson, to chart their own ways of serving God – the same God but encountered in different ways.

Which brings us back to Mark Twain. Often we begin by thinking how different we are from our parents. It takes time for us to appreciate how much they helped us become the people we are. Even when we thought we were running away, we were in fact continuing their journey. Much of what we are is because of what they were.

[1] Rashi (to Gen. 11:31) says it was to conceal the break between son and father that the Torah records the death of Terach before God’s call to Abraham. However, see Ramban ad loc.

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL

“In this manner (idolatry) the world continued to develop until the birth of Abraham, the Pillar of the World” (RAMBAM, Idolatry 1:2).

“When this giant among men was weaned, he began to cast about in his mind by day & by night,

wondering: Whence comes the Energy which rotated the celestial bodies? There was no one to instruct him. But his mind could not rest and he continued to gain in understanding until he finally arrived at the truth.” (adapted from RMBM ibid. 1:3).

When Abraham Abinu came on the scene, the Rambam says, he looked at the sun and saw how wonderfully it works. The sun is just big enough to warm us. If it were bigger, we would be burned to a crisp; if it were smaller, we would be frozen. If the sun were a little closer, we would be burned; if it were more distant, we would be frozen. How did it happen that the sun was the exact distance and the exact size? Abraham was studying the happiness of this world, how good the sun is for us. With that he came to recognize that there is Someone in charge. That is Abraham’s system.

He looked at everything in the world and saw that nothing was accidental. Everything is full of plan and purpose which demonstrates Kindness, Wisdom & Power, and from that he came to recognize the Creator/Bore’ Olam.

Whenever you look into the whole purpose of the universe, there is not a thing that doesn’t demonstrate plan and purpose. Apples turn red when they are ripe and fit to eat. When they are not the right color, they are hard and sour. They are not healthy that way, and you could get a stomachache if you ate them. The fact that apples turn red is enough proof for everyone to know there is a Creator. And peaches turn pink and red, and oranges turn orange and bananas turn yellow and Granny Smith apples turn green.

All of the instructions to produce these fruit are encoded in 1 million bits of information on the DNA of each seed. This includes production of the tree which bears the fruit which has seeds inside them in order to continue reproduction of these fruits for us.

It is as if Hashem signed His name on them,
 “Hashem is here.”
 Everything proclaims Hashem’s Presence.
 “The World is filled with the Hessed of Hashem”
 (Tehillim 33)