

The Parsha & You

Life Lessons from Parsha Lech Lecha

Theme: Saying Yes, and Everything After

Welcome & Introduction

Last week was Noach. A flood, a rainbow, a tower that fell.

This week the Torah narrows to one man and one woman.

Avram and Sarai.

And it opens with two words: *Lech lecha*. Go forth.

No destination. No timeline. No guarantees.

What follows isn't a smooth success story.

A move at seventy-five. A famine the minute they arrive. A family member in trouble. A promise that still hasn't come true.

It sounds a lot like real life.

Most of us have said a big yes at some point.

Then came everything after it. The hard parts. The people who needed us. The waiting.

We get tired, stretched, and sometimes we wonder if we chose right.

Lech Lecha speaks to that place.

Today we'll explore five nuggets from Lech Lecha about saying yes, and about what it takes to keep going once you have:

- Say Yes Before You See It
- It's Not Too Late
- Hard Doesn't Mean Wrong
- Show Up Anyway
- Tell Hashem What Hurts

Nugget #1: Say Yes Before You See It

Primary Text: Bereishit 12:1

"לֵךְ-לְךָ... אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֶרְאֶה"

"Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you."

Hashem gives Avram a direction.

He doesn't give him a destination.

Just: the land that I will show you.

And Avram goes.

There's a teaching that each of us has already done this once.

Rabbeinu Bachya was a Torah commentator in Spain about 700 years ago.

He writes that before we came into the world, our souls were shown our lives. The good years and the hard ones.

And we said yes.

Then we were born, and we forgot what we saw.

So we live the way Avram traveled. Committed to a journey we can't see.

Think about the biggest yeses of your life: a marriage, a child, a new job.

None of us saw the whole picture first.

Maybe our souls already did.

Ask

Think of a time you said yes before you knew what it would ask of you. What did it give you that you couldn't have planned?

NUGGET:

Say Yes Before You See It.

Nugget #2: It's Not Too Late

Primary Text: Bereishit 12:4

"וְאַבְרָם בֶּן־חֲמִישׁ שָׁנִים וְשִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה בָּצֵאתוֹ מִחָרָן"

"Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran."

The Torah stops to tell us his age.

Seventy-five.

At seventy-five, most people are settling in. Avram is packing up.

The biggest assignment of his life comes at an age we'd call retirement.

Many of us carry a quiet voice that says that ship has sailed.

Too old to go back to school. Too late to learn to read Hebrew. Too set in my ways to change.

The Torah doesn't accept that.

The whole story of the Jewish people begins with a seventy-five-year-old saying yes.

Ask

Where have you told yourself it's too late? What would you start if you believed it wasn't?

NUGGET:

It's Not Too Late.

Nugget #3: Hard Doesn't Mean Wrong

Primary Text: Bereishit 12:10

"וַיְהִי רָעָב בְּאֶרֶץ"

"There was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land."

Avram does everything right.

He leaves home. He follows Hashem. He arrives in the land he was promised.

And the first thing that happens is a famine.

We know this feeling.

The new job that's chaos in the first month. The move where the basement floods the first week. The baby who doesn't sleep.

In those moments we start asking: Did I make a mistake?

The Rambam counts this famine as one of Avraham's ten tests.

He points out that it hit right after Hashem promised to make Avram a great nation.

It's as if the Torah is saying: a hard start doesn't cancel the promise.

Ask

Have you ever doubted a good decision because it got hard right away? What helped you keep going?

NUGGET:

Hard Doesn't Mean Wrong.

Nugget #4: Show Up Anyway

Primary Text: Bereishit 14:14

"וַיִּשְׁמַע אַבְרָם כִּי נִשְׁבָּה אָחִיו"

"When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he mustered his retainers, born into his household, numbering three hundred and eighteen, and went in pursuit as far as Dan."

One chapter earlier, Lot chose the best land for himself.

He moved toward Sodom.

Now Lot is a prisoner of war.

Avram could have said: he made his choice.

Instead, the moment he hears, he gathers 318 men and goes after him.

The Hebrew calls Lot *achiv*, his brother.

Most of us have someone like this. A sibling. An adult child. A parent who was hard to love.

Avram doesn't stop to say "I told you so."

He goes.

You can disagree with how someone got into trouble and still show up when they need you.

Ask

Who in your life needs you to show up, even though you didn't agree with their choices?

NUGGET:

Show Up Anyway.

Nugget #5: Tell Hashem What Hurts

Primary Text: Bereishit 15:1–2

"מֵה־תִּתֶּן־לִי וְאֶנֶּכִי הוֹלֵךְ עֲרִירִי"

"Fear not, Abram, I am a shield to you; your reward shall be very great." But Abram said, "O my Sovereign GOD, what can You give me, seeing that I shall die childless..."

Hashem has just promised Avram a great reward.

Most of us know the expected answer here. Thank you.

Avram says something else.

What good is it? I still don't have a child.

He doesn't put on a brave face.

He says the thing that hurts.

And Hashem doesn't scold him. He answers him with a promise.

So many of us answer "How are you?" with "Baruch Hashem, fine."

Sometimes we answer Hashem that way too.

Avram shows us that honest prayer is allowed.

Including: I'm grateful, and this still hurts.

Ask

What are you carrying that you haven't said out loud, even to Hashem?

NUGGET:

Tell Hashem What Hurts.

Closing Brachah

May we say yes to the journeys that are ours, even before we can see where they lead.

May we remember that it's never too late to begin.

May we hold steady when the right choice gets hard.

May we show up for the people we love, even when they've made it complicated.

And may we bring Hashem our whole hearts, including the parts that still hurt.

And through it all, may we keep going on the journeys we've said yes to, even when we can't see the road ahead. Shabbat Shalom.