

LAMPLIGHTER

7 Cheshvan
Parshas Lech Lecha

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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In the Torah portion of Lech Lecha we read about the "The Covenant of the Pieces - Brit Bein Habetarim," that G-d made with our forefather Abraham. It was then that G-d promised to give Abraham the land of Israel as an inheritance for his descendants forever.

Among the many things G-d told Abraham was that his children would one day be exiled in Egypt. However, G-d promised that their exile would end. Not only would they return from their exile but "afterwards they will go out with great wealth."

The intent of G-d's promise of "great wealth" was not simply as payment for their suffering. In truth, G-d's statement that "afterwards they will go out with great wealth" revealed the entire purpose behind their descent into Egypt.

At first glance this is difficult to understand. Had G-d asked the Jewish people to relinquish the "great wealth" they were promised in order to hasten the end of their suffering they would have surely agreed. Nonetheless, we find that G-d did not offer them this choice, as the "great wealth" they were to obtain in Egypt was of particular significance.

What was this "great wealth" that required the Jewish people to endure a bitter exile for hundreds of years, and why was it so important?

The inner purpose of the Jews' descent into Egypt was that through their service of G-d, the "sparks of holiness" that that country contained would be refined and elevated. Indeed, the Jews' Divine service was successful, as it states, "And a mixed multitude (erev rav) also went up with them," for the numerical equivalent of "rav" is 202 - i.e., all 202 sparks of holiness that Egypt possessed were successfully purified.

This, then, is the "great wealth" that the Jews brought out of Egypt with them. Indeed, it was for the Jewish people's own benefit; had it not occurred, Abraham would have had a valid complaint to level against G-d.

But what was the benefit that they derived?

Every soul has its own unique role in the mystical process of "elevating the sparks." By purifying the specific "sparks" he encounters throughout his life, the Jew brings redemption to his own soul, and to the world at large.

The lesson to be derived from all this is that the Jew's function is to involve himself in the material world for the express purpose of elevating these hidden sparks of holiness. For with these sparks we will merit to greet Moshiach imminently.

Adapted from Volume 3 of Likutei Sichot

Sharing the Light

By Tali Loewenthal

There are people who have a gift or talent, but they refuse to reveal it or share it with others. They may have great knowledge, but they keep it to themselves. They endeavour to acquire more knowledge, and perhaps even more spirituality and more holiness-for themselves.

Others feel that if anyone has a gift, talent or skill this surely has been given for a purpose: to share it with others who would benefit.

Abraham, the first Jew, the hero of this week's Torah reading, was one of the greatest examples of the philosophy that one's gifts should be shared with others.

Abraham had a gift-a Divine gift. In fact his gift was: the Divine. Although he was brought up by his parents to serve idols, in a generation steeped in idolatry, he had discovered that it is G-d and no other who is Master of the world. What a beautiful thought! What a tremendous idea! G-d the Creator of All is the source of all existence and of all goodness.

What did Abraham do with his newfound knowledge? He might have simply tried to gain more and more spiritual wisdom for himself. The Sages tell us that Abraham's initial spiritual focus was very exalted, far beyond the physical practicalities of the world. In fact his name Abram, before it was later changed, means "exalted father" (av ram), signifying an exalted level of consciousness. Despite this, he and his wife Sarah sought to teach other people, as Rashi tells us: Abraham would communicate with the men and inspire them with belief in G-d, while Sarah would teach the women.

Then the beginning of this week's reading tells us that G-d told him to travel, "Go for yourself." This meant a kind of descent, towards worldliness, in order to share further his wisdom with others. The Midrash describes him as a phial of fragrant spices which is brought into the open so that others can benefit from its fragrance.

We also learn that when he reached the Land of Israel "he called in the name of G-d." Says the Talmud: Do not read this as meaning simply that Abraham himself called in the name of G-d. It means that he caused others to call in the Name of G-d.

Wherever he went, Abraham and his wife Sarah fearlessly proclaimed knowledge of G-d. One G-d, one moral standard, expressed in the Seven Noahide Laws. This idea was so different from the current fashions of his time that Abraham was persecuted, his life was threatened, and he was denigrated and derided. But he did not stop. Eventually he prevailed. His legacy is the Jewish Nation which has lived according to Divine teaching for thousands of years, and which has also generated an awareness of Monotheism in many parts of the world, paving the way for the Messiah.

G-d gave a promise to Abraham: "All families of the earth will be blessed through you." The Torah and the later history of the Jewish people describe how this promise begins to come true, bringing positive illumination to every human being in the world.

Slice of LIFE

Finding G-d in Bangkok Thailand

Two years ago a young Israeli in his early twenties entered Rabbi Wilhelm's Chabad House and stood before the massive bookcase filled with Torah books with a bewildered look on his face. Rabbi Wilhelm asked him if he needed help and he replied that he was looking for a book on Judaism.

When the Rabbi suggested that perhaps they learn something on the book of Bereshis (Genesis) the fellow asked if that was a Jewish book and when he heard it was, agreed to sit and learn.

The young man (we will call him Erez) grew up on an atheistic Israeli Kibbutz where religion (especially the Jewish religion) was branded as no more than a crutch for the crippled. So it was no wonder that he knew virtually nothing about Judaism.

Erez told the Rabbi that a few months ago he and his girlfriend, from another Kibbutz, decided to ditch Israel for a few months and set off for an unforgettable tour of the Far East together like tens of thousands of other Israelis.

Several months into their journey in one of his calls home Erez's parents made an interesting proposition. They suggested that they would pay his way, round trip, and they would love to have him for a family reunion.

He talked it over with his girlfriend, she agreed and a day later he was back in Israel with his family. There was a wonderful warm feeling of love and unity that he never felt before. They ate together, spoke, sang, laughed, reminisced and took walks together every day and after two weeks they said goodbye and returned to Thailand.

When his plane landed he called to tell his parents that he arrived safely but his mother, fighting back the tears gave him some terrible news. Just minutes after his plane took off his father suffered a heart attack and passed away. Erez was stunned.

Not being religious he didn't even consider a period of mourning. It was a shock though, the wonderful irony that the family reunion coincided exactly with the last two weeks of his father's life could not have been an accident; some infinitely kind, omniscient and unfathomable power or being was involved here.

Could that be 'G-d'?

But every time he brought it up to his girlfriend she just fell silent; she wanted to just enjoy the trip and concentrate on happy, non-religious things.

The weeks passed, the trip went on and they were enjoying every moment of it

together. Once in a while, sometimes in the middle of the afternoon or before he went to sleep, the mystery of it all suddenly welled up in his heart until he took his mind off it.

Then his girlfriend came up with a fantastic idea; she heard of that a very special yoga master in India was beginning an unforgettable ten-day silence and meditation seminar and she wanted that they should go.

For the first time Erez disagreed. How could it be that she didn't want to speak about Jewish things but she did want to go to an ashram? He respected her desire for the seminar, but he wanted something different.

They spoke it over and decided that they wouldn't be able to be together in the meditation seminar. They would part ways for ten days and he would go to learn about Judaism.

He didn't really have much of a plan but he had been briefly in the Chabad House in Bangkok which was the only religious Jewish place he had been to in his life and figured that maybe they would teach him.

Rabbi Wilhelm was more than happy to arrange a full day of teachers for Erez and even take time every day to personally teach him. But when he suggested that he should first of all put on Tefillin for a minute or so, Erez flatly refused; he hated religion, he came only to learn.

But at learning he was fantastic. He took to the books like a fish to water. He asked tens of questions on each detail and enjoyed the answers but at every opportunity he was careful to declare that it would never bring him to change his lifestyle.

Then, two days later, he suddenly approached Rabbi Wilhelm and said he wanted to put on Tefillin. Rabbi Wilhelm didn't ask questions. Before Erez could change his mind he took out his Tefillin as quickly as possible and showed Erez how to put them on for the first time in his life.

"You're probably wondering why I suddenly changed my mind and put on Tefillin." Erez asked when he finished. Rabbi Wilhelm nodded 'yes'.

"Well, last night when I called home and told my mother that I decided to learn in the Chabad House she began to cry. She said that she would never have even thought of telling me, but now that I mention Chabad, she has a secret about my father to reveal.

She told me that over fifty years ago Chabad helped him to get out of Russia and he got to know them. He didn't like religion, not at all. But the Chabad people made a good impression and, well, he used to put on Tefillin every day.

"He didn't want anyone to know. Especially the people in the Kibbutz, so he used to put them in the bathroom where no one would see. But he did it every single morning till the day he died. He was proud to be a Jew.

And that is why I decided to put on today."

After her seminar Erez's girlfriend returned to Bangkok to resume their trip but she was in for a surprise; Erez wanted one more week and he wanted her to join him!

It wasn't an ultimatum. He made it clear that he would do what she decided. So they talked it over. She agreed to the week but there was no way she would even set foot in the Chabad House. But on the other hand she knew that Erez was no fool. He was a clever young man, and had been as big an atheist as herself, maybe bigger. She didn't want to be closed minded.

So they came to an agreement; he could have one more week and she would participate from 'outside'. Every morning Erez would enter the Chabad House with a list of questions she had prepared the night before and after each class he would go outside, meet her, they would discuss the answers and he would enter with more questions.

The week ended, Erez announced that he was continuing his trip, said goodbye and Rabbi Wilhelm returned to the hundreds of visitors that pass through the Chabad House every day.

A year later Rabbi Wilhelm, was invited to speak at several institutions in Israel the last of which was the Yeshiva (Torah Academy) in Tzfat where four hundred-plus students learn.

As he entered the building and the Rabbis there greeted him and shook his hand, someone from behind him yelled "Hey, Rabbi!!" and as he turned to see who it was one of the bearded young men ran up, hugged him warmly, gave him a kiss on the cheek and stepped back saying "Don't you recognize me?"

Rabbi Wilhelm was baffled.

"It's me! It's Erez! Remember? A year ago? Remember? how my father passed away?"

The Rabbi could not believe his eyes. "Wow!" He exclaimed "Of course I remember! It's a miracle! But what about your girlfriend? What happened? How is she?"

"Listen Rabbi" Erez moved closer and spoke in a low voice. "You better watch out! There are a lot of people that I think are after your life! A lot!"

"My life?" he replied "Are you serious? Why? Who? What has that got to do with your girlfriend? Why are you smiling?"

"Who?" Erez answered "All the people in my kibbutz... and in my girlfriend's as well!! That's right, she is now learning around the corner in M'chone Alte, the Chabad College for girls. And the people in our Kibbutzim are blazing mad! They're going out of their minds!"

A few months later Rabbi Wilhelm got an invitation to their wedding and just recently he heard they were hired by a Chabad House to do what the Rebbe sent him to do... wake up Jews.

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Editor: Yisroel Leib Lester
P.O. Box 67, Balaclava Vic. 3183 AUSTRALIA
Phone 0433 026 117
Email: lamplighter@rabbinicalcollege.edu.au

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ISSUE 1108

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The First Holy Temple was characterized by a higher degree of G-dliness than was in the Second Temple. This is reflected in the fact that five elements of holiness including the Ark were present in the First Temple and were not present in the Second. On the other hand, the Second Temple possessed an advantage over the first. It was larger and endured for a longer time; i.e., in time and space, the qualities which characterize our material world, it surpassed the First Temple. The Third Temple will possess both these advantages, plus a unique dimension reflected in the fusion of these two.



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

By the Grace of G-d
The Days of Selichos, 5734 [1974]
Brooklyn, N.Y.
To the sons and daughters of Israel
Wherever they may be:
May G-d's blessings for life be with you.

Greetings and Blessings!

[...] The question arises: How can every Jew be expected to attain such a level, and to do so not only truthfully but happily as well? This question is accentuated when one realizes that on the one hand, the Divine dwelling place among the nether beings is to be built in a world that is spiritually lowly and that is physical and materialistic, in a world in which Jews are - physically - "the least among the nations"; and on the other hand, this task is demanded of every Jew, placed as he is in a predicament in which his indispensable needs (such as eating, drinking, sleeping and working) occupy a great part of his time and exertion, leaving little time for holy and spiritual matters. How, then, can a Jew be expected to attain such a level?

The answer to this question, which can be understood by every man and woman, lies in the attribute of *bitachon*, placing one's trust in G-d. This attribute is fundamental to the Torah, which is called *Toras chayim* ("the Torah of Life"). And since in the Holy Tongue the word "Torah" is cognate with *horaah* (which means "teaching" or "instruction"), the phrase *Toras chayim* signifies "a guidepost for one's daily life."

The attribute of *bitachon* is also highlighted in the psalm that is read twice daily throughout Elul, the month of self-preparation for the new year, and also at the beginning of the year, during most of the month of Tishrei: "A Psalm of David. G-d is my light and my salvation - whom shall I fear?"

This trust in G-d, this utter reliance on His help, which David HaMelech expresses here on behalf of every Jew, embraces both the material and the spiritual aspects of one's life. It extends to the highest reaches of one's Divine service. This may be seen in the later verses of the above psalm, culminating in the final verse: "Place your hope in G-d; be strong and let your heart be valiant, and place your hope in G-d."

Having trust in G-d means that one feels a certainty and a conviction that G-d will help overcome all of life's difficulties, whether material or spiritual, since He is "my light and my salvation." Every man and woman will certainly be able to fulfill their mission in This World - and with joy, *great joy* - when they consider that it is G-d Himself Who chose them to be His emissary in the world, to build Him "a dwelling place among the nether beings." Moreover, they have G-d's assurance that as they carry out His mission, He is their light, help, and strength.

One's joy in executing this mission is heightened when one recalls that G-d grants His help in the spirit of the verse, "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine" - and His love is extraordinary, G-dly.

This love, as our Sages teach, becomes mainly manifest in the period from Rosh Chodesh Elul through Yom Kippur.

At this time, therefore, and indeed throughout the year, this love ought to elicit in response a boundless love for G-d, a love that finds expression in the verses, "Whom [else] have I in Heaven? And aside from You, I desire nothing on earth. My life and my heart expire [to You, G-d]."

These verses, too, focus on one's love for G-d and one's trust in Him, both in spiritual matters ("in Heaven") and in material matters ("on earth").

Every Jew's innate trust in G-d is a heritage bequeathed to him by our Patriarchs. Of them it is written, "Our forefathers trusted in You; they trusted and You saved them." All that is required is that one should allow this trust to surface and materialize, enabling it to permeate every detail of one's daily life.

There is a principle taught by the Sages, of blessed memory: "By the same measure with which a man measures, his due is meted out to him." Accordingly, the stronger and more disproportionate is one's trust, the more disproportionately will one's trust be manifestly vindicated and fulfilled - by the bestowal of G-d's blessings, both material and spiritual.

May G-d grant that all the above - fulfilling the G-d-given mission of building Him a dwelling place down here below, placing one's trust in Him, and receiving His material and spiritual blessings - be true of every Jew in the fullest measure.

And this in turn will hasten the fulfillment of the most comprehensive blessing for the entire House of Israel - the true and complete Redemption through our Righteous *Mashiach*.

With blessings that you be inscribed and sealed for a good and a sweet year, in both material and spiritual matters together,

CUSTOMS CORNER

"And now," Moses says, "write for yourselves this song" (Deuteronomy 31:19), meaning, that every Jew has a Mitzvah to write a Torah scroll. The Torah scroll is a tangible embodiment of our connection to G-d, our most precious treasure and our guide to life.

But because writing a Torah is a laborious process, as each one of its 304,805 letters must be written by hand, with ink and quill on parchment, in special calligraphy, by a trained scribe, one may commission one to write a Torah for oneself. If one can't afford that, there is another way to fulfill the mitzvah: one can purchase just one letter in a Torah-meaning, have just one letter written specifically for oneself.

Which is the most important letter in the Torah? The first? The last? The letters in the Ten Commandments? Actually, if *any* letter is missing or incomplete, the *whole* scroll is invalid for use.

The Jewish nation is one Torah scroll. Every individual-big or small, scholar or unlearned-is one letter. We are all one, interdependent and equally important

A WORD

from the Director

This week's Parsha begins with G-d telling Abraham "Lech Lecha" which means literally to "Go to you". The verse continues with G-d explaining that he, Abraham, should leave from his land, his birthplace, and his father's house. Commentaries inquire what is the purpose of the word "to you" in the verse? It would seem that the verse would make perfect sense without the word, reading "go from your land etc.

It is explained as a lesson for all of time, how an individual can improve and achieve a higher level of awareness; by leaving one's "box", the place where he is comfortable, he is able to transcend the regular conscious "self" and reveal the true "self". This process allowed Abraham, who until then was searching for and spreading the knowledge of G-d on his own, to rise to a higher level in his connection to Hashem; by leaving his own boundaries and limits, and fulfilling the directives he was given by Hashem.

This brings us back to the meaning of the verse: "go to you", meaning go from the limits and obstacles holding you back and "go to [the true] you", transcend and reveal the true inner soul.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe at a Farbrengen - a Chassidic gathering - once said "L'chaim" to a videographer who was videotaping the Farbrengen. Sensing his hesitation, the Rebbe encouraged him saying: "forget about your profession and say L'chaim as all around you".

This personifies an identical message. By forgetting about and "going" from the "labels" and constraints which we all carry with us, we will come to a higher level of connection to Hashem and become one with "all around us", the epitome of real Jewish unity.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

The Nazi Accomplice in the Circumcision An account by Rabbi Israel Spira, the Rebbe of Bluzhov

Each morning at dawn, the Germans would lead us out of the camp for a day of hard labour that ended only at nightfall. Each pair of workers was given a huge saw and expected to cut its quota of logs. Because of the horrendous conditions in the camp and the starvation rations on which we were supposed to subsist, most of us could barely stand on our feet. But we sawed away, knowing that our lives depended upon it; anyone collapsing on the job or failing to meet his daily quota was killed on the spot, G-d forbid.

One day, as I pulled and pushed the heavy saw with my partner, I was approached by a young woman from our work detail. The pallor of her face showed her to be in an extremely weak physical state. "Rebbe," she whispered to me, "do you have a knife?"

I immediately understood her intention and felt the great responsibility that rested upon me. "My daughter," I begged, concentrating all the love and conviction in my heart in the effort to dissuade her from her intended deed. "Do not take your own life. I know that your life is now a living hell, from which death seems a blessed release. But we must never lose hope. With G-d's help, we will survive this ordeal and see better days."

But the woman seemed oblivious to my words. "A knife," she repeated. "I must have a knife. Now. Before it is too late."

At that moment, one of the German guards noticed our whispered conversation and approached us. "What did she say to you?" He demanded of me.

We both froze. Conversing during work was a grave transgression. Many a camp inmate had been shot on the spot for far lesser crimes.

The woman was first to recover. "I asked him for a knife," she said. To my horror, she then addressed her request to the guard: "Give me a knife!"

The German, too, guessed her intention, and a devilish smile flickered on his lips. Doubtless he had seen the bodies of those who, out of desperation, threw themselves during the night on the electrified fence that surrounded the camp; but this would be a novel sight for him. Still smiling, he reached into his pocket and handed her a small knife.

Taking the knife, she hurried back to her work station and bent over a small bundle of rags that she had placed on a log. Quickly unravelling the bundle, she took out a tiny infant. Before our astonished eyes, she swiftly and skilfully circumcised the week-old boy.

"Blessed are You, G-d our G-d, King of the Universe," she recited in a clear voice, "Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to enter him into the covenant of Abraham our Father."

Cradling the child in her arms, she soothed his cries. Then, she addressed the heavens: "Master of the Universe! Eight days ago you gave me a child. I know that neither I nor he will long survive in this accursed place. But now, when you take him back, you will receive him as a complete Jew."

"Your knife," she said, handing the holy object back to the German. "Thank you."

This story was told by Rabbi Israel Spira, the Rebbe of Bluzhov, who witnessed it in the Janowska Concentration Camp.

Thoughts THAT COUNT

And G-d spoke to Abram (Genesis 12:1)

There was once a person who was traveling from place to place and he saw a palace in flames. Said he: "Can it be that there is no master to this palace?" So the owner of the palace looked out to him and said to him: "I am the master of the Palace." By the same token, because Abraham would go around saying, "Can it be that the world has no master?" G-d looked out and said: "I am the owner, the master of the world." (*Midrash Rabbah*)

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

Just as the dust of the earth is from one end of the world to the other, so, too, will your children be scattered from one end of the world to the other. 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. Just as dust is treaded upon, so, too, you children are destined to be treaded upon by the nations. (*Midrash Rabbah*)

Not a thread nor a shoe-strap, nor I shall take anything that is yours (14:23)

In reward for Abraham's saying, "Not a thread nor a shoe-strap," his children merited two mitzvot: the thread of blue [in the tzitzit] and the strap of the tefillin. (*Talmud, Sotah 17a*)

Look now toward heaven and count the stars So shall be your progeny (15:5)

When they rise, they will rise as high as the heavens; when they fall, they will fall as low as the dust. (*Pesikta Zutarti*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 11 OCTOBER 2013

BEGINS	ENDS
7:14MELBOURNE	8:13
7:08ADELAIDE	8:05
5:35BRISBANE	6:28
6:25DARWIN	7:15
5:34GOLD COAST	6:27
6:07PERTH	7:02
6:46SYDNEY	7:43
6:56CANBERRA	7:53
7:09LAUNCESTON	8:10
7:14AUCKLAND	8:13
7:18WELLINGTON	8:19
7:10HOBART	8:12
6:33BYRON BAY	7:27
6:36SINGAPORE	7:25



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS LECH LECHA
7 CHESHVAN • 11 OCTOBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	7:14 PM
	MINCHA:	7:20 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	7:50 PM
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	9:53 PM
	MINCHA:	7:05 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	8:14 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	
	SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MON-FRI:	8:00 AM
	MINCHA:	7:25 PM
	MAARIV:	8:15 PM, 9:00 PM