

LAMPLIGHTER

10 Cheshvan
Parshas
Lech Lecha
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In the opening lines of this week's Torah portion, Lech Lecha, G-d commands Abraham to "go out" from his land, from his place of birth, to a land which He will show him. What can we learn from this very first commandment to Abraham, that we can apply to our own lives as well?

The first and most fundamental requirement of every Jew is to "go out" - to be in a constant state of ascent, developing and elevating both our inner potential and our surroundings.

But the very next thing that happened to Abraham after heeding this command and going to Israel appears to be the exact opposite of development and elevation: "And there arose a famine in the land, and Avram went down into Egypt." Thus, Abraham had to leave Canaan and journey to Egypt, during which time Sarah was forcefully taken to Pharaoh's palace. Although G-d protected her from harm while there, she nevertheless underwent the hardship of the whole incident.

How does this obvious descent fit into the aforementioned theme of ascent and elevation, and our task of climbing ever higher?

On a superficial level, Abraham's and Sarah's hardship was a step down, but on a deeper level it was merely a part of their eventual elevation and triumphant return. The purpose of the descent was to achieve an even higher ascent than was possible before. When they returned to Canaan they were "very heavy with cattle, with silver, and with gold."

Just as Abraham's descent was part of the greater plan of ascent, so it was with the generation of his descendants to follow. The Jewish people have found themselves thrust into exile after exile, only to return to their Land and achieve even higher spiritual heights than before. Galut (exile), although appearing to us to be a negative phenomenon, actually carries the potential for the highest good. And now that we are in the last days of the final exile, we approach an era of unprecedented spirituality and goodness, for although the First and Second Temples were eventually destroyed, the Third Temple is to stand forever, and our coming Redemption will have no exile to follow.

We therefore draw encouragement from our ancestor Abraham's descent into Egypt and eventual return to Israel: We must remember that the darkness which seems to prevail in the world is only external, and is part of G-d's greater plan for the ultimate prevailing of good over evil and the coming of Moshiach.

A Journey with an Unknown Destination

By Naftali Silberberg

Every human being has goals and aspirations. Life is a long journey and no two individuals have the exact same destination. And while sometimes we may temporarily stall in the course of this journey, our aims always simmer in the recesses of our minds, eventually boiling over and propelling us onwards.

As possessors of G-dly souls, our aspirations also include a natural desire to become more spiritually attuned and thus draw nearer to our Father in Heaven. In this area, too, every individual's ambitions are "personalized," reflecting his or her understanding and appreciation for Torah and mitzvot. One person may consider a particular level of observance and spirituality to be the very acme of holiness, while another will view that very same level as a nice starting point.

This week's Torah portion begins with G-d's command to Abraham: "Go forth from your land...to the land that I will show you." This is the first communication between G-d and Abraham, the first Jew, which is related in the Torah. With this instruction G-d also transmitted to Abraham an important foundation of Judaism, lesson number one which every Jew must study and implement G-d instructed Abraham, and indeed every one of his Jewish descendants, to embark on a journey. Interestingly, G-d did not inform Abraham of his final destination. He merely instructed Abraham to keep on traveling until he would receive an indication from Above that he had reached the "Promised Land" and his journey had ended. Having a defined goal is beneficial in other areas of life, but only serves as a handicap in a person's spiritual life-journey. It is certainly wise to carefully plan the next segment of the journey, but the destination itself must remain open-ended. G-d is infinite; the divine essence of every Jewish soul is infinite; so why place limitations on the heights one wishes to achieve?

At the outset of his divinely ordained voyage, seventy-five year old Abraham had no clue what lay in store for him when he arrived at his eventual destination. It is safe to assume that he never dreamt of arriving in a land "flowing with milk and honey," a land which would be bequeathed to the descendants of a child who would be miraculously born to his barren wife Sarah. He had no idea that as a result of this journey his descendants would be chosen by G-d to be His ambassadors to this world, chosen to have the privilege of illuminating the globe with the light of Torah and mitzvot.

"The apple doesn't fall far from the tree." We too have the ability to accomplish far more than we can imagine in our wildest dreams. But the first step is embarking on an open-ended journey.

Slice of LIFE

Rebbe Stories in Mid-Air

By Tuvia Bolton

Rabbi Chazan got on the plane in New York to return to his home in Israel. As usual, the El Al flight to Israel was full and overbooked and the loudspeakers requested volunteers to give up their seats for a free ticket.

His seat was between a Chassidic Jew dressed in a long black coat face turned to the window and an elderly woman in the aisle seat reading one of the newspapers that were handed out who did not look religious at all.

Rabbi Chazan said a cordial hello to both of them as he took his seat and buckled his safety belt and after take-off opened up one of the Chabad weekly publications he brought with him and began to read.

It didn't take long before the woman noticed the Rebbe's picture prominently displayed on the front cover and, as though replying to his cordial hello of a half-hour ago said in Hebrew. "Ahh, that is the Lubavitcher Rebbe. My husband had a big miracle with him. Are you a Lubavitcher?"

Rabbi Chazan answered yes and she told him the following story.

She and her husband, who had passed away just months earlier, were doctors and had their own private clinic. She had some connection to Judaism and in fact was now on her way to Israel to give a large donation to some religious organization. But her husband was about as far from Judaism as possible; he had a totally atheistic upbringing and never had even attended synagogue. But somehow one of his friends convinced him to visit the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

She wasn't sure how it happened but he did make the visit and returned home a different man; bubbling with happiness. He said that the Rebbe had spoken to him and had given him three dollar bills together with three

blessings; one for himself, one for his family and one for the clinic.

Then, several years later the dollars went missing. They searched the entire house until their nine year old daughter asked what they were looking for and said that she saw the three dollars in the drawer and, thinking that they were nothing special, bought some candies with them.

Her husband was broken. True he was not at all religious, but he felt that these dollars somehow were connected to the Rebbe's blessings and the Rebbe was the most positive person he had ever met.

He never really was happy after that but he was too embarrassed to return to the Rebbe to ask for more dollars since he felt that these had been lost due to his negligence.

But finally some five years later after she pressured him he did return. He stood in line one Sunday with thousands of others (Every Sunday for several years the Rebbe used to give out single dollar bills to encourage the giving of charity, blessings and advice) and when his turn came the Rebbe looked at him in a way that was obvious that he remembered him, smiled, said 'Blessings and Success' and gave him, instead of the usual dollar that he gave to everyone else.... three crisp dollars

This impressed her husband till his dying day and brought her to also write letters and receive many answers from the Rebbe.

When the Chassid sitting on his other side heard the conversation he waited till she finished and said.

"I also have a story about the Lubavitcher Rebbe. In fact, I teach young children and although I am a Skverer Chassid I just told my students the story.

"A good friend of mine went to the Rebbe almost twenty years ago and also stood in line to get a dollar and a blessing. The Rebbe gave him the dollar and he kept it in his wallet wherever he went.

"Anyway, one day he lost it, and it made him feel really bad. Years passed, but he couldn't get the loss out of his mind. He even thought about returning to the Rebbe to get another dollar but then the Rebbe had a stroke and two years afterwards in 1994 he heard the terrible news that the Rebbe passed away.

"Well, he didn't give up. About ten years after that he decided he would simply go to the Rebbe's headquarters in Crown Heights where he got the

dollar and just ask for another dollar.

"Maybe it seems foolish but... it worked!

"You know how? A few hours later he went into a grocery store to buy a bottle of soda but all he had was a ten dollar bill. So he gave his ten dollar bill and in the change he got back was a dollar bill that had something written on one of its corners! So he held it up to the light and saw written:

'Dollar from the Rebbe' followed by a Hebrew date! The Rebbe gave him a dollar!

"I just told this to my students to show them how holy people like the Rebbe live forever."

The plane landed in Israel and Rabbi Chazan bade his neighbors goodbye, went down to collect his luggage and got into a taxi to go home. It was early in the morning and the taxi driver, sensing he had a passenger that was willing to hear his troubles began to pour them out. He related how bad his luck had been lately and how although he put on Tefillin every day he was considering stopping because, after all he had to work on Shabbat in order to make ends meet so it was hypocritical to do one commandment and not the other.

Rabbi Chazan explained that each commandment contains its own blessing and he shouldn't stop doing one good thing just because he doesn't do another. Not only that but he doesn't have to work on Shabbat either. G-d is the one that gives livelihood and G-d will bless him with a livelihood from somewhere else. After all if G-d provides for over six billion people daily it should be no problem for him to provide for one more.

"Wow!" Said the driver. "That's really right. That sounds like something the Lubavitcher Rebbe would say (in fact Rabbi Chazan read it in one of the Rebbe's letters)!" And he pulled out a large poster that was rolled up under his seat. "Just now I saw some boys putting up these posters and asked them for one. You know what? You're right! I'm going to put this up in my front room. Maybe I will stop working on Shabbat!"

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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

“The tzitz was worn on the forehead, and thus represents a trust that transcends mortal reason.”

By the Grace of G-d
2 Tammuz, 5712 [1952]
Brooklyn
Greetings and Blessings!

I was happy to be informed that your daughter [...] has entered the fifth month of pregnancy. May it be G-d's Will that the days of her pregnancy be carried through to completion, properly and easily. Your daughter no doubt follows the orders of the doctor who checks her periodically, according to the local custom. May the delivery be timely and easy, and may you derive an abundance of joyful satisfaction — Jewish naches, chassidic naches — from her and from your other children.

It is no doubt superfluous for me to make you eagerly aware of the necessity for you to continue your correspondence with your son-in-law, Rabbi [...], the husband of your above-named daughter, and to explain him in detail what a great merit and responsibility he has — to bring Jewish hearts close to their Father in Heaven. And “no one among us knows until where”. Sometimes, by bringing one fellow Jew closer, one establishes generations of sons and daughters who stand in awe of the Word of G-d. It is thus worthwhile to invest every endeavor and toil and exertion, exertion of the soul and exertion of the flesh, for the sake of even one fellow Jew. For this individual is “an entire world” not only on his own account, but also on account of his offspring, and the offspring of his offspring, until the end of the whole world.

This last phrase, by the way, has a well-known non-literal interpretation in the literature of Chassidus. [Since *olam*, which means “world,” comes from the root that means “obscurity,” doing one's *avodah*] “until the end of the *olam*” also means “until the obscurity and concealment [of Divinity] is brought to an end.”

May G-d grant us the privilege of literally witnessing this with fleshly eyes. And this state comes about through having trust that transcends mortal reason.

Transcendence of mortal reason is alluded to in the various meanings of the words *tzitz* and *tzitzis*. The noun *tzitz* shares a root with the verb *meitzitz* in the verse [that speaks of the imminent arrival of Mashiach], “Here he stands behind our wall, watching through the windows, peering (*meitzitz*) through the crevices.” (See *Likkutei Torah* on *Devarim*, p. 91c.) This verse alludes to the [current] era of exile. The *tzitz* was worn on the forehead, and thus represents a trust that transcends mortal reason. (On the [esoteric] meanings of the forehead, see *Likkutei Torah* on *Shir HaShirim*, p. 23c, drawing on the *Zohar*.)

In a second interpretation, the word *tzitz* signifies brightness and radiance, being related to the verbs in the phrases, “the pomegranates have bloomed (*heineitzu*)”, and “his diadem shall sparkle (*yatzitz*).”

See also *Torah Or* and *Toras Chayim* on *Parshas Tetzaveh*, *VeAsisa Tzitz*, where all three above-quoted verses are cited, and linked with the era of Mashiach. Those two sources also speak of the connection that [the *tzitz*] shares with *tzitzis* and the forehead.

With blessings for success in both public and private matters,

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

With Rabbi Aron Moss

Will My Grandchildren Be Jewish?

Question: I fear for the future of the Jewish people. When I look at my family and where they are headed it is not very promising. My grandfather was a rabbi, but I am not sure my grandchildren will even be Jewish. What is the secret to keeping Judaism alive?

Answer: I have yet to meet a Jew who doesn't proudly claim, “My grandfather was a rabbi.” It seems that three generations ago everyone was a rabbi.

What they really mean is that their grandfather was an observant Jew. He probably had a beard, prayed every day, and was knowledgeable in Torah. He may have been a cobbler or merchant or baker, but he was a committed Jew.

Anyone who identifies as Jewish today only need go back three or four generations to find observant Jews in their family. And from there an unbroken chain of Jewish living that goes back more than three thousand years. Not that everyone has always been observant. There were plenty of unobservant Jews. But we don't know their grandchildren. They have been lost to the Jewish community.

Jewishness without Jewish observance cannot last more than a couple of generations. Unless they return to living Jewishly, the children of unobservant Jews will stop being Jewish altogether and assimilate. A family of unobservant Jews will lose one or the other - either the Jewishness, or the unobservance. You can't have both.

This is not a new phenomenon. Throughout Jewish history there have been individuals and groups who tried to keep a Jewish identity without Jewish practice. It has never worked. A vague Jewish ethnic feeling, devoid of any spiritual purpose and with no compelling message that is relevant to life, cannot last long. Only proud and authentic Judaism, that offers relevance and meaning, direction and inspiration, will stand the test of time.

In the times of the Chanukah story, a small band of faithful Jews stood up against the vast majority of Jews who subscribed to Hellenism, the Greek way of life. We celebrate Chanukah today because we descend from those faithful few.

The solution to Jewish continuity is no secret, it's obvious. Living breathing Judaism produces living breathing Jews. Do for your grandchildren what your grandfather did for you - be a living example of what it means to live a vibrant Jewish life. They don't need their grandfather to be a rabbi, but they need him to be a proud and practicing Jew.

A WORD

from the Director

On the eleventh day of Cheshvan (this coming Shabbat, October 20 this year), the Matriarch Rachel, Jacob's wife, passed away. She was not buried in the cave of Machpelah with our other Matriarchs and Patriarchs, but was buried en route from her father Laban's house. Jacob chose this spot because he knew in the future that his descendants, the Children of Israel, would pass on their way into Babylonian Exile. Her grave in Bethlehem has always been a holy site, where Jews pray for their individual or communal needs.

When the Jews in fact went into exile, Rachel wept before G-d on behalf of her children who were crying by her grave. G-d replied to her, "Refrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears, for there is reward for your labor...and the children shall return to their boundary."

This is related to this week's Torah portion, in which G-d promises Abraham that the land he travelled through, the Land of Israel, will belong to his children, the Jewish people.

Throughout the generations we have had to struggle to claim the land that has always been ours, as we see in the Torah a Divine "transfer of ownership" of Israel to our ancestor, which is to be handed down to each and every one of his descendants. G-d comforts Rachel by telling her that we will be returned to the land that is rightfully ours.

We carry G-d's promise to Rachel with us today and pray that very soon, our mother Rachel will rejoice as we, her children, are "returned to our borders." At that time, when we will be living in the Holy Land in security and peace, we will be governed by Moshiach and will be experiencing the wonders and glory of the Third Holy Temple, may this be speedily in our times.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

A Helpful Detour

By Yerachmiel Tilles

In years gone by, it was not unusual for Chasidim to spend extended periods of time in their Rebbe's presence, where they would fine-tune their own character traits and learn a path of spiritual service which would become the basis for their own spiritual endeavors.

Once, Rebbe Michil of Zlotchov sent one of his Chasidim to another town to learn from a simple, unlearned Jew the attribute of trust in G-d. The chasid remained in that town for many weeks, observing that individual and learning from his behavior how to perfect his own trust in the Creator.

Finally, when the time came to leave the chasid made his way home, pondering the lessons he had learned. He was walking down the road lost in thought, when he was shaken by the anguished screams of women and children.

The chasid looked up to see two Jewish women, bound in chains, being dragged down the road by two large, muscular gentile guards. He ran after the party and asked the women, "What has happened to you?"

The weeping women replied to him, "Our husbands leased the inn which belongs to the master of the village and they owe him a lot of rent. When they couldn't pay the rent, the master took us and he says he will kill us!"

The chasid told the guards, "I will go to your master and I will pay the entire debt." They all went to the house of the master of the village, but instead of finding him, they found the manager of the estate. When the chasid explained his intention to repay the debt, the manager was very willing to make the deal.

"Here are 150 rubles and I will sign a note for the balance," the chasid said. "You don't know my master," said the manager. "He's not the type to settle for less than the whole amount. He's waited a long time for these Jews to pay up! Either you produce the whole amount, or the deal is off!"

The chasid had no choice but to comply, for the fate of two Jewish families was at stake. He laid all his money on the table, but was still short. Then he went and pawned whatever possessions he had to amass the entire sum of money. The manager took the money and released the women.

The chasid continued on his journey home, giving thanks to the Creator for having given him the privilege of performing the exalted commandment of pidyon shevuyim/redeeming captives.

Before dark, the chasid stopped at an inn to rest for the night. He soon fell into conversation with another Jewish traveler who, by the look of his clothing, was a wealthy merchant. The wealthy Jew asked him many questions, and so they passed some time in pleasant conversation.

The next morning the chasid mentioned to his new acquaintance the names of the towns he intended to pass through on his trip home.

"You know," the merchant interrupted excitedly, "I have a relative living in the town of R--, not far from the road you will be taking. For some time I have been looking for a trustworthy messenger with whom I could send him inheritance money. Perhaps you would agree to perform this favor for me?"

The chasid agreed at once. He wouldn't have to go far out of his way, and he was happy to be able to do yet another favor for a fellow Jew. He took the money and carefully sewed it into the lining of his jacket. The wealthy merchant thanked him warmly and offered to compensate him for

his trouble, but the chasid refused, saying, "It is really no trouble for me to make a short detour, and I'm glad to be able to help you out."

But the merchant persisted, saying, "I promise you that your mitzvah will stand intact, even though you accept this small gift from me." Then the chasid agreed to take the money, for indeed, he had not even enough to pay for his night's stay at the inn. The two men shook hands and went their separate ways.

The chasid finally came to the little town and asked around for the man, but no one recognized the name or the description. He was puzzled, for the merchant had entrusted him with an enormous sum of money. He certainly must have known that his relative lived in that town. Perhaps he was a recluse, or lived on the outskirts of the town. The chasid decided to spend a few days in the town in the hope that he would discover the whereabouts of the lost relative, but all his searching was in vain.

It was a very downhearted man who returned to Zlotchov, to the court of Rebbe Michil. The chasid went into the room of his Rebbe and related to him all he had learned about his service to the Al-mighty; how he had learned to put his trust entirely in his Creator with a pure and simple belief. He also told the Rebbe about his encounter with the two women and how he had ransomed them from their cruel captors.

Finally, he told the tzadik about his meeting with the wealthy merchant who had entrusted him to deliver the inheritance to the relative who could not be found.

"Rebbe," said the man, sadly, "In this last mission which was entrusted to me I regret that I have failed, and now, I have a great sum of money which I cannot deliver to its rightful owner."

Reb Michil beamed a big smile at him and replied, "Let me explain to you what you experienced. In the merit of the great mitzvah of redeeming the two captive Jewish women, angels were created as your advocates in the Heavenly Court. The man you took for a wealthy merchant was really one of those angels and the money he entrusted you is for you to make use of with a happy and peaceful heart."

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

G-D speaks to Abram, commanding him, "Go from your land, from your birthplace and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you." There, G-d says, he will be made into a great nation. Abram and his wife, Sarai, accompanied by his nephew Lot, journey to the land of Canaan, where Abram builds an altar and continues to spread the message of a one G-d.

A famine forces the first Jew to depart for Egypt, where beautiful Sarai is taken to Pharaoh's palace; Abram escapes death because they present themselves as brother and sister. A plague prevents the Egyptian king from touching her, and convinces him to return her to Abram and to compensate the brother-revealed-as-husband with gold, silver and cattle.

Back in the land of Canaan, Lot separates from Abram and settles in the evil city of Sodom, where he falls captive when the mighty armies of Chedorlaomer and his three allies conquer the five cities of the Sodom Valley. Abram sets out with a small band to rescue his nephew, defeats the four kings, and is blessed by Malki-Zedek the king of Salem (Jerusalem).

G-d seals the Covenant Between the Parts with Abram, in which the exile and persecution (galut) of the people of Israel is foretold, and the Holy Land is bequeathed to them as their eternal heritage.

Still childless ten years after their arrival in the Land, Sarai tells Abram to marry her maidservant Hagar. Hagar conceives, becomes insolent toward her mistress, and then flees when Sarai treats her harshly; an angel convinces her to return, and tells her that her son will father a populous nation. Ishmael is born in Abram's eighty-sixth year.

Thirteen years later, G-d changes Abram's name to Abraham ("father of multitudes"), and Sarai's to Sarah ("princess"), and promises that a son will be born to them; from this child, whom they should call Isaac ("will laugh"), will stem the great nation with which G-d will establish His special bond. Abraham is commanded to circumcise himself and his descendants as a "sign of the covenant between Me and you." Abraham immediately complies, circumcising himself and all the males of his household.

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 19 - 20 October	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	7:23	8:23
Adelaide	7:15	8:13
Brisbane	5:40	6:34
Darwin	6:26	7:16
Gold Coast	5:39	6:33
Perth	6:13	7:09
Sydney	6:53	7:51
Canberra	7:03	8:01
Launceston	7:19	8:21
Auckland	7:23	8:22
Wellington	7:28	8:30
Hobart	7:20	8:24
Byron Bay	6:38	7:33

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAR STREET, ST KILDA EAST

PARSHAS LECH LECHA • 10 CHESHVAN • 19 OCTOBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	MINCHA	7.30 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS	8.00 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	9.45 AM
	SHACHRIS	10.00 AM
	MINCHA	7.15 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS	8.23 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA	7.30 PM
	MAARIV	8.20 PM