

# LAMPLIGHTER

10 Cheshvan  
Lech Lecha  
**1058**  
26 October  
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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*, circumcision, 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*.

*Adapted from Likutei Sichot, Vol. 1*

## Breaking Free

By Rabbi A. Issacson

Trapped!

I can't get myself out of this mess. I'm fighting a losing battle. Every turn I make there is another hole to fall into, into a bottomless pit, an eternal abyss.

When I think about it I realise that I'm doing it to myself. I'm holding myself back. It's like an addiction; I am my own worst enemy. I am the very shackles around my ankles. How can I release myself from this self imprisonment?

In search for help I turn to my right then to my left. I reach out for the hand of someone close by only to realise he is in the same quicksand that I am in. Looking up I see my only hope, my safe haven, my only chance for survival, my pathway to safety.

Our world, everything about us, and our surroundings were created perfectly imperfect. Fashioned with just enough problems that we have a challenge but we can nevertheless overcome. But from where do we muster the strength to transform the evils of this world when we ourselves are subject to the confines and conditions of the current situation?

By rising above these restrictions, by shedding our restraints we open a doorway of boundless potential. This applies on a global plane as well as to each individual in his personal state.

Every human being is a microcosm of the greater picture. The embodiment of the spiritual ball and chain, halting our advance, is the foreskin. This is the unnecessary addition to an otherwise complete personality. This parasite was given to us intentionally for one purpose, for us to rid ourselves of it, an act which stimulates spiritual growth.

Circumcision represents the covenant between us and G-d. It is our means to transcend and prevail over the daily struggle. It was the first direct command to our forefather Avraham. Unlike the other deeds of goodness he performed, which were on his own accord, for this one he waited for the order. By performing the will of a being not held back by the same restriction as Avraham himself, he became a vehicle for infinity. Therefore any accomplishment up until that point were subject to flaw, but from then and on, after eliminating this hindrance, every action and every movement was one of unlimited capacity.

As a result of this one act we, his descendants, inherited the Torah, our guide of various instructions to perform. Through following these directives we reach to the same status Avraham was on though his circumcision, a boundless vehicle equipped to release the world from its confines, at lead the way to everlasting salvation with Moshiach's arrival.

# Slice of LIFE

## The Chauffeur's Tale

Two of Rabbi Yisrael Abuchatzira's daughters once went to Paris to participate in a family wedding. While staying there, they took a taxi to the city centre to do some necessary shopping. As they were riding, they happened to discuss family matters. The cab driver could not help overhearing, and concluded that his two passengers were indeed daughters of the famous Baba Sali.

When they reached their destination and wished to pay, he refused to accept any money. The passengers looked at him strangely. "Why won't you take our money?" they asked in surprise.

"Because I always serve the members of Baba Sali's family for free. I would not dream of accepting anything from you."

"Why not? Do you have a personal reason for it?" they asked.

"I know that your father is a holy man, for I have first-hand experience to prove it. Ever since a miracle happened to me in his presence, I have been his ardent admirer. I am prepared to serve him and his family at all times."

He insisted on telling them what had happened:

"Many years ago, when I lived in Morocco, I served as the chauffeur of the president of our community in northern Morocco. Baba Sali, your father, was the guest of our community and when he wished to return to Arpud, the president offered to send him home in his new car with me, a distance of seven hundred and fifty kilometres.

"I was well familiar with the long road. I knew that we would be crossing desert most of the way and would be on

our own. I, therefore, equipped myself with all we might possibly need along the way.

"After traveling for a few hours, I discovered that the motor was overheated. We would have to stop and wait until it cooled off. I was surprised that a new motor should have become overheated so quickly and opened the hood of the car to inspect it.

"To my dismay, I discovered that all the water had evaporated. Without water in the cooler to cool of the motor, we would not be able to continue on. Yet here we were, in the midst of a vast desert, stranded and helpless.

"I almost panicked, for the chances of finding water were nil and the chances of another car passing by, also close to zero. The prospect looked very bleak indeed.

"When your father saw my downcast expression, he stepped out of the car and asked what the matter was. I described our situation to him and urged him to get back into the car if he did not want to bake in the blazing sun. I climbed in myself, seeing that there was nothing to be done.

"The saintly Baba Sali sat down inside the car and sank in deep thought. A few moments later, he turned to me and said, 'Get out and start walking forward for about two hundred meters. There, on the right side of the road, you will find a spring of fresh water.'

"That cannot be,' I said. 'I know this area very well; I travel it frequently and I am certain that there is no well in the entire vicinity.'

"R' Yisrael insisted that I do what he advised. I dared not be disrespectful and decided to humour him. I started walking in the hot sun. After a few moments of walking, I discovered, to my utter astonishment, a fresh spring of cool, clear water gushing by the side of the road.

"As you can imagine, I was overjoyed. I quenched my thirst and then filled a large container of water which I brought back with me to the car.

"R' Yisrael greeted me with a smile, but did not say anything. I poured some water for him. He recited the blessing over it movingly and drank his fill. I poured the water into the cooler and within a few moments, we were ready to continue on our way.

"Before we began driving, however, I went to the spring and erected a sturdy signpost above it so that I would be able to find the spot in the future and so that others could enjoy it as well.

"The rest of the journey continued uneventfully and we reached Arpud without mishap. I took my leave of R' Yisrael heartily and set out for the long return trip home.

"All along the way, I kept on thinking about the marvellous spring. When I neared the spot, I decided to stop and take a drink of its cool, refreshing water.

"I approached the place. It was distinguishable by the signpost I had erected there. I stopped the car, got out and approached it, full of excitement.

"I looked for the spring - but it was gone! I searched high and low for a long time, but it had vanished. There was no sign of it to be found anywhere!

"I returned to the car very disappointed. But then, throughout the long ride, I thought about the spring. I had plenty of time to digest the miracle that I had experienced firsthand. I realized that Baba Sali was so holy; the Al-mighty had created a spring of water in the midst of the desert especially for him, to save him from perishing.

"From that time on," concluded the taxi driver, "I became an ardent admirer of Baba Sali. I consider it a great honour to be able to be of some service to him or to anyone in his family."

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ISSUE 1088

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

Historically, Jews have settled and taken possession of seven of the ten territories promised to them. The remaining three -- the lands of the Keini, K'nizi, and Kadmoni nations-- await the coming of Moshiach for redemption. In contrast to the other seven lands, no conquest or negotiation will be necessary. The era of Moshiach will bring the cessation of all conflict, a universal recognition of the Almighty as master of the entire earth, and the Jewish people's role as the focal point of His creation. The nations of the world will recognize the integrity of all of the Land of Israel as the eternal heritage of the Jewish nation.



# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

By the Grace of G-d  
16th of Shevat, 5724  
Greeting and Blessing:

It was a pleasure to meet you at the Farbrengen [Chassidic gathering], and it was gratifying to receive regards from you subsequently through Rabbi Moshe Feller. Recently, he also informed me that you addressed a gathering at the home of \_\_\_\_\_, at which you gave your impressions of your visit here, and stimulated your audience towards greater activity to strengthen Judaism in your community in general, and the work of the Regional Merkos Office in particular. I understand that you spoke, as our Sages said, with "words coming from the heart", and I therefore hope that they have penetrated the heart, and have found fertile soil to take root and produce good results.

Although I have not heard from you since our meeting, I trust that this will also come eventually, for there is really no substitution for one's own impressions when delivered personally, rather than through a second party, even if it is an eyewitness account.

At any rate, I wanted you to know that I was very gratified to receive your regards, as well as the report about the said meeting.

Now that we are in the weekly portion of Mattan Torah (receiving the Torah), we can all draw inspiration from it, as indeed we ought to, in accordance with the teaching of the Alter Rebbe (Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi), author of the Tanya and Shulchan Aruch (code of Jewish law), that the weekly portion of the Torah should be a source of timely inspiration and instruction to every Jew, in all his affairs of that week. Mattan Torah has the further significance in that it has to be regarded and accepted as a new experience every day. This is also evidenced from the blessing over the Torah which we make every morning in our morning prayers, "giver of the Torah", in the present tense. As you know, our Sages declared that the words of the Torah should be as new every day.

One of the basic messages of the Ten Commandments is contained in the fact that they begin with "I am" etc., i.e. the profound principle of monotheism, which in itself was a tremendous revolutionary idea in those days of idolatry, dominated by the polytheistic culture of Egypt (as indicated in detail in the Second Commandment, where all forms of idolatry are strictly prohibited). Incidentally, the emphasis on monotheism, and the denial of polytheism, is to be seen not only in the fact that these ideas form the subject of the first two Commandments, but also in the quantity of words and detail which they contain. At the same time, the Ten Commandments conclude with such apparently simple and obvious injunctions as "Thou shalt not steal", etc.

The profundity of monotheism, with which the Ten Commandments begin, and the simplicity of the ethical and moral laws, with which the Ten Commandments conclude, point to an important lesson, namely:

- The true believer in G-d is not the one who holds abstract ideas, but the one whose knowledge of G-d leads him to the proper daily conduct even in ordinary and commonplace matters, in his dealings with his neighbours and the respect for their property even if it be an ox or a donkey, etc.
- The ethical and moral laws, even those that are as obvious as "Thou shalt not steal," and "Thou shalt not murder", will have actual validity and will be observed only if they are based on the first and second Commandments, that is to say, based on Divine authority, the authority of the One and Only G-d.

If in a previous generation there were people who doubted the need of Divine authority for common morality and ethics, in the belief that human reason is sufficient authority for morality and ethics, our present generation has, unfortunately in a most devastating and tragic way refuted this mistaken notion. For, it is precisely the nation which had excelled itself in the exact sciences, the humanities and even in philosophy and ethics, which turned out to be the most depraved nation of the world, making an ideal of murder and robbery, etc. Anyone who knows how insignificant was the minority of Germans who opposed the Hitler regime, realizes that the German cult was not something which was practiced by a few individuals, but had embraced the vast majority of that nation, who considered itself the "super race," etc. Surely it is unnecessary to elaborate on this at greater length.

With all good wishes, and  
With Blessing/signature

## CUSTOMS CORNER

### Circumcision

The *brit* (covenant of circumcision) must be performed by an expert, Torah-observant *mohel*. Several days after birth, the *mohel* inspects the infant's state of health. If all is well, the *brit* must be performed on the eighth day of the boy's life, anytime during daytime hours - the earlier the better. Otherwise, the *brit* must be postponed.

- Remember, the Jewish date begins and ends at nightfall. Consult with a rabbi if the child was born between sunset and dark.
- The *brit* is held even on a Shabbat, holiday or fast day. This is not the case, however, or if the *brit* was postponed, or if the child was born via C-section.
- Circumcision is an obligation for every Jew from eight days old and through all adult ages until the end of life, so even if one misses it as a child, he is still required to have it done later.

## A WORD

*from the Director*

*After only a short introduction to Avraham our forefather in last week's Parsha, this week the Torah begins with already at the age of seventy five. In truth, Avraham had much occurring at the early stages of his life, especially in spiritual growth.*

*As a matter of fact, there exist several accounts as to the year of Abraham's discovery. The Talmud states that Abraham recognized his Creator at age three; other sources cite his age at the time as 4; other as 50. Maimonides' source, for his opinion of 40, seems to be a variant version of the Midrash that states that he was 48. As many commentaries suggest, there is no contradiction between these accounts -- each represents another level of recognition achieved by Avraham.*

*With this in mind it becomes difficult to understand why the Torah chooses to omit these significant details from the text, as they stand as the basis for monotheistic belief. Does the Torah not wish us to come to the same conclusion?*

*Avraham's initial knowledge of G-d was not divinely inspired; his awareness of G-d's oneness was approached with logical deduction. Only by the age of seventy five did G-d appear to him with a command.*

*True, there is a mitzvah to 'know' G-d, to logically infer that there cannot be multiple ultimate powers in the world, but it cannot be our basis. The Torah always comes with a lesson; one's acceptance of G-d's oneness cannot essentially be one which is subject to rational dispute. Therefore the Torah begins the recount of Avraham's encounters with G-d by his first command. The Hebrew word for commandment, mitzvah, can also be defined as connection. A Jew's belief must be engrained within him, connected with his very being. To relate this message to every Jew the Torah shows us Avraham, a seventy five year old man obeying a command, revealing his indispensable connection to his commander.*

*J. I. Guterlich*

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

THE SLIPPERY SLOPE

In the winter of 1903, Rabbi Shalom Ber of Lubavitch spent several months in Vienna for medical treatment. He was accompanied by his son, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, who was later to succeed him as Rebbe. From time to time he would take along his son and visit one of the *shtiblach*, or smaller prayer houses, and sit quietly in the company of the Chassidim from Poland who gathered there, in order to hear from their mouths some tasty morsel of Chassidic ethical lore, or the story of an exemplary life.

One evening on the Fifteenth of the Hebrew month of Shvat they went together, father and son, to one of these *shtiblach*, and found a little group of aged Chassidim sitting around a table, exchanging their favourite stories about Rabbi Meir of Premishlan.

One old man related that the mikvah for ritual immersion was situated high up on the slope of a steep hill on the outskirts of Premishlan, and when the road leading up to it was slippery, people had to take the long way around the hill, for to walk uphill was dangerous. Rabbi Meir alone always took the direct route up, irrespective of the state of the road, and was never known to stumble or slip.

One snowy day when the icy mountains paths were hazardous in the extreme, Rabbi Meir walked uphill to the mikvah as usual. Two guests were staying in the area, sons of the rich who had come somewhat under the influence of the "Enlightenment" of the *Haskalah* movement.

These young men did not believe in supernatural achievements, and when they saw Rabbi Meir that day striding with sure steps uphill as usual, they convinced themselves and each other that the road up there was no doubt perfectly safe, and not in the least dangerous. And in order to bolster their theory by empirical proof, they waited until Rabbi Meir had entered the mikvah building, and set out confidently up the hillside road. After only a few steps they stumbled and slipped, and needed medical treatment for their injuries.

One of them was the son of one of Rabbi Meir's close Chassidim, and when he was fully healed he mustered the courage to approach the Tzaddik with a question: Why was it that no man could negotiate that slippery uphill road, while the Rebbe walked with such sure steps, never stumbling?

Rabbi Meir replied: "If a man is tied up on high, he doesn't fall down below. Meir is tied up on high, and that is why he can take even a slippery hill in his stride."

Rabbi Shalom Ber of Lubavitch was under orders from his Viennese doctors to go outdoors for a certain period for a daily constitutional. One cool, fresh evening the Rebbe and his son went out to stroll in one of the avenues of the city, in the middle of which there was a municipal garden.

As they walked side by side, the Rebbe became so deeply absorbed in thought that he unwittingly drew the attention of many passers-by. He walked on in this manner for a long time, until his son became embarrassed. For him each minute seemed to last an hour, until at length a deep sigh inadvertently passed his lips.

His father paused, being grieved to hear that any circumstance could reduce his son to becoming morose or distressed, and said: "Why do you sigh? If a man is tied up on high, he doesn't fall down below."

Biographical notes:

Rabbi Meir of Primishlan [?-29 Iyar 1850], lived in abject but patient poverty, yet exerted himself tirelessly for the needy and the suffering. His *ruach hakodesh* (prophetic spirit) and his ready wit have become legendary. He wrote no works, but some of his teachings were collected and published by his Chassidim after his death.

Rabbi Sholom-Dovber Schneersohn (Cheshvan 20, 1860 - Nissan 2, 1920), known as the Rebbe Rashab, was the fifth Rebbe of the Lubavitcher dynasty. He is the author of hundreds of major tracts in the exposition of Chassidic thought.

Thoughts THAT COUNT

And he called in the name of G-d (12:8)

Said Reish Lakish: Read not "and he called (*vayikra*)" but "and he made others call (*vayakrei*)." This is to teach us that Abraham caused G-d's name to be spoken in the mouths of all passers-by. How so? After they ate and drank [in his home], he made them bless G-d. He said to them: "Have you eaten of mine? Your food has been provided by the G-d of the world! Thank, praise and bless He who spoke the world into being!" (*Talmud, Sotah 10a*)

I will make your progeny like the dust of the earth (13:17)

Just as the dust of the earth is made fertile only with water, so, too, the people of Israel are blessed only in the merit of the Torah which is analogous to water. Just as dust erodes all metal utensils while it itself lasts forever, so is it with Israel: all idolatrous nations disintegrate, while they persist. (*Midrash Rabbah*)

And He said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars...so shall your children be." (Gen. 15:5)

The Jewish people are likened to stars, from earth they seem very small, but in the heavens they are actually immense. On earth, the nations of the world may consider the Jews to be of little significance, but in heaven, they are of primary importance. (*Divrei Shaul*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 26 OCTOBER 2012



BEGINS		ENDS
7:30	MELBOURNE	8:31
7:22	ADELAIDE	8:20
5:44	BRISBANE	6:39
6:27	DARWIN	7:18
5:43	GOLD COAST	6:38
6:19	PERTH	7:16
7:00	SYDNEY	7:58
7:10	CANBERRA	8:09
7:27	LAUNCESTON	8:31
7:30	AUCKLAND	8:29
7:36	WELLINGTON	8:40
7:29	HOBART	8:34
6:43	BYRON BAY	7:39

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS LECH LECHA  
10 CHESHVAN • 26 OCTOBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	7:30 PM
	MINCHA:	7:40 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8:10 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:40 AM
	MINCHA:	7:30 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS::	8:31 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	7:40 PM
	MAARIV:	8:30 PM