



# Carnegie Shul Chatter

November 3, 2022



Light candles 5:55pm

Shabbat Services 9:30am

## Shabbat Services

The Carnegie Shul continues to offer hybrid Shabbat services. Please join us in the sanctuary, providing you have been vaccinated for Covid 19. Masks are optional. To attend virtually, watch for a Zoom link in your email. If you don't receive it, contact Rosalyn Hoffman at [rjlynman@yahoo.com](mailto:rjlynman@yahoo.com). The complete Torah reading, in Hebrew and English, can be found on line at [https://www.chabad.org/parshah/torahreading\\_cdo/aid/2473477/jewish/Noach-Torah-Reading.htm](https://www.chabad.org/parshah/torahreading_cdo/aid/2473477/jewish/Noach-Torah-Reading.htm)

## Here to Stay

We are, "a people who have existed for thousands of years, in relation with God." What a wonderful heritage. And yet, as I have written many times, there are many people out there who seek to do us harm.

Anti-Semitism just will not go away. Recently, it was Kanye West with his anti-Semitic remarks that, thankfully, resulted in many of his sponsors killing his endorsement deals (costing him \$2 billion in a single day). Then there were the electric sign at TIAA Bank Field in Jacksonville, where two nationally ranked college football teams were playing, that projected a message on a stadium wall saying, "Kanye is right about the Jews." And the same message appeared on a nearby building after it was flashed at the stadium. A similar message appeared on a banner that was hung over a Los Angeles freeway by an anti-Semitic hate group last week.

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And the signs shown here were hung on an Interstate 10 overpass near Jacksonville.

Then, on Sunday morning, someone spray-painted racist and anti-Semitic messages at the entrance to Weston's Hunters Pointe subdivision (located near Orlando). Swastikas and racist messages were painted on a sign to the neighborhood, the water pump area, speed limit sign, gazebo floor, stop sign and "all over" the playground equipment, a sheriff's report said.



Earlier in October, anti-Semitic and racist graffiti was spray-painted on the sidewalk in the Weston Hills neighborhood on Yom Kippur.

And still, the murderer who terrorized Tree of Life four years ago has not gone before a jury.

We must always be vigilant. We must always keep our guard up. God will protect us, but we must also protect and safeguard our homes and our places of worship because, whether we like it or not, anti-Semitism is not going away anytime soon.

## Lech Lecha in a Nutshell

**Genesis 12:1–17:27**

*From Chabad.org*



G-d speaks to Abram, commanding him to "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. Abram and his wife Sarai, accompanied by his nephew Lot, journey to the Land of Canaan, where Abram 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; Abram 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 Abram and compensate the brother-revealed-as-husband with gold, silver and cattle.

Back in the Land of Canaan, Lot separates from Abram 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. Abram 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 Abram, 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

Still childless ten years after their arrival in the Land, Sarai tells Abram 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 Abram's 86th year.



Thirteen years later, G-d changes Abram'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."

## Lech Lecha Haftorah 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 haftarah 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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## Haftarah Commentaries

This week I have chosen two commentaries about the haftarah. I find the first, which is an excerpt from a commentary at [chabad.org](http://chabad.org), to be particularly inspiring. The second, from [exploringjudaism.org](http://exploringjudaism.org), provides an excellent put down of idolatry, "Even with the idyllic view of idolatry, what Isaiah tells to us is ours and it is better. We get God. On our side is the creator of the world, the maker and destroyer of mountains, the cause of storms. We get our heritage, a people who have existed for thousands of years, in relation with God. "

I hope you find both to be informative.

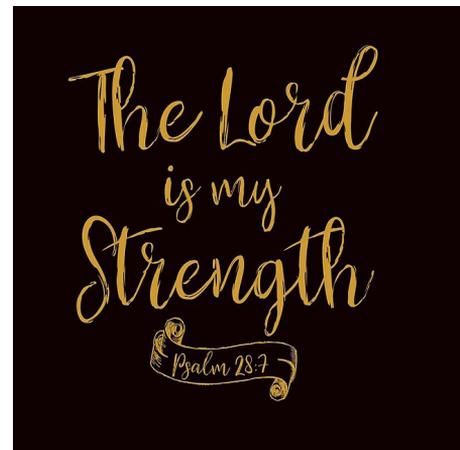
## Powerful Mouths

*By Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz*

The haftarah for Lech Lecha extols the virtues of the Jewish people, the children of Abraham, in contrast to other nations of the world. It encourages us to stay strong during the exile—that we should not be afraid because G-d is always with us, and He can be relied upon. Ultimately, it is us—the Jewish people, who put our hope in G-d—who will be strengthened and redeemed, while the unrighteous nations will face Divine judgment for not recognizing Him, despite all the clear indications that He is the one and only true G-d, and for all the suffering they put us through.

The connection to Lech Lecha is the references to Abraham, who with G-d's help journeyed away from idol-worshippers, taught the world about G-d and proved victorious over powerful kings, events that are recounted in this parshah.

The parshah tells about the founding of the Jewish people and beginning of our mission in this world. It makes sense that the haftarah encourages us and extols the virtues that make us the



chosen ones for Hashem's plan. It also makes sense that it tells us about the final redemption because that is the goal and reward of our mission.

The haftarah opens with the reassurance that although we may feel at times our efforts to follow the Torah are being ignored by G-d, that is never the case. Rather, His wisdom is beyond ours, even if we don't understand why He puts us in situations that seem undesirable.

In the end, He is the One who "gives the faint strength." Though the enemies of the Jewish people seem youthful and powerful, they will grow "tired and weary . . . and stumble. But those who hope in G-d will renew (literally, "exchange") their strength, grow wings like an eagle, they will run and not be weary, they will walk and not tire."

## Parashat Lech Lecha Reflection

*By Bex Stern Rosenblatt*

How many idolaters does it take to build an idol? Is this a whole community affair with a potluck afterward or can I do it in my basement on a rainy afternoon? Do I need technical expertise? Does building Ikea furniture qualify me for the job? If I'm just looking to worship an idol, do I really need to build my own? Can I get one ready-made?

Our haftarah portion, Isaiah 40:27-41:16, is largely a call to the exiles in Babylon to trust in God and their return to the land of Israel, following the journey that Abraham made more than a thousand years earlier.

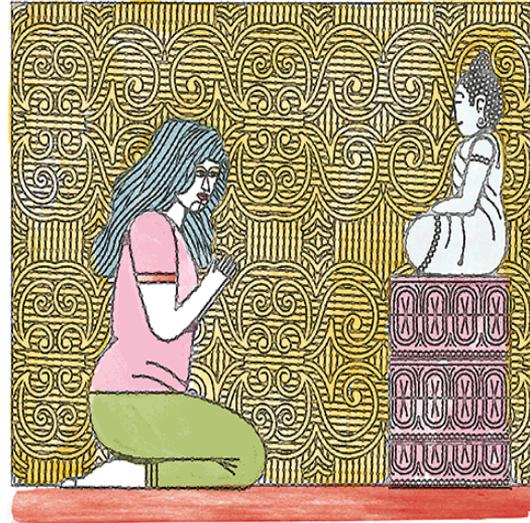
There is much talk about God's role in creation and God's role in the return. We find fairly typical language about the rest of the peoples as opposed to the chosen people of Israel. And then, in the middle of all of this, we get a confusing instruction manual on idol building in Isaiah 41:6-7, featuring a cast of supportive artisans.

Not only is the existence of the verse perplexing, the verse itself is also difficult to translate. It's unclear who is involved, what material they are using, and what it is they are making.

We can contextualize it by reading it together with Isaiah 40:19-20. Altogether, in Robert Alter's translation, they read like this:

"The craftsman has shaped the idol, and the smith overlays it with gold and forges the links of silver. Mulberry wood for the gift, wood that won't rot he chooses. A skilled craftsman he seeks for himself to ready an idol that will not topple... Each man helps his fellow and to his brother says, 'Be strong.' And the craftsman strengthens the smith, the hammer wielder—the anvil pounder. He says to the glue, 'It is good,' and strengthens it with nails that it not totter."

These people do not seem evil. Everyone is helping out and pitching in!



We even recognize that word, “be strong” from the repeated command in Deuteronomy and Joshua, given to us as we enter the land, “be strong and resolute.”

It is as if we have fallen through Alice’s looking glass. We are given a vision of what our lives might have been, if only they’d been a little different.

Rather than being strangers in exile, about to embark on a perilous journey to a land our grandparents left with great trauma, we are given a moment to imagine life from the point of view of the people who belong – the happy society of skilled artists who create together in harmony. They even reuse God’s language from creation, saying to the glue, “it is good!”

We get to peer into their world for a minute from the point of view of those who can never quite enter it. It looks just like our world, but simpler, easier, and without God.

Not only are we given the full Ikea assembly instructions, they are also offering us free delivery.

The haftarah is in effect “steel-manning” idolatry: it makes the most persuasive possible case for idolatry, and presents it in the best possible light, before demolishing it as an idea.

Even with the idyllic view of idolatry, what Isaiah tells to us is ours and it is better. We get God. On our side is the creator of the world, the maker and destroyer of mountains, the cause of storms. We get our heritage, a people who have existed for thousands of years, in relation with God.

Having glanced through the looking glass, we come back home.

*Bex Stern Rosenblatt is the Conservative Yeshiva’s Faculty-in-Residence for the Mid-Atlantic Region of the United States, teaching Tanach, using the techniques of close-reading, theater, feminist readings, and traditional commentators. Bex also directs the CY’s recruitment efforts in North America. After finishing her B.A. in History and German at Williams College, Bex received a Fulbright Grant to Austria. She later earned an M.A. in Tanakh from Bar Ilan University and has also studied at the Conservative Yeshiva and Bina Jerusalem. Bex is the founder of Havruta Tel Aviv, an organization that facilitates guided pair-learning of the Tanakh.*

## Yahrtzeits

*This week the Carnegie Shul acknowledges the yahrtzeit of:*

**Sylvia Moskovitz**

**Matthew Harold Kalson**

*May their memories be for a blessing.*

## Donations

### In Memory

**Debbie and Mitch Gardiner**

*In Memory of Pearl Lowe*

### High Holiday Donations

**Melissa Dreyer**

**Elaine Berkowitz**

**Anna Lisa Silberman**

**Cecily Routman**