

Lech Lecha: The Courage to Be a Jew

פרשת לך לך

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Complete spoken class with Hebrew–English sources · October 19, 2026. Adapted from the November 5, 2003 recording.

Current events and the question of holy chutzpah

Before we begin tonight, we need to understand what is happening in Eretz Yisrael.

Going into this past Shabbos, a report put the number of yeshiva bochurim and avreichim in military prison at forty-nine. Think about that: young men, including married men, spending Shabbos behind bars, away from their families and their batei midrash.

The legal issue is their failure to comply with military draft requirements. But those protesting see something much deeper: an attempt to force young men away from a life devoted to Torah, and to make imprisonment the price of remaining committed to that life.

That helps explain the demonstrations we are seeing. On Sunday morning, protesters associated with Rav Tzvi Friedman's faction blocked Highway 4 near Gan Yavne. The immediate trigger was the imprisonment of two yeshiva students who had each received twenty-day sentences. Traffic was stopped, confrontations followed, and police eventually cleared the road.

We should distinguish the broader concern for Torah learners from the particular tactics of particular groups. The chareidi community is not one organization, and concern about the arrests does not mean everyone endorses every roadblock. But without understanding what the protesters believe is at stake—the future of Torah learning—we cannot understand why the response is so intense.

Now consider a second story.

Rav Dov Lior, a senior Religious Zionist rav in his nineties, issued a psak permitting Jews to take olives from Palestinian Arab groves in Yehudah and Shomron without the owners' permission. That is the issue plainly stated: may Jews go into those groves and harvest the Arabs' olives for themselves?

His reported reasoning is that the land remains the inheritance of the Jewish people, and that harvesting its produce can express Jewish possession of the land. Other rabbanim dispute that conclusion. They maintain that the prohibition against theft applies to a non-Jew's property as well, and that individuals cannot simply take property on the strength of a national claim to the land.

¹ Much of the central idea of this class was heard from Rabbi Shaul Gold over 25 years ago.

A police complaint has been filed, and authorities are examining whether to open a criminal investigation. We are not reporting that Rav Lior has been sentenced to jail. We are discussing the prospect of criminal proceedings against a senior rav over a published halachic ruling.

On Shabbos morning, we will examine the psak and the competing Torah arguments more carefully. Tonight, notice the larger question. The imprisoned Torah learners come from the chareidi world. Rav Lior comes from the Religious Zionist world. These are very different approaches to the state, yet both stories raise questions about what happens when religious conviction comes into conflict with state authority.

And now we come to our subject: chutzpah.

It takes extraordinary resolve to say, “Even prison will not make me abandon what I believe Hashem requires of me.” But determination alone cannot tell us whether a particular action is right. Someone else can be equally determined and be terribly mistaken.

When is standing firm holy chutzpah—azus d’kedushah? When does it become arrogance? When is a protest defending Torah, and how must Torah govern the way that protest is conducted? When does exercising authority serve the Jewish people, and when does power become deaf to Torah?

We cannot answer those questions merely by asking who is louder, who holds office, or who belongs to our camp. We have to ask what Torah demands.

That is the question we will take into Lech Lecha: how does Avraham Avinu teach us to possess the courage to stand against the world, while remaining completely subject to the will of Hashem?

News references and the dated prisoner count appear in the accompanying notes.

Introduction to the patriarchs

After having the soldiers with us this past week, I wanted to dedicate tonight’s learning in their honour and explore a question their visit brings into focus:

| What does it mean to have Jewish courage?

This week’s תורה portion is פרשת לך לך. We now come to that special time of the year where we’re introduced to our grandparents. And over the next few weeks, they’re especially very enjoyable weeks to get reacquainted with יעקב and אברהם יצחק.

I want to share with you a very famous principle in the תורה. We’ll give you a couple ideas, and then the class will focus on one specific application. And we’ll talk about a topic that’s near and dear to my heart, and I’m sure many other people’s hearts. We are introduced to אברהם אבינו in great detail. These are his two פרשיות לך לך, חיי שרה and וירא and לך לך, פרשיות וירא primarily as he goes through his ten tests. And initially when God tells him to go leave his birthplace, so he goes to the land of Canaan.

רמב"ן and the pattern for the children

In chapter 12, verse 6, it says, And אברהם passed through in the land, until the place of שכם, until a place called מורה אלון, and the Canaanites were still living in the land. And this is just one example of many, many examples of the תורה giving us seemingly unimportant details about the story of the

patriarchs. And as we read this, there's some very important things obviously there, and there's a lot of things that seem to be kind of detail work that we think would not be important.

Original source [1] בראשית יב, ו

וַיַּעֲבֵר אַבְרָם בְּאַרְץ עַד מְקוֹם שְׁכֵם עַד אֵלוֹן מוֹרָה; וְהַפְּנִיעָנִי אֶזְבָּרָץ.

אַבְרָם passed through the land as far as the place of שְׁכֵם, as far as אֵלוֹן מוֹרָה; the Canaanites were then in the land.

This is one example. Like, does it really matter where he stopped off when he came to the land of Israel? Is it really that important? It's important he passed his tests. And if he stopped in בית אל instead of שְׁכֵם, would it make a difference? So this is the nature of a lot of the details. And we're going to share with you a piece of רמב"ן from Nachmanides, where he lays down a fundamental principle, which you should use throughout the book of Genesis. And this is what he says.

And אַבְרָהָם passed through the land. רמב"ן says, I will tell you a principle by which you will understand all the coming portions of Scripture concerning אַבְרָהָם, יִצְחָק, and יַעֲקֹב. It is indeed a great matter which our rabbis mentioned briefly, saying, **whatever has happened to the patriarchs is a sign to the children.** מעשה אבות סימן לבנים. The things that happen to the patriarchs, the actions of the patriarchs, the things that happen to them. סימן is a sign for what will happen to the children. What does it mean?

רמב"ן explains. It is for this reason that the verses narrate at great length the account of the journeys of the patriarchs, the digging of the wells, and other events. Now someone may consider them unnecessary and of no useful purpose.

But in truth, they all serve as a lesson for the future.

When an event happens to any one of the three patriarchs, that which is decreed to happen to his children can be understood. Now this principle can be understood on many levels.

Original source [2] רמב"ן על בראשית יב, ו

אומר לך כלל תבין אותו בכל הפרשיות הבאות בענין אברהם יצחק ויעקב, והוא ענין גדול הזכירוהו רבותינו בדרך קצרה, ואמרו: כל מה שאירע לאבות סימן לבנים. ולכן יאריכו הכתובים בספור המסעות וחפירת הבארות ושאר המקרים, ויחשוב החושב בהם כאלו הם דברים מיותרים אין בהם תועלת. וכולם באים ללמד על העתיד, כי כאשר יבוא המקרה לנביא משלשת האבות יתבונן ממנו הדבר הנגזר לבא לזרעו.

I will state a principle for you to understand throughout all the coming passages concerning אַבְרָהָם, יִצְחָק, and יַעֲקֹב. It is a great matter that our Sages mentioned briefly when they said: **Everything that happened to the patriarchs is a sign for their descendants.** The verses therefore describe at length their journeys, the digging of wells, and other events. A person considering them might think these are unnecessary details with no purpose. **Yet they all teach about the future**, for when an event happens to a prophet from among the three patriarchs, he can discern from it what has been decreed to happen to his descendants.

The patriarchs lay the foundation

On one level, we look at אברהם, יצחק, and יעקב as our patriarchs. The reason they are called our patriarchs, they're the אבות, is because they are blazing a trail for the Jewish people. They are laying the foundation for the Jewish people. We know it's much more difficult to blaze a trail than to follow a trail that's already been cleared. And many of the things that אברהם does will lay the groundwork for what the Jews will do later as well.

It is for this reason that the Holy One caused אברהם to take possession of the land and symbolically did to him all that was destined to happen in the future to his children. Understand this principle. So, for example, over here in this passage, he goes to שכם. Why does he go to שכם? Because he sees in the future that there's going to be a terrible calamity happening in שכם. His children are going to go to war against the inhabitants of שכם, and there's going to be great risk and danger to them. And אברהם's praying now, because he sees in the future that there's going to be a great war in שכם.

Original source [2] רמב"ן על בראשית יב, ו

[...] ולפיכך החזיק הקב"ה את אברהם בארץ, ועשה לו דמיונות בכל העתיד להעשות בזרעו, והבן זה.

[...] Therefore the Holy One, blessed be He, established אברהם in the land and enacted for him representations of everything that would happen to his descendants in the future. Understand this.

Original source [3] רש"י על בראשית יב, ו

"עד מקום שכם" — להתפלל על בני יעקב כשיבאו להלחם בשכם.

"As far as the place of שכם": to pray for יעקב's sons when they would come to fight at שכם.

And much of what happens to אברהם is a synopsis of what Jewish history is. אברהם is in the land of Canaan. As soon as he gets there a few months later, there's a hunger in the land. The hunger in the land forces him to go down to Egypt. פרעה enriches him in order to gain favor. To marry שרה, whom פרעה abducts from אברהם. But at the end of the day, שרה is released unharmed, untouched. אברהם leaves Egypt a very wealthy man. Does this sound familiar? The Jewish people have to go down to Egypt a few hundred years later because there is no food in the land.

There is a hunger in the land. The Jews are captured, so to speak, are abducted. They become slaves to פרעה. And the מדרש tells us that in spite of the fact that the Jewish people were slaves, you would figure under normal circumstances, their moral standards would be forced to be compromised. And the מדרש tells us that the Jewish women guarded themselves from immorality in the merit of שרה, while recording one exception. And when the Jews left, they left with a great wealth. So אברהם blazed the trail. And if we go through the story of the patriarchs, we'll see how these stories happen again and again and again.

Supporting source [4] רמב"ן על בראשית יב, י

הנה אברהם ירד למצרים מפני הרעב לגור שם להחיות נפשו בימי הבצורת, והמצרים עשקו אותו חנם לקחת את אשתו, והקב"ה נקם נקמתם בנגעים גדולים והוציאו משם במקנה בכסף ובוזהב, וגם צוה עליו פרעה אנשים לשלחם. ורמז אליו כי בניו ירדו מצרים מפני הרעב לגור שם בארץ והמצרים ירעו להם ויקחו מהם הנשים כאשר אמר "וכל הבת תחיון", והקב"ה ינקום נקמתם בנגעים גדולים עד שיוציאם בכסף וזהב וצאן ובקר מקנה כבד מאד, והחזיקו בהם לשלחם מן הארץ. לא נפל דבר מכל מאורע האב שלא יהיה בבנים.

Abraham went down to Egypt because of the famine, to stay there and preserve his life during the drought. The Egyptians wronged him without cause by taking his wife. The Holy One, blessed be He, avenged their wrong with great plagues and brought him out from there with livestock, silver, and gold; Pharaoh also appointed men to send them away. This hinted to him that his descendants would go down to Egypt because of famine, to stay in that land. The Egyptians would mistreat them and take their women, as it says, "Every daughter you shall keep alive." The Holy One, blessed be He, would avenge their wrong with great plagues until He brought them out with silver, gold, flocks, cattle, and very substantial livestock; the Egyptians would press them to leave the land. No detail of what happened to the father failed to occur among his descendants.

Parallel source [5] ויקרא רבה לב, ה

ר' הונא בשם ר' חייא בר אבא אמר: שרה אמנו ירדה למצרים וגדרה עצמה מן הערוה, ונגדרו כל הנשים בזכותה. יוסף ירד למצרים וגדר עצמו מן הערוה, ונגדרו ישראל בזכותו. א"ר חייא בר אבא: כדאי היה גדור ערוה בעצמו שנגאלו ישראל על ידו.

ולא נמצא אחד מהם פרוץ בערוה. תדע לך שהיה כן: אחת היתה ופרסמה הכתוב, שנא' (ויקרא כד) "ושם אמו שלומית בת דברי למטה דן".

Rabbi Huna said in the name of Rabbi Hiyai bar Abba: Our mother Sarah went down to Egypt and fenced herself off from sexual transgression, and all the women were fenced off through her merit. Yosef went down to Egypt and fenced himself off from sexual transgression, and Israel was fenced off through his merit. Rabbi Hiyai bar Abba said: Guarding against sexual transgression alone was sufficient merit for Israel to be redeemed through it.

No one among them was found sexually unrestrained. Know that this was so: there was one woman, and Scripture made her known, as it says, "And his mother's name was Shalomit daughter of Dabari, of the tribe of Dan."

So that's one level as to what this means, that what happened to the patriarchs is a sign for the children. But it goes much deeper than that because whatever characteristics that we will ever be able to cultivate within ourselves, these are all characteristics that the patriarchs had to blaze as a trail as well.

Learning character from the patriarchs

For example, the whole aspect of kindness. How do you know how to do kindness? Who teaches you how to do kindness? So guess who taught us? אברהם. אברהם taught us how to do kindness. אברהם blazed the trail of the characteristic trait of kindness. And by blazing a trail, he wasn't impermeable to

mistakes. And he made certain mistakes with his kindness. Too kind to **ישמעאל**. **ישמעאל** didn't turn out so well because of that. But as he moved through his life, **אברהם** worked through and developed the perfection of what kindness is. Why do we need to know that?

Because if we want to be kind people, we can't just do what our hearts tell us to do. We can't just do what our emotions tell us to do. **אברהם** blazed the trail and methodically approached the whole issue until he got a PhD in it. And now if you want to know how to be a kind person, don't think you're going to be able to succeed, but just do what your heart wants. You want to know how to be a kind person, look at the stories of **אברהם**. And that's how the children will learn how to be kind people.

And the same for **יצחק** with the attribute of **גבורה**, of control. The same for **יעקב** with the attribute of mercy.

If we look at the patriarchs, we will be able to understand exactly what our spiritual potentials are and how to cultivate those spiritual potentials.

So that's why when we read these stories, the details will always have a lot to tell us. And if there's anything we want to know about what it means to be a Jew and how to be a Jew and how to succeed as a Jew, the patriarchs have already tackled it.

There's nothing that you and I are going to confront in our lives that the patriarchs to a great extent did not already tackle. And therefore, if we have issues, how do we deal with anti-Semitism? How do we deal with hostile non-Jewish enemies? **יעקב** in his confrontation with **עשו**, he taught us how to do this. How do you live when you have to deal with someone who wants to kill you? The whole idea of bribing people to get things done, right? To bribe the KGB. Well, **יעקב** had to bribe **עשו**. He was teaching us what are the ways in which to live through life, maximize life as Jews.

We don't know anything about trust in God, belief in God. **אברהם** teaches this to us. Everything is there. It's a **סימן לבנים**. They have cultivated this concept for us to be able to access. This is the concept. And that's why these **פרשיות** are nice. They're more than nice stories. They teach us all about our life as Jews. So with this in mind, we'd like to look at a few stories.

לוט in Egypt and the rescue of אברהם

And perhaps see if we can come to a greater understanding to one specific area that maybe afterwards will dovetail to a couple others. We go through **אברהם**'s personality for starters. Keeping this all in mind, let's see if there's perhaps some inconsistencies in **אברהם**'s life. **אברהם**, at once there is a hunger in the land of Canaan. He goes down to Egypt. And what's his approach to going down to Egypt? He goes down, he realizes **שרה**'s very beautiful. Doesn't want anybody to find out who **שרה** is because the Egyptians were quite a morally principled people.

You see, if they would never dare take a married woman against a husband's will. Never could do such a thing. It's a terribly immoral thing to do. So they got around it very simply by killing the husband. And now the woman was now a widow. So they did the nice thing to marry a widow. So **אברהם** was afraid that was going to happen when he was going to go down to Egypt. So he tells **שרה**, listen, say you're my sister and I'm your brother so they won't kill me. And I'll also put you in a box.

So we go through customs. Maybe they won't notice you. And I'll be able to avoid the whole issue. Well, they come to the border. They insist on opening up. And there's שרה. So right away, שרה gets taken to the palace. One, two, three. פרעה's trying to win אברהם's favor. But he enriches him. Well, אברהם really doesn't react in a very strong way. And פרעה decides to take the initiative on his own and try to be intimate with שרה. To which finally God comes to the rescue. Smites פרעה. And then פרעה turns back to אברהם and says, אברהם, I didn't know she was a married woman.

Original source [6] רש"י על בראשית יב, יד

"ויהי כבוא אברם מצרימה" — היה לו לומר כבואם מצרימה, אלא למד שהטמין אותה בתיבה, ועל ידי שתבעו את המכס פתחו וראו אותה.

"When אברם came to Egypt": It should have said "when they came to Egypt." Rather, this teaches that he concealed her in a chest; when the customs payment was demanded, they opened it and saw her.

Why didn't you tell me? And guess what? אברהם doesn't even say a word. If you look at the whole story of him being in Egypt, once he's in Egypt, there's no word or narrative of אברהם in the text. So if you look at this, and you have to say, **what kind of guy is אברהם from looking at this story?** He comes across as a very timid fellow. He doesn't take any initiative. He tries to cover up. But if he can't cover up, he can't stand up to פרעה.

And if it wasn't for God intervening, there would have been major problems. And when פרעה comes back and says, why didn't you tell me she was a married woman? With complaints. It doesn't say anything. Not a very outgoing character. Then we go another chapter further on. Two chapters in chapter 14. And there's a great world war. First world war. Between the kingdoms of Canaan, in the area of Sodom, and the kingdoms of the east in Iraq. The four kings against the five kings. It's a major war. And the four kings are victorious.

What does this have to do with אברהם? He's minding his own business, studying תורה in central Israel. Look, it's his business because his nephew לוט is living in Sodom. And he was taken captive. By the four kings. Someone tells אברהם about this. What does אברהם do? He tells his servant אליעזר, we've got to save his life. This is a terrible desecration of God's name. The two of us, let's go to war. And the two of them take on the Axis powers of evil. The מדרש tells us that the Axis power consists of 2.4 million soldiers. And him and אליעזר go to battle.

Original source [7] בראשית יד, יד-טז; רש"י על בראשית יד, יד

וַיִּשְׁמַע אַבְרָם כִּי נִשְׁבָּה אַחִיו; וַיִּרְק אֶת־חֲנִיכָיו יְלִידֵי בֵיתוֹ שְׂמֹנֶה עָשָׂר וּשְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת, וַיִּרְדֹּף עַד־דָּן. וַיַּחֲלֶק עֲלֵיהֶם לִילָה הוּא וְעַבְדּוֹ וַיִּכֶם; וַיִּרְדֹּפֶם עַד־חֹבֶבָה אֲשֶׁר מִשְׁמָאל לְדָמֶשֶׁק. וַיָּשָׁב אֶת כָּל־הָרֶכֶשׁ; וְגַם אֶת־לוֹט אַחִיו וְרָכְשׁוֹ הָשִׁיב, וְגַם אֶת־הַנָּשִׁים וְאֶת־הָעָם.

רש"י: "שמונה עשר וגו'" — רבותינו אמרו אליעזר לבדו היה, והוא מנין גימטריא של שמו. "עד דן" — שם תשש כחו, שראה שעתידין בניו להעמיד שם עגל.

אברהם heard that his kinsman had been captured. He mustered his trained men, born in his household, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued as far as דן. He and his servants divided against them by night and struck them, pursuing them as far as חובבה, north of Damascus. He

brought back all the possessions, and also brought back his kinsman לוט and his possessions, along with the women and the people.

רש"י: "Eighteen," etc.: Our Sages said it was אלעזר alone, and this is the numerical value of his name. "As far as דן": There his strength weakened, because he saw that his descendants would set up an idolatrous calf there.

Source [8] מדרש

The opposing army numbered 2.4 million soldiers, as cited from a מדרש.

And now they go to battle, but they win. And they chase the four countries all the way up to the northern border of Israel, chasing them out of the country. Which, is this the same אברהם we learned about two chapters before? I mean, for his wife he does nothing? And for the nephew, the no-good nephew who only gave him problems and headaches, he's risking his life? What's going on over here? So if you're trying to learn, how do you react when a relative is abducted? What's your response? Inconsistent.

Go to war. I don't know what to do. What do you do? Well, if it's your wife, you do nothing. But if it's your nephew, you go to war. I mean, what can I learn from that? It's very hard. It's all right. So we must be able to learn something. Let's look at another couple stories.

עשו and לבן with יעקב

יעקב אבינו, when he's in the household, he has to run away from home. He has to spend 20 years in the household. His uncle, לבן. He spends 20 years. And how would you characterize יעקב? Well, he goes there penniless. לבן thought there was a lot of money with him. With him there wasn't. So לבן lets him work for a month for nothing. He says, you know, tell me what your wages are. We know the famous story. He says, well, I'd like to marry רחל. Fine. You worked for me for seven years. No problem.

And we know what happens. At the wedding night, לבן switches רחל for לאה. And the next morning, יעקב is too late. He got fooled. He says, what kind of business is this? לבן says, you know, don't worry about it. We'll give you רחל to work for me another seven years. Okay. And I don't know how you would react, but I wouldn't have reacted that way. I say, what's going on? You know, give me right now. This other one, you know what I want with her. And then when the seven years are up, he wants to leave.

And לבן says, no, I don't want you to leave. Why don't you stay? Okay. And then לבן keeps swindling him and cheating him, switching the wages a hundred times. יעקב doesn't stand his ground at all. And thank God, God did a lot of miracles and let the spotted and speckled and the whole story of the sheep and everything worked out for יעקב. In spite of יעקב's again, not being a very tough businessman attitude. Without God, the guy would have been lost. נעבעך. Poor guy. He comes back home. He finds out that לבן is trying to have a war with him.

Original source [9] רש"י על בראשית לא, ז

"עשרת מנים" — אין מונים פחות מעשרה. "מנים" — לשון סכום כלל החשבון, והן עשירות; למדנו שהחליף תנאו מאה פעמים.

"Ten reckonings": A reckoning is no less than ten. "Reckonings" means the total of a count, and these are groups of ten. We learn that he changed the terms one hundred times.

When it was time to leave לבן's home, how does he leave? Does he tell him, לבן, I've been here 20 years, nice to see you. You know, God has told me I have to leave. I got a message from God that's to leave. Not exactly. What does he do? He waits to לבן and goes out of town and they sneak out like a bunch of thieves. They don't tell anybody.

They just run. And then when לבן finds out, he says, chase after them. And he catches up with them and he gives יעקב a berating for such a חוצפה for leaving. And he searches יעקב's tents because he claims he stole his idols. And יעקב just, you know, a real neb. But then, short while later, when עשו is coming out to greet him and עשו is contemplating, we're not sure is he going to go to war or not. He's not sure what עשו's intentions are. He's got 400 soldiers. Is it for peace or for war?

יעקב turns into a warrior. He's a general. He's setting up the camps. He's splitting up the camps. He's preparing for war. And the commentary says, and if עשו wants to fight, he's going to have to fight me first. And the night before as he's preparing, an angel from עשו comes, a super power, super transcendental being, has a war with יעקב and יעקב holds his ground and יעקב's tough and the angel says, please let me go. יעקב says, no, I'm not going to let you go until you bless me. **What happened to this guy?** So again, how are you supposed to read him?

Original source [10] רש"י על בראשית לב, ט

"והיה המחנה הנשאר לפליטה" — על כרחו, כי אלחם עמו. התקין עצמו לשלשה דברים: לדורון, לתפלה ולמלחמה. לדורון — "ותעבור המנחה על פניו"; לתפלה — "אלהי אבי אברהם"; למלחמה — "והיה המחנה הנשאר לפליטה".

"The remaining camp shall escape": Against עשו's will, for I will fight him. יעקב prepared himself for three things: a gift, prayer, and war. For the gift: "The present passed ahead of him"; for prayer: "God of my father אברהם"; for war: "The remaining camp shall escape."

What am I supposed to learn when he's confronting one guy, the timid fellow, and the other guy, he's a monster. He's a soldier. And one last story.

The brothers in שכם and Egypt

And let's talk about יעקב's sons. We know when יעקב comes to the land of Israel, he is in the city, he buys a portion of land in the city of שכם. And unfortunately, his daughter דינה was taken captive by the mayor's son. And she's taken captive and abducted and she's compromised. And the brothers find out about this. They say, what? The Arabs are up to their tricks again? Closure. No closure. שמעון and לוי walk in to a house-to-house search.

They first met with them and they said, you're going to have to get circumcised and everybody in the city. They get circumcised and on the third day when they're the weakest, they come in, house to

house, kills them all out. One, two, three. That'll teach you not to mess with the Jewish people. Right? Then, later on, when יוסף is pretending to be צפנת פענח, the viceroy of Egypt, and the brothers come down to Egypt to buy some food, יוסף is giving him a hard time.

You're spies. No, we're not. We promise we're not. We're just coming to buy food. No, you're spies. Oh, no, we're not. I don't believe you. I'm taking one of your brothers, שמעון. I'm locking him in jail. You can't come back until you bring בנימין up. Yes, sir. Whatever you say, sir. And then they go back home, and they say, yeah, daddy, we got to bring בנימין. I said, no, no, and I can't bring him. I said, oh, well, we can't go down. He's a mean guy. He said, he's going to kill us if we come back. We can't go down. They wait. They don't go.

Their food is all used up. They don't have a choice. They got to go down. They bring בנימין down. And you know the story. He releases him. Fine. Then he puts the goblet in בנימין's sack. They go out. He runs after them. Trumps up the charge. Frames up בנימין. Takes him back. They know it's a frame up. And what do they do? Oh, we've sinned. You know, we're finished. We're slaves. Whatever you do, you do. We're finished. It's incredible Jewish inconsistency. Maybe that's what we learned from them. I don't know. But how do we understand all these stories? What do you do when people attack you?

What do you do if someone takes your nephew? What do you do if someone takes your brother? They rape your sister. You kill out of the city. They take your brother. You act like a bunch of wimps. There's totally no way to read what's going on. They have totally no way of understanding how to learn anything from the patriarchs.

נון and the missing אשרי

So that's the issue we want to solve. And we're going to learn a piece of Talmud, a רש"י, and a piece of פרקי אבות. We'll start with the first source. It's the Talmud and ברכות. And quite often the Talmud will take a verse from the prophets and will interpret them. So the topic for discussion in the Tractate ברכות is the prayer of the אשרי.

That we say three times a day. We know what makes אשרי unique is that every verse in the אשרי, the first letter follows the alphabet. אלה, גימל, בית, אלה, all the letters. But the Talmud asks a question. Why is there no נון in אשרי? אשרי, the נון, we have מם, and it jumps to סמך. And there's no נון. So גמרא answers:

Because the נון has a verse that represents the downfall. Now they're using a euphemistic term. They call it the enemy of Israel. It really means Israel. We don't want to say anything bad to the Jews. So we say it's to the non-Jews, to the enemies of the Jews. The downfall of the enemy of the Jews. But it really means the Jews. The נון has in it a פסוק, a verse, that represents the downfall for the Jews. What is this verse? דכתיב נפלה. She has fallen. לא תוסיף קום בתולת ישראל. The virgin Israel, the Jewish people, will no longer get up.

That's a pretty sad verse. It's a verse of tragedy. The Jewish people have fallen. We're never going to get up again. That's not the kind of verse that King דוד is going to put into his song. He's going to skip it. The thing we need to know is that נון is not a great פסוק for the Jewish people.

גמרא goes on. It says, in the west. Now remember, this is the תלמוד בבלי, the Babylonian בבלי, which is in Iraq. So to the west of Iraq is Israel. So there were two great schools and academies for the Jewish

people after the destruction of the temple. And they were in Babylonia and Israel. Two great schools and academies of learning. So in Israel, the academies in Israel, they learned the verse a little bit different. They would explain the verse like this. She has fallen, but will no longer fall.

Get up, O virgin Israel. Meaning, look at the initial verse. It's where you put the comma. The first one said, The virgin Israel will not get up anymore. The rabbis in Israel read it like this. Falling, she will no longer continue to do. She will no longer continue to fall. Rather, Get up, virgin Israel. Now, here's a classic example of two different schools of thought. Which one's right? Which one's wrong? The answer is, they're both right. How can they both be right? Very simple.

Original source [11] ברכות ד ע"ב; עמוס ה, ב

אמר רבי יוחנן: מפני מה לא נאמר נו"ן באשרי? מפני שיש בה מפלתן של שונאי ישראל, דכתיב: "נפלה לא תוסיף קום בתולת ישראל". במערבא מתרצי לה הכי: נפלה ולא תוסיף לנפול עוד; קום בתולת ישראל. אמר רב נחמן בר יצחק: אפילו הכי חזר דוד וסמכן ברוח הקודש, שנאמר: "סומך ה' לכל הנופלים".

Rabbi יוחנן said: Why is there no נו"ן in אשרי? Because it contains the downfall of the enemies of Israel, as it is written: "She has fallen; she will not rise again, the virgin of Israel." In the West they interpreted it this way: "**She has fallen and will fall no more; arise, virgin of Israel!**" רב נחמן בר יצחק said: Even so, דוד returned and supported them through divine inspiration, saying: "The שם supports all who fall."

Exile and the rebuilding of Jewish communities

It depends where you're learning it. The first school was the school of Babylonia. The second school was the school of Israel. So how do Jews in the diaspora understand this פסוק? The Jews in the diaspora learned the פסוק like this. They say like this, A Jewish community that has been established in חוץ לארץ, outside of ארץ ישראל, when that falls, it will never be rebuilt again. Because that's not our land. That's not our connection. And therefore, the verse means, the Jews, the first rabbis, the Jews in Babylonia, say, נפלה, if she falls.

Jews will never get up again. And historically, you see they were absolutely right. Spain, there were millions of Jews, hundreds of thousands of Jews in Spain, through the 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th century. Lots of Jews, a hub of Jewish activity. Great Jewish philosophers. Rabbi עראמה, incredible rabbis, incredible scholars. And what happens? You expel the Jews. You see any great ישיבות in Spain lately? I mean, you may have a couple Jews here and there, but it is not exactly a core of Jewish communal life. Right? You go back to Europe, 70 years ago, for hundreds of years, Poland, Hungary, millions of Jews.

It was the center of all Judaism. After Spain, that was the next stop, Eastern Europe, that was the spot. And what happened after World War II? They're all cleaned out. All you got left about Judaism is still anti-Semitism, but not too many Jews. That's all that was left. Jews will never come back there. The Jewish communities there are finished. They'll never come back again. And as we look at any place where the Jews lived, I mean, have you seen any great ישיבות in Iraq lately? And that's where the תלמוד בבלי, the Babylonian Talmud was written.

There's never as great scholarship as there was that time. Right? רש"י lived in France. Great rabbis in France. I mean, come on. Besides some good kosher wine, what does France really have to offer? Any Jews there are terrified for their lives.

So the principle that the rabbis in Babylonia understood that the Jew in חוץ לארץ, once it is נפלה, once you fall, you'll never get up again.

Now, however, what about in ארץ ישראל, the rabbis in Israel, after the temple was destroyed for the second time, the rabbis in Israel say, She falls and will never continue to fall again. Get up again. Israel was destroyed and rebuilt, destroyed a second time and rebuilt. But now the rabbi says, when it's going to be built up again, it'll never be destroyed. So the פסוק is true. Two ways. Two sides of the coin. In חוץ לארץ, when the hub's destroyed, it'll never get up. In ארץ ישראל, even if the hub is destroyed, it'll get up again and it'll never be destroyed again.

That's what they say. Interesting way of looking at the difference between ארץ ישראל and outside ארץ ישראל.

רש"י and the five brothers before Pharaoh

Let's look at one more רש"י. Let's give you the background here. יוסף is taking his brothers down to Egypt to meet פרעה. He does not want to make the best impression on פרעה from his brothers. Why? Because if his brothers look like they're strong strapping fellows, פרעה will probably enlist them in his army. And that's not the best thing for a religious Jew to be in the Egyptian army. So he's going to take some of his brothers and he's going to take the ones that look like weaklings, like שלעפערס. So that's where we're at.

It says, He brings part of his brothers. So רש"י says, From the least among them in terms of strength. He took the weakest ones. They don't look so strong. Because if פרעה would see that they were mighty, he'd make them men of war. He names the five weaker ones: יששכר, לוי, שמעון, ראובן, and בנימין. Now how do we know that those are the weaker ones? The proof is, because later on in the תורה, at the end of the book of the תורה, when משה blesses all the tribes, it's interesting, but some of the tribes, he'll refer to their name twice, which is really not necessary.

Just say the name once. So this rabbi says, Well, the ones that he named twice, those are the stronger ones. Because we can infer that the other ones are not the stronger ones, and those are the ones that יוסף brought to פרעה. Those are the ones that משה did not repeat their names. Those are the weaker ones. כשבִּרְכָם, when he blessed them, but the stronger ones, כפל, he repeated their words. He gives examples. For example, וזאת ליהודה, this is the יהודה, השם listened to the voice of יהודה.

Ah, יהודה's name is mentioned twice, he must be a strong one. And he goes on, the same with גד, the same with נפתלי, the same with דן, the same with אשר, the same with זבולון. So those were the stronger ones.

And the other ones, those were the weak ones, and those are the ones that יוסף brought. So where's רש"י's source? רש"י says, וזהו לשון בראשית רבה. This is the expression of the מדרש, which is called the בראשית רבה. Okay, so source. Now רש"י says four words that are totally out of character for those who are familiar with studying רש"י. רש"י doesn't say more than he needs to say. He told you the idea,

he answered the question, he gave you the source, right? Now look what he says now. שהוא אגדת ארץ ישראל. The מדרש רבה happens to be the אגדה that is taught in the land of Israel.

Now why do I need that reference? I mean, anyone who studies רש"י, if you know anything about רש"י, and you're already well into Genesis, he's cited מדרש רבה many times already. Now he says, and by the way, the מדרש רבה was written in the land of Israel. Who cares? You don't have to tell me that. Keep that in mind for a minute. Now let's go on. but in our Babylonian Talmud, it says different. We have found that those, they have a different opinion.

Those whose names משה repeated, those were the weak ones. Because they were weak, he had to repeat their names. That's the way they look at it. How do you look at it? They were strong and because they're strong they deserve more recognition to match their power? Or no, they're weak guys and they need to be built up so he repeats their names. Two ways to look at it. Right? So the ones that were repeated were the weak ones. The ones who weren't repeated, they're not the weak ones.

In the בבל's list, the five are דן, גר, זבולון, אשר, and נפתלי. יהודה is a separate case; רש"י explains that the repetition of his name has another reason.

Original source [12] רש"י על בראשית מז, ב

ומקצה אחיו — מן הפחותים שבהם לגבורה, שאין נראים גבורים, שאם יראה אותם גבורים יעשה אותם אנשי מלחמתו. ואלה הם: ראובן, שמעון, לוי, יששכר ובנימין, אותם שלא כפל משה שמותם כשברכם. אבל שמות הגבורים כפל: וזאת ליהודה ויאמר שמע ה' קול יהודה; ולגר אמר ברוך מרחיב גר; ולנפתלי אמר נפתלי; ולדן אמר דן; וכן לזבולון וכן לאשר. זהו לשון ב"ר, שהיא אגדת א"י. אבל בגמרא בבלי שלנו (ב"ק צב) מצינו שאותם שכפל משה שמותם הם החלשים, ואותן הביא לפני פרעה. ויהודה שהוכפל שמו לא הוכפל משום חלשות, אלא טעם יש בדבר כדאיתא בב"ק. ובברייתא דספרי שנינו בזאת הברכה כמו בגמרא שלנו.

“And from among his brothers”: From those among them who were less powerful, who did not look like mighty warriors; for if Pharaoh saw them as mighty warriors, he would make them his soldiers. These were ראובן, שמעון, לוי, יששכר, and בנימין, whose names משה did not repeat when he blessed them. He did, however, repeat the names of the mighty ones: “And this for יהודה”; and he said: Hear, Lord, the voice of יהודה”; “And of גר he said: Blessed is He who enlarges גר”; “And of נפתלי he said: נפתלי”; “And of דן he said: דן”; and similarly for זבולון and for אשר. This is the wording of בראשית רבה, which is an aggadic work of the Land of Israel. But in our Babylonian גמרא, 92 בבא קמא, we find that those whose names משה repeated were the weak ones, and those were the ones he brought before Pharaoh. As for יהודה, whose name was repeated, it was not repeated because of weakness; rather, there is a reason for it, as stated in בבא קמא. In the ספרי of ברייתא, we learned the same as in our גמרא.

Who needs strengthening

So, again, seems to be a debate between two schools of thought. What does the repeating of the names mean? Now, you're going to ask, well, listen, only one can be right. Right? But obviously, it goes much deeper than that again. And this is why רש"י goes out of his way to say that the מדרש רבה, this is the אגדה of ארץ ישראל. Again, he's focusing on something that we saw more before. There's a difference of approach to understanding something if you live in ארץ ישראל or if you live outside of ארץ ישראל.

רש"י is saying from the commentaries of the rabbis who live in Israel, they're saying in ארץ ישראל, it's a question, the question's a philosophical question, a pragmatic question.

Who needs more strengthening? The weak or the strong?

That's a good question to ask. You've got weak people, you've got strong people. If you only can strengthen one, which should you strengthen? The answer is, so the rabbis in ארץ ישראל said, you know we've got to strengthen, you've got to strengthen the strong ones because the strong ones have to build up the land. And if you have good leadership and strong leadership in your own country, then you know what? The others will be taken care of. And those are the ones who need the blessings because if the leaders are strong, the Jewish leaders will take care of their Jewish brothers who are weak and they'll help them out.

But if the leaders aren't strong, we're going to have nothing. So therefore the rabbis there say, who gets strengthened, the brothers who are strong get strengthened. However, the rabbis in Babylonia, if we live in the exile, in חוץ לארץ, who is more at risk? Is it the Jew who is strong, spiritually strong? Or is it the Jew who is spiritually weak? Where is the greater danger of assimilation? It's not a question of building up a Jewish national homeland in the city of Toronto, but rather in Toronto it's a question of Jewish survival. So who are the ones that are going to need strengthening?

Is it the very religious Orthodox Jew who is strong in his beliefs of Judaism? Or is it the secular Jew who couldn't care less? Who needs the strengthening? So that's what they say. The weaker brothers needed the strengthening. What do we mean? In בבל, in Babylonia, who needs the strengthening? The weaker ones need the strengthening. And that's why they have to get the special blessing. But the מדרש that was in ארץ ישראל, that is looking at everything from an Israeli perspective, is saying there's a very strong need to give the strength to the strong ones, because they're going to have to build up the land.

And the weak ones will follow soon. So that's an incredible lesson again, we have to realize. And the logic is very simple, because when you're in Israel, it's your own manifest destiny, and it's all up to you, what you build is what you're going to get, and the strong ones have to be strong. The stronger they are, the greater building that can take place, and the weaker ones will שלעפ them along. But the strong Jew will take care of himself. It's a question of survival. Survival of the weak need help. **Every Jew counts.** So we'll follow the trend that is happening here.

יהודה בן תימא on boldness

Now we come to the last piece, and this will now unlock everything for us. Such a beautiful, beautiful piece now. פרקי אבות. Ethics of the Fathers. יהודה בן תימא אומר. הוי עז, the son of תימא says, be as bold as the leopard, וקל כנשר and as light as the eagle, רץ כצבי, fleet-footed as the deer, כגבור כנמר as strong as a lion, do the will of your Father in heaven. This is such an important saying that this is the first lines of the Code of Jewish Law.

Original source [13] משנה אבות ה, כ

יהודה בן תימא אומר: הוי עז כנמר, וקל כנשר, ורץ כצבי, וגבור כארי, לעשות רצון אביך שבשמים. הוא היה אומר: עז פנים לגיהנם, ובשת פנים לגן עדן. יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו, שתבנה עירך במהרה בימינו, ותן חלקנו בתורתך.

says: **Be bold as a leopard**, light as an eagle, swift as a deer, and mighty as a lion, to do the will of your Father in heaven. He used to say: The brazen-faced are destined for גיהנום, and the shamefaced for גן עדן. May it be Your will, השם our God, that You rebuild Your city speedily in our days, **and grant us our portion in Your תורה**.

The Code of Jewish Law borrows this statement from the Rabbi of the Talmud, and this is what all of Jewish law, תפילין, אורח חיים, the laws of daily living, getting up, washing your hands, praying, מצוות are שבת. Oh, it starts off, be as bold as the leopard, right? There's an Uncle Moishy song that you really feel it when you hear it, right? You come out in the morning like a lion. You get up to דאון, roar!! Roar! Right? Roar at the שול!

Original source [14] טור אורח חיים א; שולחן ערוך אורח חיים א, א

והתחיל ב"עז כנמר", לפי שהוא כלל גדול בעבודת הבורא יתברך. לפי שפעמים אדם חפץ לעשות מצוה, ונמנע מלעשותה מפני בני אדם שמלעיגין עליו; ועל כן הזהיר שתעז פניך כנגד המלעיגין, ואל תימנע מלעשות המצוה.

שולחן ערוך: יתגבר כארי לעמוד בבוקר לעבודת בוראו, שיהא הוא מעורר השחר. רמ"א: ולא יתבייש מפני בני אדם המלעיגים עליו בעבודת השי"ת.

He began with "bold as a leopard" because this is a great principle in serving the blessed Creator: Sometimes a person wants to perform a מצווה but refrains because people mock him. He therefore warned you to show resolve in the face of the mockers and **not refrain from performing the מצווה**.

שולחן ערוך: One should strengthen oneself like a lion to rise in the morning for the service of one's Creator, so that one awakens the dawn.

השם: One should not be ashamed before people who mock one's service of השם.

The unexpected prayer at the end of the משנה

Some of you may remember this question from our summer פרקי אבות class. Tonight, we'll explore another approach from the יעב"ץ. Let's follow it through together.

That's what it's all about! That's what needs to be a Jew! Okay, fine. Let's keep reading. He also said, The brazen go to hell. But those who are not brazen, those who are shamefaced, humble, they'll go to paradise. That's a nice statement. And now, here is a statement that just makes no sense. May it be the will of our God and the God of our forefathers, that he should build the temple speedily in our days. He should give us a portion in your תורה.

What does it sound like? It sounds like the end of a speech that a rabbi would make. I give a class for an hour and I end up יהי רצון it should be God's will. The problem is, we're learning פרקי אבות. פרקי אבות is a book of ethical principles. Yeah, yeah. But, for example, there's another משנה. Famous משנה, right? הלל אומר: it should be like the students of אהרן. Run after peace, chase after peace, love people, bring them close to תורה, and God, may you quickly build the temple speedily in our days.

No, it doesn't say that. It doesn't say that anywhere in פרקי אבות. It's not, you know, we don't end up with sermonic expressions. What's the sermon doing in the end? What does it have to do? You said two very nice things. Be as bold as a leopard. Very nice. Brazen people have problems. It sounds very nice. So what are you telling me now? Hey, you know, משיח should come. Oh, man, fine. And it's a big wonder.

Rabbi יעקב עמדין explains the prayer

So this is not my question. This is a question from the יעב"ץ, Rabbi עמדין, a great, great scholar of 300 years ago. And we'll read to you a little bit here. He says like this: This statement is screaming out and saying, explain me. What is this concept of a request and a prayer here? We don't find any example like this anywhere in the Talmud. What's the nature of it here? It's a great wonder, and even a bigger wonder.

The יעב"ץ, Rabbi עמדין (1697–1776), lived in Altona, then under Danish rule and now part of Hamburg. His commentary appeared in עץ אבות in 1751. He wrote within a Jewish world rich in תורה learning but dependent on the protection of rulers, with most Jews dispersed and Jewish communities also living in Ottoman ארץ ישראל. The bitter dispute with רבי יהונתן אייבשיץ became public in 1751, over the יעב"ץ's accusation concerning Sabbatean teachings in amulets. Elsewhere in this chapter he explicitly discusses Sabbatean claims. That is relevant background, but we cannot identify this comment as a response to the dispute or establish when it was composed.

Historical references: [Publication history, p. 7](#); [Altona](#); [The 1751 dispute](#); [Related comment](#).

Why didn't any of the commentaries ask this question? You have the famous commentaries on the פרקי אבות. You have the ברטנורא, you have רש"י, you have Maimonides. רבינו יונה. All the classical commentaries right around the page. And they always ask, They don't ask a thing. He says, I don't understand why they don't ask it a question. I humbly submit to you, this is really a thing to think about. Now that we live in the exile, we are an exiled people.

Our boldness and our might have been negated. They're gone. And our heart and our courage have been taken away from us. The Jew has lost his boldness. Why?

Because the place is the cause.

Because if a person wanders from his place, The person in exile, his heart is not with it. In other words, a Jew who lives in חוץ לארץ is a Jew without any שטאָלץ. You know, I don't know how you translate, but it's... You don't have that boldness. You don't have that... It's not there. It's not my place. What am I going to build already?

I'm a stranger. What am I going to get from this? I mean, how bold are we about our Judaism? לכן, therefore, ביקש, he asked, יהי רצון, God, may be your will, שתבנה עירך, that your city will be rebuilt.

ותשוב לנו, and it should return to us, מידת עזות, the attribute of brazenness, Not brazenness, but the attribute of boldness, Should come back. הנצרכת בשלמות, Which is necessary for a Jew to be a wholesome Jew. A Jew who isn't bold is an incomplete Jew, Says the יעב"ץ.

When I speak of the incompleteness of גלות, I mean what is missing from the fullness of our national and spiritual life. That does not deny the extraordinary faith and courage Jews have shown in גלות.

Original source [15] יעב"ץ, לחם שמים על פרקי אבות ה':כ"ג, ד"ה יהר"צ כו'

The author's own כו' abbreviations are retained. The digitized text reads להיוה, evidently for להיות; its spelling is retained here.

יהר"צ כו'. זה המאמר צווח ואומר דרשני. כי מה ענין בקשה ותחנה במשנה. שלא מצינו דוגמתו. אף כי נראה לכאורה אין לו קשר ענין למה שקדם. ומה טיבה כאן. באמת פלא גדול הוא. והיותר נפלא איך המפרשים שטרחו כמה פעמים בפטומי מילי. בהרבה מקומות הבלתי צריכים באור. ומדוע בכאן שתקו לא אמרו בו דבר.

"May it be Your will," etc. This statement cries out, "Interpret me!" For what place does a request and supplication have in the משנה? We have found nothing else like it. Moreover, at first sight it seems to have no connection with what precedes it. What is it doing here? It is truly a great wonder. Still more astonishing is that the commentators, who have so often taken the trouble to indulge in verbal padding in many places that need no explanation, have remained silent here and said nothing about it.

ואני בעניי אמרתי הלא דבר הוא שאי אפשר לו מבלי ביאור. ואחזה אנכי אשית לבי. שחוזר לענין של מעלה שצוה מתחלה להיות עז כנמר כו'. ועכשיו בגלותנו בטל ממנו העוז והעצמה. וניטל הלב ואמצו. כי המקום גורם. כן איש נודד ממקומו. הגולה לבו בל עמו. וכדאיתא גבי סבי דבי אתונא. חזי דמיענו אייתי מעפרייהו שדי עלייהו. אקשו לאפי מלכא הנה שארץ נכריה מכנעת לב האדם. ואם הוא אמיץ לבו בגבורים (וכן במשל הדיוט כלבא בלא אתריה שב שני לא נבח) וארץ מולדתו של אדם. חוזר ומקנה לו מדת העזות (וכן מצינו ברמי בר תמרי. אי הוית באתרי. הוינא מחוינא לך חורפאי)

In my modest judgment, I said: surely this is something that cannot be left unexplained. I considered it and took it to heart: it returns to the preceding matter, where he first commanded us to be bold as a leopard, etc. But now, in our exile, our strength and might have fallen away, and the heart and its courage have been taken from us. **For place makes the difference.** Thus, "a man who wanders from his place": the exile's heart is not with him. As we find concerning the elders of Athens: he saw that they were subdued; he brought some of their own soil and cast it upon them, and they became defiant before the king. Thus a foreign land subdues a person's heart, even if he is stouthearted among the mighty. (Likewise the common proverb: a dog away from its own place does not bark for seven years.) A person's native land, however, restores to him the quality of boldness. (Similarly, we find with רמי בר תמרי: "If you were in my place, I would show you my sharpness.")

לכך בקש יהר"צ שתבנה עירך כו'. ותשוב לנו מדת עזות הנצרכת. בשלמות. אך יש לחוש פן יצא שכרה בהפסדה. שקרוב להפסד במדה זו מחמת שמוכנים יותר לחטוא. מתוך העזות. כמו שאירע בהיות ישראל על אדמתן מלפנים. שמרוב טובה בעטו. והיתה להם העזות לאבן נגף לצור מכשול. להעזיז פניהם כלפי מעלה.

Therefore he prayed, "May it be Your will that You rebuild Your city," etc., **so that the quality of boldness we need will return to us in its fullness.** But there is reason to fear that its benefit may be canceled out by the harm it brings. This quality readily brings harm, since boldness makes people more disposed to sin. So it happened formerly, when Israel were on their own soil: from an abundance of good they rebelled, and their boldness became a stumbling stone and an obstructing rock, making them brazen toward Heaven.

לזה אמר אחריו ותן חלקנו בתורתך. ר"ל הרי בראת תורה תבלין להתיש כח העזות שבהם לשבור לבם ולהכניעו כמ"ש רז"ל בפא"צ לא נתנה תורה לישראל אלא מפני שהן עזין. שאלמלא כן אין אומה ולשון יכולה לעמוד בפניהם. על כן כשתתן חלקנו בתורתך. כבר אנו נשמרים מרעת מדת העזות. שנמצאת בנו ביותר בא". ולא נשתמש בו עוד כי אם לעשות רצונך.

For this reason he said afterward, "And grant us our share in Your תורה." That is: You have created תורה as a remedy, to weaken the force of their boldness, to break and subdue their heart. As our Sages said in the chapter אין צדין: "תורה was given to Israel only because they are bold"; otherwise, no nation or people could stand against them. Thus, when You grant us our share in Your תורה, we are already protected from the harmful side of the quality of boldness, which is especially strong in us in ארץ ישראל. **We will then use it only to do Your will.**

ובזה האופן נשיג התועלת המבוקש. ונמלט מרעתו. אע"פ שתסור מעלינו עול רציעת הגלות. ולא יכניע אותנו טבע ארץ אחרת כאמור. כי מ"מ הלא די בתורה המתשת כח העזות לטוב לנו. וזה כפתור ופרח בלי ספק. ועמ"ש בבית יעקב דמוסף השבת (דשס"א):

In this way we will obtain the desired benefit and escape its harm, even though the yoke of exile's servitude is removed from us and the nature of a foreign land no longer subdues us, as stated above. For the תורה, which weakens the force of boldness for our good, is nevertheless sufficient. This is unquestionably a finely fitting explanation. See also what I wrote in בית יעקב, concerning the Sabbath מוסף prayer, folio 366a.

Immediately preceding comment, 5:20:2 (excerpt) [\[text\]](#)

אפי' לעבודת השי"ת. הענוה משובחת. והצנע לכת. ולא אמר הוי עז אלא לענין אומץ הלב בלבד.

Even in serving God, **humility is praiseworthy**, and one should walk modestly. "Be bold" refers **only to courage of heart.**

Closeness to השם and the courage to act

The חסד לאברהם, Rabbi אברהם אזולאי [c. 1570–1643; born in Fez, Morocco; later lived in חברון], explains that השם is with us wherever we live. But outside ארץ ישראל there are spiritual coverings that conceal His presence. ארץ ישראל has a special openness to the שכינה. That is why he describes both the land and its air as holy. (נהר ב', חסד לאברהם, מעין ג', נהר ב') (Ahavat Shalom edition, pp. 198–199.)

Think of sunlight coming through a covered window compared with an uncovered one. The sun is there in both cases. The difference is how much of its light reaches us. That is a way of picturing the spiritual distinction he describes. In ארץ ישראל there is a special closeness to השם, a distinctive spiritual shelter.

And perhaps this helps us understand where the courage described by the יעב"ץ comes from. Why does a person sometimes find the strength to do something that previously frightened him? Because he realizes:

I am not alone. השם is with me.

It is not all resting on my shoulders. I have to make the effort, but the strength and the outcome are not mine alone.

When that awareness becomes more real, it can change how a person faces a challenge. He may still feel afraid, but he can act despite his fear. Here is the connection we can suggest between these two teachings: the חסד לאברהם describes ארץ ישראל's special closeness to השכינה, and the יעב"ץ describes the courage the land can awaken. A deeper awareness of השם's presence can itself become a source of that courage.

But courage still needs direction. Feeling close to השם does not mean that every impulse is His will, or that we may ignore danger. תורה must guide our strength: when to stand firm, when to exercise restraint, and what we are standing up for.

Boldness in daily Jewish life

And that's so true. How many of us are bold, When it comes to our Judaism, When we live in Toronto, Or in other countries? The first statement of אורח חיים, Everything that being a Jew, Day-to-day living as a Jew, That's what the section of the שולחן ערוך, אורח חיים is all about. Day-to-day Jewish living. You can't live as a Jew, If you're not כנמר. If you're not as bold as the leopard, As swift as the deer. If you don't have that in your repertoire, You're not a complete Jew.

And that's the way Jews are supposed to live. Comes along, He says, That's the fact. But you live in גלות. The יעב"ץ lived in Altona. He says, This is the truth. But how many of us can live that way? How many Jews who are living in exile, Really are proud Jews? Are bold Jews? How bold are we? In these months of the winter, When שבת has to start early, And your boss wants you to stay at work till 5 o'clock. How bold are we to tell the boss, At 2 o'clock I'm leaving. And he says, What?

He says, I'm a Jew, And I have to bring in the Sabbath at sundown at 4.30. I'm leaving at 2 o'clock. Well, we need you as a... You know what? My religion comes first. I hope you appreciate it. I'll make it up. I'll come in on Sunday afternoon. Thank you. How many Jews are bold enough to say that? Right?

That takes boldness, not חוצפה.

To hold of yourself. How many Jews are bold enough? And I'm even talking Jews that will go to שול on שבת and wear a כיפה. But for some reason, They're not bold enough to wear a כיפה at work.

It's boldness. It's to be bold. I don't care what these guys say. I'm a Jew. It's a כיפה on my head. So people are going to look at me. So? But I'm bold. This is what it means to be a Jew. And then what

happens? When they're coming back into Thornhill. What happens? And you'll see these guys in Sobeys. And they still don't have the **כיפה**. Even in Sobeys you can't wear a **כיפה**? You can find a **מניין**. You can do **ברכו** in Sobeys. Right? So what do we say?

Are we saying these are bad Jews? **חס ושלום**. **חס ושלום**. They're not bad Jews. They're missing the key ingredient. Being proud of being a Jew. You know why? Because the place causes it. Because when you're surrounded by non-Jews, it's hard to buck the trend. The atmosphere is not conducive. And therefore we lack that boldness. And because of that we are incomplete Jews. So that's why **יהודה** **בן תימא** says, God, please build the **בית המקדש**. Because without the **בית המקדש**, we'll never be bold. It's not just a sermonic closure. It's very relevant to what we're talking about.

If he's telling us to be bold, he's saying, you know what, guys? But we'll never be bold in **חוץ לארץ**. So guess what, God? It's up to you to help us be bold. Once we're in Israel, then you can demand from us to be bold. Ah, you have not finished yet.

When boldness becomes brazenness

We've got to be worried about something. If God will bring us back to Israel, we'll be bold. We gotta worry about the other extreme. **Brazenness and boldness that are not channeled properly can also be a problem.** And that was the middle sentence that the Rabbi said. The brazen, they go to **גיהנום**. So now we got a problem. Either way it doesn't seem to be good. If you're outside of Israel, you're too meek and too humble. You're not bold enough to do your **יידשקייט**. And if we go to Israel, what's gonna happen? It could go to the other extreme.

It's interesting, if you ask people, would you ever want to live in Israel? I say, oh no, that lifestyle is just not for me. This is not for me. You know, and that's exactly what it's all about. In Canada, we're so polite. We'll let someone cut us off. Right? We're too embarrassed to put our **כיפה** on at work in Israel. Boy, oh boy, you call bold. It's not bold. It's **חוצפה**. Plain and simple. And it's a country full of **חוצפה** people. That's what it's all about. They're so bold. They believe in it with such strength.

You know, you don't want to go on the roads there, man. And not as a Canadian driver. But in everything. Everything is with passion there. Everything is a big deal. And everybody has what to say. And they don't care what's going on. I'm going to tell you a story. The Prime Minister could say, They're not going to open up **חברון**. Under my dead body. They're not going to open up **חברון** in 1973. And that's the way it is. And they got officers to enforce it. And then a woman's baby gets killed in 1980. And she said, I'm going to bury my son in **חברון**.

And the Prime Minister tells the people, the soldiers, she can't bury him. So what did she say? **I will not be deterred. I'm burying him.** And she takes hundreds of people from **קריית ארבע**. And they're going to **חברון**. And the officers are stopping her. And she says, You tell the Prime Minister, I'm going. And he calls up his superior. He calls the Prime Minister. And the guy says, Well, I'm sorry, Mr. Prime Minister, but if you want to stop it, you can have to come down and stop it. And she stands up against the Prime Minister and buries her child in **חברון**.

And then 20 years later, you have a thousand Jews in **חברון** that the government doesn't want at all. Why do you have such a thing? This one lady could outdo the whole government. And it's not just her, but it's all over the place. You don't like the way something's done? You just don't follow it. Finished. There's no law. I mean, there is law. You know, but you have enough guts, but you want to go to the

place. Where do you have? In Canada, you have three parties. In Israel, you have 103 parties. Everybody knows better than the other guy.

It's a different lifestyle. Living in ארץ ישראל, you know your home. But you have a big problem. The problem is you could become too brazen. Too much חוצפה. Too much חוצפה sends the person to גיהנום. So what do we do about that?

תורה gives boldness its proper measure

So he ends off. He says, well, there is a solution. Because there was one more thing he said. He said, God, build the בית המקדש. And what was the last thing he said? And give us a portion in your תורה.

Brazenness and boldness can be moderated by the תורה.

That attribute of עזות, that attribute of boldness, is a good attribute in the right measurements. If it's weighed and measured properly, and if it's tempered via the crucible of תורה, it can be a wonderful thing. **There's a fine line between עזות, boldness, and חוצפה, which is on the other side of the line.**

What keeps you back from going to the other side of the line? The תורה. God's instruction is for living. God's word is the final word. And you listen to God's words, you can be bold and at the same time not have חוצפה. And that's how רב יעקב עמדין ends. He says, We find this חוצפה mostly in ארץ ישראל. But when we have תורה in ארץ ישראל, we won't use it in a brazen way. This is a beautiful, beautiful משנה now. תימא בן יהודה says, what's a complete Jew? A complete Jew is a bold Jew.

He has pride. That's the only way you're going to be a Jew. But you know what? If you're too bold, you cross the line, you're extreme, גיהנום for you. So we got a problem. So God, please, bring us back to ארץ ישראל. And when you bring us back to ארץ ישראל, we will have that עזות again, we'll have that boldness. And in case we'll go over the line, please, make sure we all have a good portion in תורה and with a good portion in תורה, it will be tempered properly and we'll have the perfect Jews that we want.

The challenge of Jewish life in Israel

And that's how it's playing itself out. And that's the historical drama that we're finding in ארץ ישראל, where there is genuinely a civil war, not yet physical, but certainly of mind. There's a civil war in Israel. There's two camps in Israel, amongst the many other camps in Israel. There's the group in Israel that founded the state with secular intentions, with no idea of God and no idea of תורה. And they were blessed and very successful. However, there's a tremendous potential to have a little bit too much חוצפה. And they would wish that the state of Israel would be a totally secular state, like every other secular country in the world.

And then you have another group of people that say, no, our right to ארץ ישראל is because it's God's land and God wants us to do the מצוות of ארץ ישראל and deliver our life in Israel. And that is the struggle that's happening now in ארץ ישראל. And what the rabbis are telling us here is that the Jew without תורה will have a tremendous amount of חוצפה and it could destroy the country. It could destroy the people. Only with more תורה in the land will the land be able to survive and have the proper amount of עזות, enough to not be afraid of what the rest of the world says, and yet not to have the חוצפה that would take us to go down together.

Beautiful piece.

Returning to the patriarchs

With this in mind, now we can go back to what we started the evening off and the answers are ever abundantly clear. We were asking, how do we understand the dichotomy in אברם's behavior? How do we understand the dichotomy in יעקב's behavior? How do we understand the dichotomy in the brothers' behavior? If you look carefully at every story, you'll see the one common denominator. **Did the story happen in ארץ ישראל or outside of ארץ ישראל?** We start off with אברם. אברם has to leave the land and he's in Egypt. He's a stranger.

When you're not there, you're a wimp. And that's אברם can do nothing. He's afraid to open up his mouth to Pharaoh. And he needs God to help him. But as soon as he comes back to ארץ ישראל and he's living in ארץ ישראל, and he finds out that his nephew is taken. He says, what a חוצפה. My nephew is taken. It's a desecration of God's name. Him and אליעזר. They go right after 2.4 million people. Not a big deal at all. They're not afraid of anything because the land makes them bold.

And they run him all the way up to the north, up the coast, all the way up to שבט דן. And all of a sudden he stops. He gets weak. You know why he gets weak? Because they're going outside of ארץ ישראל now. And he lost his boldness. יעקב אבינו, he goes to לבן, who is in חרן, outside of ארץ ישראל. He's not a bold fellow. But as soon as he crosses, comes to מחניים, even though it's on the east bank, but it's according to הלכה part of ארץ ישראל, the angels from Israel greeted him.

Original source [16] בראשית לב, ב-ג; רש"י על בראשית לב, ב

וַיַּעֲקֹב הָלַךְ לְדֶרֶכוֹ; וַיִּפְגְּעוּ בוֹ מַלְאֲכֵי אֱלֹהִים. וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב כְּאֲשֶׁר רָאִם: מַחֲנֵה אֱלֹהִים זֶה; וַיִּקְרָא שֵׁם הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא מַחֲנֵים.

רש"י: "ויפגעו בו מלאכי אלהים" — מלאכים של ארץ ישראל באו לקראתו ללוותו לארץ.

יעקב went on his way, and angels of God met him. When יעקב saw them, he said, "This is God's camp," and he called that place מחניים.

רש"י: "Angels of God met him": Angels of ארץ ישראל came to meet him and escort him into the Land.

עשו comes, right away he's a bold fellow. And the brothers, when their sister is defiled in שכם, even if it's in the territories it is according to הלכה ארץ ישראל, they're bold, they wipe out the city. But when they're brought down to Egypt in front of צפנת פענח, they don't have the courage to say anything else. This is מעשה אבות סימן לבנים. This is such a beautiful example. We say, well, how do we know how to act? I'm not sure to act. The answer is, like יהודה בן תימא says, how are you supposed to act?

You're always supposed to be bold. That's the way you're supposed to be. But guess what? If you live in חוץ לארץ, you're an incomplete Jew. You'll never be bold in חוץ לארץ. Don't think you're better than אברם. Don't think you're better than יעקב. And don't think you're better than their children. You'll never come to their spiritual level. And even they couldn't be bold enough in חוץ לארץ. And that's the message that's consistent throughout the book of Genesis. When a Jew lives outside of ארץ ישראל, he'll never be as bold as he can be.

And when a Jew moves to ארץ ישראל, then he'll be able to be as bold as he can be. And you see this play itself out in so many different ways.

Contemporary illustrations

You just look at Sharon (Ariel Sharon, Israel's prime minister from 2001 to 2006). Look at Sharon, in front of the people, Mr. Tough. We're going to do this, we're going to do that, we're going to do this. Ba, ba, ba, ba, ba, ba. Ha, ha, ha. I don't care. You guys go straight. You don't do what I do and do what I want. Arafat is insignificant. We will debate what to do with him and maybe killing him is an option. All of a sudden he goes to Washington. Yes, Mr. President. Whatever you say, Mr. President. Let me sell the country down the line. Yes, Mr. President. What happened to the old guy?

Historical context. These remarks reflect the political context of 2003, during George W. Bush's presidency. The dialogue is the lecturer's characterization, not verified verbatim remarks by Sharon. Reports about killing Arafat as an option concerned Deputy Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in September 2003. Sources: [Israeli Defense Ministry biography](#); [White House, July 29, 2003](#); [UN September 2003 chronology](#).

One trip over the ocean, that's what does it. Every prime minister in Israel, each and every one, talks big in ארץ ישראל. All of a sudden you go outside ארץ ישראל, they become wimps. Lesson, they should never leave ארץ ישראל. Mr. President, if you'd like to speak to me, you have an open invitation anytime you want to. That's it. Everything they do. Netanyahu goes abroad. He's finished. He's out. He's prime minister. Every one of them. Finished. They lose it. You go outside ארץ ישראל, you're finished. That's why there's certain הלכות that it's not so easy for a Jew who lives in Israel to leave even for a trip to go outside ארץ ישראל unless for compelling reasons you're not allowed to leave.

Supporting source [17] [רמב"ם, הלכות מלכים ומלחמות ה, ט](#)

אסור לצאת מארץ ישראל לחוצה לארץ לעולם אלא ללמוד תורה או לישא אשה או להציל מן העכו"ם, ויחזור לארץ. וכן יוצא הוא לסחורה.

One may not leave ארץ ישראל for another country except to study תורה, to marry, or to rescue property from idolaters, and then return to the Land. One may also leave for commerce.

Leaving Israel and visiting the land

When we plan visits to ארץ ישראל, what's the one concern people have? It's dangerous. There's bombs. There's suicide bombers. This and that. I can't go to ארץ ישראל. And the truth is that there is a certain degree of legitimacy to that fear. And I don't know how to explain it other than the way we've just explained it tonight.

חברון in שבת

On our trip in May 2003, as is our tradition, we spent שבת in חברון. You think we're crazy, right? שבת in חברון. The שבת before we left was when that young couple was killed right in the main square. A suicide bomber was planning to do much worse. But he only blew up and killed those two. It was מוצאי שבת. And you know what? I gotta tell the truth, you know?

Which I will show to you. In other words, a place that I can point to. “I will show you” is like I'm showing you. It's not pointing to him. It means I'm pointing to you. I will show you you. No, you're going to show him the land. The plain meaning is, “I will show to you this land.” Now listen to the additional meaning of the **דרשה**. So, I heard a rabbi give a beautiful answer. **השם** is saying, **אברם**, go leave your birthplace. Not just the land which I will show to you.

Because I will show you what you can be. I'm not going to show you a piece of real estate in **ארץ ישראל**. I mean, you may happen to see it. But what I'm going to show you is something more important.

I'm going to show you who you really are.

You're going to find out the kind of person that you are. **אברם** was thrown into a fiery furnace. He has to go all the way into exile. And he can't do too much to defend himself in the exile. But now he's going to go to a land.

You see what happened? The fiery furnace, what could he do? He believes in his faith. Can he fight against him? No, they toss him in a furnace. God saves his life. What a wimp you are, **אברם**. You don't think you can be anything more than that. How can they ever be bold? He says, I'm going to show you who you can be. Now you're going to go to the land which will show you who you are. We'll show you what your full potential is. And you will be a different **אברם**. Your name will be great.

This is the **מדרש** that **רש"י** brings about **אברם** and the fiery furnace. His faith was already tremendous; here we are considering how coming to the land allows that inner strength to find further expression.

Original source [19] רש"י על בראשית יא, כח

שקבל תרח על אברם בנו לפני נמרוד על שכתת את צלמיו, והשליכו לכבשן האש. [...] וכשניצל אברם אמרו לו להרן: משל מי אתה?

Tarch complained about his son Abarim because Abarim had smashed his idols, and he threw him into the fiery furnace. [...] When Abarim was saved, they asked Haran, “Whose side are you on?”

You'll be a great man. Over here you'll never be a great man. Because you're not bold enough to be a great man. And that's the beginning of the whole story with the patriarchs. The whole idea, if you can go to **ארץ ישראל**, if you can merit to go to **ארץ ישראל**, that's when God will be able to show you who you really are. Because everything you think you are, you're an incomplete Jew. Until you're able to go there.

Taking this into the week

That is a powerful invitation for us too. We should cherish **ארץ ישראל** and the fullness of Jewish life that **השם** calls us to build there. And wherever we are today, we should ask what step of growth is being asked of us. Where have I allowed discomfort to hold me back? Where have I become so certain of myself that I have stopped listening to what **תורה** demands?

Let me suggest three things to take into the week. **First, choose one act of courage in עבודת השם**. It may be making proper arrangements for **שבט**, returning to a commitment in learning, or doing a **מצווה** you have put off because of embarrassment. Make it something specific.

Second, **let your תורה learning guide the way you use your strength**. Choose one area of conduct to work on: the way you speak in disagreement, your willingness to hear another person, or the ability to hold back when anger tells you to press ahead. Ask what the תורה requires of you in that situation.

Third, turn your love of ארץ ישראל and concern for כלל ישראל into **one constructive act**. Strengthen תורה learning, help a family, support a genuine communal need, or take a responsible step toward deepening your own connection with the land. Let what we have learned bring some good into another Jew's life.

And keep this question with you:

Where do I need more courage to serve השם, and where does my courage need more תורה to guide it?

Returning to the opening questions

Now let us return to the stories with which we began: the imprisoned yeshiva students, the demonstrations, and Rav Dov Lior's psak.

Why are we seeing these confrontations specifically in Eretz Yisrael?

Through the Torah we have learned tonight, we can begin to understand a spiritual dimension of what is happening. Eretz Yisrael brings out the strength of the Jewish people. Here, Jews build, defend, lead, and stand up for what they believe. But that strength needs Torah to direct it. The same boldness that enables a Jew to stand against the world can become destructive when a person cannot hear anything beyond his own certainty.

Look again at the yeshiva students. Their willingness to endure imprisonment rather than abandon what they understand to be their obligation to learn Torah expresses tremendous resolve. Those demonstrating on their behalf feel that the future of Torah is at stake. We must understand that concern if we want to understand their response.

But even when we are defending Torah, Torah must govern how we defend it. The sincerity of a protest does not settle whether every action taken during that protest is justified. Holy chutzpah requires us to ask both what we are standing for and how Hashem wants us to stand for it.

And those exercising the authority of the state must ask their own questions. Do they appreciate what Torah learning means to the Jewish people? Do they see the human beings and families affected by imprisonment? Having the power to enforce a decision does not, by itself, answer every moral and spiritual question about that decision.

Then there is Rav Dov Lior. Here is a senior rav from the Religious Zionist world, issuing a ruling that Jews may take olives from Palestinian Arab groves on the basis of his understanding of Jewish ownership of the land. Other rabbanim disagree with his application of those principles. Authorities are considering whether the ruling warrants a criminal investigation.

Tonight's discussion does not settle that halachic dispute. Love of Eretz Yisrael, however powerful, cannot substitute for determining what halachah permits. Nor does disagreement with a rav's ruling, by itself, establish that he has committed a crime. Those are questions that require careful examination.

What connects these stories is the encounter between deeply held conviction and the power to act on it. In Eretz Yisrael, that encounter becomes especially intense. We are arguing about our land, our security, our Torah, and the kind of Jewish life we are building together.

The lesson is that Jewish strength needs to remain accountable to Hashem. Azus d'kedushah means having the courage to do His will, including when His will demands restraint, humility, or reconsideration. Chutzpah becomes dangerous when our own will becomes the final authority.

So where does that leave us?

We need more Torah—Torah learned seriously, absorbed deeply, and allowed to shape our decisions. We need leaders with wisdom and yiras Shamayim. We need that ourselves as well. We cannot ask Hashem to open someone else's heart while keeping our own closed.

This is why the Mishnah's words belong together: "Shetivneh ircha" and "vesein chelkeinu be-Sorasecha." We ask to return home with the strength to build our Jewish life, and we ask for the Torah that will teach us how to use that strength. That is the Yaavetz's answer to the danger of chutzpah without Torah.

And that brings us to tefillah. Our concern for these events should lead us to ask for something better for every part of our people: protection for our soldiers, freedom and tranquillity for our Torah learners, wisdom for our leaders, and teshuvah for all of us.

That is why I composed this special Mi Sheberach. It brings those needs together in one tefillah. We ask Hashem to help us use the strength He has given us in His service, and to bring us closer to one another and closer to Him.

Let us conclude by saying it together.

Mi Sheberach for the Jewish People and Complete Redemption

מי שברך לשלום עם ישראל ולגאולה שלמה

Rabbi Yossi Michalowicz · Westmount Shul & Learning Centre

May He Who blessed our forefathers Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, Moshe and Aharon, David and Shlomo, bless and protect all our fellow Jews living in the Holy Land: the soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces and all who defend our people; those who study and teach Torah; and all our people who dwell in the Land — men and women, elderly and children — as we pray for their welfare.

May the Holy One, blessed be He, shelter them in His mercy, thwart the plans of their enemies, and grant their defenders wisdom, strength and deliverance. May He return them home alive and in peace, and heal our people's wounds, both physical and emotional. May He strengthen those devoted to Torah and grant them freedom and tranquillity to serve Him. May He mercifully restore to freedom those detained from among our Torah learners, and enable them to return peacefully to their homes and their learning.

May He bless the Holy Land with abundant goodness, bring an end to poverty and deprivation within it, and provide every family with a dignified livelihood. May He place love and brotherhood within our hearts, and increase charity and kindness among us.

May He protect all our fellow Jews, wherever they live, from hatred, persecution and violence. May He frustrate the designs of those who hate our people, and grant His people security and peace wherever they may be.

May He grant the leaders of our people in Eretz Yisrael wisdom and reverence for Heaven, to guide the Land according to His holy Torah and halachah, with justice, kindness and peace. May He turn the hearts of all our people, in the Holy Land and wherever they dwell throughout the world, to return to Him in complete repentance — teshuvah sheleimah — and to fulfil His will wholeheartedly. In the merit of our teshuvah, may He hasten our redemption. May He gather our dispersed people and bring us Mashiach Tzidkeinu. May His sovereignty be revealed to all humanity, and may all recognize that He alone is King over all the earth, speedily in our days. And let us say: Amen.

מי שברך אבותינו אברהם, יצחק ויעקב, משה ואהרן, דוד ושלמה, הוא יברך וישמר את כל אחינו בית ישראל היושבים בארץ הקדש: את חילי צבא ההגנה לישראל וכל העומדים להגן על עמנו, את לומדי התורה ומלמדיה, ואת כל ישיבי הארץ מבני עמנו, אנשים ונשים, זקנים וטף, בעבור שאנו מתפללים לשלומם.

הקדוש ברוך הוא יגן עליהם ברחמיו, יסכל צאת אויביהם, ויעניק למגנים עליהם חכמה, גבורה וישועה. ישויבם לבתיהם לחיים ולשלום, וירפא את פצועי עמנו בגוף ובנפש. יחזק את עוסקי התורה, ויעניק להם חרות ושלמה לעבודתו. ואת האסורים מקרב לומדי תורתנו יוציא לחרות ברחמים, ויזכם לשוב לביתם ולתלמודם בשלום.

יברך את ארץ הקדש בשפע טובה, יבטל ממנה עוני ומחסור, וימציא לכל משפחה פרנסה בכבוד. יתן בלבנו אהבה ואחווה, וירבה בינינו צדקה וחסד.

ואת כל אחינו בית ישראל בכל מקומות מושבותיהם ישמר משנאה, מרדיפה ומאלימות. יפר מחשבות שונאי ישראל, ויעניק לעמו בטחון ושלום בכל מקום שהם.

יתן בלב מנהיגי עמנו בארץ ישראל חכמה ויראת שמים, להנהיג את הארץ על פי תורתו הקדושה וההלכה, בצדק, בחסד ובשלום. ויטה את לבב כל בני עמנו, בארץ הקדש ובכל מקומות מושבותיהם, לשוב אליו בתשובה שלמה ולעשות רצונו בלבב שלם, ובזכות תשובתנו יחיש את גאולתנו. יקבץ נדחינו, ויביא לנו את משיח צדקנו. ויתגלה מלכותו על כל באי עולם, ויכירו כלם כי הוא לבדו מלך על כל הארץ, במהרה בימינו, ונאמר אמן.