

LAMPLIGHTER

10 Cheshvan
Parshas
Lech-Lecha
1269
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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.

Leaf Peeping

While it's easy to get caught up in contemplating the beauty of nature, it might even be more interesting to consider the Divine destiny of a leaf.

The Baal Shem Tov, founder of Chasidism, told the following story to illustrate the extensive role Divine Providence plays in our lives:

A person walks down a path and notices a leaf fall from the branch of a tree. "Leaf, leaf" he whispers, "why did you fall at this moment?"

The leaf replies, "The branch shook and I fell. Go ask the branch."

The person asks the branch and is answered, "A wind came and made me shake... go ask the wind."

The wind gives a similar answer: "I don't know why, but the Source of the wind made me shake the branch, go ask it."

When the person asks the Source of the Wind, it says, "I am not the master. I just follow orders. Go ask G-d and surely He can tell you why."

Finally the person addresses the question to G-d. "Why did the leaf fall?" he asks simply.

"Lift up the leaf and you will understand why."

The person raises the leaf and sees an ant carrying a large piece of food. He questions the ant, who explains, "I was tired and hot. This leaf came down, shaded me, and allowed me to rest before continuing my journey."

G-d's kindness and care is exercised for the benefit of each of His creations. Even the smallest ant is included in His master-plan.

Another leaf story illustrates this point:

Once, when Rabbi Shalom Ber of Lubavitch was strolling with his son, Yosef Yitzchok (later to succeed him as Rebbe) they passed through fields of grain. "Every movement of each stalk is actualized by Divine Providence for the sake of a purpose known to heaven," exclaimed Reb Shalom Ber. Yosef Yitzchok became engrossed in contemplating this concept of Divine Providence. Deep in thought, he picked up a leaf and tore it into little pieces as he walked.

"How can you treat an object created by G-d so casually?" his father rebuked him. "Just now we were speaking of Divine Providence. The leaf you tore was created by G-d for a particular purpose. In what way is the leaf less significant than you? Just as the human being has his own task to fulfill, so has this representative of the vegetable kingdom its function to perform--and both have a Divinely directed purpose."

So, the next time we're looking at leaves, we might want to consider these stories and how concerned G-d is with every aspect of all creation, including each one of us!

Slice of LIFE

Eighteen Years, or More

by Rabbi Mordechai Berkowitz

A few months ago, during a visit to the countryside, I led the Sabbath prayers at a local community synagogue. Before services, the gabbai (attendant) approached me and asked me to deliver a sermon. I agreed.

While giving over the weekly Torah portion and its relevant lessons, I spoke about the Rebbe and his work in Jewish outreach.

Afterwards, an elderly congregant approached me. "When you spoke about the Lubavitcher Rebbe, you aroused some very special memories within me," he said, with great emotion. "If you are free for a few minutes, I'd like to tell you a story about the Rebbe that I personally experienced."

I soon found myself sitting down next to this gentleman, listening most attentively to the following story:

About 40 years ago, I was living in Boston, actively involved with the local Jewish community and Young Israel. I sent my children to the Jewish day school and, when they reached college age, to Boston University. Since in those days many observant Jews studied there, the campus provided a kosher kitchen. Naturally, I not only paid the high cost of tuition, but also the special cost for the kosher meal program.

Several months into the school year I received a surprising phone call from my son, who decided to be honest: since he didn't want me to waste my money for nothing, he asked that I stop paying for the kosher meals. "For several weeks now," he said, "I haven't been stringent; I eat my meals in the university's regular dining hall, together with my friends."

I was shocked. I never imagined how powerful the winds of heresy were blowing at the university. I realized that I had made a serious mistake by sending my son to a place of spiritual

danger.

But it was too late. My son had shaken off all Torah observance, and I was beside myself. From a communally active individual and a businessman, I became a broken vessel.

One day, I met one of my acquaintances. Noticing on my face that something was wrong, he asked if he could help. I tried to dissuade him, but as a truly good friend, he insisted.

Eventually, in great anguish, I shared with him the news about my son, about my attempts to persuade him to return to the right path, only to find that it was no longer possible. My friend brightened. "I know someone who can help you. You know I'm not at all a Lubavitcher, but I'm telling you right now that the Rebbe can help you."

I refused to believe that after all my efforts to bring my son back to his heritage, the Lubavitcher Rebbe from New York, who had neither seen nor known my son, could succeed where I had failed. But hearing from my friend a number of miracle stories, I concluded that it was worth a try. Even if it didn't help, it certainly couldn't hurt. I called the Rebbe's secretary, made an appointment, and traveled to New York.

I arrived at 770, Lubavitch headquarters, late in the evening. The people in line ahead of me were standing quietly and chanting Psalms. The tranquil atmosphere calmed ever so slightly the storm my soul was enduring.

My turn came. I entered the Rebbe's room with much excitement, and after introducing myself, I proceeded to give all the sad details.

The Rebbe listened. After I finished, he said, "You must be careful not to sever your connection with your son. Maintain good relations with him, and in the meantime, accept him as he is. However, in the end, he will come back."

Then, the Rebbe added the following: "This could take some time - 18, 20, 22 years. But he eventually will come back."

Although I wasn't a Lubavitcher Chasid, the Rebbe's unique look and tone filled me with serenity, and I left the room certain that my son would return to his

family and the Torah.

Over the following years, we always kept the channel of communication open, despite the fact that it was a little one-sided, since my son didn't want to come home. This was possibly because he didn't want to upset us too much.

Then, in the eighteenth year, just before Rosh Hashana, he called and asked if he could come to us. We told him that his room was waiting, and that he should just come.

I excitedly remembered the Rebbe's words. My son came for Rosh Hashana, went with me to shul, and ate the holiday meals with us. The atmosphere was wonderful. Apparently, however, the time had not yet come for him to return completely, and after Rosh Hashana he left in peace and went back to his business affairs.

Two years passed. Twenty years since the meeting with the Rebbe, I again received a phone call from my son. It was right before Passover and my son asked to come and spend the holiday with us. He actively participated in the Seder, and we spent the entire week together. Faithful to the Rebbe's instructions, I refrained from pressuring him regarding Jewish observance. For his part, my son also didn't raise the subject.

From our conversations, I understood that my son was rapidly advancing in his career. Another two years passed, and the Rebbe's words began to ring even more powerfully. I had waited 22 years for this moment.

One day, my son called me. He asked to see us again, but this time he wanted my wife and me to come to his house. Before I could think about how to keep kosher there, he updated me.

Recently he had become acquainted with the Rebbe's emissary in Washington, through whom he had begun to return to his roots. Remembering his training for his Bar Mitzva, he became the official Torah reader for the local Chabad House.

"A short while ago," my son concluded, "I made my kitchen kosher, and now you can come to me without any worries."

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Editor: Shlomo Chaim Kesselman
P.O. Box 67, Balaclava Vic. 3183 AUSTRALIA

Email: lamplighter@rabbinicalcollege.edu.au

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ISSUE 1269

MOSHIACH MATTERS

G-d promised Abraham the lands of the ten nations. This included not only the land of the seven Canaanite nations conquered by the Jews, but also the lands of Keini, Kenizi, and Kadmoni. G-d promised, and thus gave, the Jews all these ten lands at the same time. Nevertheless, in the present era, we were granted only the lands of seven nations and the fulfillment of this promise in its entirety will be in the Messianic Era... In that Era, by contrast, not only all Jews of that generation but also all Jews of all previous generations who will arise in the Resurrection, will live there.



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

When Dating, Do I Follow My Mind or My Heart?

I received your letter in which you write that you had been given to understand that in connection with a Shidduch, the true approach of the Torah and the Jewish way is not to let the heart play a decisive part in it, but that the important thing is to ensure the good qualities, etc., of the party concerned. Therefore, you write, that my reply, as it was reported to you, seemed inconsistent with the above.

Now, I do not know how my reply was reported to you. At any rate, my reply always relates to a particular question, asked by a particular person, on the basis of a particular set of data, and, needless to say, my reply is given to the person concerned, who alone can reveal the answer to others. With regard to your particular problem that you write in your letter, however, let me state that it is true that according to the ideal of the Torah, "The mind should rule the heart," and when the mind desires something in accordance with the Torah, the heart should follow without question. This is theoretically true also of a Shidduch, where the ideal woman is described as "Grace is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth G-d, she shall be praised" (Proverbs 31:30). The same is true, of course, of a man.

Undoubtedly, however, in our present-day world, it is not always a case where the heart follows the mind, but the heart often has an opinion of its own, not consistent with the above quotation. Therefore, when it comes to a particular case, and it is necessary to decide whether it is a suitable Shidduch among two particular persons, it is then necessary to take into consideration the two concerned parties as they are, and not as they should be, in all perfection. Hence, there is no contradiction between the ideal of the Torah in connection with a Shidduch, and the practical necessity to advise one, in a particular situation where the party has not attained the ideal stage, to listen also to the voice of the heart.

I trust that you know of the three daily Shiurim and observe them, and may G-d grant that you find your suitable Shidduch in all details, since G-d's blessing is necessary in every case, and particularly in the case of a Shidduch.

A WORD

from the Director

This week's Torah portion, Lech Lecha, describes G-d's promise of the Land of Israel to the Jewish people. It also describes Abraham's travels through the land whereby he acquired it for his descendants forever. Abraham's traversing of the land was not a necessary prerequisite for his taking possession of it as G-d's promise itself sufficed to transfer ownership of the Holy Land to Abraham.

It has been mentioned numerous times that the Rebbe's statements regarding the Holy Land, and his staunch position not to give back even one inch of land to the Arabs, has nothing to do with Biblical promises nor Messianic visions.

Rather, the Rebbe has made these statements and taken this position because of "Pikuach Nefesh" - the imminent danger to life - of Jews in the Holy Land.

Unfortunately, the Rebbe's stand has been shown to be absolutely true. And yet, of course, there are spiritual as well as mundane lessons to be learned from this week's Torah portion. There are spiritual implications, the Rebbe explains, of G-d's promise to the Jewish people via Abraham:

"There is a particular relevance to G-d's promise in the present age, the era immediately preceding Moshiach's coming. For G-d promised Abraham the lands of the ten nations, including not only the land of the seven Canaanite nations conquered by the Jews after the exodus from Egypt, but also the lands of the Keini, the Kenizi, and the Kadmoni people. G-d promised - and thus gave - the Jewish people all these ten lands at the same time. Nevertheless, in the present era, we were granted only the lands of seven nations and the fulfillment of this promise in its full sense will not be until the Era of the Redemption..."

"In the Era of the Redemption, by contrast, not only all the Jews of that generation but also all the Jews of all previous generations who will arise in the Resurrection, will live there."

J. I. Gutnick

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

Why do we wear a Kippah?

Question: *Is the kippah a symbolic reminder intended to prevent assimilation, or is the kippah a biblical obligation, like the tzitzit?*

Answer: The tradition to wear a kippah is not derived from any biblical passage. Rather, it is a custom which evolved as a sign of our recognition that there is Someone "above" us who watches our every act.

The Talmud relates that a woman was once told by astrologers that her son is destined to be a thief. To prevent this from happening, she insisted that he always have his head covered, to remind him of G-d's presence and instill within him the fear of heaven. Once, while sitting under a palm tree, his headcovering fell off. He was suddenly overcome by an urge to eat a fruit from the tree, which did not belong to him. It was then that he realized the strong effect which the wearing of a kippah had on him.

In Talmudic times, the practice of wearing a headcovering was reserved for men of great stature. In later generations, though, it became the accepted custom for all Jewish men to wear a kippah at all times, and especially during prayer. As with all Jewish customs, once they become a universally accepted Jewish practice, they become halachically obligatory.

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

The following story was recorded by the Chasid, Reb Dov Zev who witnessed the events with his own eyes.

More than a hundred years ago there lived a Chasid by the name of Reb Chaim Yehoshua. He had lived to the ripe age of 87, but although he was not ill, he had a feeling that his days were drawing to a close. He summoned the elders of the town to his bedside and in addition, a visiting emissary of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Reb Dov Zev.

"I have an important request to make of you," he said, "but before I do, I want to tell you about something that happened to me many years ago. Many years ago, I spent Chanuka at the court of the Tzemach Tzedek (the third Lubavitcher Rebbe). During the course of the holiday, he spoke about the self-sacrifice of the Maccabees in sanctifying the Name of G-d. The words of the Rebbe made an enormous impression on me.

"After the holiday ended I returned to our farm. Our father, who was a Chasid of the first and second Rebbes of Chabad-Lubavitch had instilled in his children a particular devotion to the mitzva (commandment) of hospitality, so when two frozen strangers appeared on our doorstep one cold snowy night, we, of course, invited them in and served them a warm, hearty meal.

"I had retired to my own room when I heard the faintest whining sound. I thought it was a cat and I listened carefully, straining my ears to make out its source. As I followed the sound, it became obvious that it was not a cat, but a child who was crying. I approached the spot from where the cry came and to my utter shock, there in the wagon of the two strangers lay two small children, one sleeping and the other crying, both tied hand and foot. I knew at once that they were victims of kidnapers, or "chappers," as they were known at the time. For then was the height of the terror of child-kidnapping for the Czar's army. The unfortunates were stolen from the bosom of their families, never to be seen again, to serve in the army for twenty years and more.

"I took the two into my home and fed them and put them into a warm bed. My brother confronted the kidnapers and in a frenzy of anger threatened to give them a beating they would never forget. They, for their part, feigned innocence. No, they were the wronged ones, they claimed. They concocted a story about the children being mentally ill and being taken to a famous doctor, but when they saw that we wouldn't buy their ridiculous story, they disappeared as fast as their horses could gallop.

"When my brother next visited the Rebbe, he blessed us all and told us to hide the children for a full year before returning them to their families, and this we did. The event

inspired in me a great desire to continue in this mitzva of redeeming captives, and for a large part of every year I traveled to different parts of the region, seeking out these children, who were called Cantonists, and saving them.

"I continued this work for seven years, until I fell into a trap and almost lost my life. I traveled to the Rebbe and he gave me a blessing for long life and promised me that when it came my time to leave this world, I would be 'with him in his abode.' And this leads me to tell you why I have summoned all of you here today. I feel sure that my life is about to end, and I am asking you to gather a minyan at my grave side and say these words, 'Reb Menachem Mendel, son-in-law of Reb Dov Ber and grandson of Reb Shneur Zalman! Your servant Chaim Yehoshua ben Esther is dead. Before his passing, he appointed us to inform you of this and to remind you that you promised him, that because of his mitzva of ransoming captives, he would be with you, in your abode.' "

The Chasidim agreed to carry out his wish, and the following day, Reb Chaim Yehoshua recited "Shema Yisrael," and returned his soul to its Maker. That same day, a minyan surrounded his grave and said the words he had requested of them, reminding the Rebbe of his promise of long ago.

Thoughts THAT COUNT

Go out of your land, out of your birthplace, and from your father's house, to the land that I will show you (Gen. 12:1)

By obeying G-d's command to go to the land of Israel, Abraham acquired it for himself and for his progeny forever. Even now, more than 3,300 years later, G-d's words convey an important message for us to apply in our daily lives, urging us to hasten the Messianic Era in which all Jews of all generations since the beginning of time will dwell in peace and prosperity in the greater land of Israel.

(The Rebbe, Lech Lecha, 5752)

And I will make your children as the dust of the earth. (Gen. 13:16)

A Rabbi who intensely fought the missionaries in his town was visited by the bishop and asked, "Rabbi, why do you oppose us so strongly?" The Rabbi replied, "When you convert someone to your religion, you sprinkle him with your 'ritual water.' Jews are compared to the dust of the earth. When one mixes water with earth, mud results. I cannot sit idly and see someone trying to make mud of my people."

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

The Jewish people are likened to stars, in that from the 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.

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 11-12 November	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	7:48	8:50
Adelaide	7:37	8:38
Brisbane	5:56	6:52
Darwin	6:32	7:24
Gold Coast	5:55	6:52
Perth	6:33	7:31
Sydney	7:15	8:14
Canberra	7:26	8:27
Launceston	7:47	8:43
Auckland	7:46	8:48
Wellington	7:56	9:02
Hobart	7:50	8:58
Byron Bay	6:55	7:52

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS LECH LECHA • 10 CHESHVAN • 11 NOVEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	7.48 PM
	MINCHA:	7.55 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8.20 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.31 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	7.45 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	8.50 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	8.00/9.15 AM
	MINCHA:	7.45 PM
	MAARIV:	8.30 PM