



THANK YOU HASHEM

For Shabbos Kodesh!

Parshas Lech Lecha

HaMeor Shebah

A Short Burst of Relevance

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־אַבְרָם לֵךְ מֵאַרְצְךָ וּמִמּוֹלֶדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ אֶל־הָאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֹמַר...

Hashem said to Avram, go for yourself from your land, from your birthplace, and from your father's house to the land that I will show you...

WHEN IT COMES to avodas Hashem, external factors have no influence on one's likelihood to fail or succeed. It matters little where one lives, when one was born, or whether one's lineage is prestigious or insignificant. Avodas Hashem is an independent endeavor which depends solely upon the essential Jewishness we carry within and the choices we make. If one puts in the requisite effort, even the most detrimental set of circumstances will not hold him back from attaining lofty levels. Conversely, even the most prestigious lineage will not help one who does not actively work on his or her avodas Hashem. The holy Noam Elimelech teaches that it is this message the Torah intends to impart with the opening verse of our parsha: **"Lech lecha"**: Avodas Hashem is a highly personal process which requires each and every Jew to "go to himself", **"mei'artzecha"**: abandoning the external circumstances of his physical location no matter if it is beneficial or detrimental to spiritual growth, **"umimoladit'cha um'beis avocha"**: as well as his family lineage, prestigious or insignificant as it might be, **"el ha'aretz asher areka"**: in a bid to access the individual greatness

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that can come only as a result of a Jew's personal yearning, striving, sacrifice, toil, and eventual success. 🕎

Parsha Roundup

A 60-second Review

- 🕎 Hashem commands Avram to travel from his birthplace to a land he will be shown where he will be made into a great nation. Accompanied by his nephew Lot, Avram and Sarai travel to Canaan where Avram builds a Mizbeach and continues to spread his revolutionary theology of monotheism.
- 🕎 Avram flees Canaan because of a famine and arrives in Egypt, where Sarai is taken to Pharaoh's palace. Presenting themselves as brother and sister, Avram escapes death. A plague prevents the Egyptian king from touching Sarai and he returns her to Avram, compensating him with gold, silver, and cattle.
- 🕎 Lot separates from Avram and settles the 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. Avram defeats the four kings, freeing Lot, and is blessed by Malki-Tzedek.
- 🕎 At the *Bris Bein HaBesarim*, Hashem tells Avram about the exile and persecution of the nation he will father and bequeaths Eretz Yisrael to the nation as their eternal heritage.
- 🕎 Still childless, Sarai tells Avram to marry her maidservant Hagar. Hagar conceives and then flees when Sarai treats her harshly. An angel convinces her to return and Yishmael is born.
- 🕎 Thirteen years later, Hashem changes Avram's name to Avraham and Sarai's to Sarah, promising that a son will be born to them. From this child, whom they should call Yitzchak, will descend the great nation with which Hashem will establish His special bond. Avraham is commanded to circumcise himself and his descendants and immediately complies.

P'nimiyus haParsha

An Encounter with the Soul of the Torah

ואעפער לגוי גדול ואברכך ואגדלה שמך ויהיה ברכה...

I shall make you into a great nation, I shall bless you and make your name great, and you shall be a blessing...

THE MEKUBALIM TEACH that in addition to representing the primary Name of Hashem, the *Shem Havaya*, (*Yud-Hei-Vav-Hei*) encompasses all of creation. The tzaddikim revealed that the first two letters, “*Yud-Hei*”, refer to the Master of the world’s revelation in the upper realms while the final two letters, “*Vav-Hei*”, refer to the Jewish nation who embody His presence in the lower realms. Before Avraham’s birth, any blessing that flowed upon the lower realms was triggered by the upper realms themselves, in a process known as “*Iseirusa D’I’Eilah*”, or Upper Awakening. This model is embodied in the *Shem Havaya* when its letters are written in order; first “*Yud-Hei*” - representing the source of the bounty, and then “*Vav-Hei*” - representing the recipient.

However, Avraham Avinu achieved such an incredibly lofty level of holiness that he was able to trigger this flow of blessing upon the world by virtue of his actions, bringing about what is known in the Zohar as an “*Iseirusa D’I’Sata*”, or Lower Awakening. Thus, about Avraham, Hashem proclaims, “*Vehyeih beracha*”, “And you shall be a blessing.” The Kedushas Levi points out that when we look closely at the word “*Veheyeih*”, we find that it contains the same letters as the *Shem Havaya*. Here, however, the order is switched around, with “*Vav-Hei*”, the lower realms, preceding “*Yud-Hei*”, the upper realms, reflecting the manner in which Avraham Avinu was the first to bring about an *Iseirusa D’I’Sata*.

“*Vehyeih beracha*”: Avraham Avinu brought blessing upon the world by triggering a flow from the upper realms with his exalted actions.

Throughout his glorious *sefer*, the advocate of the Jewish nation reminds us that as descendants and spiritual heirs of Avraham Avinu, each and every member of the Jewish nation has this ability to awaken the upper realms and trigger a flow of Hashem’s kindness upon creation. As *maaminim b’nei maaminim*, we were taught and believe that we have been set apart from all the nations of the world, chosen by the Creator to forge an intimate relationship with Him. But in stressing the primacy of am Yisrael, the tzaddikim never intended for this awareness to devolve into a sense of entitlement, superiority, or privilege. Quite the contrary! While we are indeed chosen, we are chosen to fix the world, to pray for the world, to trigger a flow of Hashem’s mercy and kindness upon creation as a whole. (See *Likutei Moharan* 5) Seen in this way, we arrive at the understanding that instead of arrogance, our chosenness fosters a heightened sense of responsibility and care for the world entrusted into our loving care. 🕎



Each and every Jew is charged with triggering Hashem’s blessing to flow down upon the world we were chosen to rectify.



The ohel of Reb Leib Baal Yissurim in Tzfat

Zechus Avos

Yahrtzeit of the Week

15 Cheshvan (Sunday Night, Monday – November 2nd)

Reb Leib Baal Yissurim zy”a (? – 1836)

15 CHESHVAN IS the *yahrtzeit* of Reb Leib “Baal Yissurim.” A close disciple of the Baal Hatanya, he was the first of his students to emigrate to Eretz Yisroel. There is a tradition that before his death, he proclaimed that he would intercede on behalf of all those that daven at his kever. To this day, Jews flock to daven at his burial place throughout the year, particularly on the *yahrtzeit*. He is buried in the old city of Tzfat, in the same cemetery as the Beis Yosef and Arizal.

One of the most famous teachings of the Baal HaTanya is referred to as להשכיל בינה, a teaching about embracing trials and tribulations with love and emunah. The Baal Hatanya writes that, in truth, *yissurim* are an illusion, and a person should hold fast to faith that Hashem does only good. If one believes that the pain he experiences is truly bad, this is borderline heresy - the faithful are not perturbed by any *yissurim*. (*Igeres Hakodesh*, Ch. 11.)

Not much is known about Reb Leib, but the title “Baal Yissurim” indicates that he experienced much suffering in his life. As a student of the Baal Hatanya, we can assume that he lived by his Rebbe’s teaching. Indeed, he was called “*Baal Yissurim*,” indicating that he was master over his suffering. This is hinted to in his very name, as the first and last letters of his name, לייב, are the first letters of בינה להשכיל, the title of the Baal HaTanya’s teaching. Additionally, לייב בעל יסורים with the 3 words is equal to להשכיל בינה (with the *kollel*).

The words בעל יסורים are equal to 428, which is equal to בטחון שמחה, as well as the closing letters of אחי שם - indicating that one who has true faith in Hashem will be happy regardless of the pain he experiences.

Zechuso Yogen Aleinu!

*This section is adapted from the *yahrtzeit* remazim of R’ David Friedman. 🕎*

Tohameha

Tasting the Depth of Shabbos Kodesh

LAST WEEK, THE Chernovitzer Rav presented a basic explanation as to why the first two commandments of “*Anochi*” and “*Lo Yihyeh*” were alone uttered by Hashem Himself. Here, the tzaddik begins to explain this in greater depth. As we have discussed toward the outset of this study, the soul contains five ascending elements - *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshama*, *Chayah*, and *Yechidah* - each of which contains all five elements. The Mekubalim revealed that the days of the week embody the lower three soul elements of the Shabbos that was and the Shabbos to come. Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday embody the *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, and *Neshama* of the preceding Shabbos, while Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday embody the *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, and *Neshama* of the Shabbos to come. It emerges that **Monday** and **Thursday** are both bound with the concept of “*Ruach*”. This, explains the tzaddik, is why we read from the Torah in *shacharis* on these days. It is through the Torah that one can merit to access the spiritual vitality of “*Ruach d’Nefesh*”, the level of *Ruach* within *Nefesh*. Based on Chazal’s characterization of the Torah as “*Oraysa telisa’ah*”, a three-fold Torah (referring to Torah, Neviim, and Kesuvim), the Chernovitzer teaches that there are three ways of engaging with the Torah which enable a Jew to access the full soul-spectrum of the “*Ruach*” which Torah study embodies. Next week, we will delve into these three levels as well as their parallel in the experience of Shabbos Kodesh. 🕎

This section is adapted from the sefer “Sidduro Shel Shabbos” by R’ Chaim of Chernowitz zy”a (1760-1816)

Chassidus 101

Exploring the Foundations of Chassidus

ONE OF THE central themes of *tefillah* is the concept of “*semichas geulah l’tefillah*,” juxtaposing our mention of the redemption from Egypt to *Shemoneh Esrei*. While there are many basic explanations offered as to why this concept is important, the tzaddikim offer us a practical *avodah* to be drawn out from this seemingly simple *halachah*.

The *yetzer hara*’s goal is to fill one’s mind with vanity and falsehood, hoping to draw him after worldly pleasures and experiences which offer immediate, temporary gratification. This is where *tefillah* comes into play. While the *yetzer hara* seeks to draw our minds away from that which we know to be true, from our recognition of the Master of the world as our ultimate Source and the One Who is constantly breathing life into all of creation, *Tefillah* is about bringing that understanding back to the forefront of our mind.

More than a simply physical Exodus from those who enslaved us, leaving Egypt freed our nation from the spiritual influence the Egyptians were having on us. What was this influence? The *kelipah*, negative spiritual force, represented by the Egyptians is *dimyon*, delusion - losing sight of that which we know to be true.

Reb Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin explains that this is why we can only properly stand before Hashem in *Shemoneh Esrei* once we recount the story of when we left Egypt. The *Zohar HaKadosh* teaches us that one who has conquered his *yetzer hara* is given the “daughter of the King,” a reference to *tefillah* (*Tikkunei Zohar*, 13 & 21). It is only when we shed the false perspectives the *yetzer*

hara tries so valiantly to imbed within our minds that we can receive the proper intention and focus with which to speak with our Father in heaven.

Our Sages write that one who is *somech geulah l’tefillah* during Maariv is a *ben olam haba*. While the commentaries explain that this certainly holds true for those who observe this halacha during Shacharis as well, Reb Tzadok finds a deeper meaning as to why Chazal’s statement is made specifically in the context of Maariv.

The daytime symbolizes moments and experiences when things are clear. While we each face our own struggles and obstacles on a daily basis, there are always those moments when we regain that clarity, when we are reminded of “*ein od milvado*,” that it is Hashem Who is constantly sustaining us. These shining moments are referred to as “day.” On the other hand, the nighttime represents times and experiences when things are “dark”; when, because of our surroundings or specific occurrences, we lose our awareness of Hashem’s loving presence.

It is during such a time, Reb Tzadok explains, that this concept of *semichas geulah l’tefillah* is of the utmost importance. It is one who is able to gather the strength to push forward even during the most difficult of times that earns the title of *ben olam haba*. It is a Jew who is able muster the strength to look past the *dimayon* of the *yetzer hara*, reminding himself that he can always find Hashem’s presence regardless of circumstance who is truly worthy of experiencing eternal closeness with Him. 🕎

This section is written by R’ Akiva Bruck, author of “From Behind the Curtain” (Mosaica Press)

A Quick Mayseh

A Story to Warm the Heart

REBBE MORDECHAI DOV of Hornsteipel once fell ill with a terrible cough. When he went to consult doctors in the city of Kiev, he was told that in order to be healed, it would be necessary to sear one spot on his body with a burning-hot lance. In order to prepare him for what this procedure entailed, the doctors told the tzaddik in advance that the treatment was extremely painful. In fact, it was necessary for the patient to be tied to a chair to ensure he would not flail about during the process because of the awesome pain involved.

The Rebbe was silent for a moment. Then, with a fire in his eyes, the Rebbe answered quietly, "There will be no need to tie me. I will not move."

The doctor began the treatment and, true to his word, the Rebbe did not move a muscle. He did not emit so much as a groan even as his skin was scorched with a searing-hot metal rod.

Amazed at this incredible show of willpower, the doctor remarked to the Rebbe's son that just the day before he had performed the identical treatment on a tough Russian Cossack. The moment the hot lance touched the Cossack's skin, he had jumped out of his seat, ripped open the restraint that bound him, and escaped through the window!

Overhearing this, the Rebbe said, "Believe me, when a Jew comes to my office and pours out the troubles weighing on his heart, when a Jew so desperately needs help and there is simply no way to help him - that pain burns far more fiercely within me than even a burning-hot lance."

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov would often discuss the importance of being able to feel the pain of another Jew. With the tzaddikim as our guide, let us try to allow the suffering of our brethren to impact us deeply, sharing in the burden of their desperation. 🕯

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"Thank You Hashem" is a powerful sound bite. These simple words are a prayer, blessing, appreciation, sanctification, and expression of spiritual intimacy—all in one. Jews from all walks of life utter them in all life circumstances, finding meaning and strength in direct access to Hashem. Our mission is to ignite that passion and pride in every Jew worldwide. To remind us all that Hashem exists in every single aspect of life. That He loves each of us in every situation, environment, and spiritual position. And that by saying His name with gratitude, we return His love every day.

"THANK YOU HASHEM
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