

# The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center  
6701 Old Pimlico Road  
Baltimore, MD 21209

[www.chabadshul.org](http://www.chabadshul.org)



November 9, 2024

Lech Lecha

8 Cheshvan, 5785

## Give Me the Soul !

The weekly Parshah is enlivened these days with the arrival of Abraham on the biblical scene. Our founding father brings new life to the world, as he spreads the message of monotheism in a hitherto pagan society. He also shows his prowess as a fearless fighter for justice, putting his own life on the line to save his nephew Lot, when Lot is taken captive in the world war of the day.

It was after Abraham rescued his nephew that the King of Sodom thanked Abraham for liberating the other prisoners of war—the king's soldiers and citizens—at the same time. The king offers Abraham the spoils of war, and asks only to have his men back. Ten li hanefesh, he says. "Give me the people, and take the possessions for yourself."

Twenty-five years ago, I heard a powerful and passionate call by my saintly mentor, the Rebbe of blessed memory. It was Simchat Torah, the yom tov (festival) when we celebrate the gift of Torah in a spirit of boundless joy. He had appealed for charity to be given in the same heightened spirit, i.e., beyond normal limitations or the usual budgetary considerations. Later, he explained his call to have been one of ten li hanefesh, which, literally, means "give me the soul." It was a special moment, and what he was demanding of his followers was a genuine outpouring of soul, a sincere act of pure faith, beyond reason or issues of affordability. The Rebbe had called for a total, unconditional commitment.

The call, "Give me the soul," still reverberates. And it applies to everything we do. We are all composites of body and soul. But more often than not, our physical selves get all the attention while our spiritual side is neglected. How many times do we hear Jews, especially young Jews, complaining that Judaism lacks spirituality; that their synagogues and temples are devoid of any real feeling or atmosphere of sanctity? And then we bemoan them trekking off to the Himalayas to find purpose, depth, and all the things we never gave them.

How many bar mitzvahs and weddings have been reduced to empty shells of materialistic one-upmanship, with friends and neighbors compelled to outdo each other in garish extravagances, which miss the whole point of what the celebration is about?

And G-d calls out, Give me the soul! Give me back what is mine. Put some spirit back into Judaism. Enough with the Mickey Mouse routines and rituals, the song-and-dance gimmicks. Get beyond the external and the plastic. Give me some soul!

When our faith is superficial, we look as foolish as the pathetic thief described in the Talmud. "The thief, at the mouth of the tunnel, calls out to G-d." Here is a goniff, a lowly criminal, about to enter the tunnel he has dug to rob a bank, but before he goes in, he prays to G-d for success. What a chutzpah! He is about to violate G-d's express command not to steal, and has the audacity to still ask G-d to help him do the job?!

But such is the effect of superficiality. He has faith, our Talmudic thief. It just hasn't penetrated. Because this shallow pseudo-religiosity hasn't permeated his inner being, he is blissfully unaware of the hypocrisy of his actions. So what's wrong with stealing and praying at the same time?

The truth is that we all believe, even the thieves among us. The challenge is for the penny to drop; for that faith to reach into our core, to touch our souls. Let us heed the call, Ten li hanefesh—"Give me the soul." Let us move beyond superficial Judaism to something deeper, profound and real, which will touch our own souls and inspire our children.



(by Rabbi Yossy Goldman from [www.chabad.org](http://www.chabad.org))

## The Sweet Aroma

Our Parashah opens: "Hashem said to Avram, 'Go for yourself from your land, from your relatives, and from your father's house to the land that I will show you.'" Later, Avram (later known as Avraham) wanders further—throughout the Land of Canaan, to Egypt, and to the land of the Plishtim.

In contrast, we read about Avraham's idolatrous ancestors (Yehoshua 24:2—a verse quoted in the Pesach Haggadah), "Your forefathers—Terach, the father of Avraham and the father of Nachor—always dwelt beyond the [Euphrates] River." They remained in one land and were not asked to wander from place to place. Why?

R' Gedaliah Silverstone z"l (1871-1944; rabbi in Belfast, Ireland and Washington, D.C.) explains that there is a positive aspect to Avraham's wanderings and, likewise, to those of the Jewish People throughout our millennia in exile. Specifically, it serves to publicize the Name of Hashem throughout the world. R' Silverstone writes: When one has a pleasant-smelling air freshener, he walks through all the rooms of the house with it so that its aroma will be distributed throughout. In contrast, when one has foul smelling tar or gasoline, he keeps it in the cellar or garage so that its aroma will not be widely-distributed. Likewise, when it comes to idolators such as Terach and his ancestors, it was better for mankind that they remain in one land. In contrast, it is to the world's benefit that Avraham and his descendants travel widely. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Korban Pesach[1939 ed.] p.30.)

*(by Rabbi Shlomo Katz from Project Genesis at [www.torah.org](http://www.torah.org))*

**Kol Hanaarim— Father and Son Learning** – every Friday evening during the winter at **7:30 p.m. in The Shul**. Cholent and other refreshments are served. Each session is 'topped off' at the end with a fascinating story. For any questions, please see Rabbi Itzkowitz.



### 'The Rav's Friday Night Hashkafa Q&A Shiur for Men'

will take place **Friday night – November 22<sup>nd</sup>**  
at 8:00 p.m. and will be held at  
the home of **Mr. Zvi & Mrs. Avital Friedman**,  
at 6715 Old Pimlico Road.

Questions can be submitted in advance to [rabbikaplan@chabadmd.com](mailto:rabbikaplan@chabadmd.com).

### SHUL DIRECTORY

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### DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

**Friday, 11/8 – 7 Cheshvan**  
Shacharit —7:00 a.m.  
Candles — 4:39 p.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:40 p.m.

**Shabbat, 11/9 – 8 Cheshvan**  
Shacharit – 9:00 a.m.  
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:15 a.m.  
Minchah — 4:25 p.m.  
Shiur — after Minchah  
Shkiah — 4:56 p.m.  
Ma'ariv — 5:39 p.m.

**Sunday, 11/10 – 9 Cheshvan**  
Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.  
Minchah / Maariv — 4:40 p.m.

**Monday – Veterans Day, 11/11 – 10 Cheshvan**  
Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:40 p.m.

**Tuesday, 11/12 – 11 Cheshvan**  
Shacharit — 7:00 a.m..  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:40 p.m.

**Wednesday, 11/13 – 12 Cheshvan**  
Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:40 p.m.

**Thursday, 11/14 – 13 Cheshvan**  
Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:40 p.m.

**Friday, 11/15 – 14 Cheshvan**  
Shacharit —7:00 a.m.  
Candles — 4:33 p.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:35 p.m.