



MACHSHAVOT

Parashat Lech Lecha

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A Brighter Light in a Darkening World

Rabbi Andrew Shaw
Chief Executive, Mizrachi UK

One of the new experiences of 2020 – is davening outside.

Even though, the experience is hopefully temporary, I have found myself moving to the same area each time, as if, there is a *Makom Kavua* (a fixed place for sitting in shul) outside as well!

So there I was, in my place on Friday night at Edgware Adas. During Mincha, I happened to look up to my right, and saw the large stain glass window of the shul. The lights were on in shul, there was also an indoor minyan, and the light coming from the window was very dim.

At the end of Maariv, I happened to look again – now the light from the window was very bright.

What had happened? Had the light actually got brighter?

No, the light had not changed, all that had happened was that the world outside had got darker.

As I walked home from shul with my boys, I realised this was a metaphor for Shabbat. Since I was a teenager I have seen the beauty in keeping Shabbat. Back then, in the mid 1980's, that meant a day away from watching TV or listening to the radio. As the years have gone on, the importance and the kedusha of Shabbat have not got any more powerful, Shabbat is Shabbat. However, the world around us has got darker, the all-pervading nature of social media, smart phones, emails, whatsapps, youtube etc has taken over so much of our lives – many times because it is needed for work, social or entertainment. However, there is no rest, no pause, no disconnect.

Until we have 25 blissful hours of Shabbat.

Shabbat is needed more today than I believe at any time in Jewish history.

The question is, whether the Jewish community in terms of Shabbat are ready for their Lecha Lecha moment?

What do I mean?

Obviously I am referring to Avram in this week's parsha.

‘And the Lord said to Abram, *Lech Lecha* from your land and from your birthplace and from your father's house, to the land that I will show you.’

Most translations translate Lech Lecha as go, however it literally means ‘go for yourself’. Hashem is explaining that to be the father of the Jewish nation it necessitates a break from the routine and the world view he had become accustomed. To see beyond the idol worshipping value system that he had been raised on. However, to realise that deep down, that is what the self really truly needs. A connection to reality, to God, to a divine mission. This is not simply a physical journey for Avram, it is also a spiritual one. Lech Lecha will be of huge benefit to Avram, even if at face value, it appears to be a tremendous sacrifice.

I believe the Jewish community also needs to realise its purpose in terms of Shabbat and Torah in general. We have read this week, shamefully, with the release of the EHRC report, how the Labour party in the UK were involved in promoting and encouraging anti-Semitism. Yet, we must never let that define us. Avraham was not commanded to leave Haran due to anti-Semitism but because Hashem had a plan for him and his people, a plan that we are still engaged in fulfilling.

I hope that people realise the power, not just of a day of physical rest, but to realise the Divine gift of a day of spiritual bliss and connection by disconnection the observance of Shabbat gives.

So join us and tell everyone to tune in next **Thursday at 8:00pm** with Chief Rabbi Mirvis, Chief Rabbi Goldstein, Tzipi Hotovely and Yishai Ribo as we launch the UK Shabbaton at Home 3 in almost 80 communities across the UK as part of the global celebration of the Shabbat project. A project that was born to open peoples’ eyes to the magic and bliss of shemirat Shabbat.

The light of Shabbat is glowing ever brighter in a darkening world that desperately needs a way out of the addictive, stressful, worrying life.

Join us next week as the light will please God spread throughout the UK and throughout the Jewish world.

Shabbat Shalom



MIZRACHI
UNITED KINGDOM

THE **SHABBATON** **@ HOME** #3

12 CITIES
80 COMMUNITIES

Thursday 5th November - 6:30pm

Virtual Challah Make with Seed
Join virtual Challah Bakes around the world **LIVE**

Thursday 5th November - 8:00pm

Launch event with Chief Rabbi Mirvis, Chief Rabbi Goldstein,
Her Excellency Ambassador Tzipi Hotovely
with music from Ishay Ribo **LIVE**

Shabbat 6th/7th November

Read and discuss the Shabbaton booklet during meals,
with contributions from Chief Rabbi Goldstein, Yehuda Avner Z"L,
Rabbanit Shani Taragin, Dayan Simons and more...

Motzei Shabbat 7th November - 6:30pm

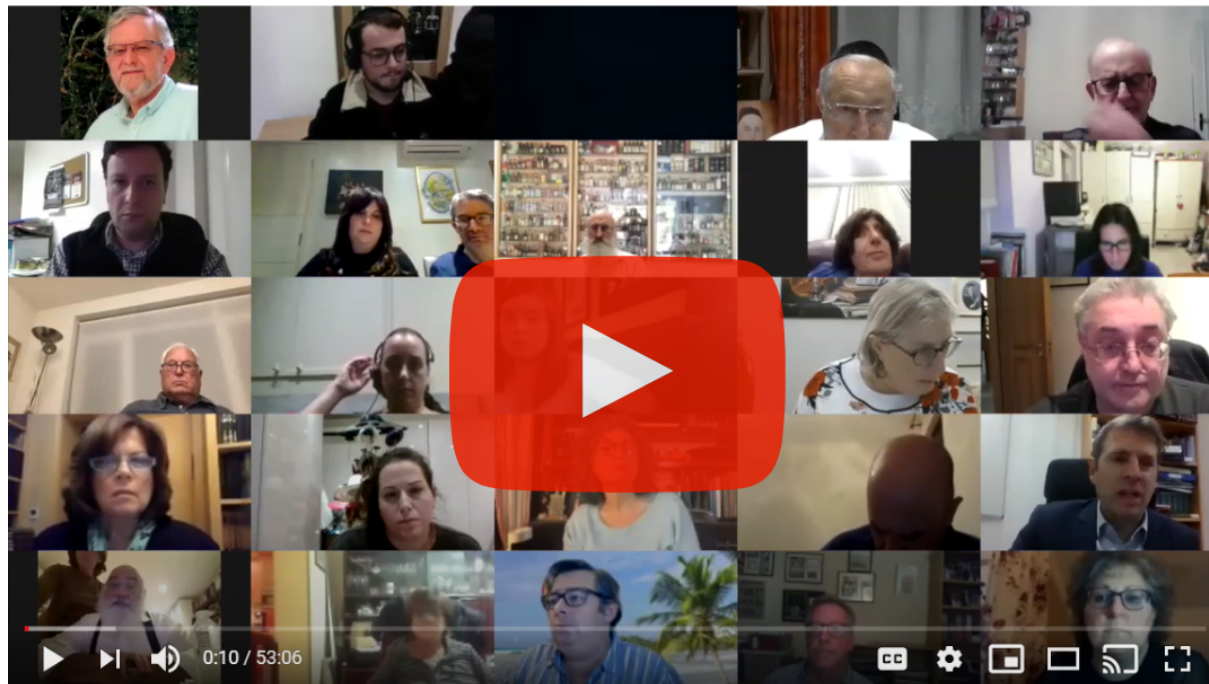
The Great UK Shabbaton @ Home Quiz with Etgar **LIVE**



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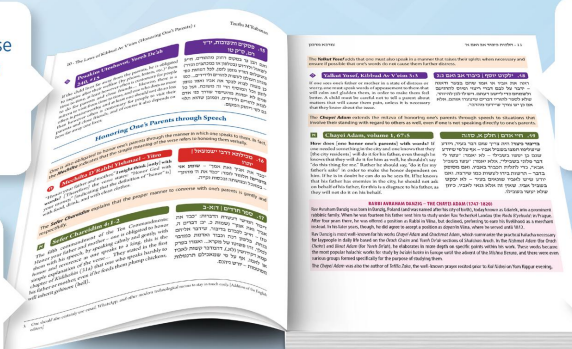
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