

# LAMPLIGHTER

7 Cheshvan  
Lech Lecha  
**1007**  
4 November  
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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In this week's Torah portion, Lech Lecha, when Abraham was told by G-d that Isaac would be born, he already had Ishmael. Abraham said to G-d, "O, that Ishmael would live before You!"; Abraham would have been satisfied with just one son, if that son followed the ways of G-d.

G-d, however, explained that the Jewish people would be perpetuated through Isaac. G-d promised that eventually Abraham would have nachas (satisfaction), from Ishmael, but his true nachas would come from Isaac.

Ishmael's birth was a natural phenomenon, but Isaac's birth was a miracle. It was impossible for Abraham and Sara to have a child at such an advanced age. No one believed that such a miracle would occur. Yet, Isaac was born.

Another difference between Ishmael and Isaac was in their brit mila, the covenant that binds the Jew to G-d.

Ishmael was 13 years old when he was circumcised. At the age of 13 a person's intellect is already well established. He is able to make rational decisions based on his understanding, which is why he becomes obligated in mitzvot. At 13, Ishmael agreed to connect himself to G-d.

The circumcision of Isaac, by contrast, was performed when he was only 8 days old. One cannot obtain an infant's permission and it is precisely then that this eternal bond with G-d that can never be erased was effected.

Ishmael's upbringing was likewise natural. Ishmael grew up under the watchful eyes of his parents, who helped him acquire the proper understanding to enable him to connect to G-d. Their efforts were rewarded when he made the rational decision to undergo brit mila at the age of 13.

Judaism, however, cannot be based solely on the foundations of human understanding. Judaism as predicated on the intellectual capacities of a 13-year-old boy is unstable. If, as a more mature individual, that person were to encounter a new set of circumstances or find himself in an unfamiliar situation, there is no predicting how he will react. The basis of his Judaism -- his own understanding -- is deficient.

For this reason G-d told Abraham that his true nachas would come from Isaac. Judaism is not based on the foundations of nature. The connection between the Jew and G-d transcends nature entirely; it is an eternal bond that endures forever. And the Judaism of a child whose connection with G-d is forged as an 8-day-old infant will be stable.

From this we derive an important lesson. Jewish education cannot be postponed until a child reaches the age of reason. From the moment of birth one must inculcate the infant with Judaism that transcends the bounds of nature. A child thus educated will bring his parents true nachas.

*Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe*

## Great Wealth

By Yanki Tauber

*And [G-d] said to Abram: "Know that your children shall be strangers in a land not theirs, and they will enslave them and afflict them ... and afterwards they will go out with great wealth."*

*Galut* (exile) comes in many forms. The Hebrew slave in Egypt, the persecuted ghetto-dweller in medieval Europe, the Auschwitz inmate, the Jewish-American tolerated at the local country club, the Israeli hostage to the caprices of the global superpower[s] -- all are subjects of the *galut*-state, whose most basic definition is that one is "a stranger in a land that is not yours." You are not the master of your environment, but its subject; you are not in control of your circumstances, but their victim.

*Galut* is often described as a punishment for our own failings." But this is only part of the story. At the "Covenant Between the Parts" between G-d and Abraham, at which it was first established that there was going to be a Jewish people, and already then G-d informed Abraham that his descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs.

Indeed, we have been in *galut* for much of our history. There were the two Temple Eras totalling some 830 years, when we resided in our homeland and the Divine Presence manifestly dwelled in our midst; but during the Second Temple Era we lived under the hegemony of foreign powers, and even the first Temple Era included periods of internal strife and foreign subjugation. In fact, the Talmud points to but a single generation, the 40-year reign of King Solomon, as a time when "the moon was full" - when our relationship with G-d was whole and we were truly masters of our fate.

One would think that a state of being that has held sway for 99% of our history would, by now, have been ingrained in the Jewish character, or at least have become a familiar way of life. But the most amazing thing about *galut* is that nearly 4000 years after the "Covenant Between the Parts" it is as terrifying, as incomprehensible, as alien to our souls as it was to Abraham on that fateful day when he beheld its dread and great darkness.

The peoples of the world -- which certainly include nations more powerful and more politically independent than ourselves -- have by and large accepted the fact that the world in which they live includes forces greater than themselves, to which they are subject. But not the Jew. We have never accepted *galut* and have never ceased striving for redemption.

Indeed, it is the very unnaturalness of *galut* that is the key to the "great wealth" it yields. The enduring faith that the present circumstances are truly *not* "the way things are," is at the root of all that the Jew has accomplished and achieved, both for himself and for the world.

Therein lies the paradox of *galut*: its power stems from the fact that it mustn't, cannot be, from the incessant effort to bring about its demise, from the certain faith that this effort will succeed. For this, too, was preordained at the Covenant Between the Parts.

We Jews have been accused of many things, but no one has ever called us gullible. If a hundred generations of Jewish toil and tears were expended on the effort, it's only because we know that the moon will regain its fullness and we will dwell in a world of divine goodness and perfection.

# Slice of LIFE

## A Rose among the Thorns

By Mirish Kiszner

The following story illustrates the strength of the Jewish people. It is a story of remarkable heroism in the face of utter insanity. "Like the rose maintaining its beauty among the thorns, so is my faithful Beloved among the nations" (Song of Songs). I am grateful to the Kaliver Rebbetzin for sharing her story with me.

In the time of our greatest sorrow, deep inside the bowels of the earth, where the Nazis, may their names be blotted out, forced us to dig anti-tank ditches in the path of the advancing Red Army, we cried out, "From the depths I call to you..." (Psalms 130)

The earth was frozen over. The Germans would throw a grenade to soften the earth and then force us, young women and girls, to dig the ditches, two and three meters deep into the ground. Every Shabbat morning, two girls would stand vigil to warn us when the S.S. guards would approach. We didn't want to work on the holy Shabbat. We sang Shabbat songs and prayers, we told each other stories of ancient and not-so-ancient Jewish heroes, we drew strength from one another.

I remember one Friday night. I was sitting with my two nieces on a thin pile of straw, resting from the backbreaking labour in a barn on the roadside. We were in the middle of a death march then. And as the sun dipped below the horizon I suddenly remembered that it was Shabbat.

"Let's pray," I urged, "in honour of Shabbat."

Some other girls came to join us and we sat and sang the prayers greeting the Shabbat Queen. We felt mesmerized by the words. They reminded us of bygone days, and we allowed ourselves to become enveloped in the sweet memories that those words evoked.

Suddenly, the Blockelteste (block leader), who had been sitting in her room behind the wall we shared, burst upon our small group huddled together in song and hurled a vicious slap in my face. Before I could get my bearings, another violent blow landed on my other cheek.

"You are still praying?" She asked. Her face was crimson, contorted from fury, her eyes bloodshot.

A sudden Jewish pride arose within me like a pillar of smoke rising from a chimney.

"Yes," I answered her calmly but in a firm voice, "we are still praying."

Her lips were trembling from rage. She gritted her teeth, planted her arm on her hips and snarled angrily, "You still think that you will get out of here?"

There was absolute silence in the room. No one moved. When did anybody ever challenge the Blockelteste? At that moment, time seemed to stand still. My eyes took in the frozen, terror-stricken faces of my friends, and I arose from my crouched position. I had more to say.

"With G-d's help," my voice emerged with a strength I didn't know I possessed, "we will get out of here."

The Blockelteste opened her mouth to speak. Then she stopped. Her arms went limp, her shoulders sagged. Then, without a word she turned on her heels and left.

## The Banker's Shabbat Dilemma

By David Zaklikowski

Jews in Karlsruhe, Germany, were given the rights to live as equals and in relatively peaceful conditions from the late 17th century. The Jewish community thus flourished in this city, located on the Rhine River and a short distance from France.

Shmuel Straus, a banker in this city, enjoyed a happy life, free to spend his extra time raising his children, doing good deeds and studying Torah from his vast library of Jewish books. Shmuel earned just enough to support his family without any worries. He was known to be G-d-fearing and thus did all of his business dealings honestly.

Shmuel's first business venture was to run a small bank, given to him by his father-in-law following his marriage. With a permit from the government, Shmuel would mainly exchange currencies and invest money for people. He owned a special coat with two large pockets, one where he would place account receivables and one for currency exchange.

One Friday morning, before going to the ritual circumcision, brit, of his friend's son, he put on the special coat he would wear on Shabbat, holidays and special occasions, and transferred the wads of cash he'd ordinarily keep in his other coat. Following the celebration, he continued on his way to work as usual, changing money and accepting payments.

At midday, he stopped his work to assist in the preparations at home for the holy Shabbat. After his wife lit the Shabbat candles, he put on his Shabbat coat, and bid farewell to his wife and small children and then headed to the synagogue for the Friday night prayers.

Shabbat was a special day for Shmuel, and he'd spend it in prayer, learning and precious time with his family. For the Shabbat meal, they would always have many guests. That Shabbat was no different. As he walked the quiet route back from the synagogue, he'd take

the time to gather the words of Torah he would say at the Shabbat table. His guests would soon arrive with their families at his home.

Shmuel sat on the bench on the side of the road as he gathered his thoughts, when he suddenly realized that his pockets were still filled with wads of money from that day's dealings.

Raised on the tradition of not "carrying on Shabbat" -- transferring anything from the private domain (his home) to the public domain (the city streets), or vice versa -- Shmuel rooted in his place was sweating from the thought of having to carry the money. He could not bear the idea of using money that he brought home on Shabbat.

Sitting in the deserted street, he suddenly thought about the joy he'd have knowing that he did the right thing, and quickly unbuttoned his coat, dropping the wallets on the ground. A blanket of relief swept over him. He knew that he would have to repay many debts, and that his future was in doubt. However, his trust in G-d empowered him to make a decision that he knew was right.

That Shabbat was extra joyous for him. He felt that he passed the great test G-d placed in his way, and had prevailed triumphantly. His extra joy was a mystery to his family and the many guests who had been to his table before.

As the sun faded and the stars came out, Shmuel said the special prayer recited over wine at the conclusion of Shabbat. His wife held the special candle and the family passed around the special fragrance to soothe the soul upon the departure of the beautiful Shabbat.

After saying the after-blessing on the wine, Shmuel relayed to his family what had transpired on Friday night, thus revealing the reason for the joyous Shabbat. He also told them that it may be the beginning of a more difficult life. His wife accepted the will of G-d and assured the family that everything will turn out for the best.

The same night, Shmuel decided to check the route he'd used, hoping to find the wallets he'd dropped. He did! And as Shmuel opened the door to his home, the family breathed a sigh of relief, for the wallets were intact with the full sum of money inside them.

A few days later, the Minister of Finances of the Baden region heard about the trustworthy Straus bank, and entrusted Shmuel with a huge sum of money. The investment in the bank spread and many well-to-do people invested their money with Shmuel.

Today, Shmuel's legacy lives on in Jerusalem, where the Straus Courtyard, a place of Torah learning, stands in his name. His children sold Straus & Company in 1938 when they fled from Germany and relocated to California.

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ISSUE 1007

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

At the end of the day on which Abraham made a special covenant with G-d, the Torah states, "And the sun came down, and Abraham fell into a deep sleep." The sun represents Moshiach, as it is written in Psalms (89:37), "And his (Moshiach's) throne is like the sun before Me." Abraham represents the Jewish people. The meaning of the verse, "And the sun came down, and Abraham fell into a deep sleep," is that the Jewish people will be in a deep spiritual slumber before Moshiach comes. Moshiach will awaken us all from this sleep. (*Midrash Agada in Torah Shleimah 15:127*)



# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan, 5732 [1971]

To the Participants in the Testimonial Banquet honouring Rabbi Dr. Moshe Yitzchok Hecht

#### Greeting and Blessing:

I am very pleased to be informed about the forthcoming Testimonial Banquet in honour of Rabbi Hecht's twenty-five years of dedicated service to the greater New Haven community.

The occasion is a fitting testimony to the personal achievements of the recipient of this honour. It also shows that he is fortunate in having Baalei-batim [supporters] who appreciate his services to the community. Furthermore, and this is the most essential aspect, the occasion reflects recognition of the vital importance of Jewish education, the field in which Rabbi Hecht has particularly distinguished himself and made his greatest contribution.

All this gives me the confident expectation that the event will serve as a further stimulus to the cause of Chinuch [Jewish education], where there is of course still much more to be done. For, as long as there is a Jewish boy or girl who does not yet receive a Torah-true education, the obligation of the community cannot be considered fully done.

On the other hand, we live in a situation which is especially conducive to Chinuch (education). Parents are more keenly aware of the compelling need of Chinuch in the present days of confusion and misguided values. As for Jewish children and youth, they are always receptive to the Torah and Mitzvos [commandments]. This has again confirmed the truth of the Torah and of the Lubavitch approach, namely, that the Torah and Mitzvos are part of the Jewish essence, and that it is only necessary to help a Jew bring this essence to the fore and rediscover himself. And having been brought into the experience of Torah and Mitzvos, they are happy and grateful, and proceed to go from strength to strength on their own accord, and help others, in the manner of a chain reaction.

It is customary to make a reference to the Torah portion of the week, in which any event takes place. It is, therefore, significant that the weekly portion Lech-lecho begins with G-d's call to Abraham to leave his land and birthplace, etc., in order to begin a new life in the Promised Land.

Symbolically speaking, this is also the call and challenge to every Jew, at all times and in all places. It is the eternal call to the Jew not to allow himself to be swept by the outside environment, nor to be swayed by inborn temptations, or acquired habits, or common daily routine. A Jew must rise above all this and follow the Divine call to go "To the land which I (G-d) will show you" - the Jewish way of life, which G-d prescribed for Abraham, the first Jew and for our Jewish people as a whole at Mt. Sinai. Moreover, G-d promises that this way of life, far from being impossible, as some mistakenly think, is within reach of every Jew and it is the source of blessing for himself and the society in which he lives, as G-d further promised, "And all the families of the earth will be blessed through you."

I send my prayerful wishes that the enthusiasm and dedication of all participants in this Banquet will inspire also others to a concerted and ever-growing effort on behalf of Torah-true education, both for the young as well as for the old who are still young in Jewish knowledge and experience. May G-d bless you with Hatzlocho [success] and true Nachas [pleasure] from your children, and fulfil your hearts' desires for good materially and spiritually.

#### CUSTOMS CORNER

The order of the blessings for the torah (according to the customs of Chabad): With the *tallit* touch the beginning and ending of the reading, kiss the *tallit* where it touched the Torah, roll up the Torah, turn your face slightly to the right, say the blessings, open the Torah and read.

The order of donning the tallit (according to the Chabad customs): Place the folded *tallit* on the right shoulder. Inspect the *tzitzit* while reciting *borchi nafshi*. Remove the *tallit* from the shoulder and open it. Kiss the top border. Twirl the *tallit* away from in front of the face to a position behind you.

Begin the blessing *l'hitateif b'tzitzit*. Complete the blessing close to placing the two right corners (of the tallit) around the neck over the left shoulder. (See *Sh'eirir Yehuda, Orach Chayim, 1*, and *Divrei Nechemya, Orach Chayim, 9*.)

## A WORD

from the Director

*We are now in the month of Marcheshvan, the eighth month on the Jewish calendar. After the incredibly intense spiritual experience of the High Holy Days - Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah - we are commanded to imbue the "regular" days of the year with the same spiritual energy, in order to elevate them to a higher level. By sanctifying even the most mundane aspects of our daily lives, we bring Moshiach's arrival closer and closer.*

*Indeed, Marcheshvan is the time when we begin to fulfil our Divine mission of "And Jacob went on his way." Jacob is symbolic of every Jew. In Marcheshvan, we must all strive to utilize the spiritual strength we acquired during the previous month of Tishrei. As the weather changes and the temperature drops outside, the lack of physical warmth should remind us of the need to "turn up the thermostat" in the spiritual sense. Emulating our forefather Jacob, who left his father's house and travelled on his own, we should all strive for spiritual growth regardless of the warmth or hospitality of our surroundings.*

*Every month of the year corresponds to a different one of the Twelve Tribes, Marcheshvan corresponding to the tribe of Menashe. Menashe was the firstborn son of Joseph, who gave him that name as a reminder to remember his Jewish identity. ("For G-d, said he, has made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.") After the powerful holiday period of Tishrei, a Jew might find himself in a spiritual vacuum. Especially during Marcheshvan, we must always be aware of our roots and try to avoid negative influences.*

*When the letters of the name Menashe are rearranged, they spell the word "neshama," soul. For when a Jew is in touch with his neshama, he will never forget his Father in Heaven.*

*J. I. Gutnick*

## IT HAPPENED

Once...

## Hide and Seek

Rabbi DovBer of Mezheritch (second leader of the Chassidic movement, d. 1772) once encountered a weeping child.

"Why are you crying?" he asked.

The child replied that he and a friend had been playing at "hide and seek," but his friend had run off to some amusement, leaving him curled up in his hiding place, waiting in vain to be searched out.

Rabbi DovBer lifted his eyes to heaven and cried: "You, too, have hidden your face from us only because You want us to seek You. But your children have tired of the game and have run off..."

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## The Rebbe's Son and the Chassid

Told by the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Sholom DovBer Schneerson

Once, when Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch, the son of Chassidic master Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, was a young man, he was visiting with his father-in-law in Yanovitch. There he met with one of his father's chassidim. The chassid noticed that the young "Rebbe's Son" was all too aware of his achievements in scholarship and meditative prayer, and felt that some "cutting down to size" was in order.

Said the chassid to Rabbi DovBer: "Considering who you are and how you've lived, what's the big deal? Your father -- well, we all know who your father is. You were certainly conceived under the holiest of circumstances, and I'm sure that your father secured a most lofty soul to bring down into the world. Then you were raised in a rebbe's home and great care was taken to mould your character and safeguard you from any negative influences. All your life you've been exposed to scholarship and sanctity, and to this very day you're preoccupied only with the study of Torah and the teachings of Chassidism. So you've amassed a certain amount of knowledge and you pray with fervour and devotion. Big deal.

"Now, take me, for example. My father was a simple man, and we can well imagine what was on his mind when he scraped out some dreg of a soul from the bottom of the barrel. My upbringing? I was raised as a goat and basically left to my own devices. And do you know what I do with my life? Let me tell you how I earn my living. I loan money to the peasants during the planting season and then, during the winter months, I make my rounds of their villages and farms to collect the

debts before they have a chance to squander their entire harvest on vodka. This means setting out several hours before sunrise, well before the permissible time for prayer, equipped with a flask -- for without a drink one cannot begin to talk business with a peasant. After drinking to his health, one must share a l'chayim with the woman in the house as well -- otherwise she can ruin the whole deal for you. Only then can you sit down to settle part of the account.

"After three or four such stops I make my way home, immerse myself in the Mikvah and prepare for prayer. But after such preliminaries, what sort of prayer would you expect...?"

The words of this chassid, who was, in truth, renowned for his refined nature and soulful prayers, made a deep impression on Rabbi DovBer. The young man immediately travelled home to his father and poured out his heart. He bewailed his spiritual state, saying that his service of G-d is worthless, falling so short of what is expected from him.

The next time the chassid from Yanovitch came to Rabbi Schneur Zalman, the Rebbe said to him: "I am most grateful to you. You have made a chassid out of my Berl".

## Thoughts THAT COUNT

And the L-rd said to Abram, go out from your country, and from your family, and from your father's house (Gen. 12:1)

There are some lands that produce naturally strong and robust people, but as G-d implied to Abraham, a Jew mustn't rely on his inborn strength. Nor should he content himself with the positive character attributes he inherited from his family, or with the fact that his father was holy and righteous. Rather, every Jew must "go out" and expend his own efforts, as it states in Psalms (128:2), "For you shall eat the labour of your hands; happy shall you be, and it shall be well with you." (*Daat Moshe*)

A person must overcome his natural inclinations in order to draw closer to G-d. This is alluded to in "Go out of your country" ("eretz," related to the word "ratzon" or will; "your family" ("molad'tcha," an allusion to the intellect which "gives birth" to the emotions); and "your father's house" (the word "av," "father," related to "taava," lust and appetite). Only then can one arrive at "the land that I will show you." (*Sifrei Chasidut*)

And he believed in G-d, and he counted it to him for righteousness (Gen. 15:6)

Not only did Abraham believe in G-d, but he was appreciative of G-d's kindness and generosity in giving him the intelligence to have faith. (*Avodat Yisrael*)

## CANDLE LIGHTING: 4 NOVEMBER 2011

BEGINS	ENDS
7:39 .....MELBOURNE .....	8:40
7:29 .....ADELAIDE .....	8:29
5:50 .....BRISBANE .....	6:45
6:30 .....DARWIN .....	7:21
5:49 .....GOLD COAST .....	6:45
6:25 .....PERTH .....	7:23
7:07 .....SYDNEY .....	8:06
7:18 .....CANBERRA .....	8:17
7:37 .....LAUNCESTON .....	8:42
7:38 .....AUCKLAND .....	8:39
7:46 .....WELLINGTON .....	8:51
7:39 .....HOBART .....	8:45
6:49 .....BYRON BAY .....	7:45



## CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS LECH-LECHA  
8 CHESHVAN • 5 NOVEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	7:39 PM
	MINCHA:	7:50 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8:20 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:36 AM
	MINCHA:	7:30 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	8:40 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	7:50 PM
	MAARIV:	8:40 PM