



November 5, 2022

Lech Lecha

11 Cheshvan, 5783

The Burning Palace

How did the Jewish faith come into existence?

The Midrash describes the birth of Judaism with the following cryptic parable:

"And G-d said to Abraham: 'Go from your land, your birthplace, and your father's house...'" (Genesis 12:1) — To what may this be compared? To a man who was traveling from place to place when he saw a palace in flames. He wondered: "Is it possible that the palace has no owner?" The owner of the palace looked out and said, "I am the owner of the palace." So Abraham our father said, "Is it possible that the world lacks a ruler?" G-d looked out and said to him, "I am the ruler, the Sovereign of the universe."



Abraham's bewilderment is clear. This sensitive human being gazes at a brilliantly structured universe, a splendid piece of art. He is overwhelmed by the grandeur of a sunset and by the miracle of childbirth; he marvels at the roaring ocean waves and at the silent, steady beat of the human heart. The world is indeed a palace.

But the palace is in flames. The world is full of bloodshed, injustice and strife. Thugs, abusers, rapists, kidnappers and killers are continuously demolishing the palace, turning our world into an ugly tragic battlefield of untold pain and horror.

What happened to the owner of the palace? Abraham cries. Why does G-d allow man to destroy His world? Why does He permit such a beautiful palace to go up in flames? Could G-d have made a world only to abandon it? Would anyone build a palace and then desert it?

The Midrash records G-d's reply: "The owner of the palace looked out and said: 'I am the owner of the palace.' G-d looked out and said to Abraham: 'I am the ruler, the Sovereign of the universe.'"

What is the meaning of G-d's response?

Note that the owner of the palace does not make an attempt to get out of the burning building or to extinguish the flames. He is merely stating that He is the owner of the palace that is going up in smoke. It is as if, instead of racing out, the owner were calling for help. G-d made the palace, man set it on fire, and only man can put out the flames. Abraham asks G-d, "Where are you?" G-d replies, "I am here, where are you?" Man asks G-d, "Why did You abandon the world?" G-d asks man, "Why did you abandon Me?"

Thus began the revolution of Judaism --- humanity's courageous venture to extinguish the flames of immorality and bloodshed and restore the world to the harmonious and sacred palace it was intended to be. Abraham's encounter with G-d in the presence of a burning palace gave birth to the mission statement of Judaism - to be obsessed with good and horrified by evil. (Midrash Rabbah Bereishit 39:1; as interpreted by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks in *Radical Then, Radical Now*, Harper Collins, 2000).

(by Rabbi Yosef Y. Jacobson from <https://www.chabad.org/>)

The Patriarchs' Trust

In this week's Parashah, we begin to focus on the life of our Patriarch Avraham. Some commentaries count our Parashah's opening verse, "Lech lecha / Go for yourself from your land, from your relatives, and from your father's house to the land that I will show you," as the first of Avraham's Asarah Nisyonot / Ten Tests.

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R' Moshe Zuriel shlita (Bnei Brak, Israel; former Mashgiach Ruchani of Yeshivat Sha'alvim) writes: The Rishonim / early authorities who list the 613 Mitzvot (for example, Rambam z"l, Ramban z"l, and Sefer Ha'chinuch) do not list Bitachon / placing one's trust in Hashem among the commandments. Indeed, Bitachon is never mentioned expressly in the Torah. Where, then, asks R' Zuriel, can we find the concept of Bitachon in the Torah? After all, the Zohar teaches, "There is nothing that is not alluded to in the Torah."

R' Zuriel answers: Each of Avraham's Asarah Nisyonot was a test of his Bitachon. Leaving his homeland, Sarah's kidnaping, through the command to sacrifice Yitzchak – notwithstanding Hashem's promise that a great nation would come from him – each of these called on Avraham to stand firm in his Bitachon. Likewise, Yaakov Avinu's Bitachon was tested when he fled from Esav and came empty-handed to Lavan. Midrash Rabbah records that Yaakov said on that occasion, "Have I lost my hope that my Creator will care for me? G-d forbid! I will not lose my hope. My assistance comes from Hashem!" The Midrash teaches that Yaakov gained this strength from reciting (prophetically) the fifteen chapters of Tehilim (120-134) that begin "Shir Ha'ma'alot." (Otzrot Ha'mussar p.321)

(by Rabbi Shlomo Katz from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)

Community Information of Interest

November 5: Oslo, Immigration, Assassination: The State of Israel and the Jewish People 1992-1996. Lecture by Rabbi Dovid Katz. *Plausible Deniability? Arafat, Hamas, and Terrorism in the Aftermath of Oslo.* This lecture will begin at 8:45 p.m. and be held at the Congregation Shomrei Emunah.

As it is dark both on the way to Shul in the morning and going home after Ma'ariv; please wear reflective clothing, bands, belts, vests, etc. when walking to and from Shul.



Rabbi Matisyahu and Chana Rivka Friedman and family
are sponsoring a Kiddush after davening this Shabbat
in honor of their daughter
Sara,
who was born in June 2022.



Yahrzeits This Week:

Allan Berman 17 Cheshvan - Thursday night / Friday for father Hillel ben Shmuel

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DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

Friday, 11/4 — 10 Cheshvan

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.

Shabbat Candles — 5:43 p.m.

Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:45 p.m.

Shabbat, 11/5 — 11 Cheshvan

Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.

Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 10:23 a.m.

Minchah — 5:30 p.m.

Shiur: *Overcoming Folly* — after Minchah

Ma'ariv — 6:46 p.m.

Sunday, 11/6 — 12 Cheshvan

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m. **E.S.T.**

Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:45 p.m.

Monday, 11/7 — 13 Cheshvan

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.

Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:45 p.m.



Tuesday, 11/8 — 14 Cheshvan

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.

Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:45 p.m.

Wednesday, 11/9 — 15 Cheshvan

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.

Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:45 p.m.

Thursday, 11/10 — 16 Cheshvan

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.

Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:45 p.m.

Friday, 11/11 — 17 Cheshvan

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.

Shabbat Candles — 4:36 p.m.

Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:40 p.m.