

שבת ציון

AMERICAN ZIONIST SHABBAT

SOURCEBOOK

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Lech Lecha to Vayishlach • לך-לך - וישלח
October 31 - December 5, 2020 / 13 Cheshvan - 19 Kislev 5781



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 American
Zionist
Movement
התנועה הציונית האמריקאית

AMERICAN ZIONIST SHABBAT - שבת ציון

The American Zionist Movement is pleased to update for 2020-5781 and share once again the **American Zionist Shabbat** initiative. This project spans the period from Parshiot Lech Lecha (October 31/ Cheshvan 13) to Vayishlach (December 5/19 Kislev), 2020-5781.

Below you will see resources for discussing Zionism in synagogues, schools and the community during this period, including links to materials easily available through the internet.

Beginning in 2017, the American Zionist Movement (AZM) launched a new **American Zionist Shabbat** initiative covering the period of Shabbat *Lech Lecha through Vayishlach*. The updated edition you will find below, is running from October 31/ Cheshvan 13 to December 5/19 Kislev 2020-5781.

AZM is continuing the Zionist Shabbat/Shabbat Tzion program in order to encourage greater dialogue within American Jewry on the significance of Zionism and its continuing relevance to our people and community. We hope the commencement of Parshat Lech Lecha – the beginning of Abraham and Sara's journey to what would become the Land of Israel – will inspire Rabbis to speak about Zionism in their sermons, drashot, and writings; day schools, yeshivot and Hebrew schools to connect their students to Zionism through the Parshiot; and congregations, community organizations, and Jewish institutions to share materials through programs and discussions on Zionism.

AZM has compiled this Source Book, drawn from materials developed and shared by our AZM organizations and others, to whom we express our thanks and appreciation for their leadership and dedication, in order to provide a resource for conversations on Zionism during this period of **American Zionist Shabbat**. We will continue to grow and expand this guide and program through the years, and encourage others to share sources with us at azm@azm.org.

Since the convening by Theodor Herzl of the World Zionist Congress in Basel, in 1897, Jews worldwide have been brought together by the discussion of Zionism. AZM has continued this tradition to further advance Zionist discourse in the United States. We hope that our contribution will connect Jews with our homeland, continuing to support the culture and democracy that Israel imbues today. Below, please find a plethora of Zionist content, including Shabbat in Israel, Divrei Torah, history and culture.

Please share, forward, and implement your own thoughts in celebration of Zionism and the **American Zionist Shabbat**.

The American Zionist Movement wishes to thank the leaders of each of the AZM organizations who have contributed materials, ideas, and thoughts in developing the **American Zionist Shabbat Sourcebook**. Special thanks to our summer intern Sam Koffler for his work in updating and compiling this material for 5781/2020.

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The American Zionist Movement (AZM), including 33 national Jewish organizations, represents American Zionists in the World Zionist Organization and works across a broad ideological, political and religious spectrum linking the American Jewish community together in support of Israel, Zionism and the Jewish People. AZM is the U.S. Zionist Federation in the World Zionist Organization.

How To Utilize the Zionist Shabbat Source Book

1. Materials - Through the wealth of sources, pick materials that best align with your needs and values. There are sources for weekly Torah portions as well as general Zionist materials.
2. Education Classes - In adult and youth classes, participants can discuss relevant topics and materials. This should be led by a community member who can facilitate these conversations.
3. On Shabbat - It is recommended that if your Synagogue has a children's service or youth groups, the leaders include some of the attached games and activities to engage the children.
4. During the Week - Sources can be sent out to community members earlier in the week as to better familiarize and learn before the discussions on Shabbat. Additionally, this year you can find Podcasts and Videos to engage members.
5. **Please see and continue to use the materials from the previous editions which are still relevant at the [AZM Zionist Shabbat website](#) for [2017 / 5778](#), [2018 / 5779](#), [2019 / 5780](#)**
For "nostalgia" see the [Shabbat Zion materials from 1983](#).

The Zionism of the Prophets

Reading the Haftarah During Zionist Shabbat

5781 Essay by Rabbi Paul Golomb, AZM Vice President for Programming

Torah is an obligation; Haftarah is a choice.

One reads the Torah in the synagogue from beginning to end, as commanded to Moses in Deuteronomy (Chapter 31). Since the Gaonic Era, the reading has been accomplished in a yearly cycle of *parashiot*, ending and beginning again on Simchat Torah. The prophetic readings that compose the haftarah, is not as orderly. They were also set and substantially fixed during the Gaonic Era, but the weekly portion is not automatic. Some decisions had to be made as to what prophetic reading – which biblical book, which chapter(s) and how many verses – ought to accompany a Torah *parashah*. We cannot be certain who made the determination or exactly what criteria went into the choice, although we should assume that it was quite deliberate and carefully thought through. We can also surmise that the sages who did set these haftarot lived in Diaspora communities.

It would hardly be fair to describe these sages as Zionists in the way the term has been employed since the late nineteenth century, but it is appropriate to draw Zionist themes from haftarah. Virtually everything in Torah is Israel-centered. From God's command to Abram to go forth, through the Exodus and the wandering in the wilderness, Torah consistently points toward the Hebrew people aspiring to a national existence on the land of Israel. The haftarah, on the other hand, reflects the reality of a community in exile. Even those who read the passages in synagogues situated in the Land, were well aware that they were dwelling in a Roman, then Umayyid, Abbasid and Ottoman administrative state. It was exile in a different form. The haftarah was therefore designed to point back to the promise of the Israel revealed to Moses in the Torah.

Here are some themes that can be drawn from haftarot, that can be used in a Zionist context:

Lekh L'kha (Isaiah 40:27-41:16). More haftarot are selected from Deutero-Isaiah (Chapters 40-66) than any other source, and for good reason. The prophet imagines the Jews in Babylonia at the time of the fall of Nebuchadnezzar's empire, and exhorts the people to return. It is quintessential prophetic material for an exiled community longing to return.

41:1-2 is particularly noteworthy: *...let us come together at the seat of Judgment/ Who has awakened one from the East/ for whom triumph is met at every step*. Ibn Ezra and later commentators identify this "one from the East" as Cyrus, the Persian ruler who facilitated the Jewish return from Babylonia. The prophet is confident of the end of exile, but cannot imagine that it will be accomplished directly by God, as in the Exodus from Egypt, or by the Jews somehow freeing themselves.

In the history of modern Zionism, its leaders have never relied on divine providence or on exclusive and unilateral action. Success in building and maintaining a Jewish State has always been dependent on allies.

Chayei Sarah (I Kings 1:1-31). The narrative details a succession battle between Solomon and an older half-brother, Adonijah, for David's crown upon the old king's death. Adonijah assumes that as the eldest of David's surviving sons, the monarchy is his. Bathsheva and the prophet Nathan implore the infirmed monarch to intercede, and David declares his support for Solomon. The haftarah reading ends with David's declaration and Bathsheva's thankful response. That Solomon succeeds his father need not be read. In this way, the haftarah focuses on the issue of the process of succession. In the case of every state and nation, an important concern is not simply who is the leader, but rather how leadership is transferred from one ruler (president, Prime Minister, etc.) to the next. It is valuable to note that in this case, Adonijah concedes any claim to the throne without a fight.

To this day, throughout the world and particularly in the Middle East, transfer of leadership involves either monarchic succession or violence. Israel stands out as one of very few nations capable of a peaceful transfer that is not only free of death or violence, but may entail an ideological shift (from Labor to Likud or back).

Tol'dot (Malachai 1:1-2:7) [and also *VaYishlach* in Sephardi congregations (Ovadia)] The focus of the haftarah is the relationship between Israel (Judah) and Edom. The two kingdoms always had tension along their common border in the 'Arava south of the Dead Sea. Edom allied itself with Nebuchadnezzar and served as the advance troops in Babylonia's conquest. The fraught relationship between brothers Jacob and Esau is thus reimagined as an enduring enmity. In rabbinic literature, Edom will be utilized as a code for Rome, and then the Roman Church.

The prophet, reflecting on the Jewish return to the Land, and with it the ignominious retreat of occupying Edomites, appears to be engaging in triumphant speech. The message, however, is not about vengeance but justice. In one noteworthy verse, God, through the prophet, declares twice *My Name is great among the nations* (Mal. 1:11). There is a twofold force to this proclamation. The fall of Edom is due to a universal and divinely ordained justice, a justice by which Israel itself is to be measured.

A central feature of Zionism is indeed justice. There is an inherent justice in the Jewish return to the land and restoration of a national polity. The Zionist goals have not come to an end with the founding of the State. The need to expect justice toward Israel on the part of the nations (especially its neighbors), and for Israel to impart justice within its territory remains a prophetic and a Zionist imperative.

VaYeitzei (Hosea 12:13-14:10) and *VaYishlach* in Ashkenazi congregations (Hosea 11:7-12:12). The two haftarot comprising the last chapters of the Book (although in a reverse order), follow a similar pattern. *VaYeitzei* references Jacob fleeing to Aram. *VaYishlach* begins with a charge that the people have turned from God. In this fashion, they both commence with exile, real and spiritual. Hosea, the sole northerner among the literary prophets, witnessed the rapid disintegration of the kingdom from a period of relative stability and prosperity under the reign of Jeroboam II, to the eve of the Assyrian conquest. As the Assyrians marched southward, the prophet sensed the magnitude of the disunity in Israel as a result of the severing of David and Solomon's kingdom, as well as the casual corruption that had long infected Israelite society. The feeling of exile – of both alienation and of despair – was palpably real. The heart of Hosea's message is, however, one of hope. Over and again he reminds the people that God, despite their waywardness, has not abandoned them. That the crisis can yet be averted.

Modern Zionism was born in the wake of bitter disappointment in the promise of an enlightened Europe. It organized, developed and carried on through pogroms and the disaster of the Shoah. The initial hope that as a State the Jewish people would be received as a nation among nations has yet to be fulfilled. The challenge of finding stable accommodation among its neighbors, and of defending the Zionist idea in intellectual circles continues to be daunting. We are reminded by the prophet, however, not to give in or give up. In Hosea's time, his voice was not heard, and the kingdom did indeed fall. Their failure need not be ours, if we only listen.

Drawing from the tradition of Israel's prophets, Martin Luther King would say *The arc of moral history is long, but it bends toward justice*. The haftarah is born of exile: a real exile from the Land, and a spiritual exile of feeling lost and abandoned. Its message is consistently one of hope and steadfast belief in justice. It is Zionism's message as well.

Shabbat & Zionism – Prayers and Sources

[“Let’s Start Davening” packet \(pdf\)](#) - WZO Beit Ha’am

[Zion in the Sources: Yearning for Zion, covers Mitzvot, Prayers, and Tehillim \(pdf\)](#) - WZO Education Department

[Liturgical References to Zion: Packet](#) - Center for Israel Education

[Shabbat and Zionism](#) - WZO Education Department’s Chagim Center

[Shabbat Sources and Philosophy](#) - WZO Education Department

[D'var Torah- Zionism Shabbat](#) - Hadassah

[A Zionist Shabbat with Texts from The Zionist Ideas](#) - Professor Gil Troy

Parshiot – Weekly Torah Readings

[Shabbat Tzion \(pdf\)](#) - Israel Forever Foundation

[Parshat Lech Lecha \(pdf\)](#)

[Parshat Vayera \(pdf\)](#)

[Parshat Chayei Sarah \(pdf\)](#)

[Parshat Toldot \(pdf\)](#)

[Parshat Vayetzei \(pdf\)](#)

[Parshat Vayishlach \(pdf\)](#)

[The Shabbat: Parashat HaShavua](#) - WZO Education Department Chagim Center

[Dvar Torah on Parshat Lech Lecha \(pdf\)](#) - Former WZO Chairman Avraham Duvdevani

[Lekh Lekha](#) - Rabbi Vernon Kurtz, Past President AZM

[From Yitzhak to Yitzhak](#) (Parashat Vayera) - WZO Beit Ha’am

[The Greatest Love Story: Parashat Chayei Sarah](#) - Rabbi Stuart Weinblatt, Congregation B’nai Tzedek, Potomac, MD and Founder, Zionist Rabbinic Coalition

[Parshat HaShavua](#) - Religious Zionists of America

Zionist History Timeline

[Steps To Statehood Timeline](#) ([pdf](#)) - Israel Forever Foundation

[Events and Personalities in the History of the Zionist Movement](#) - WZO

[Analysis of Hatikva](#) - Reform Judaism

Modern Zionism

[AZM's Statement of Principles of Zionism](#) ([pdf](#))

[Brandeis on Zionism: A Collection of Addresses and Statements by Louis D. Brandeis](#) ([pdf](#))

Reclaiming/Reviving Zionism

[Want Zionism To Survive? Keep It Simple](#) ([pdf](#)) - Tablet Magazine

[Reclaiming Zionism](#) ([pdf](#)) - Jewish Week

[Reclaiming Zionism](#) ([pdf](#)) - Jerusalem Post

[Reclaiming Zionism](#) ([pdf](#)) - By Gil Troy, JTA

[What happened to Zionism](#) ([pdf](#)) - JTA

[Transcending our differences](#) ([pdf](#)) - eJewishPhilanthropy

[The Alienation of Zionism](#) ([pdf](#)) - MERCAZ Olami

[Zionism – Reclaiming an Inspiring Word](#) - Rabbi Alan Silverstein, Masorti Olami

Current state of Zionism

[What is Reform Zionism?](#) - ARZA

[Zionism: A Jewish Communal Response](#) (UK)

[The opportune time to visit Israel](#) ([pdf](#)) - iCenter

[Current State of Zionism](#) ([pdf](#)) - Tikvah Fund

[Teen Zionist Experience of a Lifetime](#) ([pdf](#)) - StandWithUs

[WZO Beit Ha'am Zionism Packet](#) - Zionism: Asking, Exploring, Dreaming

[An Impenetrable Wall Between Progressivism and Zionism?](#) ([pdf](#)) - Ameinu

[The Zionist Story Of Abraham & Sarah in the Torah](#) - Herut North America

[It's Zionism Month! Time to proudly say 'I am a Zionist'](#) ([pdf](#))

[Zionism 101](#) ([pdf](#)) - Rabbi Vernon Kurtz, AZM Past President

[How to discuss Israel in a productive form](#) - Hadassah

Videos and Podcasts

Podcasts:

The Evolution of American Zionism - Pardes/Elmad ([Part I](#)) ([Part II](#))

[Z3 Project](#)

Videos:

[Discussing Zionism in the 21st Century](#) - Hadassah

[What is Zionism](#) - Israel Unpacked