



5780 Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Yosef Bronstein Parashat Lech-Lecha / פרשת לך-לך

From Yerushalayim – Blessings to the World

In God's opening command to Avraham he tells him "And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you."¹ Avraham's journey into the unknown which launched Jewish history is not only relevant for him or his descendants but will ultimately effect all of humanity. Rashi explains that the nations of the world will look up to Avraham and the Jewish people as role models for morality and connection to the Divine.

What is the best way for the Jewish people to accomplish this mandate and be a role model and blessing for the people of the world? One might think that a diasporic existence holds an advantage in this regard. When Jews are in exile they are living amongst non-Jews and are interacting with them in all sorts of quotidian ways – as neighbors, business partners, on the street and as friends. Perhaps this is the best way for the Torah's character traits, lifestyle and values to be on display for the nations of the world.

Rav Kook, however, took a different approach. While fully cognizant of the Jewish people's universal mission, he argued that this mission can be best accomplished when the Jewish people are living as an independent nation in their own land. It is when the Jewish people dive deeply into their own nationalism and their own Torah and live as a nation apart, that on a national level non-Jews will take note of the Torah's superior mandates and want to learn of its ways.²

¹ Bereishit 12:3. Translation from Chabad.org.

² See, for example, Orot Yisrael 6:6.



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Rav Chaim Drukman³ explains that this is part of the messianic vision of Yeshayhu. In what is perhaps the most elegant expression of the Torah and the Jewish people being a blessing for the nations of the world, Yeshayahu famously said:⁴

And it shall be at the end of the days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be firmly established at the top of the mountains, and it shall be raised above the hills, and all the nations shall stream to it. And many peoples shall go, and they shall say, "Come, let us go up to the Lord's mount, to the house of the God of Jacob, and let Him teach us of His ways, and we will go in His paths," for out of Zion shall the Torah come forth, and the word of the Lord from Yerushalayim.

Yeshayahu does not describe that Jews will be a positive influence on the world from the diaspora itself, but rather from Yerushalayim. The nations of the world will be most captivated by the Torah and its messages when it is being taught and practiced by the Jewish people in the heart of their own homeland – Yerushalayim. When we are truest to ourselves - in Yerushalayim - we will be able to optimally influence the entirety of humanity.

³ Available at <https://www.yba.org.il/%D7%A4%D7%A8%D7%A9%D7%AA-%D7%9C%D7%9A-%D7%9C%D7%9A--%D7%9C%D7%98%D7%95%D7%91%D7%AA%D7%9A-%D7%95%D7%9C%D7%A9%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%A9%D7%9A/-%D7%94%D7%A8%D7%91-%D7%97%D7%99%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%93%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%A7%D7%9E%D7%9F-%D7%99%D7%95-%D7%A8-%D7%9E%D7%A8%D7%9B%D7%96-%D7%99%D7%A9%D7%99%D7%91%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%95%D7%90%D7%95%D7%9C%D7%A4%D7%A0%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%91%D7%A0%D7%99-%D7%A2%D7%A7%D7%99%D7%91%D7%90>

⁴ Yeshayahu 2:2-3.