

LampLighter

12 Cheshvan
Lech-Lecha
902
30 October
5770/2009

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

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 that G-d will show him. What can we learn from this initial commandment to Abraham that can be applied 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 one's inner potential and one's surroundings.

But the very next thing that happened to Abraham after heeding this command appears to be the exact opposite of development and elevation: "And there arose a famine in the land, and Abraham 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 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 is with the Jewish people of all generations. 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 moments of the final exile, we approach an era of unprecedented spirituality and goodness. For, although the First and Second Temples were 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 that seems to prevail 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.

(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Self Esteem

Ask parents, educators and psychologists whether self-esteem is good and their unanimous answer will be "yes." Recently, a group of mothers from diverse backgrounds were asked what they would most like to impart to their children. Almost all answered "high self-esteem." Having a positive self-image, the theory goes, is an important ingredient for successful living.

And yet look up "self-esteem" in the thesaurus and you will find a list of words that have negative connotations like: arrogance, disdain, egotism, haughtiness and vanity.

More apt words which describe what parents hope to build in their children are: self-assurance, poise and presence.

This discussion leaves us with two questions:

1. How do we assure that we and our children have a healthy self-image?
2. Is there a way to insure that by building up self-image we won't fall into the trap of egotism?

In Jewish teachings, a positive self-image is established through recognizing one's standing in the world.

It is not for naught that the first person, Adam, was created alone, unlike the other creatures, which were created in pairs or multiples. The Mishna explains, "For this reason was Adam created as an individual in order to teach you that one person equals a whole world."

Chasidic philosophy expounds on this thought saying, "This indicates emphatically that one single individual has the capacity to bring the whole of creation to fulfillment, as was the case with the first person."

The Talmud takes the idea of a person being equal to the whole world a step further and declares that if one saves the life of another person, it is considered as if he saved the entire world.

However, concentrating on such eloquent Jewish teachings could possibly bring one to self-esteem and not self-assurance. Rather, it is important to temper these teachings, which is exactly what some of the Chasidic masters did in their own, succinct way.

Rabbi Noach of Lechovitch taught, "A person is, as is known, a small world. This means that if he is a world in his eyes, he is actually small. But if he is small in his eyes, then he is a world."

Rabbi Simcha Bunim of Pshischa taught that, "A person should always have two teachings in his pockets. In one pocket there should be the verse, 'I am but dust and ashes.' In the other pocket should be the verse, 'The entire world was created for me.'"

Once, a Jewish mother was asked how she instilled such confidence and feelings of self-worth in her many children. She told the questioner about the age-old custom of lighting one Shabbat candle for each family member. "I tell each child," she explained simply, "When you were born I began lighting an additional Shabbat candle because you being in the world makes it a brighter place."

Of course, part of building up a positive self-image includes knowing who we are and who we are not.

Rabbi Zushe of Anipoli said, "If they will ask me in the World of Truth, 'Why weren't you like Moses?' I will know what to answer. But if they will ask me, 'Why weren't you Zushe?' I will not have an answer."

The Baal Shem Tov taught that every Jew is a cherished land. Just as the earth has precious stones and metals hidden within, so does every Jew have treasures hidden within him.

One of his disciples, Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz expanded on this thought by adding that within every person there is something precious that is not found in any other person.

But, nothing could be a greater boost to one's sense of self-worth than knowing that one's existence in this world is for a purpose - to make the world a dwelling place for G-d.



The Jews of Cancun, Mexico

By Howard Hian

While attending the 2008 annual conference of the North American Travel Journalists Association, I met Cancun's Director of Public Relations, Emilio Reyner. Almost immediately, my Jewish radar began to buzz. Reyner is not a typical Latino surname. He smiled and responded that his family was originally from Hungary. I asked rhetorically, "So, you're Jewish?" He looked at me and said with a straight face, "No, but my aunt in New York is." I laughed and told him, "Emilio, you are Jewish" and that's how this narrative began. I was about to get a glimpse of Jewish life in Cancun.

Within a few months, a trip was arranged and I had an opportunity to meet and chat with Ari Rajsbaum, the volunteer president of the Jewish Community in Cancun. Ari stated that the history of the Jews of Cancun began when the first merchants and entrepreneurs arrived shortly after development of the area in 1974.

Organized Jewish life coalesced in 1985, when a handful of "settlers" congregated in a private home to celebrate Shabbat. Temple life has slowly evolved from that small dedicated group into its present form. In 1998, a Civil Association was established and donations were obtained to acquire a small community centre, which included space for a synagogue and rooms for educational

purposes. Although there is no official rabbi, there is a friendly, intertwined relationship with Chabad of Cancun and its Rabbi, Mendel Druk. Even though the membership spans a wide religious spectrum, services are traditional, including a mechitzah. Activities at the synagogue, Neve Shalom, include Hebrew lessons, music, study groups, cultural events, weddings, bar/bat mitzvahs, weekly prayer services and celebration of all festivals (Tu' B'Shevat is observed in the nearby jungle).

When interviewing the enthusiastic and engaging Rabbi Druk, I learned that Chabad's part time relationship with the Cancun Jewish community began approximately 13 years ago. At that time, rabbinical students were sent from the United States to officiate at high-holiday services. At the urging of American and Canadian émigrés who wanted a more formal Jewish education for their children, Chabad began a permanent relationship in 2007 when Rabbi Druk and his family arrived. While he is involved with his rabbinical duties, his wife, Rachel, teaches, coordinates the ritual requirements of the Mikvah and handles the challenges of kashrut; quite formidable given the limited local availability of kosher food. When asked what it was like to be a Jew in a Catholic country, Rabbi Druk's answer was most interesting. He stated that it was very difficult to find any anti-Semitism, however stereotypes relating to Jews and wealth endure. The incongruity is that both he and Ari mentioned that a significant percentage of Jews in Cancun struggle economically.

When asked about his congregation, the Rabbi replied that, "Every Jew who steps into Cancun belongs to our community." Recently,

on a Friday night, there were 270 people in attendance for services. About 60 were local and the balance were visitors from outside Mexico including tourists, time-share owners and a few Israeli backpackers. Rabbi Druk estimates that 60%-70% were "connected Jewishly" but not necessarily religiously; they just wanted to experience and celebrate Shabbat in Mexico.

The overall population of Cancun is approximately 450,000. There are an estimated 500 Jews, which represents 150 families living there make up a diverse group. The demographics are heavily skewed toward residents who migrated from Mexico City. The ethnic background is 40% Ashkenazi, 40% Halebi and Shami (Syrian and Lebanese) and the last 20% are Sephardi from either Turkey or the Balkans. In addition there are part and full-time residents from other Mexican cities, South America, Israel, Canada, Europe and the United States. Only about one-third are actively involved in synagogue life. It is a fascinating, evolving Diaspora tale with a Mexican twist.

A few days before we were to leave, Emilio joined me for a stroll through town. At one point, he stopped to take an incoming call on his cellphone. After he hung up, Emilio looked at me and smiled broadly. He had spoken to his daughter who told him that she was excited to be a guest of her boyfriend's family for Shabbat dinner. Emilio was clearly pleased. Reflecting back on Emilio's comment about his Jewish aunt in New York, my thought was that perhaps their family roots had taken hold in a new generation, reaching from Hungary to Mexico and the Jewish community of Cancun.

Published by The Chabad House of Caulfield in conjunction with the Rabbinical College of Australia and N.Z.

P.O. Box 67, Balaclava Vic. 3183 AUSTRALIA
Phone (03) 9525 8190
Email: lamplighter_weekly@hotmail.com

The Lamplighter contains words from sacred writings. Please do not deface or discard.

ISSUE 902

MOSHIACH MATTERS

In time to come, Divinity will be revealed in this world at a level more sublime than the level at which it is revealed in the Higher Garden of Eden. This is why even the loftiest tzadikim [righteous people] such as Avraham and Moshe, whose abode is at the zenith of the Higher Garden of Eden, will become vested in corporeal bodies and will arise at the Resurrection of the Dead. (*Likutei Torah*)

INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



JEWISH EDUCATION: NOT JUST AN INCREASE OF KNOWLEDGE

18th of Cheshvan, 5724 [1963]

I received your letter of the 14th of Cheshvan with the enclosure. You are, of course, quite right in writing that the purpose of education is not merely the increase of knowledge but the actual training and upbringing to live the Jewish way of life.

This is especially true in our day and age, in view of the adverse influence of the environment, etc., which makes it all the more imperative to instill a goodly measure of Yirat Hashem [fear of G-d] into the children. Indeed, this is the purpose of the Torah and mitzvot, as it is written, "G-d commanded us to do all these decrees—to fear the L-rd, our G-d, to return all the days," etc.

There can be no difference of opinion as far as the purpose of Jewish education is concerned, which applies everywhere. There can only be a difference of approach and method as to how to attain this goal, and this may vary from generation to generation, from city to city and sometimes even from classroom to classroom.

Another point to remember is that inasmuch as parents are not always permeated with the idea that true Jewish education is truly vital for their children, it is necessary to follow the approach suggested by our Sages, of blessed memory, "A person should always say, metoch shelo lishma bo lishma [from doing something not for its own sake one comes to do the thing for its own sake]." This is why it is often useful to emphasize the good side effects of Jewish education, until they will eventually understand also the essential aspects involved.

With regard to the question which you write towards the end of your letter, namely, about your present job and your difficulty with parnasa [livelihood], etc., an improvement would depend on those who must be approached and who have the final say. Therefore, it would be well for you to consult fully with such persons that know them personally, and who can judge their reaction to any particular approach.

May G-d, who feeds and sustains the whole world out of His generous and ample Hand, also give you your parnasa with kashrut [in a permissible manner] and peace of mind, so that you should be able to concentrate on your efforts to strengthen and spread true Yiddishkeit to the utmost of your capacity.

A WORD from the Director

This week's Torah portion, Lech L'cha, discusses the upbringing of one of our patriarchs, Isaac.

Isaac was the son of Sara and Abraham, born to them in their old age. Ishmael, a son to Abraham by his wife Hagar, was a teenager when Isaac was born.

Ishmael's behaviour was far from exemplary. He was already a young man when Isaac, a mere child, was at a most impressionable age. Sara saw how Ishmael behaved; how he scoffed at Abraham's teachings. According to the Biblical commentator, Rashi, this "scoffing" might even have included idol-worship or murder!

Sara's only solution to the problem of Isaac being affected in a negative manner by Ishmael, was to have Hagar and Ishmael sent away. When she demanded this of Abraham, he objected. Ishmael, after all, was his son, and his first-born son at that.

G-d, however, told Abraham, "In all that Sara says to you, listen to her voice." Sara was correct in insisting that Isaac, the person who would carry on G-d's covenant, be brought up in an atmosphere devoid of harmful and injurious influences.

The lesson for us today is clear. We must do everything in our power to raise our children in the proper atmosphere. It must be an environment which fosters Jewish pride and identity, love of all Jews, the Torah and G-d. We must ensure that they are brought up among people who will not scoff at the teachings of our ancestors. And in all these matters, as G-d Himself said, the voice of Sara must be listened to.

J. I. Gutnick

Why does the groom put the veil over the bride's face before the Chupah?

There is a common misconception that the groom has to check that he is marrying the right bride before the Chupah, to avoid what happened to our Patriarch Jacob, who was tricked into marrying Leah instead of Rachel. This has nothing to do with it. The groom covers his bride's face with the veil; if he is meant to be identifying her he should surely rather uncover her face!

The real reason (or at least one of many reasons) for the veil is the following: on our wedding day we look our best. After hours being

made up and dressed up, we make a beautiful couple indeed. By covering his bride's face, the groom is making a statement. "As beautiful as you look today, my love for you is not skin-deep. I want to marry you not because our outfits match, but rather because our values match. It is not just your eyes that dazzle me, it is your persona, your views on life, the real you I am marrying. I can cover your sweet face with a veil and still marry you, because your face is just one level of your true beauty."

CUSTOMS CORNER

It Happened Once...



One year there was little rainfall in Jerusalem. The dry ground yielded but little produce, and food prices were sky-high. Even the wealthy were pressed to pay for all their needs, but for the poor, starvation looked them in the eye. And yet, it was even worse for the Torah scholars who were always dependent on the yeshivas for their livelihood. The many yeshivas were supported by the generosity of the wealthy citizenry, who now couldn't afford to give with their usual open-handedness.

The leading rabbis of Jerusalem met and decided to dispatch a delegate to raise money from their brethren abroad. But who would go? No one was anxious to accept upon himself the task. They drew lots, and the choice fell upon Rabbi Avraham Galanti. He was a man noted for his piety and vast knowledge, but he had never travelled abroad and had no experience with foreign ways. Nevertheless, he accepted his mission and travelled to the port city of Yaffa, where he boarded a ship headed for Constantinople.

The gruelling voyage took many weeks, and when the sailors finally saw land, a strange sight met their eyes. Instead of the busy activity of a port, they saw distraught people running to and fro. Others stood on rooftops, while militia patrolled the empty streets.

The ship's captain and crew were frightened. They were reluctant to land. Rabbi Galanti, however, was determined to go ashore, for Constantinople, with its well-to-do and generous Jewish community was his main destination. It was specifically there that he was sent and he was determined to fulfil his instructions.

Rabbi Galanti begged the captain for a small rowboat, explaining the importance of his mission. Soon a small craft carrying the rabbi and one sailor set out for the shore.

No sooner had Rabbi Galanti stepped ashore when he was approached by two soldiers who cried out: "You must return to your ship! Two great lions have escaped from the Sultan's private zoo and are running through the city. The Sultan wants them alive, and we are terrified to approach them."

Just then, they heard a blood-curdling roar, and the panic-stricken soldiers fled, leaving the rabbi standing alone. The famished lion sprang towards him, anticipating a meal at last, but just as suddenly it froze in its tracks and crouched down at his feet. People standing on the surrounding roof-tops turned away to avoid the horrible sight, but when they saw that a miracle was occurring, they craned their necks to get a better look.

They saw Rabbi Galanti holding the lion by the mane and leading it quietly down the street toward the royal palace. Rabbi Galanti's path took him past the second lion. Rabbi Galanti gently called to it, and the lion turned and docilely followed him down the street. When they reached the Sultan's private gardens, Rabbi Galanti deposited the two lions in their cages and locked the bars securely.

As he turned to leave, Rabbi Galanti was approached by the Sultan and his ministers who now dared to leave the confines of the palace. The rabbi was invited to accompany them to the royal quarters. As they stood together the Sultan turned to Rabbi Galanti and inquired, "Who are you, and what are your powers that you have dared and succeeded to capture my escaped lions?"

Rabbi Galanti explained that he was from Jerusalem where the people were enduring a famine. He had come to collect funds with which to help his beleaguered brethren.

The Sultan was amazed. "I thought you must be an animal-tamer or a sorcerer. If you are what you claim to be, a Torah scholar, then I still don't understand how you accomplished this feat."

"Your Majesty," replied Rabbi Galanti, bowing respectfully, "I am a weak old man, and I certainly make no use of magic, for it is forbidden to us. I will explain to Your Majesty the teachings of our Sages, and you will be able to understand how I was able to control these wild animals. We have been taught that the definition of a brave person is one who can conquer his evil impulses. All of my life I have fought against my evil inclination, and I have succeeded in purifying my heart up to the point that I fear nothing except the A-mighty.

"Also, Your Majesty, the Creator instilled in beasts an innate fear of people which is manifested only when people act as they should. But, when a person sullies his G-dly image, the roles are reversed, and the person fears the beast instead".

The Sultan was impressed by the rabbi's words. He instructed his servants to bring a large sum of money from his treasury and give it to Rabbi Avraham as a token of his gratitude and esteem. Rabbi Avraham returned to Jerusalem having accomplished his mission of mercy and having sanctified the Name of G-d before the Sultan and all his people.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

"And I will bless those who bless you and those who curse you, I will curse." (Gen. 12:3)

Why doesn't the Torah write both in the same order, i.e., "I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you?" The Talmud (Kiddushin 40a) says that G-d gives credit to one who plans to perform a mitzva, even if circumstances prevent the realization of the plan. However, for a transgression, one is punished for plans only when they are carried out.

When a person blesses or curses, he first thinks about it and then expresses verbally what he has in mind. Therefore, G-d is saying to Avraham, "I will bless those who bless you as soon as they plan to bless you, even if they have not yet blessed you. However, those who curse you will be cursed only after they actually curse you, but not merely for thinking."

"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."

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

PARSHAS LECH LECHA 13 CHESHVAN • 31 OCTOBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	7:33 PM
	MINCHA:	7:45 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS :	8:15 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	MINCHA:	7:30 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	8:34 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS: SUN- FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	7:45 PM
	MAARIV:	8:35 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING: 30 OCTOBER 2009



Begins		Ends
7:33	MELBOURNE	8:34
7:24	ADELAIDE	8:23
5:46	BRISBANE	6:41
6:28	DARWIN	7:19
5:45	GOLD COAST	6:40
7:21	PERTH	8:18
7:02	SYDNEY	8:01
7:13	CANBERRA	8:12
7:33	LAUNCESTON	8:37
7:33	AUCKLAND	8:33
7:40	WELLINGTON	8:44

Dedicated to the beloved, revered leader of World Jewry

The Lubavitcher Rebbe

זצוקלה"ה נב"מ ז"ע

May he succeed in imploring the Almighty to redeem His people speedily in our days.