

The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center

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Baltimore, MD 21209

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www.chabadshul.org



October 31, 2020

Lech Lecha

13 Cheshvan, 5781

From a New Perspective

You buy a brand new car. Each time before you go for a drive, you carefully make a 360 degree circuit around the car to ascertain that there are no scratches or dents. When you arrive at your destination, you leave your new car in a lone spot, far from the other cars parked like sardines. In this way, no laissez-faire motorist will unthinkingly swing his door open into your car.

The baby starts to crawl. Suddenly, a speck on the carpet is no longer innocuous; it might be daintily picked up by the baby and happily popped into her mouth. Loose change becomes a potential enemy when it rolls out of your pocket. You get down on your hands and knees, or perhaps even lower, to peer around from a kids-eye-view, scanning the terrain for anything that the horizontally mobile baby might go for.

Isn't it interesting how the slightest change in circumstances can alter your whole perspective on how you see your surroundings?

This insight answers a frequently asked question about the coming of Moshiach, whose arrival we await every day. How is it possible that the material world will remain unchanged with all its natural laws and characteristics, and yet, at the same time, we will have a heightened sensitivity to spirituality and be able to perceive the G-dliness in all of creation?

Our examples above can help us understand the answer to this question. The world will remain the same world. It is our perspective which will change. Our new consciousness of and sensitivity to the good and G-dly within ourselves and all of creation will allow us to be aware of and appreciate things we did not even notice before.

Another example, and this one from a positive viewpoint: You are on vacation and are touring ancient historical sites. You are impressed by the thought that you are seeing something which has been around for hundreds, or perhaps thousands, of years. You ask your tour guide questions. Back in your hotel room you read a history book you picked up that has a detailed account written by an eyewitness to an event which actually occurred in that place. You visit the site a second time. But this time, your new perspective literally opens your eyes to an appreciation you could not have imagined before.

And so it will be with the Redemption. Our new-found appreciation of G-dliness and G-d's world will open our eyes and enable us to have a completely different perspective on the world and its real meaning.

The Rebbe has told us that we don't have to wait. By learning more Torah in general, and more about Moshiach and the ultimate Redemption in particular, we can open our eyes now and enjoy the inherent harmony and G-dliness of the world in anticipation of Moshiach's arrival.

(from <http://www.lchaimweekly.org/>)

Spiritual Lamarckism

Pirkei Avos (Ethics of the Fathers) teaches that "Avraham Avinu (our Forefather Abraham) was tested with ten tests (one of which was "Lech Lecha", leaving his birthplace for an unknown destination based on a Divine promise) and prevailed in all of them." (Pirkei Avos 5:4) Rabbi Chaim Volozhiner notes in his commentary on that mishna that the previous mishna also mentions Avraham but surprisingly omits the tribute "Avinu." Based on the verse in Mishlei/Proverbs (20:7), "A tzadik (righteous individual) walks in righteousness, fortunate are his offspring after him," Rabbi Chaim explains what could be described as the Theory of "Spiritual Lamarckism." According to Lamarck, organisms altered their behavior in response to environmental change. Their changed behavior, in turn, modified their organs, and their offspring inherited those "improved" structures. For example, giraffes developed their elongated necks and front legs by generations of browsing on high tree leaves. The exercise of stretching up to the leaves altered the neck and legs, and their offspring inherited these acquired characteristics. Although this theory has long been disproved in the science of the physical world, it nonetheless remains completely true in the realm of the spirit. One who ascends the spiritual ladder and acquires levels of saintly achievement does indeed bequeath these acquisitions to their offspring.

(continued on the other side)

The commentaries point out that the word for trial or tribulation, nisayon, derives from the word for flag, nays, because the purpose of life's ordeals is to elevate the person, to raise him up like a flag, and to assist in the actualization of his potential.

Avraham was tested ten times because he was destined to become "Avinu," the progenitor of the holy Jewish nation. By rising to the challenge of each of these ordeals, and prevailing in each instance, he was able to realize all of his latent potential which would then, through the process of "Spiritual Lamarckism," become the inheritance of his offspring and part of the spiritual DNA of the Jewish People.

Rabbi Chaim Volozhiner uses this idea to explain how so many simple Jews over the centuries have proved willing to give up their lives, dying to sanctify the Divine name, dying as a Jew, in order to hold true to their religious beliefs. It is encoded in the spiritual genetics of a Jew to be able to do so as a result of Avraham's willingness to be tossed into Nimrod's fiery furnace at Ur Kasdim rather than to relinquish his monotheistic convictions. Likewise, Rabbi Chaim explains, the ability of the simple Jew to uproot himself and his family and trek large distances through horrible conditions in order to set foot in the Land of Israel results from Avraham's success in his challenge to do the same upon hearing the command "Lech Lecha."

As we strive in our own lives to grow in Torah and G-d consciousness and to ascend the ladder of spirituality, we should do so with the awareness and joy of knowing that our achievements and acquisitions will not only elevate us, but will become the spiritual inheritance of our offspring as well.

(by Rabbi David Begoun from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)

Remember to set your clocks **BACK 1 hour** before going to sleep Saturday night.



We happily wish Mazel Tov to
Mr. Marvin and Mrs. Sarah Itzkowitz
 on the **Birth of a Granddaughter, Toby**
 born to their children **Aryeh and Rochella Shapiro.**
 Mazel Tov also to the grandparents **Rabbi and Mrs Shuley Shapiro.**

Yahrzeits This Week:

Allan Berman 17 Cheshvan - Tuesday night / Wednesday for father Hillel ben Shmuel

SHUL DIRECTORY

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DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

<p>Friday, 10/30 — 12 Cheshvan Shacharit — 7:00 Candles — 5:48 p.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:50 p.m.</p> <p>Shabbat, 10/31 — 13 Cheshvan Shacharit — 9:00 a.m. Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 10:09 a.m. Beitzah Gemora Shiur — 4:35 p.m. Minchah — 5:35 p.m. Ma'ariv — 6:49 p.m.</p> <p>Sunday, 11/1 — 14 Cheshvan Shacharit — 8:00 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:45 p.m. E.S.T.</p> <p>Monday, 11/2 — 15 Cheshvan Shacharit — 6:50 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:45 p.m.</p>	<p>Tuesday, 11/3 — 16 Cheshvan Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:45 p.m.</p> <p>Wednesday, 11/4 — 17 Cheshvan Shacharit — 7:00a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:45 p.m.</p> <p>Thursday, 11/5 — 18 Cheshvan Shacharit — 6:50 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:45 p.m.</p> <p>Friday, 11/6 — 19 Cheshvan Shacharit — 7:00 Candles — 4:40 p.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:40 p.m.</p>
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