

The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center

6701 Old Pimlico Road
Baltimore, MD 21209

www.chabadshul.org



October 16, 2021

Lech Lecha

10 Cheshvan, 5782

The Sands of Abraham

Let's take a walk on the beach and squish the sand beneath our feet.

Let's join a caravan on its course through the desert, trekking through the dunes. Whipped and swirled by the wind, a thousand pebble-pricks sting, succeeded by a thousand more - a swift sequence of thousands on thousands. Even when quiet, the grittiness gets into clothes, clogs the skin; 'tis a desiccating lubricant, with an infinite thirst.

Let's make a sand castle, a transient fortress for our dreams. Loose particles, with no apparent bond between them, held together by that which dissolves them, severs the molecular link. Water and sand. Too little water, or none at all, and the conglomeration of grains has no connection one to another. Too little water, or none at all, and the sands blow away, each grain alone and indifferent - an irrelevant speck lost in the vastness, though surrounded and sustained by the sand's own innumerable multitude.

Water and sand. Too much water - if there can be too much water - and even the microscopic ceases to exist. A balancing act, water and sand. Sand in water must be stirred, lest it settle out, precipitate - again - into individual instability. But the right mixture suspends the sand.

Water and sand. Let there be more sand than water, but let the water penetrate, permeate and saturate. Let it infiltrate and seep, binding the granular each to each. Let the water adhere to the sand and the sands to each other. Then we can build such a castle, an edifice echoing eternity. Fragile, yes, for even a child's touch can tumble those turrets. But testament nevertheless to the enduring. For what is a sand castle if not a vision manifest? And if it be manifest but a moment, what of that? There, in that tower, that bulwark, that portal, that moat the dream becomes real. And only there, as long as it stands, does it stay real.

It's a paradox. From sand comes glass. Glass protects us from the world and let's us participate in the world.

Sand - symbol of time and eternity. An hour glass is filled with - sand. The grains slip one by one, marking the passing of the seconds one by one. As the sands run out, time runs out. But then - it's a paradox - we turn the glass over and are leased another hour. And so on, hour after hour, the sands slide and return, slide and return.

When we think of vastness, of stretching out of sight, of ownerless extensions of holiness - where the Jewish people met G-d - we think of sand.

Sand - the dust of the earth washed clean, made pure.

""And I will make your seed as the dust of the earth, so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, also shall your seed be numbered.""

Water is Torah. And the Jewish people - the Jewish people are the sands of Abraham.

(by from <https://www.lchaimweekly.org/>)

To Hear with Our Heels

And 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. And I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will make your name great, and you shall be a blessing. And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and all the families of the earth shall be blessed through you." (Breishis 12:1-3)

The Ramban asks an important and almost obvious question on these initial words that were spoken to Avraham Avinu. Why is there no prior introduction to explain why HASHEM is talking to him? Suddenly HASHEM is speaking to this individual without the reader of the narrative having any clue or hint as to what he did to deserve to be in the spotlight of history.

Sure we have loads of information in the Oral Torah about Avram's youth and his search for G-d, courageously destroying idols in his father's shop, and his willingness to go into a fiery furnace rather than submit himself to idolatry. These events are not explicitly spelled out. Where do we see a hint of the merit that made him worthy of HASHEM giving the directive, "Lech Lecha"?

(continued on the other side)

The Sefas Emes offers a stunning explanation to this question. He quotes a Zohar that states, "Woe to those people who sleep in their caves, while Avraham Avinu of Blessed Memory, heard and accepted." The Sefas Emes sees a profound implication in that Zohar. He says that those words "Lech Lecha" that launched our national mission, was not only said to Avraham.

It was announced then and is announced constantly ever since to everybody, and this was the great praise of Avraham that made him worthy. The fact that he heard and responded makes it as if HASHEM was speaking only to him.

Sometimes a child will come home and say, "My Rebbe said to me..." A parent might ask, "Did he speak only to you?" The child answers, "He was talking to the class but I felt he was talking to me!"

It can work the other way around as well. A Rebbe or a lecturer, or a teacher imparts an important message and for whatever reason only one student shows that he gets it. He was essentially saying what he said and it was well worth his while to say it just for that one student. "And HASHEM said to Avram, Lech Lecha..."

One of my teachers once relayed to us the results of a study. I don't know how the study was done or if the results are truly scientific but even if it is nearly correct, it reflects a serious point worth pondering. One percent of people think. Five percent of people think they think, and 94% of people would rather die than think.

Perhaps a huge portion of humanity did not even hear the broadcast of this message. Maybe there were a few that heard it but did not respond. Avraham Avinu was a seeker of truth. He was a thinker and a persistent researcher. Avraham was not only the greatest iconoclast of all time, shattering the myth of idolatry and exposing their lies, but he was also the greatest ideologue as he became completely convinced of HASHEM ECHAD, One G-d! So not only did he hear "Lech Lecha" and let it remain an intellectual proposition, he accepted it, he was ready and he literally leapt into action. His great merit and praise was that he heard it and took immediate and appropriate action.

V'haya EIKEV Tishm'un ... (Devarim 7:12) It will be when you hearken to the laws ... V'haya introduces blessing. "Eikev" is a heel. I would like to say, "When you listen with your heels ..." When you are so clear and sensitized, as in the Ikva D'Mashicha, the heels of Moshiach we too will be able to hear with our heels.

(by Rabbi Label Lam from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)



Rabbi Kaplan is holding a weekly Thursday evening at 8:30 p.m. **in-person** and online shiur on the topic "'Igeret HaTeshuva.'" This online shiur is open to anyone who would like to attend and can be joined at: <https://cutt.ly/join-shiur>.



A Hearty Mazel Tov to:
Dr. Allan and Mrs. Kate Genut
on the **marriage of their granddaughter**
Reezha Teichman to Leil Hayun.

Mazel Tov also to the parents:
Michael and Devorah Teichman and Armand and Revital Hayun.

DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

Friday, 10/15 — 9 Cheshvan

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Shabbat Candles — 6:09 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:10 p.m.

Shabbat, 10/16 — 10 Cheshvan

Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 10:02 a.m.
Minchah — 5:55 p.m.
Ma'ariv — 7:09 p.m.

Sunday, 10/17 — 11 Cheshvan

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
Father and Son Learning — 5:15 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:05 p.m.

Monday, 10/18 — 12 Cheshvan

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:05 p.m.

Tuesday, 10/19 — 13 Cheshvan

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:05 p.m.

Wednesday, 10/20 — 14 Cheshvan

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:05 p.m.

Thursday, 10/21 — 15 Cheshvan

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:05 p.m.

Friday, 10/22 — 16 Cheshvan

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Shabbat Candles — 5:59 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:00 p.m.