

Lechi Lach on Our Journey

“♪ Lechi lach, to a land that I will show you. Lech lecha, to a place you do not know. Lechi Lach, on your journey I will bless you. And you shall be a blessing, and you shall be a blessing, and you shall be a blessing, lechi lach. Lechi lach, and I shall make your name great. Lech lecha, and all shall praise your name. Lechi Lach, to the place that I will show you. Le'simchat chayim, le'simchat chayim, le'simchat chayim, lechi lach. ♪ (Debbie Friedman from [Genesis 12:1-2](#))

In late 1992 (or was it 1993?) Marilyn, our children and I went to *B'nei Israel* synagogue for a concert by singer/songwriter Debbie Friedman. She performed several of her songs including her hit song *Lechi Lach*. It was a very beautiful and fulfilling experience. The phrase *lechi lach* is a feminine variation of the biblical command *lech l'cha* (go forth), given to Abraham in [Genesis 12:1](#). The accepted meaning of the Biblical command in the TLV Bible is *Get going*. Modern meanings include: *Go for yourself* - To go out into the world and make your own way; or *Go into yourself* - To embark on a journey of internal discovery and find the path within yourself; or *Go with yourself* - To take your beliefs and way of life with you on your journey. The first and third meanings are most appropriate to describe today's *Torah* reading, *Parashat Lech Lecha*. The song *Lechi Lach* by Debbie Friedman applies this ancient command, *Get going*, to all people, emphasizing personal growth and responsibility. The song ends with the phrase *le'simchat chayim, lechi lach, for the joy of life, get going*.

Last year on November 9, 2024, I shared a message entitled *Come on Gators Lech-Lechu – Get Up and Go!* urging us to: *come on Kol Simcha, get up and go!* to the Land and Place the Father will show us. I also shared: “I am persuaded that we have an identical decision to make in our day: Get Going... I have the conviction that the Lord is requiring from you and I an answer to the same identical question posed to our father Abraham – *Lech Lecha Mearetzcha* – literally, *get going out from your familiar*. We must do the same thing today, even today – obey and get out of our comfort zone, get out of that which is familiar, get out of the traditions of our forefathers, even out of the vestiges our *mother country*.” Today I want to emphasize that we need to *Go for yourself, Go with yourself*, and even *Go into yourself* to truly embark into *OUR* successful future calling.

Scripture tells us that Abraham was required to leave his place of birth with his family and over 318 adults aged between 20 and 50 who were members of Abraham's camp. Obviously, Abraham was a wealthy man with a large camp of servants and soldiers, and a wife who was not able to have children!

The Almighty chooses this man and his clan to be the father of all the faithful throughout human history. Just take this into consideration: The Jews first attribute their origin to Abraham and his family. Christians worldwide attribute their relationship to God through Abraham. The Muslims also attribute the origins of their faith to Abraham. When calculating the numbers, you see that more than half of the world's population traces its religious origin to Abraham and his family. So, this makes Abraham not only our father but the father of the faithful to one God in most of the world. This fact is enough to cause us to do our best to understand this man called Abraham!

Jewish literature through the centuries has analyzed, studied, interpreted, and commented on the person of Abraham and his family, and the kind of faith and relationship that he had with *The Almighty* and with people. Here are a few things about Abraham and his faith:

- 1) Abraham was not perfect and was not sinless.

2) Abraham really loved Sarah, his wife, and she loved him so much that she actually gave him an Egyptian female servant named Hagar that she had for herself to have sex with Abraham and birth a son! She gave old man Abraham a son called Ishmael, which means *Elohim heard Abraham's plea for a son!*

3) While Abraham was a sinner like all of us, he was also faithful, honest, intelligent, and uncompromising when it came to *The Almighty* and *His commands*.

A most important word in all of Abraham's story is actually the tiny Hebrew word *הִנְנִי*, which is pronounced *HiNeNi*. This word appears in the Hebrew bible 178 times. The literal English meaning of this small Hebrew word is *here I am*, (*hinēnî* = *Here I am*), which appears with varying counts depending on textual form, vocalization, or context. The conservative scholastic figure is seven occurrences for the precise form *הִנְנִי* in the *Torah*. The larger numbers reflect broader forms or usages (e.g., the suffix-form, variant vocalizations, and pronouncing readiness). Frequency is not the only important point in Abraham's response. When Abraham said *Hineni*, were they identically executed?

Let me contrast two of these instances from *Parashat Vayera*. In *Genesis 22*, *Yah* asks Abraham to take his son and offer him as a human sacrifice: Even in being asked to sacrifice his only son, the son of promise, Abraham is ready to do it and obey. But earlier in *Genesis 18*, when three angels appear and eat lunch with Abraham and reveal to him that Sodom will be destroyed, Abraham *argues* with these three angels (one of them is actually called *Jehovah*). Abraham does not readily accept the destruction of Sodom because of his nephew Lot. He argues face to face with the angel called *Jehovah*. He proceeds to negotiate the possibility that the verdict on Sodom would be canceled if 10 righteous men are found in that wicked city (some have theorized that Lot and family accounted for those ten people).

So in the case of the *Angel* called *Jehovah* informing Abraham about the judgment of Sodom, Abraham negotiates with the three angels, especially with the one who is called *Jehovah*, like an Arab or Armenian merchant in the market of the old city of Jerusalem. But when it comes to *his one and only true son from Sarah*, Isaac's sacrifice, Abraham obeys Him without negotiation and builds an altar for the sacrifice of Isaac. Is it purely that Abraham became *more obedient* as he got older?

We note that this was the last conversation *The Almighty* had with Abraham. A possible reason for the absence of face-to-face communication between with Abraham from *Genesis 22* forward could be because Abraham didn't try to negotiate on behalf of his son Isaac's sacrifice, but proceeded to build the altar with the wood that Isaac carried on his shoulder (like *Yeshua* who carried his own cross on his shoulder). He didn't, *The Angel Jehovah* stopped him. The Rabbis make this point in their writings. On the other hand Abraham starts his *hineni* journey in *Genesis 12* with complete obedience (no lip service), in *Genesis 18* (near the middle) he debates *The Almighty*, but in *Genesis 22* near the end of journey his *hineni* is back to complete obedience. We (I) seem to mirror this in our *hineni* journey.

Parashat Lech Lecha sets in motion things that influence and lay a foundation for the rest of the Bible, including the story of *Yeshua* and the cross. We all need to be judicious and consider whom we obey and whose voice we hear when we read *The Word* as we all seek ways to follow and fulfill our calling as disciples of *Yeshua*, our *Rabbi and Savior*. In order to *Hineni to The Almighty*, we will need to *Go for yourself*, *Go with yourself*, and even *Go into yourself*. In this way *KS* can fulfill its impending future. We all have make the willful decision to *Hear and Obey*, embracing our own *hineni* journey. For the joy of life (*le'simchat chayim*, *lechi lach*), let's get going! *Shabbat Shalom!*