

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 129

Lech Lecha | Building a Home - A Lifelong Calling



MESILLOT

Pathways to the Soul

Illuminating teachings and insights on the weekly parasha
by **Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l**

From the weekly lectures of his son,
Rabbi Israel Abargel shlita

פרשת לך לך | אנגלית

...PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL...

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Parshat Lech Lecha

Hashem Directs the Steps of Man

The following story is told about the great Tzadik Rabbi Aryeh Leib of Shpola, also known as the Saba (grandfather) from Shpola:¹

When the Saba was young, he ventured out in exile, as was customary for many righteous individuals of that generation. One Friday, the Saba found himself in a village not far from Poltava. Spotting a house with a mezuzah, the Saba knocked on the door. The door opened, and the homeowner, scrutinizing the traveler with a piercing gaze, invited him inside, pointing to a bench against the wall where the Saba, sighing in relief, settled down.

After many nights on the floor or even under the open sky, the bench felt as soft as a feather bed. Unnoticed, the Saba took a

book from his bag, and upon opening it, he immersed himself in a completely different world. Studying the Torah gave him strength, as if he were feasting, his cheeks reddened, his eyes gleamed with a special light, and he began to sway with enthusiasm.

Meanwhile, the door of the house opened again, and another guest entered, carrying a bag over his shoulder. After some consideration and consultation with the hostess, another bench was offered to the guest.

Throughout the Shabbat, the guest captivated the host and the Saba with his witty remarks about the weekly Torah portion, Jewish laws, and more. Everyone, including Saba, was convinced that they had an

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extraordinary guest before them.

The guest told the homeowner that in his own city, he was highly respected, heading a yeshiva with many students. But now, he had to marry off his daughter, and he had no money for her dowry. Therefore, he had to travel from place to place, relying on the kindness of his Jewish brethren to collect charity. In his own community where he was well-known and highly regarded, he couldn't do this, his situation embarrassed him greatly. The homeowner and the Saba sighed in sympathy with the Torah scholar that had to wander the world collecting money.

After the conclusion of the Shabbat, they recited the Havdalah and shared a meal, and then retired for the night.

However, the guest couldn't sleep. Walking around the room with his head down, making occasional hand gestures, and uttering words that resembled quotes from the Talmud, he seemed completely absorbed in

clarifying a difficult passage in the Talmud.

In the morning, after praying and having breakfast, the Saba thanked the host for his hospitality and set out on his journey. The second guest decided to join him and said loudly enough for the host to hear, "Actually, I would've liked to stay here for an additional day or two, such hospitality is rare to find. But since you are leaving now, I'll join you so that neither of us has to travel alone."

The Saba waited for the second guest to gather his belongings and was pleased that he had found such a knowledgeable companion with whom he could study the Torah during the travels.

Walking together and enjoying his fellow traveler's remarks, the Saba didn't notice that the man kept looking back.

After they had covered a significant part of the journey and were nearing Poltava, they heard the sound of galloping horses. Suddenly, the Saba's companion,

clutching his stomach, began groaning as though he were experiencing stomach cramps. He quickly dropped one of his bags near the Saba's feet asking him to watch over it while he went to relieve his stomachache, and hastily disappeared into forest.

Sitting on the roadside and still oblivious to what was happening, the Saba waited for his companion. Pulling the bag closer to his feet he regretted that the man hadn't relieved himself of his heavy bag as well for safekeeping. He sat there, engrossed in studying the Torah, not paying attention to the quickly approaching wagon drawn by horses. In the wagon sat none other than the host of the house where the Saba had spent the entire Shabbat, accompanied by two burly men.

In an instant, they leaped from the wagon and knocked the Saba to the ground, and began a thorough search, meticulously inspecting his pockets, bags, and the companion's bag he was entrusted with. After untying the knot of the companion's bag, they

triumphantly produced two silver forks, the same ones they had used during the Sabbath meal. The homeowner looked accusingly at the Saba, no explanations were needed, as the situation was quite clear. However, the search did not end there; besides the forks, other items of silver and gold had disappeared. After a thorough search that yielded nothing more, and being unable to extract any information from Saba regarding the whereabouts of the stolen items, they decided to help him "talk".

The homeowner, followed by the two strong men, mercilessly beat the Saba. "You vile and ungrateful thief!" the homeowner yelled at him. "Is this your gratitude for the warm welcome you received her?!"

After their traditional methods failed to make the Saba "confess" or "remember" where the stolen items were, they loaded him onto the wagon and took him to the police station in Poltava. Once in police custody, the Saba received another round of

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beatings, which, of course, did not help him "repent" or "recall" the whereabouts of the stolen items.

After the "investigation" was concluded, the Saba, badly bruised, was brought before a judge who sentenced him to several years of prison. In the middle of the night, they threw the Saba into a cell with hardened criminals, leaving him with only his tallit and tefillin, and even that only by a miracle.

At dawn, the astonished inmates surveyed their new neighbor, who was very different from the usual inmates: he sported a head covering and had a long beard and *peyot*. After some exchange, they decided that they needed to teach the newcomer the local rules and collect a fee from him for joining them. The Saba turned out his pockets, showing that he had not a single penny, and said, "Actually, I don't intend to join your group; I have never stolen anything in my life. I ended up here by mistake"...

Such insolent behavior would not be tolerated by the inmates: to

alienate himself from them and also refuse to pay?! They felt compelled to make the newcomer understand, in prison vernacular, that he was deeply mistaken!

But as soon as the first inmate approached and raised his hand to mete out his revenge on the Saba, his hand froze in the air, began to swell, and bleed. Falling to the floor and writhing like a snake, he screamed in unbearable pain.

Panic ensued. Some screamed in fear, others froze in horror, and their cries intermingled with the groans of the "injured" inmate...

The guards rushed to the noise, trying to figure out what was going on. Upon seeing the injured man on the floor, the supervisors tried to bandage his wounds, but it was to no avail... Despite everything, the hand continued to bleed. The injured man was placed on a stretcher and taken to the hospital.

The commotion subsided...

From that day on, the Saba was able to peacefully engage in Torah study and prayer, enjoying unquestioned authority

in the eyes of the inmates. They even started addressing him with the honor as *Rabbi*, and treated him with reverence. During the Saba's prayers an unusual fear would overcome them, as they sat with their mouths as though filled with water.

Among the inmates was one known as the "Gypsy," and the Saba initially believed him to be a Gypsy. However, over time and after lengthy conversations, the Saba realized that he was, in fact, an assimilated Jew who had joined a Gypsy camp, marrying a Gypsy woman. He was now serving time for horse theft and had one more year until his release.

"**It's** clear that I didn't end up here by chance!" the Saba thought one day. "Perhaps the Al-mighty sent me here solely to help this "Gypsy". I must make every effort to bring him back to the Jewish fold."

That same day, the Saba decided to establish a stronger connection with the "Gypsy." He spent many hours talking to him, trying to awaken the Jewish

spark in his heart, but after so many years among non-Jews, the the "Gypsy's" heart was closed.

Only after much effort, something began to stir in his hardened heart. Slowly but surely, he began to listen to the Saba's words and even agreed to put on tefillin, offered by the Saba. Step by step, the Saba guided him in learning the basics of Judaism and observing the commandments.

However, his Gypsy family weighed heavily on his heart. How could he leave his wife and children?

One day, the prison authorities received an urgent letter addressed to the "Gypsy." Upon opening it, even the most hardened prison officials couldn't remain indifferent. The letter informed him that his wife, tired of waiting for him to be released, had decided to leave him and had gone away with another man, taking their children with her. In a tragic turn of events, that man, in a fit of drunken rage, had killed them all and then took his own life.

How could they deliver such devastating news to their charge? What would stop him, already incarcerated and now bereft of his family, from taking his own life?

They discussed how to handle the situation delicately. By that time, everyone knew about the special bond between the rabbi and the "Gypsy." They decided to approach the Saba, believing that he would find a way to convey such a dismal message. If something would go wrong, the Rabbi would be to blame.

Upon receiving the letter and reading it, the Saba wiped away a tear. He decided to share the news with the "Gypsy" gradually, eventually getting to the point.

To his surprise, the "Gypsy" did not only not become upset, he even rejoiced: "You brought me good news, Rabbi! I realized that it's wrong to continue this relationship. But what could I do? They were my wife and children! But now, nothing else binds me, and I can live as a full-fledged Jew!"

Saba, could hardly believe, his student had advanced to the level of understanding that it was impossible to live with such a family, and felt great pride in his 'student'.

The "Gypsy," filled with joy, thanked the Al-mighty for showing him that his repentance was accepted in heaven.

The Saba encouraged him, "keep on ascending further spiritually. I'm sure that I wound up here for you. As soon as you will reach the proper level, we will be able to leave together!"

The "Gypsy" wholeheartedly agreed, "Alright, Rabbi, I'm prepared to do as you say. But I have one request: please remain here and don't abandon me..."

A short time later, in a vision one night, the Saba heard a voice saying, "Get up and leave this place, and go to Zlatopol!"

Waking up in a cold sweat, the Saba hurried to wake up the "Gypsy," instructing him to get dressed and follow him without veering right or

left. In a half-asleep state, the "Gypsy" followed the Saba, not understanding what was transpiring.

Saba approached the cell door and shoved it. The door swung wide open. Nearby, the guard was soundly asleep, snoring loudly. The same happened with the second door and the third. In a short time, Saba and the "Gypsy" found themselves out on the street, enjoying the fresh night air.

They walked quickly under the moonlight in no specific direction, trying to get as far away from the prison as possible.

Solely for this

Another tale that illustrates a similar point:

Rabbi Yehuda Tzadka, of blessed memory, shared a story about his student, Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu:

When Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu was a young student, he and a group of his friends were accused of plotting to blow up the Knesset, and they

By morning, they arrived in a village where they were taken in by a Jewish family. After resting, praying, and strengthening themselves, they continued their journey. To their great joy, they learned that they were on the right path. Three days later, they reached Zlatopol.

For a long time later, the former "Gypsy" continued to study under the Saba's tutelage. When the Saba saw that he had already reached a high level of Torah knowledge and fear of G-d, he outlined the next steps of divine service for him and sent him out to spread Torah.

were sentenced to prison. In anticipation of the arrival of this supposedly dangerous group of 'terrorists', the prison warden prepared a special squad of armed and baton-wielding prison guards for any contingency.

However, upon seeing these "dangerous terrorists," he was taken aback. Before him stood a group of skinny, bespectacled

Yeshiva students who looked like so lean that a strong gust of wind would blow them away. The warden decided that he needed to conduct a personal investigation to understand why these "wimps" had been incarcerated.

He engaged in lengthy conversations with the boys, hoping to uncover the truth. Rabbi Eliyahu, who had received the longest sentence of ten months, was among them. Over the course of these months, the warden learned about concepts such as Torah, love for one's fellow Jew, a sense of responsibility for another

Jew, and the significance of every deed.

By the time the prison sentences of the "terrorists" were to come to an end, the warden had reached his own conclusions: he decided to start observing the Torah and Mitzvot.

Upon hearing from the warden about his determined resolution, Rabbi Eliyahu said, "It was worth serving our long sentence just for the warden to return to his roots!"²

These stories emphasize an important principle that we'll discuss below.

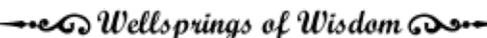
New Medicine

In a lecture my father Zt"l once delivered, he said the following:

During the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, the great love of the Creator for His people was revealed. But over the many years since the giving of the Torah, the people of Israel have gone through numerous trials and tribulations. Gradually,

as a result, the spiritual level of the people began to decline. During the long exile, our people "contracted" such illnesses that the previous remedies were no longer able to heal, and something new was required.

And so, the Al-mighty took out a new medicine from His "pharmacy," in the form of the



teachings of Baal Shem Tov, and brought it into this world. The Baal Shem Tov began to teach people the teachings of Chassidut, which contain amazing advice on how to heal the ailments of the soul and how to prevent them.

As the exile continued, the condition of the Jewish people deteriorated even further. To the point that many Chassidic leaders had to travel from city to city, from town to town, addressing all the of the different populations, hoping that a drop of this healing medicine would reach people's hearts and cure them of the maladies caused by the exile.

In this context, there is a story told about one of the Chassidim of the Rebbe Rashab of Lubavitch who came to see him. The Rebbe

asked about his affairs, to which the Chassid replied that he lived in a small town near Vilnius but couldn't find employment there, so he moved to a town near Kherson and began teaching children in a cheder.

The Rebbe inquired, "Do you teach Chassidut to adults?"

"The residents of the town are God-fearing Jews, but they are not very eager to learn Chassidut, except a little on Shabbat," the Chassid responded.

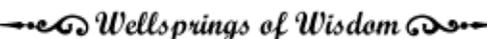
"Please have a seat; I want to explain something to you," said the Rebbe...

To understand the rest of the story, we first need to explain at length about the creation and the purpose of Man:

The Union of Heaven and Earth

The foundation of the entire universe is the four-letter name of the Creator - הו"ייה (Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey).³

This is true regarding the Jewish people as well, as it says in the Torah, "בנים אתם להו"ייה אלקיכם"- "You are the children of הו"ייה



3. See at length in Sod Hashem L'yireiav (p. 10) of Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh Shlita.

Parshat Lech Lecha - The Creation of Man

your God" indicating the connection we have to Hashem.

The Vilna Gaon wrote that the Al-mighty created the world so that the name יהויה would be revealed in it.⁴

The Creator decided that the

The Creation of Man

During the first five days of creation, all of reality came into being. The pure, elevated, and spiritual heavenly beings, and the material and lowly beings created on Earth.

This state of affairs persisted until the sixth day. On the sixth day, the Creator formed a majestic soul, a part of God Himself, a general soul which encompassed all the souls of Israel, and sent it downward.

There, awaited it a lump of earth shaped in the form of a

means to achieve this would be by our efforts in studying the Torah (which is called the "Great Name of the Creator) and fulfilling its commandments through which we transform the material into the spiritual, and we bring about the revelation of the sacred name יהויה.

human being. The soul was then placed within this lump, and it came to life. Thus, humanity was born.

Man is the only creation that combines spirituality and materiality.

1. He was created from the earth, as it is written, "And the Lord G-d formed man of the dust of the ground" (Bereshit 2:7).

2. He is similar to the Creator, as it is written, "And G-d said, 'Let us make man in

Wellsprings of Wisdom

4. The Gr"a writes as follows (Sifra D'tzniuta p. 32, f. 4): Havay"א is the name of the infinite, and with this name he rules the world, and reveals himself, and all previous emanations are all in order for this name to come about, and

this is the purpose of creation... and this is the main name of Hashem, and all other names including higher ones are secondary to it... this level has a name since its role is to reveal higher levels that have no name.

our image, after our likeness"
(Bereshit 1:26).

This is why man is called "Adam," which incorporates two concepts: man is composed of a material body formed from the earth ("adamah"), and a soul likened to the divine ("Edameh

L'Elyon"). This duality is hinted at in the word "Adam."

When a Jew studies the Torah for the sake of the Torah itself, his soul unites with his body, and at that moment, the letter ך (Yud) from the Divine name rests upon him.

It is not Good for Man to be Alone

The Al-mighty placed man in the Garden of Eden, and even there, he stood out due to his elevated status. The letter ך (Yud) from the Divine name יהו"ה illuminated him, casting a special light on everything around him.

However, this light still lacked the other three letters from the Creator's name יהו"ה. Thus, man was still far from perfection. In order to elevate him to the next level, the Al-mighty created woman.

This is what is written: "And the Lord God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helpmate opposite him'" (Bereshit 2:18).

The Creator desired that a

man and a woman enter into marriage, thereby create a dwelling place for the Shechinah (the Divine presence), connecting the material world with the spiritual, the body with the soul.

In this structure, the man is responsible for spirituality, and the woman is responsible for material matters. When they live according to these roles, without interfering in each other's responsibilities, they merit a true and lasting union, uniting spirituality with materiality, and thus, the second letter, ה (Hey) of the Creator's name is manifested.

We digress to discuss the unique roles of a man and a woman:

Importance of Understanding one's Misson

In the series of books called "Chelev Ha'aretz" we wrote the following:

The Creator fashioned man from two parts—man and woman, as it is written: "Male and female He created them, and He blessed them, and He called their name Adam, in the day they were created" (Bereshit 5:2). The Creator created man and woman with different qualities and abilities, each with their own purpose.

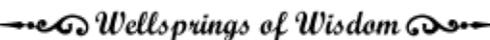
However, they share a common goal, achieved when each of them fills in the gap left by the other. The man is designed to fulfill certain responsibilities, and the woman has her own. Therefore, the Al-mighty predetermined a fitting match for each man, unique to him alone, according to the source of his soul and his character traits, even before his birth. As the Talmud states: "Rabbi Eliezer said in the name of Rabbi Yosi:

Forty days before the formation of a child, a heavenly voice calls forth and says, "The daughter of so-and-so is destined for so-and-so". (Sotah 2:1)

Rabbi Eliyahu Ki Tov wrote in the book "Ish u'Beito:"

A man and a woman are two entirely different worlds, each with distinct tasks that do not overlap. A man represents the revealed aspect of the world, while a woman embodies the concealed aspect. A man acts, and a woman provides him with the strength to act. A man is like a tree, and a woman is like a wellspring that nourishes that tree.

The actions of a man are expansive and open, encompassing "the entire world," and this is his strength. A woman's actions, on the other hand, are more hidden and purposeful, resulting in long-lasting outcomes, this is her strength.⁵



5. When a woman intermarries G-d forbid, her children (and her daughter's

children etc.) will be Jewish for eternity. When a Jewish man intermarries

Parshat Lech Lecha - Importance of Understanding one's Misson

however, his Jewish identity gets completely lost and doesn't transfer to his children. A Jewish woman's impact is more strongly felt and eternal...

As the following story of Rabbi Dov Halperin illustrates (V'Rabim Heishiv MiAvon vol. 1, p. 210): "His appearance was unusual in the Chassidic scene, which was gathered around the long table in the 'Torat Emet' Yeshiva during the 'Seudat Mashiach.' There were 'shtreimlech' and round hats, typical of Jerusalem, alongside the distinctive attire of Chabad. His hairdo, long hair, and the 'disposable' kipa on his head were certainly unconventional there.

The year was 1972. The location: 'Torat Emet' on Me'ah She'arim Street. The main figure: the Chassid Rabbi Moshe Weber. It's hard to believe that the young guest fully understood Rabbi Moshe Weber's words — quite a challenging task even for seasoned Chassidim.

Only later in the evening, when Rabbi Reuven Donin burst into the gathering like a storm, and his powerful and captivating speech began to resonate in the hall, did the young man suddenly felt 'at home.'

Perhaps the young guest didn't fully grasp who Rabbi Reuven was, who exactly he was talking to, and what his words were implying. But he understood the language, and how! Rabbi Reuven's fiery spirit swept him away.

Reuven noticed him too, and he sent four cups his way, and to be sure, four more cups. He also tried to join in the

singing and melodies, and moment by moment, it was clear that he was feeling more and more 'at home.'

And then, when he felt comfortable enough, he opened his mouth for the first time. He heard Rabbi Reuven shouting too many times to count: 'Chaverim (friends), stop being a tail' and he simply couldn't understand the significance of this Yiddish word that Rabbi Reuven was mentioning so often...

When he tried to ask the person sitting next to him what the word meant, he saw, to his astonishment, that the man was silent and avoided the question. Then he turned to the person sitting on his other side, who told him, 'Ask Rabbi Reuven himself'... And before he could stop him, he was already on his feet, and with a loud and resonant voice that left all the participants slightly stunned and perplexed, he addressed Rabbi Reuven: 'What does a 'tail' mean...?'

Rabbi Reuven, as if awakened anew, jumped onto the 'find' with both hands: 'Have you ever seen how a tail looks? If not, look at those sitting around you. The tail is constantly swaying. Sometimes here, sometimes there. Sometimes up, sometimes down. It has no bone. It has no spinal cord. It doesn't even know where it belongs.'

And then suddenly, without prior notice, the young guest began to sob uncontrollably, and he couldn't be calmed down. At first, they thought he

Parshat Lech Lecha - Importance of Understanding one's Misson

might have been hurt by Rabbi Reuven's words or the tone that might have sounded a bit harsh. They tried to comfort him and calm him down, but to no avail.

Meanwhile, the gathering continued. In all the other homes in the neighborhood they had already finished the holiday of Pesach. The utensils had been stored in the attic, and next to the bakeries, long lines were formed. But here, in 'Torat Emet,' in the heart of Ma'ah She'arim, they were in the midst of the 'VeHi SheAmdah' song, as if Passover had just begun...

Only after the Grace after Meals and the evening prayer, somewhere around midnight, when the attendees began to disperse, and only a few young men remained, the young guest finally opened his heart, and then came our turn to be surprised and amazed:

"I come from a traditional religious background. After the army, I left the land of Israel and completely strayed off the path in New York and got involved with an African-American non-Jewish girl, and we were about to get married.

My relatives, Chabadniks from Crown Heights, tried to talk to me - but in vain. Then they came with their 'heavy artillery': 'Go meet with the Rebbe.' Of course, I didn't agree. I'm not a fool, and I had no question what was the Rebbe's opinion about our intention to get married.

Then, when they realized that all of their efforts were in vain, they squeezed one

last deal out of me: 'This week, on the eve of Passover, the Rebbe distributes matzot to everyone. Come and receive matzah from the Rebbe. It will surely put the right idea in your head.'

I had nothing to lose. I didn't believe in these 'nonsense,' of course, and for me, it was just an excellent opportunity to get rid of the pressure from my relatives...

So, I arrived in Crown Heights exactly a week ago, on the eve of Passover. I stood in line with my relatives, and when I approached the Rebbe, he gave me a piece of matzah and said to me, 'A kosher and joyful Passover.' As I began to leave, the Rebbe turned to me again and asked, 'Where do you live?'

"New York," I answered."

"**And** your parents?" the Rebbe asked.

"**In** Israel," I replied.

"**Why** didn't you travel to be with your entire family for the Seder night?"

I didn't answer anything. I just mumbled that it didn't work out so well.

"**In** any case," the Rebbe continued, "it's not too late. You won't make it for the Seder night, but you can leave immediately after the holiday and spend the rest of Passover with your parents. It will certainly make them happy, and you will fulfill the mitzvah of honoring your parents."

Talk about "gender equality" is mistaken and misguided, since

men and women were initially created differently to handle

...*~* Wellsprings of Wisdom *~*...

And then the Rebbe cut two more pieces and gave them to me, saying, 'These are for your parents.'

And even before I could move again, the Rebbe turned to me once more and asked, 'Where do your parents live'?

"**In** Jerusalem," I answered.

"**Where** in Jerusalem?" the Rebbe asked.

"**In** Romema," I replied.

"**Well,**" the Rebbe said, "Romema is not so far from Ma'ah She'arim Street. You just walk straight until you reach it. So, on the seventh day of Passover, when it's customary to have the 'Seudat Mashiach,' come to the 'Torat Emet' Yeshiva, which is almost at the end of Ma'ah She'arim Street, and participate in the meal. May your journey be timely and successful, and may we hear good news."

"**When** I left the Rebbe's courtyard, my relatives and various Chassidim 'pounded' on me. It became clear to me that it was quite a rare event for the Rebbe to delay someone with such a long conversation.

'**Come** on,' my relatives said. 'Let's book you a flight.'

'**What** flight are you talking about?' I said to them and began to get really

annoyed. 'You asked me to come to your Rebbe, and I did. That's it. Now let me be; I'm not going anywhere.'

"**But** they continued to pester me. And I came back to Israel. And here I am. And I don't need to tell you what a commotion there was in my house when I told them about my plans. My parents were delighted with the surprise of my visit after four years of not seeing me, but when they heard what was had become of me and of my plans - they started to scream.

"**All** these days of Chol Hamoed (the intermediate days of Passover), I've been torn inside. Suddenly, I realized how I was disconnecting from my entire family, and in fact, I understood that I was disconnecting from my entire people.

"**And** then the seventh day of Passover arrived. I remembered what the Rebbe had told me. I found out where the 'Torat Emet' Yeshiva was, and here I am. And when Reuven explained to me about the tail that doesn't know whether it's up or down, I began to think that maybe that's why the Rebbe sent me here..."

What happened in the end, we don't know for sure; there are two possibilities: either he is your average Chabad Chassid or he's an emissary of the Rebbe in one of the cities or countries..."

different tasks. Imagine a chair demanding equality with a table. If we make them equal, we will have two tables or two chairs, but not a complete set! Only when the table is a table and the chair is a chair can we derive benefit from their joint use.

Similarly, men and women, being inherently different, together form a complete set. Only when each of them fulfills their respective functions can they achieve the desired result. Therefore, the aspiration of every person should be to realize their own potential, knowing their personal abilities, character traits, and the qualities inherent to men or women. This is the perspective with which we must view the Torah's directives to each gender and its relationship to them.

Building a Family – Life's Mission

Rabbi Aaron Zakai in the book "Mitzvot A-Nashim" (Commandments for Women) writes: Perfection achieved by a man and a woman does not come on its own but is the result of their joint efforts, as it is

As we mentioned earlier, men and women complement each other, and only when they are together can they attain the status of "Adam," as stated in the Talmud: "Rabbi Eliezer said: One who does not have a wife is not a complete person, as it is stated, 'Male and female He created them, and He blessed them, and He called their name Adam'".

It is written in the Shulchan Aruch (Code of Jewish Law): "One who does not have a wife lives without blessing, without Torah, and is not called a complete person. But when he marries, his sins are 'stopped up,' as it is written, 'He who finds a wife has found good and obtains favor from the Lord.'"

written: Rabbi Eliezer asked, "How can we understand the verse, 'I will make him a helpmate opposite him'? If he is deserving, she is a helpmate; if he is not deserving, she is against him."

Therefore, each spouse must make an effort to understand the differences between the two genders and strive to complement each other to achieve this perfection together. Our sages also say, "Rabbi Akiva said: When a man and a woman are worthy, the Divine Presence abides with them, but when they are not worthy, they are consumed by fire."

The difference between a man and a woman is fundamental. The man acts as the "Minister of Foreign Affairs," while the woman serves as the "Minister of the Interior." The man is responsible for providing for the family, he takes action, engages in the study of the Torah,

and all this corresponds to his abilities and character traits. The woman's task, on the other hand, is to manage the home, which suits her unique characteristics.

When each of them fulfills their roles, showing interest and helping the other without interfering in their partner's domain, complementing but not taking over the other's role, there is understanding, love, and friendship between them, unifying them as a whole...

A woman's role has been crucial ever since the giving of the Torah. The upbringing of children and their future lies in her hands. This means that the continuation of the Jewish people depends on her.

Three Channels

My father once said that there are three channels through which the Al-mighty bestows His blessings to a person: life, sustenance, and children.

The channel of life is in the hands of the man, and it depends

on him. The more righteous his deeds, the more he attracts health and life to himself and his family.

The channel of sustenance is in the hands of the woman, in order that the blessings of the Al-mighty will flow through this

Parshat Lech Lecha - Torah – in the Power of Women

channel, there is a necessary condition: peace in the home. As our sages say, "Rabbi Chelbo said: A man must respect his wife because all the blessings in the home are because of her, as it is written: 'And the Lord did well for Abraham's sake' (Bereshit 12:16). Similarly, Rava taught to the residents

of Mechoza: Respect your wives if you wish to become wealthy."

The above words are not allegorical but a statement of fact: the blessings in the home depend on the wife!

Lastly, the third channel of children depends on both of them.

Torah – in the Power of Women

A man's burden to study the Torah is very great since it upholds all of creation, as it is said, "If it were not for My covenant, day and night, the laws of heaven and earth I would not have established" (Yirmiyah 33:25).

In the tractate Moed Katan, it is said that the study of the Torah is equivalent to all other commandments combined, as it is written, "For wisdom is better than pearls, and all the things one may desire are not equal to her" (Mishlei 3:15). It has precedence "All the things one may desire," even those desired by the heaven (the Mitzvot).

But in order for a person to engage in Torah, they

require tranquility. How can the soul be tranquil when it bears the burden of providing sustenance, taking care of children, paying bills, and many other things that demand time and effort?

Hence, the Creator provided a faithful partner for man, one who would help him carry this burden and divided their responsibilities clearly. The man would concern himself with the spiritual aspects - studying the Torah and fulfilling commandments, while everything related to the material world would fall under the jurisdiction of the wife: raising children, preparing meals, etc.

Since the burden on the woman is considerable, the Torah exempted her from time-bound positive commandments to allow her to fulfill her other responsibilities. Imagine a scenario where a husband returns home hungry, and there's no food because the wife hasn't finished praying. Or a baby who needs to be changed, and she has to rush to hear the shofar blowing. It's hard to imagine that peace and harmony would reign in such a family.

The responsibility for educating and nurturing children primarily lies with the woman. This requires much patience and sensitivity. The investment that a woman sows, bears fruit even many years later, as the Talmud says in tractate Chullin: "Rabbi Chanina said: The warm water and oil that my mother anointed me with when I was a child sustain me in my old age."⁶

Therefore, the Torah exempted her from time-bound

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

6. In the book HaRabbanit (biography of Rabbanit Batsheva Kanievsky wife of Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky Zt"l chap. 3) is brought: without many introductions without lengthy speeches on the importance of learning, without exalting the Torah's value and virtue to great heights, without burdening with words—Torah held the highest and absolute value within the Kanivsky family household. Every aspect of the Rebbetzin's life was a complete devotion to the Torah. She esteemed it without bounds and aspired earnestly to merit upholding it in the loftiest manner.

Her son, the esteemed Rabbi Shlomo Kanivsky Shlita, testifies, "We never heard a lecture from our mother about the importance of Torah study in general

or our father's study in particular. It was simply our life. The air we breathed at home was the air of Torah. Without words, it was clear that Torah occupied the foremost place in our mother's life. She never interfered in our father's matters or in taking care of the children. With pure joy and wholehearted desire, she allowed him to be entirely dedicated to Torah. It wasn't an educational philosophy; it was a way of life" !

Rabbi Shlomo Levinstein, Shlita, relates the following story: "For many years, on Fridays, Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky and his son-in-law Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein held a chavrusa (study partnership), and one individual was privileged to join them in their study. This individual related: Every

Parshat Lech Lecha - Lost Opportunity

positive commandments that are associated with specific times because she is engaged in an extremely important task:

ensuring the continuity of the Jewish people.⁷

Now let's return to the creation of Man in the Garden of Eden.

Lost Opportunity

Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden, illuminated by the light of the first two letters of the Creator's name. Angels surrounded them, listening to the words of Torah from Adam's lips.

Somewhere nearby, a serpent was preparing for battle..."

Taking advantage of a moment when Eve was alone, the serpent approached her and spoke in his polished tongue, "In my opinion, there is almost no difference between you and the Creator. Everything He

knows, you know too! Well, except for one thing...

He can create 'something from nothing,' but you cannot. However, don't worry! I've found the source of His power! He tasted from the tree of knowledge of good and evil and gained this ability (which is why He forbade it to you). But if you eat from the fruits of this tree, you will become like Him!

"But the Lord knows that on the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you

...*~* **Wellsprings of Wisdom** *~*...

Friday, Rebbetzin Kanievsky would enter with a cup of coffee for her husband, Rabbi Kanievsky, may he live long and well. On one occasion, she entered with an ornate cup filled with coffee and a wide smile on her face. When she saw our surprised expressions, she said, 'he earned it, he made a siyum today'".

Initially, we wondered how a person could complete the entire Torah each year. But then, we understood the secret; it was the power of a woman. Through her encouragement and support, she strengthened the soul of her husband.

7. See Avnei Eish (p. 181) of Rabbi Aharon Shapira.

Parshat Lech Lecha - Illuminate the World!

will be like G-d, knowing good and evil" (Bereshit 3:5).

Both Adam and Eve fell for it due to their pride. And then, something terrible happened: the Shechinah (Divine Presence)

retreated to the heavens, and the opportunity to connect the higher worlds with the lower ones was barred.⁸

Darkness enveloped the world...

Illuminate the World!

It had been 1948 years since that fateful day of creation when Adam sinned. The Al-mighty decided that it was time to set the world on a path of rectification. The soul of Avraham descended into the world...

Avraham, from his childhood, selflessly began to serve the Creator.⁹ Avraham merited the illumination of the letter "Yud" (י) from the name of the

Creator. At the age of twenty-five, he married Sarah, who was then fifteen, and after their marriage, he merited the illumination of the letter "Hey" (ה) in the merit of Sarah.

When he was 75 years old (in the year 2023 to creation), he received a command from the Creator: "And the Lord said to Abram, 'Go forth from your land and from your birthplace

...*Wellsprings of Wisdom*...

8. The great Kabbalist Rabbi Yosef G'ikatilia wrote the following (Sha'arei Orah, first gate, p. 30): "make for me a temple and I will dwell amongst them" (Shemot 25:8).

"You must know the following principle: In the beginning of creation the Divine presence dwelled in our lower world, the great divine energy was complete and was drawn down... came Adam and sinned, and all

the conduits and pathways of divine energy broke and the divine presence left..."

9. The Rebbe from Kubrin would often say: it's no surprise that Avraham Avinu didn't burn in the furnace, the surprise is that the furnace didn't burn up in the great fiery love of Hashem of Avraham Avinu... (Chaim Sheyesh Bahem, of Rabbi Baruch Lev p. 144).

and from your father's house to the land that I will show you."

Chassidut explains: The Al-mighty revealed Himself to Abraham and said to him, "Know that thanks to your faith and service, there is now an opportunity to unite the upper and lower worlds once again. Therefore, go forth from your land, your birthplace, and your father's house to the land that I will show you—I am sending you on a journey around the world. In every place you go, you will redeem sparks of Divine holiness that have fallen there, drawing down the Shechinah (Divine presence) to that place."

Now let's return to our previous tale.

The Rashab explained to the Cheder teacher from Kherson:

"**From** the time when the Al-mighty said to Avraham, 'Go forth from your land,' and as it is written, 'And Avram set forth on his journeys going on toward the south,' the work

of birurim (redeeming sparks of holiness) began.

According to the Creator's decree, a person embarks on a journey and enters places where holy sparks await him to redeem them.

The righteous, possessing a pure vision, see where the holy sparks destined for them are, and they go there to redeem them. As for others, the Al-mighty guides their steps so that they arrive at the place where they are destined to perform this 'redemption.' In times of Avraham our forefather began the long history of the wanderings of the Jewish people throughout the world by divine providence to "redeem" the "sparks of holiness".

The Rashab continued: "For what purpose did the Al-mighty bring you specifically to this place, in the Kherson region? If it were only for the position of teaching, He could have sent instead students to you to Vilna. Obviously, the Al-mighty directed you here

so that you would spread the teachings of Chassidut not

merely on Shabbat, but even on weekdays!"¹⁰

Women first

In our weekly portion is included the following description of Avraham's journeys: "From there he ascended to the mountain that was east of Beit-El and set up his tent And Avram set forth on his journeys going on toward the south..."

Certainly, in each of these places, Avraham had the task of redeeming sparks of holiness¹¹ However, it is unclear why the words "and he pitched his tent" are inserted here. Why is this mentioned? How do these words relate to all of Abraham's journeys?

The Midrash explains: Rabbi Huna said, first and foremost, Avraham took care of

a place to stay for Sarah, and only then for himself.

Even during his spiritual work, when he was engaged in redeeming sparks of holiness, Avraham did not forget about his wife and her needs. When he wanted to pitch a tent, it was primarily a tent for Sarah, and only afterward for himself.

The respect shown to Sarah was not superficial but genuine and real, from the depths of his heart. Therefore, the Torah mentions it. Only the respect shown to Sarah allowed him to advance to the next level: "going on toward the south", South referring to the lofty spiritual level of Chesed of Atzilut.¹²

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

10. Otzar Sipurei Chabad (vol. 10 p. 57) of Rabbi Glitzenstein.

11. It's well known that the forefathers' actions hint to the spiritual dimension of their divine service. In this case going South, refers to the divine attribute of kindness, of love of G-d. He excelled in this divine service to the extent

that he was the 'vehicle' for this incredible attribute, indicating his total self-nullification to the divine will. His constant travels southward exemplified his constant ascensions to higher and greater spiritual heights.

12. Rabbi Azriel Tauber writes: "It is not good for Man to be alone, I will

Parshat Lech Lecha - A Son and Daughter - Perfection

After that, he progressed further, attaining the spiritual

light of the letters "Vav" (ו) and "Hey" (ה) from the name יהוה¹³.

A Son and Daughter - Perfection

An integral part of the marriage ceremony is the writing

of the Ketubah (marriage contract). A man is not allowed to live with

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

create for him a helpmate" (Bereshit 2:18), while regarding all the creatures and animals G-d said "It is very good" (ibid 1:31), regarding the Man, the crown of creation it states that he was 'not good' so long as he didn't have a wife,

As our sages say quite succinctly: "Anyone who does not have a wife, dwells without joy, without goodness, without blessing... without fortification without Torah.

The term used for marriage is to cleave to his wife, a term only used regarding the relationship with Hashem, as the Zohar states: When one marries a wife he cleaves to the divine presence.

Our sages say that when a couple is worthy, the divine presence rests on them.

As well, on one's wedding day he merits to ten spiritual gifts: goodness, joy, blessing, harmony, assistance, atonement, Torah, Wisdom, life, goodwill, wealth, and honor.

Moreover, the unity of marriage is an everlasting one, while humans are frail, this connection is everlasting.

Unfortunately, many married couples feel that their marriage is a yoke and

unwanted obligation. However, the Torah's view is that one must expend all of one's effort to make marriage work. Divorce is only to be seen as a last resort, as the Gemara states: Whoever divorces his first wife, even the altar sheds tear.

One also cannot say I'd rather live alone than get married, As the Bac"ח writes (beginning of Even HaEzer): Some have the mistaken notion that since the "helpmate" was given for their benefit, they may also choose to relinquish this benefit, and instead find a "helpmate" in the form of a close friend or family member. Therefore, the Torah specifically states that the woman was given to man with G-d's infinite wisdom and kindness knowing that this is his true helpmate and soulmate.

13. Rabbi Yehuda HaChasid writes: "And Hashem blessed Avraham 'בכל' - with everything", Bakol refers to a daughter that Sarah gave birth to, (there are differing opinions whether before or after the birth of Yitzchak). Thus, Avraham and Sarah merited as well to the four letters of Hashem' name.

(According to Tosfot however, Bakol was Hagar's daughter.)

his wife without a Ketubah as is the halacha in the Shulchan Aruch (Code of Jewish Law).

I once heard an interesting explanation from my father Rabbi Yoram, on this halacha:

The letter "Yud" (י) corresponds to the man, and the letter "Hey" (ה) corresponds to the woman. When they merit the birth of a son, they receive the letter "Vav" (ו), and with the birth of a daughter, they receive the last letter "Hey" (ה). This

way they merit that Hashem's holy name dwells upon the family.

But what about newlyweds who do not have children yet? The sages instituted the Ketubah. The word "Ketubah" is also comprised **ה"ו** כתובה=כתב, meaning that through writing the Ketubah, the spouses merit the letters "Vav" (ו) and "Hey" (ה) as well.

May the Al-mighty grant us the spiritual light of all the letters of His holy name!

Shabbat Shalom!



The Pathway...

1. Hashem created the world in order to reveal therein the great light of His name Havayah. It arose in His will that the way to draw down this great light be through refining the physical and elevating it to the spiritual, by connecting between this world and the next.

2. There are four stages in drawing down Hashem's light into this world. These are the four stages in a person's life which correspond to the four letters of Havayah (Yud, Hei, Vov, Hei):

Before marriage, upon marriage, upon the birth of a son, and finally upon the birth of a daughter.

3. Before marriage an individual has the opportunity to study Torah and refine himself, thereby further drawing the soul into the body, and the letter Yud from Hashem's name dwells upon them.

4. Upon marriage, which is akin to the soul's descension a second time, one is granted the

(First) letter Hei of Hashem's holy name.

5. Shalom bayit is requisite for the dwelling of the Shechinah, only when there is true harmony and peace can the spiritual dwell in the physical.

6. For there to be true harmony between a husband and wife, there needs to be recognition of each of their roles. They each have a unique mission, the man is the conduit for the spiritual blessings in the home, and the wife is the channel for the sustenance and maintenance of the home.

7. A husband and wife are similar to two kings who each rule their respective kingdoms. They each have strengths and abilities and advantages, which must be partnered together to be as "one flesh" in harmony and unity.

8. This demands effort, each must be ready to sacrifice and do their best to understand each other, understand their differences, and be complementary to each other.

Parshat Lech Lecha - The Pathway...

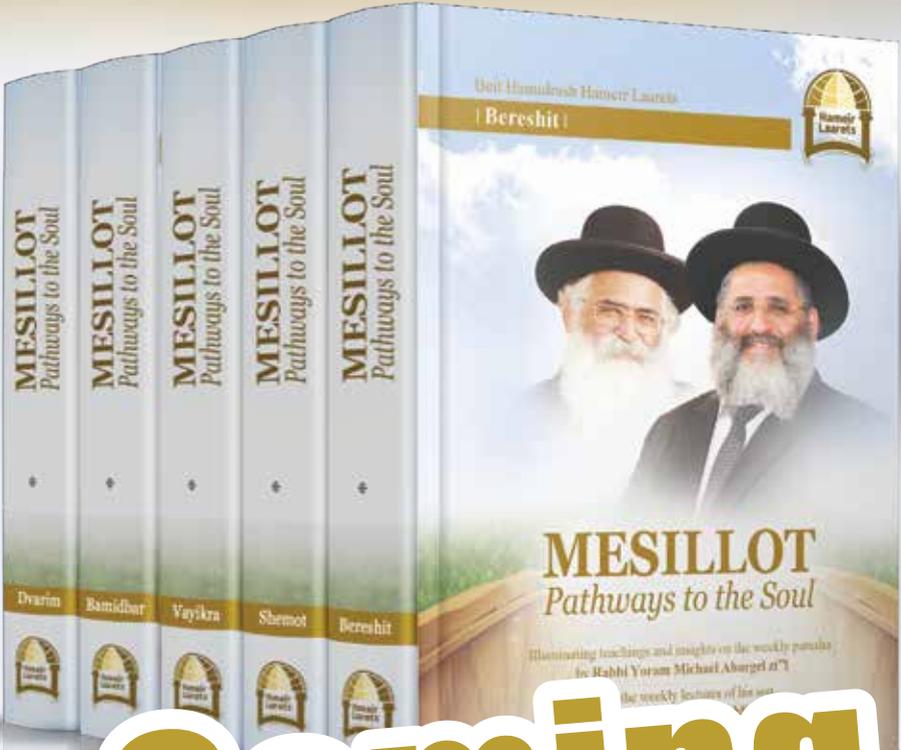
9. When a boy is born, the couple merit to the letter Vov of the divine name of Hashem.

10. When a couple have a daughter, they merit to the final

letter Hei of the tetragrammaton (Hashem's holy four-letter name).

May we all merit that Hashem's holy name and countenance bless and shine upon us.





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Lech Lecha

13th of Cheshvan, 5784



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New York	5:41 pm	6:39pm	7:09pm
Miami	6:25pm	7:17pm	7:54pm
Los Angeles	5:48pm	6:43pm	7:17pm
Montreal	5:31pm	6:33pm	7:00pm
Toronto	5:58pm	6:58pm	7:26pm
London	5:25pm	6:32pm	6:54pm
Jerusalem	5:39 pm	6:28 pm	7:05 pm
Tel Aviv	5:36 pm	6:25 pm	7:01 pm
Haifa	5:34 pm	6:23 pm	6:59 pm
Be'er Sheva	5:37 pm	6:26 pm	7:02 pm

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HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l*

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Those who forgo their slumber and come to pray at dawn and study afterward from the Talmud or the Tanya, will be blessed with a spiritual energy and life for all their posterity as it states "and one shall live through it" (Leviticus 18:5)



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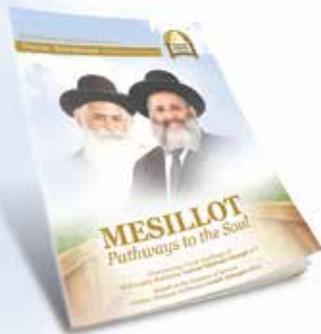
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